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Aug. 16. 8 A. M. — To Cassia Field.

*Chenopodium hybridum*, a tall rank weed, five feet at least, dark-green, with a heavy (poisonous?) odor compared to that of stramonium; great maple(?) shaped leaves. How deadly this peculiar heavy odor! *Diplopappus linariifolius*, apparently several days.

Ambrosia pollen now begins to yellow my clothes.

*Cynoglossum officinale*, a long time, mostly gone to seed, at Bull's Path and north roadside below Lephleman's. Its great radical leaves made me think of smooth mullein. The flower has a very peculiar, rather sickening odor; Sophia thought like a warm apple pie just from the oven (I did not perceive this). A pretty flower, however. I thoughtlessly put a handful of the nutlets into my pocket with my handkerchief. But it took me a long time to pick them out [of] my handkerchief when I got home, and I pulled out many threads in the process.

At roadside opposite Leighton's, just this side his

barn, *Monarda fistulosa*, wild bergamot, nearly done, with terminal whorls and fragrance mixed of balm and summer savory.<sup>1</sup> The petioles are not ciliated like those on Strawberry Hill road.

Am surprised to find the cassia so obvious and abundant. Can see it yellowing the field twenty-five rods off, from top of hill. It is perhaps the prevailing shrub over several acres of moist rocky meadow pasture on the brook; grows in bunches, three to five feet high (from the ground this year), in the neighborhood of alders, hardhack, elecampane, etc. The lower flowers are turning white and going to seed, — pods already three inches long, — a few upper not yet opened. It resounds with the hum of bumblebees. It is branched above, some of the half-naked (of leaves) racemes twenty inches long by five or six wide. Leaves alternate, of six or eight pairs of leaflets and often an odd one at base, locust-like. Looked as if they had shut up in the night. Mrs. Pratt says they do.<sup>2</sup> E. Hoar says she has known it here since she was a child.

The cynoglossum by roadside opposite, and, by side of tan-yard, the apparently true *Mentha viridis*, or spearmint, growing very rankly in a dense bed, some four feet high, spikes rather dense, one to one and a half inches long, stem often reddish, leaves nearly sessile. Say August 1st at least.

Some elecampane with the cassia is six feet high, and blades of lower leaves twenty inches by seven or nine.

<sup>1</sup> Apparently the same kind in Loring's yard.

<sup>2</sup> I observe it myself.

What a variety of old garden herbs — mints, etc. — are naturalized along an old settled road, like this to Boston which the British travelled! And then there is the site, apparently, of an old garden by the tan-yard, where the spearmint grows so rankly. I am intoxicated with the fragrance. Though I find only one new plant (the cassia), yet old acquaintances grow so rankly, and the spearmint intoxicates me so, that I am bewildered, as it were by a variety of new things. An infinite novelty. All the roadside is the site of an old garden where fragrant herbs have become naturalized, — hounds-tongue, bergamot, spearmint, elecampane, etc. I see even the tiger lily, with its bulbs, growing by the roadside far from houses (near Leighton's graveyard). I think I have found many new plants, and am surprised when I can reckon but one. A little distance from my ordinary walk and a little variety in the growth or luxuriance will produce this illusion. By the discovery of one new plant all bounds seem to be infinitely removed.

Amphicarpæa some time; pods seven eighths of an inch long. *Mimulus ringens* four feet high, and chelone six feet high!

Am frequently surprised to find how imperfectly water-plants are known. Even good shore botanists are out of their element on the water. I would suggest to young botanists to get not only a botany-box but a boat, and know the water-plants not so much from the shore as from the water side.

White morning-glory up the Assabet. I find the dog's-bane (*Pocynum androsarifolium*) bark not

nearly so strong as that of the *A. cannabinum*. *Amaranthus hypochondriacus*, how long?

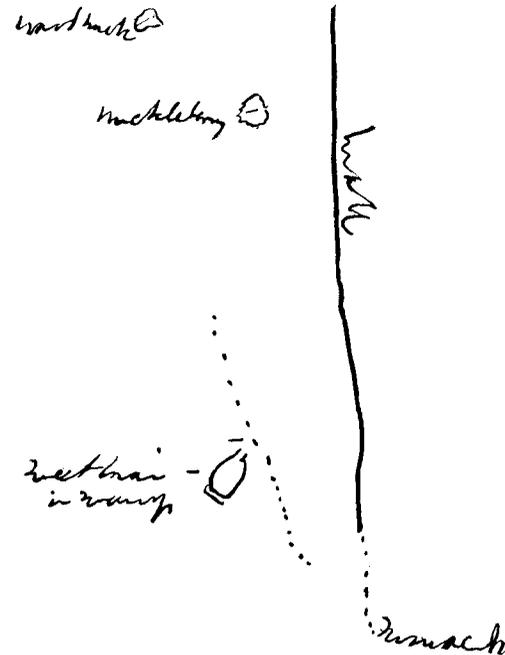
Minott says that the meadow-grass will be good for nothing after the late overflow, when it goes down. The water has *steamed* the grass. I see the ruc all turned yellow by it prematurely. Bathing at Merrick's old place, am surprised to find how swift the current. Raise the river two feet above summer level and let it be running off, and you can hardly swim against it. It has fallen about fifteen inches from the height.

My plants in press are in a sad condition; mildew has invaded them during the late damp weather, even those that were nearly dry. I find more and other plants than I counted on. Very bad weather of late for pressing plants. Give me the dry heat of July. Even growing leaves out of doors are spotted with fungi now, much more than mine in press.

Aug. 17. P. M. — Walked with Minot Pratt behind his house.

*Hypericum Canadense* well out at 2 P. M. *Ludwigia alternifolia* still with red or scarlet calyx-lobes to the seed, roadside this side H. Shattuck's. *Aster miser* some time, turned purple. *A. longifolius* not long. *Hieracium Canadense*. Pratt describes finding one or two small yellowish plants on the edge of his field under the hill, like a polygala, but twice as large, stiff, and points of the flowers turned down [?]; leaf clover-like, three-foliolate. Russell had suggested *genista*. He has in his garden the mountain fringe (*Adlumia cirrhosa*), which grows in Maine and he thought in

the western part of this State. Also wood geranium (*G. dissectum* (Big.)) from Fitzwilliam, though Gray seems to think that the *Carolinianum* has been mistaken for it. *Rhus copallina* already going to seed by the wall, apparently on what was W. E. C.'s ground. Saw again the red huckleberry and the white hardhack. I think this the lay of the land:—



The red huckleberry is as easily distinguished in the green state as when ripe. It is then red with a white cheek, often slightly pear-shaped, semitransparent with a lustre, very finely and indistinctly white-dotted. I do

not perceive any very marked peculiarity in the bush, unless that the recent twigs are red. The last year's a peculiar ochreous color and the red buds in the axils larger. It might be called *Gaylussacia resinosa* var. *erythrocarpa*.

Aug. 18. P. M. — To Beck Stow's.

Now, perhaps, get thoroughwort. The lecheas in the Great Fields are now turning red, especially the fine one.

As I go along the hillsides in sprout-lands, amid the *Solidago stricta*, looking for the blackberries left after the rain, the sun warm as ever, but the air cool nevertheless, I hear the *steady* (not intermittent) shrilling of apparently the alder cricket, clear, loud, and autumnal, a season sound. Hear it, but see it not. It reminds me of past autumns and the lapse of time, suggests a pleasing, thoughtful melancholy, like the sound of the flail. Such preparation, such an outfit has our life, and so little brought to pass!

