

then must know all the particulars. We do not enjoy poetry fully unless we know it to be poetry.

III

OCTOBER, 1856

(ET. 39)

Oct. 1. Very heavy rain in the night; cooler now.

P. M. — To Walden.

Examined an *Asclepias Cornuti* pod, already opening by the wall. As they dry, the pods crack and open by the seam along the convex or outer side of the pods, revealing the seeds, with their silky parachutes, closely packed in an imbricated manner, already right side up to the number, in one instance, of one hundred and thirty-four (as I counted) and again two hundred and seventy. As they lie they resemble somewhat a round plump fish with the silk ends exposed at the tail. Children call them fishes. The silk is divided once or twice by their raised partitions of the spongy core around which they are arranged. At the top of some more open and drier, is already a little cloud of loosened seeds and down, two or three inches in diameter, held by the converging tips of the down like meridians, just ready to float away when the wind rises.

It is cooler and windier, and I wear two thin coats.

I do not perceive the poetic and dramatic capabilities of an anecdote or story which is told me, its significance, till some time afterwards. One of the qualities of a pregnant fact is that it does not surprise us, and we only perceive afterward how interesting it is, and

Oct. 2. P. M. — To Cliffs *via* Hubbard's meadow.

Succory still, with its cool blue, here and there, and *Hieracium Canadense* still quite fresh, with its very pretty broad strap-shaped rays, broadest at the end, alternately long and short, with five very regular sharp teeth in the end of each. The scarlet leaves and stem of the rhexia, some time out of flower, makes almost as bright a patch in the meadow now as the flowers did, with its bristly leaves. Its seed-vessels are perfect little cream-pitchers of graceful form. The mountain sumach now a dark scarlet quite generally.

The prinus berries are in their prime, seven sixteenths of an inch in diameter. They are scarlet, somewhat lighter than the arum berries. They are now very fresh and bright, and what adds to their effect is the perfect freshness and greenness of the leaves amid which they are seen. *Gerardia purpurea* still. Brakes in Hubbard's Swamp Wood are withered, quite dry. *Solidago speciosa* completely out, though not a flower was out September 27th, or five days ago; say three or four days.

The river is still higher, owing to the rain of September 30th, partly covering the meadows; yet they are endeavoring to rake cranberries. After all, I perceive that *in some places* the greatest injury done by the water to these berries has probably been that it prevented their ripening, but generally it has been by

softening them. They carry them home, spread, and dry them, and pick out the spoilt ones. One gets only fifty bushels where he would have had two hundred. *Eupatorium purpureum* is generally done. Now and then I see a *Hypericum Canadense* flower still. The leaves, etc., of this and the *angulosum* are turned crimson.

I am amused to see four little Irish boys only five or six years old getting a horse in a pasture, for their father apparently, who is at work in a neighboring field. They have all in a row got hold of a very long halter and are leading him. All wish to have a hand in it. It is surprising that he obeys such small specimens of humanity, but he seems to be very docile, a real family horse. At length, by dint of pulling and shouting, they get him into a run down a hill, and though he moves very deliberately, scarcely faster than a walk, all but the one at the end of the line soon cut and run to right and left, without having looked behind, expecting him to be upon them. They haul up at last at the bars, which are down, and then the family puppy, a brown pointer (?), about two-thirds grown, comes bounding to join them and assist. He is as youthful and about as knowing as any of them. The horse marches gravely behind, obeying the faint tug at the halter, or honestly stands still from time to time, as if not aware that they are pulling at all, though they are all together straining every nerve to start him. It is interesting to behold this faithful beast, the oldest and wisest of the company, thus implicitly obeying the lead of the youngest and weakest.

The second lechea radical shoots are one inch long. *Solidago bicolor* considerably past prime. *Corydalis* still fresh.

Saw apparently two phœbes on the tops of the dry mulleins. Why so rarely seen for so many months?

Oct. 3. The white pines are now getting to be pretty generally parti-colored, the lower yellowing needles ready to fall. The sumachs are generally crimson (darker than scarlet), and young trees and bushes by the water and meadows are generally beginning to glow red and yellow. Especially the hillsides about Walden begin to wear these autumnal tints in the cooler air. These lit leaves, this glowing, bright-tinted shrubbery, is in singular harmony with the dry, stony shore of this cool and deep well.

The frost keeps off remarkably. I have seen none, though I hear that there was some two or three mornings ago.

I detect the crotalaria behind the Wyman site, by hearing the now rattling seeds in its pods as I go through the grass, like the tinkets about an Indian's leggins, or a rattlesnake.

Oct. 4. *Helianthus tuberosus*, apparently several days, in Reynolds's yard (the butcher's).

P. M. — Down river.

Wind from northeast. Some water milkweed flying. Its pods small, slender, straight, and pointed perfectly upright; seeds large with much wing. The hibiscus gone to seed, and pods opened showing the

seed, opposite Ostrya Island¹ or Rock below Battle-Ground.

In an article on the alligator in *Harper's Magazine* for December, 1854, it is said that mosquitoes "surround its head in clouds; and we have heard the negroes assert that the reptile opened its mouth until its interior was fully lined, and suddenly closing it up, would swallow the accumulated marauders, and then set its huge jaws as a trap for more." This reminds me of the swarms of mosquitoes about frogs and, I think, turtles.

In another article, of May, 1855, on "The Lion and his Kind," the animals are placed in this order: the domestic cat, wildcat, the ocelot or tiger-cat of Peru and Mexico, the caracal of Asia and Africa, the lynx of North America, the chetah of India and Africa, the ounce of India (perhaps a rough variety of the leopard), the leopard, the jaguar, the cougar, the tiger, the lion. "The Cougar is the American lion — at least it bears a closer resemblance to that noble brute than any other of the feline family, for it is destitute of the stripes of the tiger, the spots of the leopard, and the rosettes of the jaguar; but when full-grown possesses a tawny-red color, almost uniform over the whole body, and hence the inference that it is like the lion." "Cougar is a corruption of the Mexican name." Ranges between Paraguay and the Great Lakes of North America. "In form it is less attractive than the generality of its species, there being an apparent want of symmetry; for it is observable that

¹ Burr's Island.