Hear a *faint*-warbling bird amid birches and pines. Clear-yellow throat and breast, greenish-yellow head, conspicuous white bar on wings, white beneath, forked tail, bluish legs. Can it be pine warbler? The note, *thus faint*, is not like it.

See black and white creeper.

Yellow Bethlehem-star yet, and indigo.

Saw yesterday and some days before a monster aphid some five eighths of an inch long on a huckleberry leaf. I mistook it, as before, for a sort of loose-spun cocoon. It was obovate, indistinctly ribbed, of

long, loose, white, streaming down, but being touched it recoiled and, taken off the leaf, rolled itself into a ball. The father of all the aphides. *Enothera pumila* still.

Aug. 19. P. M. — To Fair Haven Hill.

Dog-day weather as for clouds, but less smoky than before the rains of ten days ago. I see *Hypericum Canadense* and *mutilum* abundantly open at 3 P. M. Apparently they did not bear the dry, hot weather of July so well. They are apparently now in prime, but the *Sarothra* is not open at this hour. The *perforatum* is quite scarce now, and apparently the *corymbosum*; the *ellipticum* quite done. The small hypericums have a peculiar smart, somewhat lemon-like fragrance, but bee-like.

The dangle-berries in Hubbard's Grove have a peculiar, not very pleasant, flavor and a tough skin. I see white buds on swamp-pink, just formed, also green checkerberries about grown.

In the radula swamp the sweet scent of clethra;<sup>1</sup> some peculiarly bright orange toadstools with a wavy edge. Now for spotted aralia leaves, brown pupils with yellow iris amid the green.

The whorled polygala is a plant almost universally dispersed but inconspicuous.

I spent my afternoon among the desmodiums and lespedezas, sociably. The further end of Fair Haven Hill-side is a great place for them.

All the lespedezas are apparently more open and

<sup>1</sup> Which lasts ten days at least.

delicate in the woods, and of a darker green, especially the violet ones. When not too much crowded, their leaves are very pretty and perfect.

Ivy berries dry and apparently ripe on the rocks (*Toxicodendron*).

Low blueberries, though some are a very little wilted, are very sweet and good as well as abundant. Huckleberries getting to be suspected. What countless varieties of low blackberries! Here, in this open pine grove, I pluck some large fresh and very sweet ones when they are mostly gone without. So they are continued a little longer to us.

*Lobelia spicata* still.

The wind rises and the pasture thistle down is blown about.

Lespedezas and desmodiums are now generally in prime. The latter are an especially interesting family, with commonly such delicate, spreading panicles, the plants themselves in their distribution so scattered and inobvious, and the open and spreading panicle of commonly verdigris-green flowers (in drying) make them to be unobserved when you are near them. The panicle of flowers often as large or larger than all the rest of the plant, with their peculiar chain-like seed-pods, rhomboidal or semiorbicular, or with concave backs. They love dry hillsides. They are not so abundant, after all, but I feel an agreeable surprise as often as I come across a new locality for desmodiums. Rarely find one kind without one or two more species near, their great spreading panicles, yet delicate, open, and airy, occupying the August air. Like raking masts

with countless guys slanted far over the neighboring plants.

Some of these desmodiums, the *paniculatum*, *Marilandicum*, *nudiflorum*, *rigidum*, and *Dillenii*, are so fine and inobvious that a careless observer would look through their thin flowery panicles without observing any flower at all. The flowery beds of *D. Marilandicum* reveal themselves to me like a blue-green mist or gauze veil spread on the grass. I find them abundant in some places where I am sure there were none last year. They are outsiders, few and far between, further removed from man's walks than most plants, considering that there is such a variety of them. A dry, thin family of many species, nowhere abundant, yet widely dispersed, looking out from dry hillsides and exercising their dry wit on the race of man. The lespedezas and *D. Canadense*, more stiff and wand-like, nearer to man and his paths. The *D. rigidum*, *Dillenii*, etc., etc., more spreading and open, thin and fleeting and dispersed like the aborigines. They occupy the same dry soil, too.

When huckleberries are getting stale on dry hillsides, amid the huckleberry bushes and in sprout-lands and by paths you may observe them. The broad meshes of their panicles rarely catch the eye. There is something witch-like about them; though so rare and remote, yet evidently, from those bur-like pods, expecting to come in contact with some travelling man or beast without their knowledge, to be transported to new hillsides; lying in wait, as it were, to catch by the hem of the berry-pickers' garments and so get a lift to new

quarters. They occupy a great deal of room, but are the less obvious for it. They put their chains about you, and they cling like savage children to their mother's back or breast. They escape your observation, as it were under bare poles. You only notice as far up as their green sails are set, perchance, or to the cross-trees, not the tall, tapering, raking spars, whence are looped the life-lines and halyards. Or it is like that slanting mast and rigging in navy-yards where masts are inserted.

*Aug. 20.* Rain all night and to-day, making it a little chilly. Though I sit with open window, I should think it uncomfortably cool with it closed. Some must have a little fire.

*Aug. 21.* Rains still all day, and wind rises, and shakes off much fruit and beats down the corn.

The prevailing solidagos now are, 1st, *stricta* (the upland<sup>1</sup> and also meadow one which I seem to have called *puberula*);<sup>2</sup> 2d, the three-ribbed, of apparently several varieties, which I have called *arguta* or *gigantea* (apparently truly the last); 3d, *altissima*, though commonly only a part of its panicles; 4th, *nemoralis*, just beginning generally to bloom. Then there is the *odora*, 5th, out some time, but not common; and, 6th, the *bicolor*, just begun in some places.

The commonest asters now are, 1st, the *Radula*; 2d, *dumosus*; 3d, *patens*; 4th, say *puniccus*; 5th, *cordifolius*; 6th, *macrophyllus*; (these two a good while);

<sup>1</sup> That is, *arguta* var. *juncea*.

<sup>2</sup> That is, true *stricta*.

7th, say *Tradescanti*; 8th, *miser*; 9th, *longifolius*; (these three quite rare yet); 10th, probably *acuminatus*, some time (not seen); 11th, *undulatus*; 12th, *lewis*; (these two scarcely to be seen yet).

N. B. Water so high I have not seen early meadow aster lately.

*Aug. 22.* Fair weather at last.

P. M. — Up Assabet.

Owing to the rain of the 8th and before, two days and two nights, the river rose to within six inches of the top of Hoar's wall. It had fallen about one half, when the rain began again on the night of the 20th, and again continued about two nights and two days, though so much did not fall as before; but, the river being high, it is now rising fast. The Assabet is apparently at its height, and rushing very swiftly past the Hemlocks, where it is narrow and choked with rocks, I can hardly row against it there. I see much hay floating, and two or three cocks, quite black, carried round and round in a great eddy by the side of the stream, which will ere long be released and continue their voyage down-stream. The water is backing up the main stream so that there is no current whatever in that, as far up as my boat's place, at least. When I rest on my oars the boat will not after any waiting drift down-stream. It is within three inches of the top of Hoar's wall at 7 p. m.

I notice three or four clumps of white maples, at the swamp up the Assabet, which have turned as red (dull red) as ever they do, fairly put on their autumnal

hue. But we have had no dry weather and no frost, and this is apparently a premature ripening of the leaves. The water stands around and affects them as it does the weeds and grass, — steams them too. They, as it were, take these for the fall rains, the latter rain, accept their fates, and put on the suitable dress. This shows how little frost has to do with such changes, except as a ripener of the leaves. The trees are so ready for this change that only a copious rain and rise of the waters as in the fall produces the same effect. Also some red maples on hillsides have a crisped look for the same reason, actually ripening and drying without turning and without drought or frost.

I find that much of the faint warbling I hear nowadays is from apparently *the young* Maryland yellowthroats, as it were practicing against another spring, — half-finished strains. They are also more inquisitive and bold than usual, hopping quite near.

The creak of the mole cricket is heard along the shore.

Aug. 23. P. M. — To Walden.

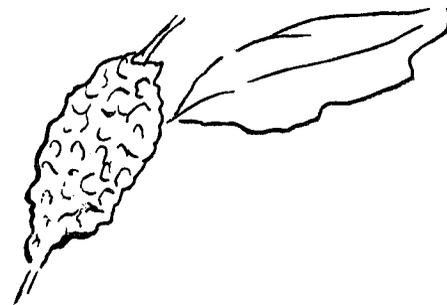
I see a bed of *Antennaria margaritacea*, now in its prime, by the railroad, and very handsome. It has fallen outward on all sides ray-wise, and rests on the ground, forming [a] perfectly regular circle, four feet in diameter and fifteen inches high, with a dark ash-colored centre, twenty inches in diameter, composed of the stems, then a wide circumference, one foot or more broad, of dense pearly masses of flowers covered

with bees and butterflies. This is as regular as a wheel. So fair and pure and abundant.

Elder-berries, now looking purple, are weighing down the bushes along fences by their abundance. White goldenrod, not long commonly. Decodon getting stale at Second Andromeda Pond. Often the end has rooted itself, and the whole forms a loop four feet long and twenty or more inches high in the middle, with numerous branches, making it rather troublesome to wade through. Where the stems bend down and rest on the water, they swell to several times their usual size and acquire that thick, soft bark, and put forth numerous roots; not the extreme point, but a space just short of it, while that starts up again.

On R. W. E.'s hillside by railroad, burnt over by the engine in the spring, the crechthites has shot up abundantly, very tall and straight, some six or seven feet high.

Those singular crowded and wrinkled dry galls, red and cream-color mingled, on white oak shrubs, with their grubs in them.



On the west side of Emerson's Cliff, I notice many *Gerardia pedicularia* out. A bee is hovering about

one bush. The flowers are not yet open, and if they were, perhaps he could not enter. He proceeds at once, head downwards, to the base of the tube, extracts the sweet there, and departs. Examining, I find that every flower has a small hole pierced through the tube, commonly through calyx and all, opposite the nectary. This does not hinder its opening. The Rape of the Flower! The bee knew where the sweet lay, and was unscrupulous in his mode of obtaining it. A certain violence tolerated by nature.

Now for high blackberries, though the low are gone. At the Lincoln bound hollow, Walden, there is a dense bed of the *Rubus hispidus*, matting the ground seven or eight inches deep, and full of the small black fruit, now in its prime. It is especially abundant where the vines lie over a stump. Has a peculiar, hardly agreeable acid.

On this *Lespedeza Stuevei*, a green locust an inch and three quarters long.

The scent of decaying fungi in woods is quite offensive now in many places, like carrion even. I see many red ones eaten more or less in the paths, nibbled out on the edges.

7 P. M. — The river has risen four inches since last night and now is one inch above the wall, and there is a little current there. Probably, then, the Assabet has begun to fall, — if this has not risen higher than that.

J. Farmer says that he found that the gummed twig of a chimney swallow's nest, though it burned when held in a flame, went out immediately when taken out

of it, and he thinks it owing to a peculiarity in the gum, rendering the twig partly fire-proof, so that they cannot be ignited by the sparks in a chimney. I suggested that these swallows had originally built in hollow trees, but it would be interesting to ascertain whether they constructed their nests in the same way and of the same material then.

Aug. 24. 3 P. M. — Up river to Clamshell.

*Polygonum tenue* abundant and in bloom, on side of Money-Diggers' Hill, especially at south base, near apple tree. The choke-cherry by fence beyond spring, being dead ripe and a little wilted, is at length tolerable eating, much better than I ever tasted, but the stones are much in the way.

I was surprised to hear Peter Flood mention it as an objection to a certain peat meadow that he would have to dry the peat on the adjacent upland. But he explained that peat, dried thus was apt to crumble, and so was not so good as that dried gradually and all alike on damper ground; so an apparent disadvantage is a real advantage, according to this.

It rained a little last night, and the river at 3 P. M. is at the same height as last night. It is not remembered when it was so high at this season. I have not seen a white lily nor a yellow one in the river for a fortnight. The river meadows probably will not be mown this year. I can hardly get under the stone bridge without striking my boat. Cardinal-flowers, etc., etc., are drowned before they are fairly in bloom.

River at same height as yesterday.

*Aug. 25. P. M.* — To Hill by boat.

Silvery cinquefoil now begins to show itself commonly again. Perhaps it is owing to the rain, spring-like, which we have in August.

I paddle directly across the meadow, the river is so high, and land east of the elm on the third or fourth row of potatoes. The water makes more show on the meadows than yesterday, though hardly so high, because the grass is more flatted down. I easily make my way amid the thin spires. Almost every stem which rises above the surface has a grasshopper or caterpillar upon it. Some have seven or eight grasshoppers, clinging to their masts, one close and directly above another, like shipwrecked sailors, now the third or fourth day exposed. Whither shall they jump? It is a quarter of a mile to shore, and countless sharks lie in wait for them. They are so thick that they are like a crop which the grass bears; some stems are bent down by their weight. This flood affects other inhabitants of these fields than men; not only the owners of the grass, but its inhabitants much more. It drives them to their upper stories, — to take refuge in the rigging. Many that have taken an imprudent leap are seen struggling in the water. How much life is drowned out that inhabits about the roots of the meadow-grass! How many a family, perchance, of short-tailed meadow mice has had to scamper or swim!

The river-meadow cranberries are covered deep. I can count them as they lie in dense beds a foot under water, so distinct and white, or just beginning to have a red cheek. They will probably be spoiled, and this

crop will fail. Potatoes, too, in the low land on which water has stood so long, will rot.

The farmers commonly say that the spring floods, being of cold water, do not injure the grass like later ones when the water is warm, but I suspect it is not so much owing to the warmth of the water as to the age and condition of the grass and whatever else is exposed to them. They say that if you let the water rise and stand some time over the roots of trees in warm weather it will kill them. This, then, may be the value of these occasional freshets in August: they steam and kill the shrubs and trees which had crept into the river meadows, and so keep them open perpetually, which, perchance, the spring floods alone might not do. It is commonly supposed that our river meadows were much drier than now originally, or when the town was settled. They were probably drier before the dam was built at Billerica, but if they were much or at all drier than now originally, I ask what prevented their being converted into maple swamps? Maples, alders, birches, etc., are creeping into them quite fast on many sides at present. If they had been so dry as is supposed they would not have been open meadows. It seems to be true that high water in mid-summer, when perchance the trees and shrubs are in a more tender state, kills them. It "steams" them, as it does the grass; and maybe the river thus asserts its rights, and possibly it would still to great extent, though the meadows should be considerably raised. Yet, I ask, why do maples, alders, etc., at present border the stream, though they do not spring up to any

extent in the open meadow? Is it because the immediate bank is commonly more firm as well as higher (their seeds also are more liable to be caught there), and where it is low they are protected by willows and button-bushes, which can bear the flood? Not even willows and button-bushes prevail in the Great Meadows, — though many of the former, at least, spring up there, — except on the most elevated parts or hummocks. The reason for this cannot be solely in the fact that the water stands over them there a part of the year, because they are still more exposed to the water in many places on the shore of the river where yet they thrive. Is it then owing to the soft character of the ground in the meadow and the ice tearing up the meadow so extensively? On the immediate bank of the river that kind of sod and soil is not commonly formed which the ice lifts up. Why is the black willow so strictly confined to the bank of the river? What is the use, in Nature's economy, of these occasional floods in August? Is it not partly to preserve the meadows open?