its back is hollow, its legs short and thick, and its tail does not gracefully taper; yet nature has invested the cougar with other qualities as a compensation, the most remarkable of which is an apparent power to render itself quite invisible; for so cunningly tinged is its fur, that it perfectly mingles with the bark of trees — in fact, with all subdued tints — and stretched upon a limb, or even extended upon the floor of its dimly lighted cage, you must prepare your eye by considerable mental resolution to be assured of its positive presence." Its flesh is eaten by some. Mrs. Jane Swisshelm kept one which grew to be nine feet long, and, according to her, in this writer's words, "If in exceeding good-humor he would purr; but if he wished to intimidate, he would raise his back, erect his hair, and spit like a cat. In the twilight of the evening the animal was accustomed to pace back and forth to the full extent of his limits, ever and anon uttering a short, piercing shriek, which made the valley reverberate for half a mile or more in every direction. Mrs. Swisshelm says these sounds were the shrillest, and at the same time the most mournful she ever heard. They might, perhaps, be likened to the scream of a woman in an agony of terror." He once sprang at her, but was brought up by his chain. When preparing to spring, his eyes were "green and blazing, and the tip of his tail moving from side to side." This paper describes "a full-grown royal tiger, measuring four feet seven inches from the nose to the insertion of the tail. . . . Unlike the miserable wretches we see in our menageries, etc." The Brattleboro paper

makes the panther four feet eleven inches, so measured!!

I hear that a Captain Hurd, of Wayland or Sudbury, estimates the loss of river meadow-hay this season in those two towns on account of the freshet at twelve hundred tons.

Oct. 5. Sunday. P. M. — To Hill and over the pastures westward.

Sally Cummings and Mike Murray are out on the Hill collecting apples and nuts. Do they not rather belong to such children of nature than to those who have merely bought them with their money? There are few apples for them this year, however, and it is too early for walnuts (too late for hazelnuts). The grapes are generally gone, and their vines partly bare and yellowed, though without frost. I amuse myself on the hilltop with pulling to pieces and letting fly the now withered and dry pasture thistle tops. They have a much coarser pappus than the milkweeds. I am surprised, amid these perfectly withered and bleached thistles, to see one just freshly in flower. The autumnal dandelion is now comparatively scarce there. In the huckleberry pasture, by the fence of old barn boards, I notice many little pale-brown dome-shaped (puckered to a centre beneath) puff-



balls, which emit their dust. When you pinch them, a smoke-like brown dust (snuff-colored) issues from the orifice at their top, just like smoke from a chimney. It is so fine and light that it rises into the air and is wafted away like smoke. They

are low Oriental domes or mosques. Sometimes crowded together in nests, like a collection of humble cottages on the moor, in the coal-pit or Numidian style; for there is suggested some humble hearth beneath, from which this smoke comes up, as it were the homes of slugs and crickets. They please me not a little by their resemblance to rude dome-shaped, turf-built cottages on the plain, wherein some humble but everlasting life is lived. Amid the low and withering grass or the stubble there they are gathered, and their smoke ascends between the legs of the herds and the traveller. I imagine a hearth and pot, and some snug but humble family passing its Sunday evening beneath each one. Some, when you press them harder, emit clear water — the relics of rain or dew — along with the dust, which last, however, has no affinity for it, but is quite dry and smoke-like. I locate there at once all that is simple and admirable in human life. There is no virtue which their roofs exclude. I imagine with what contentment and faith I could come home to them at evening.¹ I see some not yet ripe, still entire and rounded at top. When I break them open, they are found to be quite soggy, of a stringy white consistency, almost cream-like, riper and yellowish at top, where they will burst by and by. Many have holes eaten into them. On one I find a slug feeding, with a little hole beneath him,² and a cricket has



¹ [Channing, p. 101.]

² This was a different species, the white pigeon-egg, with that tough, crystallized surface.

eaten out the whole inside of another in which he is housed. This before they are turned to dust. Large chocolate-colored ones have long since burst and are spread out wide like a shallow dish.

Crickets are seen now moving slowly about in the paths, often with their heads only concealed in a burrow, as if looking out for winter quarters. I saw, on my return, a dozen crickets of various sizes gathered on an apple paring which I had dropped in the path when I came along.

The sweet-briar rose hips are very handsome now, but these hips do not deserve to be coupled with haws as articles of food, even in extremities. They are very dry, hard, seedy, and unpalatable. I see some fresh-grown callitriche in some clear well-filled leafy pools which are commonly dry at this season. The singular long pointed reddish bulbs in the axils of the *Lysimachia stricta* are one of the signs of the season, cool and late.

It is well to find your employment and amusement in simple and homely things. These wear best and yield most. I think I would rather watch the motions of these cows in their pasture for a day, which I now see all headed one way and slowly advancing, — watch them and project their course carefully on a chart, and report all their behavior faithfully, — than wander to Europe or Asia and watch other motions there; for it is only ourselves that we report in either case, and perchance we shall report a more restless and worthless self in the latter case than in the first.

Oct. 6. I notice the effects of some frost this morning in garden. Some pumpkin vines drooping and black.

P. M. — Carried Sophia and Aunt up the Assabet.

The reflections of the bright-tinted maples very perfect. The common notes of the chickadee, so rarely heard for a long time, and also one *phebe* strain from it,¹ amid the Leaning Hemlocks, remind me of pleasant winter days, when they are more commonly seen. The jay's shrill note is more distinct of late about the edges of the woods, when so many birds have left us. Were suddenly driven home by a slight thunder-shower!

Oct. 8. P. M. — To Smith Chestnut Grove by Turnpike, and Saw Mill.

At length I discover some white pine cones, a few, on Emerson Heater Piece trees. They are all open, and the seeds, all the sound ones but one, gone. So September is the time to gather them. The tip of each scale is covered with fresh flowing pitch.

The trees and weeds by the Turnpike are all alive this pleasant afternoon with twittering sparrows, Emerson's buckthorn hedge especially, and Watts's weeds adjoining. I observe white-throated sparrows, song sparrows, I think some *Fringilla junco*, etc. (*maybe* tree sparrows ???). They are all together and keep up a faint warbling, apparently the white-throats and tree sparrows, — if the last are there. A song sparrow utters a full strain.

¹ This again the 8th. It is an anticipation of spring.

Asters and goldenrods are now scarce; no longer that crowd along the low roadsides.

The following is the condition of the asters and goldenrods, judging from my observations on this walk alone. I will only refer to those which were not done September 24th. I speak of their general condition, though a very few specimens here and there may present a different appearance.

- Swamp *stricta*, done, some hoary.
S. nemoralis, done, many hoary, though a *very few* flowers linger.
S. altissima, done, many hoary,
S. puberula, not seen.
S. bicolor and variety, probably done (not seen out).
S. latifolia, far gone.
S. carnea, much the worse for the wear, but freshest of any seen.
S. speciosa, not seen (it was in prime Oct. 2d).
Diplopappus cornifolius, not seen, probably done.
D. umbellatus, not seen, probably done.¹
A. patens, apparently done.
A. macrophyllus, not seen.
A. acuminatus, not seen.
A. dumosus, probably done.
D. linariifolius, apparently nearly done.
A. undulatus, *comparatively* fresh.
A. corymbosus, looks fresh!
A. laevis, not noticed, probably done (?) *generally*.
A. Tradescanti, a few still.
A. puniceus, hardly seen, probably nearly done.
A. longifolius, a few still.
A. multiflorus, none observed.
A. miser, a very few left.

Of solidagos, I judge that only the last three named, and perhaps *puberula* and *S. bicolor* in some places,

¹ Certainly done the 14th.

are common still; and, of asters, only *corymbosus*, *undulatus*, *Tradescanti*, and *longifolius* (know not of *multiflorus*) are common.

The *Bidens cernuum* is quite common and fresh yet in Everett's meadow by Turnpike. A few chestnut burs are open, and have been some days, before they could have felt frost, showing that they would open without it, but a stone will not jar them down, nor a club thrown into the tree yet. I get half a pocketful out of slightly gaping burs at the expense of many prickles in my fingers. The squirrels have cut off some burs. I see the marks of their teeth. Find many checkerberries on Smith's hill beyond the chestnut grove, which appear to be just ripe, a lighter pink color, with two little white checks on the stem side, the marks of what I suppose are the two outer calyx-leaves. Near by, a short fertile fern with large shelly capsules, perhaps a botrychium.¹ A great deal, a great part, of the dicksonia fern at Saw Mill is now whitened or whitening. I see, as I go through the hollow behind Britton's shanty, the already hoary tops of many *S. nemoralis* and also the yellowish spheres of the *Hieracium scabrum* amid the scarlet (or crimson) sumach and reddened comptonia. So fast the winter advances. I notice a large toad amid the dead leaves in the woods at *Chimaphila maculata*, colored like the leaves, a much darker brown than usual, proving that they resemble the ground they occupy.

Meet Nealy, short and thick, in the woodland path, with his great silent mastiff by his side and his double-

¹ Yes, small botrychium. *Vide* 19th *inst.*

barrelled gun in his palm, all dangerously cocked. He is eager for partridges, but only guilty of killing a jay, I judge, from his report. Once or twice I hear the report of his fowling-piece. I heard partridges *drum* the 3d instant. Observed in the woods a very large, perhaps owl pellet, or possibly fox stercus, of gray fur and small bones and the jaw of a rodent, apparently a wild mouse.

The hickory leaves are among the handsomest now, varying from green through yellow, more or less broadly green-striped on the principal veins, to pure yellow, at first almost lemon-yellow, at last browner and crisped. This mingling of yellow and green on the same leaf, the green next the veins where the life is most persistent, is very pleasing.

Sophia brings home two or three clusters of very large freshly ripe thimble-berries, with some unripe, a second crop, apparently owing to the abundance of rain for the last six weeks.

Oct. 10. These are the finest days in the year, Indian summer. This afternoon it was 80°, between three and four, and at 6.30 this evening my chamber is oppressively sultry, and the thermometer on the north side of the house is at 64°. I lie with window wide open under a *single sheet* most of the night. But I anticipate. The *phebe* note of the chickadee is now often heard in the yards, and the very Indian summer itself is a similar renewal of the year, with the faint warbling of birds and second blossoming of flowers. Going to E. Hosmer's by boat, saw quite a flock of

wild ducks in front of his house, close by the bridge. While moving the fence to-day, dug up a large reddish, mummy-like chrysalid or nymph.¹

Oct 11. P. M. — To Cliffs.

The Indian summer continues. Solidagos now generally show woolly heads along the fences and brooks.

E. Hosmer said yesterday that his father remembered when there was but one store in Concord, and that the little office attached to Dr. Heywood's house, kept by Beaton. I remember the old shutters with names of groceries on them.² Perhaps, then, Jones was the only shopkeeper in *his* day. I was speaking of it to Farrar, the blacksmith, to-day, and he said, yes, he had heard his father speak of Beaton as "the most honestest man that ever was." When a child was sent to his store and he could not make change within half a penny he would stick a row of pins in the child's sleeve, enough to make all square. He said he had only a keg of molasses and a bladder of snuff when he began. Farrar thought that the spirit manufactured a century ago was not so adulterated and poisonous as that now made. He could remember when delirium tremens was very rare. There was Luke Dodge; he could remember him a drunkard for more than forty years, yet he was now between eighty and ninety.

Farrar gave me a wing and foot of a hawk which he shot about three weeks ago as he was sitting on a wood-pile by the railroad, against R. W. E.'s lot. He called

¹ That is, of the sphinx moth.

² No, it probably was not there.

it a partridge hawk; said he was about as big as a partridge and his back of a similar color, and had not a white rump. This foot has a sharp shin¹ and stout claws, but the wing is much larger than that of the *Falco fuscus* (or sharp-shinned hawk), being, with the shoulder attached, sixteen inches long, which would make the alar extent some thirty-three inches, which is the size of the *F. Pennsylvanicus*. This wing corresponds in its markings very exactly with the description of that, and I must so consider it. Peabody does not describe any such bird, and Nuttall describes it as very rare. — apparently he has not seen one, — and says that Wilson had seen only two.

Bay-wing sparrows numerous. In the woods I hear the note of the jay, a metallic, *clanging* sound, sometimes a mew. Refer any strange note to him. The scent of decaying leaves after the wet fall is a very agreeable fragrance on all sides in the woods now, like a garret full of herbs. In the path, as I go up the hill beyond the springs, on the edge of Stow's sprout-land, I find a little snake which somebody has killed with his heel. It is apparently *Coluber amarus*, the red snake. Brown above, light-red beneath, about eight inches long, but the end of its tail is gone (only three quarters of an inch of it left). I count some one hundred and twenty-seven plates. It is a conspicuous light red beneath, then a bluish-gray line along the sides, and above this brown with a line of lighter or yellowish brown down the middle of the back.

The sprout-land and stubble behind the Cliffs are

¹ I had reference to the sharp angle of the *rear* edge of the shin.

all alive with restless flocks of sparrows of various species. I distinguish *F. hyemalis*, song sparrow, apparently *F. junco* or maybe tree sparrows,¹ and chip-birds (?). They are continually flitting past and surging upward, two or more in pursuit of each other, in the air, where they break like waves, and pass along with a faint cheep. On the least alarm many will rise from a juniper bush on to a shrub oak above it, and, when all is quiet, return into the juniper, perhaps for its berries. It is often hard to detect them as they sit on the young trees, now beginning to be bare, for they are very nearly the color of the bark and are very cunning to hide behind the leaves. There are apparently two other kinds, one like purple finches, another more like large Savannah sparrows.