Mr. Rice says that the brook just beyond his brother Israel's in Sudbury rises and runs out before the river, and then you will see the river running up the brook as fast as the brook ran down before.

Apparently half the pads are now afloat, notwithstanding the depth of the water, but they are almost all white lily pads, the others being eaten and decayed. They have apparently lengthened their stems somewhat. They generally lie with more or less coil, prepared for a rise of the water, and perhaps the length

of that coil shows pretty accurately to how great a rise they are ordinarily subject at this season.

I was suggesting yesterday, as I have often before, that the town should provide a stone monument to be placed in the river, so as to be surrounded by water at its lowest stage, and a dozen feet high, so as to rise above it at its highest stage; on this feet and inches to be permanently marked; and it be made some one's duty to record each high or low stage of the water. Now, when we have a remarkable freshet, we cannot tell surely whether it is higher than the one thirty or sixty years ago or not. It would be not merely interesting, but often practically valuable, to know this. Reuben Rice was telling me to-night that the great freshet of two or three years ago came, according to his brother Israel, within two inches of one that occurred about forty years ago. I asked how he knew. He said that the former one took place early (February?), and the surface froze so that boys skated on it, and the ice marked a particular apple tree, girdled it, so that it is seen to this day. But we wish to speak more confidently than this allows. It is important when building a causeway, or a bridge, or a house even, in some situations, to know exactly how high the river has ever risen. It would need to be a very large stone or pile of stones, which the ice could not move or break. Perhaps one corner of a bridge abutment would do.

Rice killed a woodchuck to-day that was shearing off his beans. He was very fat.

I cross the meadows in the face of a thunder-storm

rising very dark in the north. There were several boats out, but their crews soon retreated homeward before the approaching storm. It came on rapidly, with vivid lightning striking the northern earth and heavy thunder following. Just before, and in the shadow of, the cloud, I saw, advancing majestically with wide circles over the meadowy flood, a fish hawk and, apparently, a black eagle (maybe a young white-head). The first, with slender curved wings and silvery breast, four or five hundred feet high, watching the water while he circled slowly southwesterly. What a vision that could detect a fish at that distance! The latter, with broad black wings and broad tail, thus:  hovered only about one hundred feet high; evidently a different species, and what else but an eagle? They soon disappeared southwest, cutting off a bend. The thunder-shower passed off to the southeast.

*Aug. 26. Tuesday.* More wind and quite cold this morning, but very bright and sparkling, autumn-like air, reminding of frosts to be apprehended,<sup>1</sup> also tempting abroad to adventure. The fall cricket—or is it alder locust?—sings the praises of the day.

So about 9 A. M. up river to Fair Haven Pond.

The flooded meadow, where the grasshoppers cling to the grass so thickly, is alive with swallows skimming just over the surface amid the grass-tops and *apparently* snapping up insects there. Are they catch-

<sup>1</sup> We see no effects of frost yet in garden, but hear a rumor of a little somewhere. First muskmelon gathered.

ing the grasshoppers as they cling to bare poles? (I see the swallows equally thick there at 5 P. M. when I return also.) River slowly falling. The most conspicuous weed rising above the water is the wool-grass, with its great, rich, seedy heads, which rise from a few inches to a foot above at present, as I push over the uncut meadows. I see many white lilies fairly and freshly in bloom after all this flood, though it looks like a resurrection. The wind is northwest, apparently by west, and I sail before it and under Hubbard's Bridge. The red maples of Potter's Swamp show a dull-purple blush and sometimes a low scarlet bough, the effect evidently of the rain ripening them.

Rice told me about their crossing the causeway from Wayland to Sudbury some sixty years ago in a freshet which he could just remember, in a half-hogs-head tub, used for scalding pigs, having nailed some boards on the bottom to keep it from upsetting. It was too deep for a team.

We begin to apprehend frosts before the melons are ripe!

A blue heron sails away from a pine at Holden Swamp shore and alights on the meadow above. Again he flies, and alights on the hard Conantum side, where at length I detect him standing far away stake-like (his body concealed), eying me and depending on his stronger vision.

The desmodium flowers are pure purple, rose-purple in the morning when quite fresh, excepting the two green spots. The *D. rotundifolium* also has the two green (or in its case greenish) spots on its very large

flower. These desmodiums are so fine and inobvious that it is difficult to detect them. I go through a grove in vain, but when I get away, find my coat covered with their pods. They found me, though I did not them. The round-leafed desmodium has sometimes seven pods and large flowers still fresh.

The *Lespedeza Stuevei* is very abundant on Blackberry Steep, two and a half to three feet high. It has a looser top and less dense spikes than the *hirta*. It gives a pink hue to the hillside. The *L. violacea* is smaller and much more violet, the *hirta* more white. *Galium pilosum* still common; and *Desmodium acuminatum* still by rock on Blackberry Steep. This to be added to the desmodiums of this place.

As I stand there, a young male goldfinch darts away with a twitter from a spear thistle top close to my side, and, alighting near, makes frequent returns as near to me and the thistle as it dares pass, not yet knowing man well enough to fear him.

I rest and take my lunch on Lee's Cliff, looking toward Baker Farm. What is a New England landscape this sunny August day? A weather-painted house and barn, with an orchard by its side, in midst of a sandy field surrounded by green woods, with a small blue lake on one side. A sympathy between the color of the weather-painted house and that of the lake and sky. I speak not of a country road between its fences, for this house lies off one, nor do I commonly approach them from this side. The weather-painted house. This is the New England color, homely but fit as that of a toadstool. What matter though this one has not

been inhabited for thirty years? Methinks I hear the crow of a cock come up from its barn-yard.

I think I hear the pine warbler's note in the woods behind me. Hear a plain *phebe* note from a chickadee. Bluets still. Epilobium down flies abundantly on hillsides. I gather a bundle of pennyroyal; it grows largest and rankest high and close under these rocks, amid the loose stones. I tie my bundle with the purple bark of the poke-weed.

Sailed across to Bee Tree Hill. This hillside, laid bare two years ago and partly last winter, is almost covered with the *Aster macrophyllus*, now in its prime. It grows large and rank, two feet high. On one I count seventeen central flowers withered, one hundred and thirty in bloom, and half as many buds. As I looked down from the hilltop over the sprout-land, its rounded grayish tops amid the bushes I mistook for gray, lichen-clad rocks, such was its profusion and harmony with the scenery, like hoary rocky hilltops amid bushes. There were acres of it, densely planted. Also crechthites as abundant and rank in many places there as if it had been burnt over! So it does not necessarily imply fire. I thought I was looking down on gray, lichen-clad rocky summits on which a few bushes thinly grew. These rocks were asters, single ones a foot over, many prostrate, and making a gray impression. Many leaves of shrubs are crisp and withered and fallen there, though as yet no drought nor frost. Nothing but rain can have done it.

Aspen leaves are blackened. Stonecrop still. Another monster aphid on a huckleberry leaf. *Galium*

*triflorum* still. See a great many young oaks and shrub oaks stripped by caterpillars of different kinds now.