The shrub oak plain is now in the perfection of its coloring, the red of young oaks with the green of spiring birches intermixed. A rich rug.

It is perfect Indian summer, a thick haze forming wreaths in the near horizon. The sun is almost shorn of its rays now at mid-afternoon, and there is only a sheeny reflection from the river.

The patches of huckleberries on Conantum are now red. Here on the Cliffs are fresh poke flowers and small snapdragon and corydalis. The white goldenrod is still common here, and covered with bees. *Hieracium venosum* still. I see pretty dense spreading radical leaves about the pinweeds, apparently recent.

A cuckoo is heard.

I find that the rough, white, crystallized-surfaced

¹ Probably not.

pigeon-egg fungus (one was noticed in report of October 5th) are puffballs. The outer thick white coat peels off first. I see it so now, but not in segments like the *stellata*.

A pasture thistle with many fresh flowers and bees on it.

Oct. 12. It is interesting to see how some of the few flowers which still linger are frequented by bees and other insects. Their resources begin to fail and they are improving their last chance. I have noticed them of late, especially on white goldenrod and pasture thistles, etc.; and to-day, on a small watermelon cut open ten days ago, in the garden, I see half a dozen honey-bees, many more flies, some wasps, a grasshopper, and a large handsome butterfly, with dark snuff-colored wings and a stripe of blue eyes on them. The restless bees keep buzzing toward the butterfly, but it keeps them off by opening and shutting its wings, but does not much mind the other insects. I did not suspect such a congregation in the desolate garden.

Wasps for some time looking about for winter quarters.

Oct. 14. A sudden change in the weather after remarkably warm and pleasant weather. Rained in the night, and finger-cold to-day. Your hands instinctively find their way to your pockets. Leaves are fast falling, and they are already past their brightness, perhaps earlier than usual¹ on account of wet.

¹ No.

P. M. — To Hubbard's Close.

Huckleberries perfectly plump and fresh on the often bare bushes (always (else) red-leaved). The bare gray twigs begin to show, the leaves fast falling. The maples are nearly bare. The leaves of red maples, still bright, strew the ground, often crimson-spotted on a yellow ground, just like some apples.¹ Pine-needles, just fallen, now make a thick carpet.

Going to Laurel Glen in the hollow beyond Deep Cut Woods, I see now withered cecchthites and epilobium standing thick on the bare hillside, where the hemlocks were cut, exposing the earth, though no fire has been there. They seem to require only that the earth shall be laid bare for them.

In Laurel Glen, an aspen sprout which has grown seven to eight feet high, its lower and larger leaves, already fallen and blackened (a dark slate), about. One green and perfect leaf measures ten inches in length and nine broad, heart-shaped. Others, less perfect, are half an inch or more larger each way.

Any flowers seen now may be called late ones. I see perfectly fresh succory, not to speak of yarrow, a *Viola ovata*, some *Polygala sanguinea*, autumnal dandelion, tansy, etc., etc.

Oct. 15. P. M. — Up Assabet.

A smart frost, which even injured plants in house. Ground stiffened in morning; ice seen.

River lower than for some months. Banks begin to wear almost a Novemberish aspect. The black willow

¹ [Excursions, p. 265; Riv. 325]

almost completely bare; many quite so. It loses its leaves about same time with the maples. The large ferns are now rapidly losing their leaves except the terminal tuft. Other species about the edges of swamps were turned suddenly dark cinnamon-color by the frost of yesterday. The water is very calm and full of reflections. Large fleets of maple and other leaves are floating on its surface as I go up the Assabet, leaves which apparently came down in a shower with yesterday morning's frost. Every motion of the turtles is betrayed by their rustling now.¹ *Mikania* is all whitish woolly now. Yet many tortoises are still out in the sun. An abundance of checkerberries by the hemlock at V. Muhlenbergii Brook. A remarkable year for berries. Even this, too, is abundant like the rest. They are tender and more palatable than ever now. I find a little pile of them, maybe fifteen or twenty, on the moss with each a little indentation or two on it, made apparently by some bird or beast. The chickadees are hopping near on the hemlock above. They resume their winter ways before the winter comes. A great part of the hemlock seeds fallen.

Oct. 16. Ground all white with frost.

P. M. — To chestnuts, down Turnpike.

I notice these flowers on the way by the roadside, which survive the frost, *i. e.* a few of them: hedge-mustard, mayweed, tall crowfoot, autumnal dandelion, yarrow, some *Aster Tradescanti*, and some red clover.²

¹ [*Excursions*, pp. 266, 267; Riv. 327.]

² Catnep. Tansy next day, and a very few meagre *S. cœsia* and

Polygonum orientale was finished by yesterday's frost. There was plenty of the front-rank polygonum freshly open along river on the 13th. Perhaps the frosts have nipped it.

I saw a farmer busily collecting his pumpkins on the 14th. — Abel Brooks, — rambling over his corn-fields and bringing the pumpkins out to the sides on the path, on the side of the field, where he can load them. The ground was so stiff on the 15th, in the morning, that some could not dig potatoes. Bent is now making haste to gather his apples. I. Wright, too, is collecting some choice barrels of golden russets. Many times he turns it over before he leaves out a specked one. A poor story if the farmer cannot get rich, for everything he has is salable, even every load of mud on his farm.

At the Everett meadow a large flock of mewing and lispig goldfinches, with but little yellow, pass over the Turnpike.

Many chestnut burs are now open, yet a stone will not jar down many nuts yet. Burs which were quite green on the 8th are now all brown and dry, and the prickles come off in your hand when you touch them, yet the nuts do not readily drop out. Many nuts have fallen within two or three days, but many squirrels have been busily picking them up.

Found amid the sphagnum on the dry bank on the south side of the Turnpike, just below Everett's meadow, a rare and remarkable fungus, such as I have heard of but never seen before. The whole height six and

A. undulatus, and, on the 19th, snapdragon, *Ranunculus bulbosus*, shepherd's-purse, and chickweed, of course.

three quarters inches, two thirds of it being buried in the sphagnum. It may be divided into three parts, pileus, stem, and base, — or scrotum, for it is a perfect phallus. One of those fungi named *impudicus*, I think.¹ In all respects a most disgusting object, yet very suggestive. It is hollow from top to bottom, the form of the hollow answering to that of the outside. The color of the outside white excepting the pileus, which is olive-colored and somewhat coarsely corrugated, with an oblong mouth at tip about one eighth of an inch long, or, measuring the white lips, half an inch. This cap is thin and white within, about one and three eighths inches high by one and a half wide. The stem (bare portion) is three inches long (tapering more rapidly than in the drawing), horizontally viewed of an oval form. Longest diameter at base one and a half inches, at top (on edge of pileus) fifteen sixteenths of an inch. Short diameters in both cases about two thirds as much. It is a delicate white cylinder of a finely honeycombed and crispy material about three sixteenths of an inch thick, or more, the whole very straight and regular. The base, or scrotum, is of an irregular bag form, about one inch by two in the extremes, consisting of a thick trembling gelatinous mass surrounding the bottom of the stem and covered with a tough white skin of a darker tint than the stem. The whole plant rather frail and trembling. There was at first a very thin delicate white collar (or *rolva*?) about the base of the stem above the scrotum.

¹ This is very similar to if not the same with that represented in London's *Encyclopaedia* and called "*Phallus impudicus*, Stinking Morel, very fetid."

It was as offensive to the eye as to the scent, the cap rapidly melting and defiling what it touched with a fetid, olivaceous, semiliquid matter. In an hour or two the plant scented the whole house wherever placed, so that it could not be endured. I was afraid to sleep in my chamber where it had lain until the room had been well ventilated. It smelled like a dead rat in the ceiling, in all the ceilings of the house. Pray, what was Nature thinking of when she made this? She almost puts herself on a level with those who draw in privies. The cap had at first a smooth and almost dry surface, of a sort of olive slate-color, but the next day this colored surface all melted out, leaving deep corrugations or gills — rather honeycomb-like cells — with a white bottom.

Oct. 17. Noticed some of the fungus called spunk, very large, on the large white oak in Love Lane, eight or nine feet from the ground on the east side, on a protuberance where a limb was formerly cut off. It is now green and moist, of a yellowish color, composed of several flakes one above the other; the length of the shelf, or chord of the arc, twenty-one inches; depth from the tree, or width of shelf, about one foot.

Frost has now within three or four days turned almost all flowers to woolly heads, — their November aspect. Fuzzy, woolly heads now reign along all hedges and over many broad fields.

Some trees, as small hickories, appear to have dropped their leaves instantaneously, as at a signal, as a soldier grounds arms. The ground under such reflects a blaze

of light from now crisped yellow leaves.¹ Down they have come on all sides, as if touched by fairy fingers. Boys are raking leaves in the street, if only for the pleasure of dealing with such clean, crisp substances.² Countless leafy skiffs are floating on pools and lakes and rivers and in the swamps and meadows, often concealing the water quite from foot and eye. Each leaf, still crisply curled up on its edges, makes as yet a tight boat like the Indian's hide one, but ere long it will become relaxed and flatted out and sink to the bottom, *i. e.* if it is driven out to sea, but most are drifted toward the shore, which is converted into one long, crowded haven where the water is concealed, and they settle close to land.³

Many fringed gentians quite fresh yet, though most are faded and withered. I suspect that their very early and sudden fading and withering has nothing, or little, to do with frost after all, for why should so many fresh ones succeed still? My pressed ones have all faded in like manner!!

It would be too late to look for bees now at Wyman's; the flowers are too far gone.

I go down the path through Charles Bartlett's land. The young white oak leaves are now generally withered in and on the sides of the hollows there, also the black scrub, while the red and black oaks are still commonly red and so far alive.

As I stood looking at Emerson's bound under the

¹ [*Excursions*, p. 264; Riv. 324.]

² [*Excursions*, p. 266; Riv. 326.]

³ [See *Excursions*, pp. 266-268; Riv. 326-328.]

railroad embankment, I heard a smart *tche-day-day-day* close to my ear, and, looking up, saw four of these birds, which had come to scrape acquaintance with me, hopping amid the alders within three and four feet of me. I had heard them further off at first, and they had followed me along the hedge. They *day-day'd* and lisped their faint notes alternately, and then, as if to make me think they had some other errand than to peer at me, they pecked the dead twigs with their bills—the little top-heavy, black-crowned, volatile fellows.

Oct. 18. Rain all night and half this day.

P. M. — A-chestnutting down Turnpike and across to Britton's, thinking that the rain now added to the frosts would relax the burs which were open and let the nuts drop.

The sugar maples are now in their glory, all aglow with yellow, red, and green. They are remarkable for the contrast they afford of deep blushing red on one half and green on the other.¹

The chestnuts are not so ready to fall as I expected. Perhaps the burs require to be dried now after the rain. In a day or two they will nearly all come down. They are a pretty fruit, thus compactly stowed away in this bristly chest,—three is the regular number, and there is no room to spare,—the two outside nuts having each one convex side without and a flat side within; the middle nut has two flat sides. Sometimes there are several more nuts in a bur, but this year the burs are small, and there are not commonly more

¹ [*Excursions*, p. 271; Riv. 332.]

than two good nuts, very often only one, the middle one, both sides of which will then be convex, each way bulging out into a thin abortive mere reminiscence of a nut, all shell, beyond it. It is a rich sight, that of a large chestnut tree with a dome-shaped top, where the yellowing leaves have become thin, — for most now strew the ground evenly as a carpet throughout the chestnut woods and so save some seed, — all richly rough with great brown burs, which are opened into several segments so as to show the wholesome-colored nuts peeping forth, ready to fall on the slightest jar. The individual nuts are very interesting, of various forms, according to the season and the number in a bur. The base of each where it was joined to the bur is marked with an irregular dark figure on a light ground, oblong or crescent-shaped commonly, like a spider or other insect with a dozen legs, while the upper or small end tapers into a little white, woolly spire crowned with a star, and the whole upper slopes of the nuts are covered with the same hoary wool, which reminds you of the frosts on whose advent they peep forth. Each nut stretches forth a little starry hand at the end of a slender arm — and by this, when mature, you may pull it out without fear of prickles. Within this thick prickly bur the nuts are about as safe until they are quite mature, as a porcupine behind its spines. Yet I see where the squirrels have gnawed through many closed burs and left the pieces on the stumps.

The late goldenrod (*S. latifolia*) is all gone, on account of frost.