Last Friday (the 22d) afternoon (when I was away), Father's pig got out again and took to the riverside. The next day he was heard from, but not found. That night he was seen on an island in the meadow, in the midst of the flood, but thereafter for some time no account of him. J. Farmer advised to go to Ai Hale, just over the Carlisle line. He has got a dog which, if you put him on the track of the pig not more than four hours' old, will pursue and catch him and hold him by the ear without hurting him till you come up. That's the best way. Ten men cannot stop him in the road, but he will go by them. It was generally conceded that the right kind of dog was all that was wanted, like Ai Hale's, one that would hold him by the ear, but not uselessly maim him. One or two said if I only had such a one's dog, I'd catch him for so much.

Neighbors sympathized as much as in them lay. It was the town talk; the meetings were held at Wolcott & Holden's. Every man told of his losses and disappointments in this line. One had heard of his pig last up in Westford, but never saw him again; another had only caught his pig by his running against a post so hard as to stun himself for a few moments. It was thought this one must have been born in the woods, for he would run and leap like a wolf. Some advised not to build so very high, but lay the upper board flat over the pen, for then, when he caught by his fore feet, his body would swing under to no purpose. One said you would not catch him to buy

a pig out of a drove. Our pig ran as if he *still* had the devil in him. It was generally conceded that a good dog was the desideratum. But thereupon Lawrence, the harness-maker, came forward and told his experience. He once helped hunt a pig in the next town. He weighed two hundred; had been out some time (though not in '75), but they learned where he resorted; but they got a capital dog of the right kind. They had the dog tied lest he should scare the pig too soon. They crawled along very carefully near to the hollow where the pig was till they could hear him. They knew that if he should hear them and he was wide awake, he would dash off with a grunt, and that would be the last of him, but what more could they do? They consulted in a whisper and concluded to let the dog go. They did so, and directly heard an awful yelp; rushed up; the pig was gone, and there lay the dog torn all to pieces! At this there was a universal *haw! haw!* and the reputation of dogs fell, and the chance of catching the pig seemed less.

Two dollars reward was offered to him who would catch and return him without maiming him. At length, the 26th, he was heard from. He was caught and tied in north part of the town. Took to a swamp, as they say they are inclined. He was chased two hours with a spaniel dog, which never faced him, nor touched him, but, as the man said, "tuckered him out," kept him on the go and showed where he was. When at a distance the pig stopped and faced the dog until the pursuers came up. He was brought home the 27th, all his legs tied, and put into his new pen. It was a very deep one.

It might have been made deeper, but Father did not wish to build a wall, and the man who caught him and got his two dollars for it thought it ought to hold any decent pig. Father said he did n't wish to keep him in a well.

Aug. 27. P. M. — To Clintonia Swamp and Cardinal Ditch.

Unusually cold last night.

*Goodyera pubescens*, rattlesnake-plantain, is apparently a *little* past its prime. It is very abundant on Clintonia Swamp hillside, quite erect, with its white spike eight to ten inches high on the sloping hillside, the lower half or more turning brown, but the beautifully reticulated leaves which pave the moist shady hillside about its base are the chief attraction. These oval leaves, perfectly smooth like velvet to the touch, about one inch long, have a broad white midrib and four to six longitudinal white veins, very prettily and thickly connected by other conspicuous white veins transversely and irregularly, all on a dark rich green ground. Is it not the prettiest leaf that paves the forest floor? As a cultivated exotic it would attract great attention for its leaf. Many of the leaves are eaten. Is it by partridges? It is a leaf of firm texture, not apt to be partially eaten by insects or decayed, and does not soon wilt. So unsoiled and undecayed. It might be imitated on carpets and rugs. Some old withered stems of last year still stand.

On dry, open hillsides and fields the *Spiranthes gracilis* is very common of late, rising tall and slender,

with its spiral of white flowers like a screw-thread at top; sometimes fifteen inches high.

There are, close by the former, the peculiar large dark blue indigo clintonia berries of irregular form and dark-spotted, in umbels of four or five on very brittle stems which break with a snap and on erectish stemlets or pedicels.

See no fringed gentian yet. *Veronica serpyllifolia* again by Brister's Spring. *Krigia* yesterday at Lee's Cliff, apparently again, though it may be uninterruptedly. Tobacco-pipe still. The rhexia greets me in bright patches on meadow banks. *Ludwigia alternifolia* still. It is abundant in Cardinal Ditch, twenty rods from road. *Bidens frondosa*, how long? *Hypericum Canadense* and *mutilum* now pretty generally open at 4 p. m., thus late in the season, it being more moist and cooler.

The cardinals in this ditch make a splendid show now, though they would have been much fresher and finer a week ago. They nearly fill the ditch for thirty-five rods perfectly straight, about three feet high. I count at random ten in one square foot, and as they are two feet wide by thirty-five rods, there are four or five thousand at least, and maybe more. They look like slender plumes of soldiers advancing in a dense troop, and a few white (or rather pale-pink) ones are mingled with the scarlet. That is the most splendid show of cardinal-flowers I ever saw. They are mostly gone to seed, *i. e.* the greater part of the spike.

*Mimulus* there still common.

Near the clintonia berries, I found the *Polygonatum*

*pubescens* berries on its handsome leafy stem recurved over the hillside, generally two slaty-blue (but dark-green beneath the bloom) berries on an axillary peduncle three quarters of an inch long, hanging straight down; eight or nine such peduncles, dividing to two short pedicels at end; the berries successively smaller from below upwards, from three eighths of an inch [in] diameter to hardly more than one eighth.

There are many wild-looking berries about now. The *Viburnum Lentago* begin to show their handsome red checks, rather elliptic-shaped and mucronated, one check clear red with a purplish bloom, the other pale green, *now*. Among the handsomest of berries, one half inch long by three eighths by two eighths, being somewhat flattish. Then there are the *Viburnum dentatum* berries, in flattish cymes, dull lead-colored berries, depressed globular, three sixteenths of an inch in diameter, with a mucronation, hard, seedy, dryish, and unpalatable.

The large depressed globular hips of the moss rose begin to turn scarlet in low ground.

Aug. 28. First watermelon.

P. M. — To tortoise eggs, Marlborough road.

*Potentilla Norvegica* again. I go over linnæa sprout-lands. The paniced cornel berries are whitening, but already mostly fallen. As usual the leaves of this shrub, though it is so wet, are rolled like corn, showing the paler under sides. At this season it would seem that rain, frost, and drought all produce similar effects. Now the black cherries in sprout-lands are in their

prime, and the black choke-berries just after huckleberries and blueberries. They are both very abundant this year. The branches droop with cherries. Those on some trees are very superior to others. The bushes are weighed down with choke-berries, which no creature appears to gather. This crop is as abundant as the huckleberries have been. They have a sweet and pleasant taste enough, but leave a mass of dry pulp in the mouth. But it is worth the while to see their profusion, if only to know what nature can do. Huckleberries are about given up, low blueberries more or less shrivelled, low blackberries done, high blackberries still to be had. *Viburnum nudum* berries are beginning; I already see a few shrivelled purple ones amid the light green. Poke berries also begun.

A goldfinch twitters away from every thistle now, and soon returns to it when I am past. I see the ground strewn with the thistle-down they have scattered on every side.

At Tarbell's andromeda swamp. A probable *Bidens connata* or small *chrysanthemoides*.

I open the painted tortoise nest of June 10th, and find a young turtle partly out of his shell. He is roundish and the sternum clear uniform pink. The marks on the sides are pink. The upper shell is fifteen sixteenths of an inch plus by thirteen sixteenths. He is already wonderfully strong and precocious. Though those eyes never saw the light before, he watches me very warily, even at a distance. With what vigor he crawls out of the hole I have made, over opposing weeds! He struggles in my fingers with great strength;

has none of the tenderness of infancy. His whole snout is convex, and curved like a beak. Having attained the surface, he pauses and warily watches me. In the meanwhile another has put his head out of his shell, but I bury the latter up and leave them.