Men commonly exaggerate the theme. Some themes they think are significant and others insignificant. I feel that my life is very homely, my pleasures very cheap. Joy and sorrow, success and failure, grandeur and meanness, and indeed most words in the English language do not mean for me what they do for my neighbors. I see that my neighbors look with compassion on me, that they think it is a mean and unfortunate destiny which makes me to walk in these fields and woods so much and sail on this river alone. But so long as I find here the only real elysium, I cannot hesitate in my choice. My work is writing, and I do not hesitate, though I know that no subject is too trivial for me, tried by ordinary standards; for, ye fools, the theme is nothing, the life is everything. All that interests the reader is the depth and intensity of the life excited. We touch our subject but by a point which has no breadth, but the pyramid of our experience, or our interest in it, rests on us by a broader or narrower base. That is, man is all in all, Nature nothing, but as she draws him out and reflects him. Give me simple, cheap, and homely themes.¹

I forgot to say that there are sometimes two meats within one chestnut shell, divided transversely, and each covered by its separate brown-ribbed skin.²

I still see a yellow butterfly occasionally zigzagging by the roadside.

What a strong medicinal but rich scent now after the

¹ [Channing, p. 83.]

² As if Nature had smuggled the seed of one more tree into this chest.

rain, from decaying weeds, perhaps ferns, by the roadside! The rain, falling on the fresh dried herbs and filling the ditches into which they drooped, has converted them into tea.¹

Apple leaves are now pretty generally brown and crisp.

I see where the chestnut trees have been sadly bruised by the large stones cast against them in previous years and which still lie around.

That was an interesting sight described on the 12th, the winged insects of various kinds gathered on the last fragment of a watermelon in the garden, to taste the last sweets of the year. In midsummer they are dispersed and not observed, but now, as in the spring, they are congregated about the little sweet that is left.

Minott told me one of his hunting stories yesterday, how he saw a very large hen-hawk come sailing from over the hill, just this side of where Moore lives now. He did n't expect to reach her, but he knew that he had a plaguy smart little piece,—it was a kind of half-stocked one (he always speaks of the gun he used on a particular occasion as if it were a new one, describing it minutely, though he never had more than three, perhaps not more than two, in his life, I suspect),—so he thought he'd give her a try, and, faith, she pitched down into the little meadow on the north side the road there, and when he came up she bristled up to him so that he was obliged to give her another charge.

¹ [*Excursions*, p. 268; Riv. 329.]

Oct. 19. P. M. — To Conantum.

The fall, now and for some weeks, is the time for flocks of sparrows of various kinds flitting from bush to bush and tree to tree — and both bushes and trees are thinly leaved or bare — and from one scared meadow to another. They are mingled together, and their notes, even, being faint, are, as well as their colors and motions, much alike. The sparrow youth are on the wing. They are still further concealed by their resemblance in color to the gray twigs and stems, which are now beginning to be bare. I have not noticed any kind of blackbird for a long time.

The most prominent of the few lingering solidagos which I have noticed since the 8th is the *S. cavia*, though that is very scarce indeed now, hardly survives at all. Of the asters which I have noticed since that date, the *A. undulatus* is, perhaps, the only one of which you can find a respectable specimen. I see one so fresh that there is a bumblebee on it. Of lingering flowers which I have noticed during the last three or four days (*vide* list under 16th), not including fringed gentian and witch-hazel, the freshest, and at same time commonest, is the yarrow.

I noticed, two or three days ago, after one of those frosty mornings, half an hour before sunset of a clear and pleasant day, a swarm, — were they not of winter gnats? — between me and the sun like so many notes, seven or eight feet from the ground, by the side of a young cherry tree in the yard. The swarm was some three feet in diameter and seemed to have been revealed by the level rays of the sun. Each insect was acting

its part in a ceaseless dance, rising and falling a few inches while the swarm kept its place. Is not this a forerunner of winter?

I go across Hubbard's land and find that I must go round the corners of two or three new winter-rye fields, which show very green by contrast with the scared grass. I sit on the old Conantum door-step, where the wind rattles the loose clapboards above my head, though for the most part only the horizontal rows of wrought nails are left to show where the clapboards have been. It is affecting to behold a peach and apple orchard just come to maturity by the side of this house, which was planted since this house was an uninhabited ruin, as if the first step would have been to pull down the house.

See quite a flock of myrtle-birds, — which I might carelessly have mistaken for slate-colored snowbirds, — flitting about on the rocky hillside under Conantum Cliff. They show about three white or light-colored spots when they fly, *commonly* no bright yellow, though some are pretty bright. They perch on the side of the dead mulleins, on rocks, on the ground, and directly dart off apparently in pursuit of some insect. I hear no note from them. They are thus near or on the ground, then, not as in spring.

Both the white and black ash are quite bare, and some of the elms there. The bass has lost, apparently, more than half its leaves.

The *Botrychium lunarioides*, now shedding its pale whitish dust when struck by the foot, but apparently *generally* a little past its maturity, is quite common

in the pasture near the wall where I sat to watch the eagle. At first you notice only the stipe, four to seven or eight inches high, like a narrow hand partly closed, for the small (now dull-purplish) frond unites with it below the surface.

Walking through the reddened huckleberry bushes, whose leaves are fast falling, I notice the birds' nests already filling with withered leaves.

Witch-hazel is in prime, or probably a little past, though some buds are not yet open. Their leaves are all gone. They form large clumps on the hillside there, even thirty to fifty stems from one to two or three inches in diameter and the highest twelve feet high, falling over on every side. The now imbrowned ferns around indicate the moist soil which they like.

I have often noticed the inquisitiveness of birds, as the other day of a sparrow, whose motions I should not have supposed to have any reference to me, if I had not watched it from first to last. I stood on the edge of a pine and birch wood. It flitted from seven or eight rods distant to a pine within a rod of me, where it hopped about stealthily and chirped awhile, then flew as many rods the other side and hopped about there a spell, then back to the pine again, as near me as it dared, and again to its first position, very restless all the while. Generally I should have supposed that there was more than one bird, or that it was altogether accidental, — that the chipping of this sparrow eight or ten rods [away] had no reference to me, — for I could see nothing peculiar about it. But when I brought my glass to bear on it, I found that

it was almost steadily eyeing me and was all alive with excitement.

Pokeweed has been killed by the severe frosts of the last three or four days.



The *Aselepias Cornuti* pods are now apparently in the midst of dis-counting. They point at various angles with the stem like a flourish.

The pretty brown fishes have loosened and lifted their scales somewhat, are bristling a little. Or, further advanced, the outer part of the down of the upper seeds is blown loose, while they are still retained by the ends of the middle portion in loops attached to the core. These white tufts, ready to burst and take to flight on the least jar, show afar as big as your fist. There they dangle and flutter, till they are quite dry and the wind rises. Others again are open and empty, except of the brown core, and you see what a delicate smooth white (slightly cream-colored) lining this casket has.



The hypericums — the whole plant — have now generally been killed by the frost. A large pasture thistle bud close to the ground amid its leaves, as in spring.

Among the dirty woolly heads of plants now gone to seed, I notice for the first time the peculiar matted, woolly top of the tall anemone, rising above some red-leaved huckleberries. I am surprised to see to what length and breadth one of these little compact conical heads has puffed out. Here are five which have flown

and matted together into a mass four or five inches long, perpendicularly, by two wide, full of seeds with their wool.

I return by the west side of Lee's Cliff hill, and sit on a rounded rock there, covered with fresh-fallen pine-needles, amid the woods, whence I see Wachusett. How little unevenness and elevation is required for Nature's effects! An elevation one thousand or fifteen hundred feet above the plain is seen from all eminences and level open plains, as from over the opening made by a pond, within thirty miles. Nature is not obliged to lift her mountains very high in the horizon, after all, to make them visible and interesting.

The rich sunny yellow of the old pitch pine needles, just ready to fall, contrasting with the new and unmixed masses above, makes a very pleasing impression, as I look down into the hollows this side of Lee's Cliff.

I noticed the small woodpecker several days ago.

Oct. 20. P. M. — To Hill, to look for ground squirrel nests.

The river-banks have now assumed almost their November aspect. The button-bushes are nearly bare. The water is smooth, the sun warm, and the reflections particularly fine and distinct; but there are reflected now, for the most part, only gray twigs and a few sere and curled brown leaves, wool-grass, etc. Land at Hemlocks, in the eddy there, where the white bits of sawdust keep boiling up and down and whirling round as in a pot.

Amid the young pitch pines in the pasture behind I notice, as elsewhere of late, a great many brownish-yellow (and some pink) election-cake fungi, eaten by crickets; about three inches in diameter. Some of those spread chocolate-colored ones have many grubs in them, though dry and dusty. Think I heard the very faint *gnah* of a nuthatch. Thus, of late, when the season is declining, many birds have departed, and our thoughts are turned towards winter (began to have a fire, more or less, say ten days or a fortnight ago), we hear the jay again more frequently, and the chickadees are more numerous and lively and familiar and utter their *phebe* note, and the nuthatch is heard again, and the small woodpecker seen amid the bare twigs.

Owing to the great height of the river, there has been no *Bidens Beckii* nor *Polygonum amphibium* to my knowledge this year, nor have I found any myriophyllum.

I dig into two or three squirrel-holes under a black oak, and in a rotten stump trace them a foot or more and lose them, or else they come to an end? Though I saw a squirrel enter the ground, I dug and lost it. They are apparently very busy now laying up their stores. I see a gray one making haste with waving tail across the field from the nut trees to the woods.

Looking up the side of the hill toward the sun, I see a little gossamer on the sweet-fern, etc.; and, from my boat, little flocks of white gossamer occasionally, three quarters of an inch long, in the air or caught on twigs, as if where a spider had hauled in his line. I

think that all spiders can walk on water. Last summer, I knocked one off my boat. He ran swiftly back to the boat and climbed if more to avoid the fishes than the water account for those long lines stretched low from one grass stem to another. I see one five or six feet long and only three or four the surface, and it is remarkable that they ceptible sag to it, weak as the line must be. Weeds are now bare, and their stem are a dark brown. The thorns on the hill are bare.

There are fewer turtles, now and few out sunning. A very little *Solidago nemoralis* place from the axil.

I hear from my chamber the note of the blue jay mingled with sparrows, in the yard, especially in the morning, quite like a clear, *sweet squawking* barrow.

Oct. 21. A very warm Indian-summer for a thick coat. It is remarkably hazy, and I open the door I smell smoke, which I account for it. After being out awhile I do not see the smoke, only on first opening the door a blue haze that, when, going along in the Path, I look through the trees into Abel's hollow, I cannot see across it to the lake though it is only a stone's throw. Like a lake at first glance.

Had a chat with Minott, sitting on

¹ White-throat sparrow.

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door. He says he began to carry a gun when he was fifteen or sixteen years old; afterward he owned three at one time, one training-piece and two fowling-pieces. He lived at James Baker's seven years; not till after he was of age. He used to range all over that neighborhood, away down into Lexington, and knew every stone and stump; used to go chestnutting about Flint's Pond, and a-fishing there, too. The fish and fowl were ten times as plenty as they are now. Why, he has been along the ridges (the moraines toward Ditch Pond) when, the ducks rising up on each side, the sky was black with them. His training-piece was an old king's-arm, taken from the British some time, he supposed. It was a capital piece, even for shot, and thoroughly made, made upon honor every part of it. There are no such guns made in this country. The lock was strong and smart, so that when you snapped it, it filled the pan chock-full of fire, and he could burn a single kernel of powder in it. But it took a good deal of powder to load it. He kept its brass mountings burnished so bright that you could see your face in them. He had also owned a French piece. Once, too, he had a little English cocking-piece, *i. e.* fowling-piece. It had the word "London" on the barrel close to the lock. It was a plaguy smart piece, bell-muzzled, and would carry ball well. He could knock over a robin with it eight rods off with ball or a slug. He had a rifle once. What did they use rifles for? Oh, for turkey-shooting.

Once, one Rice, who lived in Lincoln where Hayden does now, made a turkey-shooting, and he went to it

with his English fowling-piece. He saw many on the road going to it. Saw Dakin [and] Jonas Minott (Captain Minott's son, who spent quite a fortune on shooting), one offering to take another down to the shooting for a mug of flip. They asked him what he was going to do with that little thing. You paid fourpence a shot at a live turkey only twenty rods off. Those who had rifles were not allowed to rest. Amos Baker was there (who was at Concord Fight). The turkey was a large white one. Minott rammed down his slug and, getting down behind a fence, rested on it while the rest laughed at him. He told Amos to look sharp and tell him where his ball struck, and fired. Amos said the ball struck just above the turkey. Others were firing in the meanwhile. Minott loaded and tried once more, and this time his ball cut off the turkey's neck, and it was his; worth a dollar, at least. You only had to draw blood to get the turkey. Another, a black one, was set up, and this time his ball struck the ground just this side the turkey, then scaled up and passed right through its body, lodging under the skin on the opposite side, and he cut it out.