Meanwhile a striped squirrel sits on the wall across the road under a pine, eyeing me, with his cheek-pouches stuffed with nuts and puffed out ludicrously, as if he had the mumps, while the wall is strewn with the dry brown husks of hazelnuts he has stripped. A bird, perhaps a thrasher, in the pine close above him is hopping restlessly and scolding at him.

June, July, and August, the tortoise eggs are hatching a few inches beneath the surface in sandy fields. You tell of active labors, of works of art, and wars the past summer; meanwhile the tortoise eggs underlie this turmoil. What events have transpired on the lit and airy surface three inches above them! Summer knocked down; Kansas living an age of suspense. Think what is a summer to them! How many worthy men have died and had their funeral sermons preached since I saw the mother turtle bury her eggs here! They contained an undeveloped liquid then, they are now turtles. June, July, and August, — the livelong summer, — what are they with their heats and fevers but sufficient to hatch a tortoise in. Be not in haste; mind your private affairs. Consider the turtle. A whole summer — June, July, and August — is not too good nor too much to hatch a turtle in. Perchance you have worried yourself, despaired of the world, meditated the end of life, and all things seemed rushing to de-

struction; but nature has steadily and serenely advanced with a turtle's pace. The young turtle spends its infancy within its shell. It gets experience and learns the ways of the world through that wall. While it rests warily on the edge of its hole, rash schemes are undertaken by men and fail. Has not the tortoise also learned the true value of time? You go to India and back, and the turtle eggs in your field are still unhatched. French empires rise or fall, but the turtle is developed only so fast. What's a summer? Time for a turtle's eggs to hatch. So is the turtle developed, fitted to endure, for he outlives twenty French dynasties. One turtle knows several Napoleons. They have seen no berries, had no cares, yet has not the great world existed for them as much as for you?

*Euphorbia hypericifolia*, how long? It has pretty little white and also rose-colored petals, or, as they are now called, involucre. Stands six inches high, regularly  curving, with large leaves prettily arranged at an angle with both a horizontal and perpendicular line. See the great oval masses of scarlet berries of the arum now in the meadows. Trillium fruit, long time.

The river being thus high, for ten days or more I have seen little parcels of shells left by the muskrats. So they eat them thus early. Peppermint, how long? Maybe earlier than I have thought, for the mowers clip it.

The bright china-colored blue berries of the *Cornus sericea* begin to show themselves along the river, amid their red-brown leaves, — the *kinnikinnie* of the Indians.

Aug. 29. Heavy rain in the night and this forenoon.

P. M. — To J. Farmer's by river.

The *Helianthus decapetalus*, apparently a variety, with eight petals, about three feet high, leaves petioled, but not wing-petioled, and broader-leaved than that of August 12th, quite ovate with a tapering point, with ciliate petioles, thin but quite rough beneath and above, stem purple and smoothish, Hosmer's bank, opposite Azalea Swamp. Fragrant everlasting in prime and very abundant, whitening Carter's pasture. Ribwort still. An apparent white vervain with bluish flowers, as blue as bluets even or more so, roadside beyond Farmer's barn.

Aug. 30. Rain again in the night, as well as most of yesterday, raising the river a second time. They say there has not been such a year as this for more than half a century, — for winter cold, summer heat, and rain.

P. M. — To Vaccinium Oxycoccus Swamp.

Fair weather, clear and rather cool.

Pratt shows me at his shop a bottle filled with alcohol and camphor. The alcohol is clear and the camphor beautifully crystallized at the bottom for nearly an inch in depth, in the form of small feathers, like a hoar frost. He has read that this is as good a barometer as any. It stands quite still, and has not been unstopped for a year: yet some days the alcohol will be quite clear, and even no camphor will be seen, and again it will be quite full of fine feathery particles, or it will be partly clear, as to-day.

*Bidens connata* abundant at Moore's Swamp, how long? The aspect of some of what I have called the swamp *Solidago stricta* there at present makes me doubt if it be not more than a variety, the leaves are so broad, smooth (*i. e.* uncurled or wrinkled), and thick, and some cauline ones so large, almost *speciosa*-like, to say nothing of size of rays.

The *Aster puniceus* is hardly yet in prime; its great umbel-shaped tops not yet fully out. Its leaves are pretty generally whitened with mildew and unsightly. Even the chelone, where prostrate, has put forth roots from its stem, near the top.

The sarothra is now apparently in prime on the Great Fields, and comes near being open now, at 3 P. M. Bruised, it has the fragrance of sorrel and lemon, rather pungent or stinging, like a bee. *Hypericum corymbosum* lingers still, with *perforatum*.

I have come out this afternoon a-cranberrying, chiefly to gather some of the small cranberry, *Vaccinium Oxycoccus*, which Emerson says is the common cranberry of the north of Europe. This was a small object, yet not to be postponed, on account of imminent frosts, *i. e.*, if I would know this year the flavor of the European cranberry as compared with our larger kind. I thought I should like to have a dish of this sauce on the table at Thanksgiving of my own gathering. I could hardly make up my mind to come this way, it seemed so poor an object to spend the afternoon on. I kept foreseeing a lame conclusion, — how I should cross the Great Fields, look into Beck Stow's, and then retrace my steps no richer than

before. In fact, I expected little of this walk, yet it did pass through the side of my mind that somehow, on this very account (my small expectation), it would turn out well, as also the advantage of having some purpose, however small, to be accomplished, — of letting your deliberate wisdom and foresight in the house to some extent direct and control your steps. If you would really take a position outside the street and daily life of men, you must have deliberately planned your course, you must have business which is not your neighbors' business, which they cannot understand. For only absorbing employment prevails, succeeds, takes up space, occupies territory, determines the future of individuals and states, drives Kansas out of your head, and actually and permanently occupies the only desirable and free Kansas against all border ruffians. The attitude of resistance is one of weakness, inasmuch as it only faces an enemy; it has its back to all that is truly attractive. You shall have your affairs, I will have mine. You will spend this afternoon in setting up your neighbor's stove, and be paid for it; I will spend it in gathering the few berries of the *Vaccinium Oxycooccus* which Nature produces here, before it is too late, and *be paid for it also* after another fashion. I have always reaped unexpected and incalculable advantages from carrying out at last, however tardily, any little enterprise which my genius suggested to me long ago as a thing to be done. — some step to be taken, however slight, out of the usual course.

How many schools I have thought of which I might

go to but did not go to! expecting foolishly that some greater advantage or schooling would come to me! It is these comparatively cheap and private expeditions that substantiate our existence and batten our lives, as, where a vine touches the earth in its undulating course, it puts forth roots and thickens its stock. Our employment generally is tinkering, mending the old worn-out teapot of society. Our stock in trade is solder. Better for me, says my genius, to go cranberrying this afternoon for the *Vaccinium Oxycooccus* in Gowing's Swamp, to get but a pocketful and learn its peculiar flavor, aye, and the flavor of Gowing's Swamp and of *life* in New England, than to go consul to Liverpool and get I don't know how many thousand dollars for it, with no such flavor. Many of our days should be spent, not in vain expectations and lying on our oars, but in carrying out deliberately and faithfully the hundred little purposes which every man's genius must have suggested to him. Let not your life be wholly without an object, though it be only to ascertain the flavor of a cranberry, for it will not be only the quality of an insignificant berry that you will have tasted, but the flavor of your life to that extent, and it will be such a sauce as no wealth can buy.