Rice made his money chiefly by his liquor, etc. Some set up the turkeys they had gained: others "hustled" for liquor or for a supper; *i. e.*, they would take sides and then, putting seven coppers in a hat, shake them up well and empty them, and the party that got the fewest heads after three casts paid for the supper.

M. says that, in all the time he lived at Baker's, in fact in all his life, he never went to market.

Told me how they used to carry on, on Concord Common formerly, on great days. Once, when they were shaking dice there in the evening for money, round a table with twenty-five or thirty dollars in cash upon it, some rogue fastened a rope to one leg of the table, and so at a distance suddenly started off with the table, at the same time upsetting and extinguishing the light. This made a great outcry. They ran up crying, "Mister, I'll help you pick up your money," but they put the half into their own pockets.

Father told me about his father the other night, — that he remembers his father used to breakfast before the family at one time, on account of his business, and he with him. His father used to eat the under crusts of biscuits, and he the upper. His father died in 1801, aged forty-seven. When the war came on, he was apprentice or journeyman to a cooper who employed many hands. He called them together, and told them that on account of the war his business was ruined and he had no more work for them. So, my father thinks, his father went privateering. Yet he remembers his telling him of his being employed digging at some defenses, when a cannon-ball came and sprinkled the sand all over them.

After the war he went into business as a merchant, commencing with a single hogshead of sugar. His shop was on Long Wharf. He was a short man, a little taller than my father, stout and very strong for his size. Levi Melchior [?], a powerful man, who was his clerk or tender, used to tell my father that he did not believe he was so strong a man as his father was.

He would never give in to him in handling a hogshead of molasses, — setting it on its head, or the like.

Minott, too, sings the praises of Beaton, the store-keeper, though of course he does not remember him. He was a Scotchman and a peddler, and the most honest man that is mentioned in Concord history. You might send a child to the store, and if there was a fraction still due the child after making change, he would give him a needle or a large pin.

Oct. 24. Friday. 12 M. — Set out for Eagleswood, Perth Amboy, N. J.

Spent the afternoon in Worcester.

By cars in evening to Allyn's Point and Steamer Commonwealth to New York.

Oct. 25. Saw, at Barnum's Museum, the stuffed skin of a cougar that was found floating dead in the Hudson many years ago. The stuffed jaguar there looks rather the largest. Had seen a clergyman in Worcester the previous afternoon (at Higginson's) who told me of one killed near the head of the Delaware, in New York State, by an acquaintance of his. His dog had treed it or found it on a tree on a mountain-side, and the hunter first saw it as he came up from below, stretched out on a limb and looking intently at him, ready to spring. He fired and wounded it, but, as usual, it sprang as soon as struck, in the direction it was pointing. It struck seventy feet down the mountain from the tree, or a hundred feet distant, tearing off the sleeve of the hunter's very thick and

stout coat, as it passed, and marking his arm from shoulder to hand. It took to a tree, and again, and this time approaching it from above, he shot it. The specimens I have seen were long-bodied. Looked into De Kay's Report at the Astor Library. He describes one, the largest "of which we have any account," killed in Lake Fourth, Herkimer County. "It had a total length of 11 feet 3 inches." He says that Vanderdonk speaks of lions and their skins, only the latter seen by Christians, meaning panthers. According to D., haunts ledges of rocks called "panther ledges." There is no well-authenticated account of their having attacked a man, and it is not well established that the northern and southern species are the same.¹

De Kay describes the *Sorex Dekayi*, "nearly allied to *brevicaudus*, but is larger and more robust in its form." From Massachusetts to Virginia. "Cheek teeth $\frac{16}{10}$," instead of $\frac{18}{10}$ in *S. brevicaudus*. The color resembles the fur of the star-nosed mole. Length of head and body, 4.8 inches; tail, .8; to end of hairs, .9. He never met with *S. brevicaudus* in New York. Is not this my *sorex* of July 12th, 1856? Or is mine possibly the *Sorex Fosteri*, whose cheek teeth are $\frac{18}{10}$; and total length, 4; tail, 1.5.

Arrived at Eagleswood, Perth Amboy, Saturday, 5 P. M., October 25th.²

¹ Apparently a panther was killed after this, this fall in Rhode Island.

² [Concerning this visit, its object, and the interesting people with whom it made Thoreau acquainted, see *Familiar Letters*, pp. 283, 286-291; Riv. 333-341.]

Oct. 26. Sunday. An abundance of a viburnum, making thickets in dry woods and ravines and set out about houses, now full of edible fruit like that of *V. nudum*, and also of leaves. At first I was inclined to call it *V. nudum*, but beside that it bears an abundance of berries still, long after the *V. nudum* berries have fallen with us (and they hold on for three or four weeks afterward at least), it grows generally in dry woods and ravines and uplands; the leaf is quite thin, now reddened, of various forms; and the bush is quite thorny (!), in the woods making almost impenetrable thickets in many places, like a thorn bush, and gave me much trouble to cut through in surveying, as did the cat-briar. I think it must be the *V. prunifolium*, or black haw. It is quite ornamental, with its abundance of purple fruit, which tastes much like dates. I think I have never seen it in Concord, and perhaps Emerson and others confounded it with *V. nudum*. It is thorny like a wild apple, but of course much more slender. The privet was a very common shrub, with its black berries.

Flowers almost entirely done. See apparently the seaside goldenrod, lingering still by the Raritan River, and a new aster.

The persimmon (*Diospyros Virginiana*) quite common. Saw some trees quite full of fruit. There was a little left on the trees when I left, November 24th, but I should think it was in its prime about the end of the first week of November, *i. e.*, what would readily shake off. Before, it was commonly puckery. In any case it furs the mouth just like the choke-cherry. It

is not good for much. They would be more edible if it were not for the numerous large seeds, and when you have rejected them there is little but skin left. Yet I was surprised that the fruit was not more generally gathered.

The sassafras was common.

Saw and heard a katydid about the 1st of November.

Oct. 27. Monday. Began to survey along the shore and through the woods. One of the largest and commonest trees, the tulip, in the moist ravines; its dried tulip-shaped relic of a flower, the broad flat stamens still remaining. Noticed a medicinal odor, somewhat like fever-bush, in the bark of twigs. It is said to be a valuable tonic.

The liquidambar or sweet-gum trees, very common and large, oak-like. The corky bark on young trees and twigs was raised into two ears, so as to form a channel, which would conduct the rain down the branches to the main stem, I should say. The fruit was a coarse, rigid, spherical bur, an inch or more in diameter, which opened and dropped much fine seed in my trunk.

Black walnut and bayberry were pretty common, though I noticed no berries on the last.