Both a conscious and an unconscious life are good. Neither is good exclusively, for both have the same source. The wisely conscious life springs out of an unconscious suggestion. I have found my account in travelling in having prepared beforehand a list of questions which I would get answered, not trusting

to my interest at the moment, and can then travel with the most profit. Indeed, it is by obeying the suggestions of a higher light within you that you escape from yourself and, in the transit, as it were see with the unworn sides of your eye, travel totally new paths. What is that pretended life that does not take up a claim, that does not occupy ground, that cannot build a causeway to its objects, that sits on a bank looking over a bog, singing its desires?

However, it was not with such blasting expectations as these that I entered the swamp. I saw bags of cranberries, just gathered and tied up, on the banks of Beck Stow's Swamp. They must have been raked out of the water, now so high, before they should rot. I left my shoes and stockings on the bank far off and waded barelegged through rigid andromeda and other bushes a long way, to the soft open sphagnous centre of the swamp.

I found these cunning little cranberries lying high and dry on the firm uneven tops of the sphagnum, — their weak vine considerably on one side, — sparsely scattered about the drier edges of the swamp, or sometimes more thickly occupying some little valley a foot or two over, between two mountains of sphagnum. They were of two varieties, judging from the fruit. The one, apparently the ripest, colored most like the common cranberry but more scarlet, *i. e.* yellowish-green, blotched or checked with dark scarlet-red, commonly pear-shaped; the other, also pear-shaped, or more bulged out in the middle, thickly and finely dark-spotted or peppered on yellowish-green or straw-

colored or pearly ground, — almost exactly like the smilacina and convallaria berries now, except that they are a little larger and not so spherical, — and with a tinge of purple. A singular difference. They both lay very snug in the moss, often the whole of the long (an inch and a half or more) peduncle buried, their vines very inobvious, projecting only one to three inches, so that it was not easy to tell what vine they belonged to, and you were obliged to open the moss carefully with your fingers to ascertain it; while the common large cranberry there, with its stiff erect vine, was commonly lifted above the sphagnum. The grayish speckled variety was particularly novel and pretty, though not easy to detect. It lay here and there snugly sunk in the sphagnum, whose drier parts it exactly resembled in color, just like some kind of swamp sparrows' eggs in their nest. I was obliged with my finger carefully to trace the slender pedicel through the moss to its vine, when I would pluck the whole together. Like jewels worn on, or set in, these sphagnous breasts of the swamp, — swamp pearls, call them. One or two to a vine and, on an average, three eighths of an inch in diameter. They are so remote from their vines, on their long thread-like peduncles, that they remind you the more forcibly of eggs, and in May I might mistake them for such. These plants are almost parasitic, resting wholly on the sphagnum, in water instead of air. The sphagnum is a living soil for it. It rests on and amid this, on an acre of sponges. They are evidently earlier than the common. A few are quite soft and red-purple.

I waded quite round the swamp for an hour, my bare feet in the cold water beneath, and it was a relief to place them on the warmer surface of the sphagnum. I filled one pocket with each variety, but sometimes, being confused, crossed hands and put them into the wrong pocket.

I enjoyed this cranberrying very much, notwithstanding the wet and cold, and the swamp seemed to be yielding its crop to me alone, for there are none else to pluck it or to value it. I told the proprietor once that they grew here, but he, learning that they were not abundant enough to be gathered for the market, has probably never thought of them since. I am the only person in the township who regards them or knows of them, and I do not regard them in the light of their pecuniary value. I have no doubt I felt richer wading there with my two pockets full, treading on wonders at every step, than any farmer going to market with a hundred bushels which he has raked, or hired to be raked. I got further and further away from the town every moment, and my good genius seemed [to] have smiled on me, leading me hither, and then the sun suddenly came out clear and bright, but it did not warm my feet. I would gladly share my gains, take one, or twenty, into partnership and get this swamp with them, but I do not know an individual whom this berry cheers and nourishes as it does me. When I exhibit it to them I perceive that they take but a momentary interest in it and commonly dismiss it from their thoughts with the consideration that it cannot be profitably cultivated. You could not get a pint at one haul of a rake, and Slocum would not give

you much for them. But I love it the better partly for that reason even. I fill a basket with them and keep it several days by my side. If anybody else — any farmer, at least — should spend an hour thus wading about here in this secluded swamp, barelegged, intent on the sphagnum, filling his pocket only, with no rake in his hand and no bag or bushel on the bank, he would be pronounced insane and have a guardian put over him; but if he'll spend his time skimming and watering his milk and selling his small potatoes for large ones, or generally in skinning flints, he will probably be made guardian of somebody else. I have not garnered any rye or oats, but I gathered the wild vine of the Assabet.<sup>1</sup>

As I waded there I came across an ant-like heap, and, breaking it open with my hand, found it to my surprise to be an ant-hill in the sphagnum, full of ants with their young or ova. It consisted of particles of sphagnum like sawdust, was a foot and a half in diameter, and my feet sunk to water all around it! The ants were small and of a uniform pale sorrel-color.

I noticed also a few small peculiar-looking huckleberries hanging on bushes amid the sphagnum, and, tasting, perceived that they were hispid, a new kind to me. *Gaylussacia dumosa* var. *hirtella* (perhaps just after *resinosa*), though Gray refers it to a "sandy low soil" and says nothing of the hispid fruit. It grows from one to two feet high, the leaves minutely resinous-dotted — are not others? — and mucronate, the racemes long, with leaf-like bracts now turned conspicu-

<sup>1</sup> Vide [3] pages forward.

ously red. Has a small black hairy or hispid berry, shining but insipid and inedible, with a tough, hairy skin left in the mouth; has very prominent calyx-lobes.

I seemed to have reached a new world, so wild a place that the very huckleberries grew hairy and were inedible. I feel as if I were in Rupert's Land, and a slight cool but agreeable shudder comes over me, as if equally far away from human society. What's the need of visiting far-off mountains and bogs, if a half-hour's walk will carry me into such wildness and novelty? But why should not as wild plants grow here as in Berkshire, as in Labrador? Is Nature so easily tamed? Is she not as primitive and vigorous here as anywhere? How does this particular acre of secluded, unfrequented, useless (?) quaking bog differ from an acre in Labrador? Has any white man ever settled on it? Does any now frequent it? Not even the Indian comes here now. I see that there are some square rods within twenty miles of Boston just as wild and primitive and unfrequented as a square rod in Labrador, as unaltered by man. Here grows the hairy huckleberry as it did in Squaw Sachem's day and a thousand years before, and concerns me perchance more than it did her. I have no doubt that for a moment I experience exactly the same sensations as if I were alone in a bog in Rupert's Land, and it saves me the trouble of going there; for what in any case makes the difference between being here and being there but many such little differences of flavor and roughness put together? Rupert's Land is recognized as much by one sense as another. I felt a shock, a thrill, an agree-

able surprise in one instant, for, no doubt, all the possible inferences were at once drawn, with a rush, in my mind, — I could be in Rupert's Land and supping at home within the hour! This beat the railroad. I recovered from my surprise without danger to my sanity, and permanently annexed Rupert's Land. That wild hairy huckleberry, inedible as it was, was equal to a domain secured to me and reaching to the South Sea. That was an unexpected harvest. I hope you have gathered as much, neighbor, from your corn and potato fields. I have got in my huckleberries. I shall be ready for Thanksgiving. It is in vain to dream of a wildness distant from ourselves. There is none such. It is the bog in our brain and bowels, the primitive vigor of Nature in us, that inspires that dream. I shall never find in the wilds of Labrador any greater wildness than in some recess in Concord, *i. e.* than I import into it. A little more manhood or virtue will make the surface of the globe anywhere thrillingly novel and wild. That alone will provide and pay the fiddler; it will convert the district road into an untrodden cranberry bog, for it restores all things to their original primitive flourishing and promising state.

A cold white horizon sky in the north, forerunner of the fall of the year. I go to bed and dream of cranberry-pickers far in the cold north. With windows partly closed, with continent concentrated thoughts, I dream. I get my new experiences still, not at the opera listening to the Swedish Nightingale, but at Beck Stow's Swamp listening to the native wood thrush.

Wading in the cold swamp braces me. I was invigorated, though I tasted not a berry. The frost will soon come and smite them on the surface of the sphagnum.

Consider how remote and novel that swamp. Beneath it is a quaking bed of sphagnum, and in it grow *Andromeda Polifolia*, *Kalmia glauca*, menyanthes (or buck-bean), *Gaylussacia dumosa*, *Vaccinium Oxycoccus*, — plants which scarcely a citizen of Concord ever sees. It would be as novel to them to stand there as in a conservatory, or in Greenland.

Better it is to go a-cranberrying than to go a-huckle-berrying. For that is cold and bracing, leading your thoughts beyond the earth, and you do not surfeit on crude or terrene berries. It feeds your spirit, now in the season of white twilights, when frosts are apprehended, when edible berries are mostly gone.

Those small gray sparrow-egg cranberries lay so prettily in the recesses of the sphagnum, I could wade for hours in the cold water gazing at them, with a swarm of mosquitoes hovering about my bare legs, — but at each step the friendly sphagnum in which I sank protected my legs like a buckler, — not a crevice by which my foes could enter.

I see that all is not garden and cultivated field and crops, that there are square rods in Middlesex County as purely primitive and wild as they were a thousand years ago, which have escaped the plow and the axe and the scythe and the cranberry-rake, little oases of wildness in the desert of our civilization, wild as a square rod on the moon, supposing it to be uninhabited. I believe almost in the personality of such

planetary matter, feel something akin to reverence for it, can even worship it as terrene, titanic matter extant in my day. We are so different we admire each other, we healthily attract one another. I love it as a maiden. These spots are meteoric, acrolitic, and such matter has in all ages been worshipped. Aye, when we are lifted out of the slime and film of our habitual life, we see the whole globe to be an acrolite, and reverence it as such, and make pilgrimages to it, far off as it is. How happens it that we reverence the stones which fall from another planet, and not the stones which belong to this, — another globe, not this, — heaven, and not earth? Are not the stones in Hodge's wall as good as the acrolite at Mecca? Is not our broad back-door-stone as good as any corner-stone in heaven?

It would imply the regeneration of mankind, if they were to become elevated enough to truly worship stocks and stones. It is the sentiment of fear and slavery and habit which makes a heathenish idolatry. Such idolaters abound in all countries, and heathen cross the seas to reform heathen, dead to bury the dead, and all go down to the pit together. If I could, I would worship the parings of my nails. If he who makes two blades of grass grow where one grew before is a benefactor, he who discovers two gods where there was only known the one (and such a one!) before is a still greater benefactor. I would fain improve every opportunity to wonder and worship, as a sunflower welcomes the light.<sup>1</sup> The more thrilling, wonderful, divine

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, p. 89.]

objects I behold in a day, the more expanded and immortal I become. If a stone appeals to me and elevates me, tells me how many miles I have come, how many remain to travel, — and the more, the better, — reveals the future to me in some measure, it is a matter of private rejoicing. If it did the same service to all, it might well be a matter of public rejoicing.

*Aug. 31. Sunday. P. M. — To Hubbard Bath Swamp by boat.*

There sits one by the shore who wishes to go with me, but I cannot think of it. I must be fancy-free. There is no such mote in the sky as a man who is not perfectly transparent to you, — who has any opacity. I would rather attend to him earnestly for half an hour, on shore or elsewhere, and then dismiss him. He thinks I could merely take him into my boat and then not mind him. He does not realize that I should by the same act take him into my mind, where there is no room for him, and my bark would surely founder in such a voyage as I was contemplating. I know very well that I should never reach that expansion of the river I have in my mind, with him aboard with his broad terrene qualities. He would sink my bark (not to another sea) and never know it. I could better carry a heaped load of meadow mud and sit on the tholepins. There would be more room for me, and I should reach that expansion of the river nevertheless.

I could better afford to take him into bed with me, for then I might, perhaps, abandon him in my dreams.

Ah! you are a heavy fellow, but I am well disposed. If you could go without going, then you might go. There's the captain's stateroom, empty to be sure, and you say you could go in the steerage. I know very well that only your baggage would be dropped in the steerage, while you would settle right down into that other snug recess. Why, I am *going*, not staying. I have come on purpose to sail, to paddle away from such as you, and you have waylaid me at the shore. You have chosen to make your assault at the moment of embarkation. Why, if I thought you were steadily gazing after me a mile off, I could not endure it. It is because I trust that I shall ere long depart from your thoughts, and so you from mine, that I am encouraged to set sail at all. I make haste to put several meanders and some hills between us. This Company is obliged to make a distinction between dead freight and passengers. I will take almost any amount of freight for you cheerfully, — anything, my dear sir, but yourself.

Some are so inconsiderate as to ask to walk or sail with me regularly every day — I have known such — and think that, because there will be six inches or a foot between our bodies, we shall not interfere! These things are settled by fate. The good ship sails — when she is ready. For freight or passage apply to —?? Ask my friend where. What is getting into a man's carriage when it is full, compared with putting your foot in his mouth and popping right into his mind without considering whether it is occupied or not? If I remember aright, it was only on condition *that you were*

asked, that you were to go with a man one mile or twain.<sup>1</sup> Suppose a man asks, not you to go with him, but to go with you! Often, I would rather undertake to shoulder a barrel of pork and carry it a mile than take into my company a man. It would not be so heavy a weight upon my mind. I could put it down and only feel my back ache for it.

The birches on Wheeler's meadow have begun to yellow, apparently owing to the water. The *Cornus sericea*, with its berries just turning, is generally a dull purple now, the first conspicuous change, methinks, along the river; half sunk in water.

Captain Hubbard is out inspecting his river meadow and his cranberries. Says he never saw the water so high at this season before. I am surprised that the river is not more than two inches higher than yesterday, or than the day before, notwithstanding the last copious rain; but Hubbard says he has heard that they have just lowered their dam a foot at Billerica. He sees that the water has fallen a little in his meadow. It leaves a scum on the grass and gives it a smell and taste, which makes the cattle reject it. He gets into my boat, and we obtain some cranberries from beneath the water. Some of them are softened and spoiled. He thinks it depends on the warmth of the water how much they are injured. This is what calls the farmer out now, — to inspect his cranberries or his grass. He talks with his neighbor about it at church.

I am frequently amused when I come across the proprietor in my walks, and he asks me if I am not

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, pp. 119, 120.]

lost. I commonly approach his territory by the river, or some other back way, and rarely meet with him. The other day Conant observed to me, "Well, you have to come out once in a while to take a survey." He thinks that I do not visit his neighborhood more than once in a year, but I go there about once a week, and formerly much oftener; perhaps as often as he.

H. says he has found coal at the bottom of his meadow under the mud, three feet deep.

The *Viburnum nudum* berries are now in prime, a handsome rose-purple. I brought home a bunch of fifty-three berries, all of this color, and the next morning thirty were turned dark purple. In this state they are soft and just edible, having somewhat of a cherry flavor, not a large stone.

A painted tortoise shedding its scales.