DAYS IN JUNE.

EXTRACTS FROM THE JOURNAL OF HENRY D. THOREAU.

JUNE 1, 1852. Evening. To the Lee place. The moon about full. The sounds I hear by the bridge; the mid-summer frog (I think it is not the toad), the night-hawk, crickets, the peet-weet (it is early), the hum of dor-bugs, and the whippoorwill. The boys are coming home from fishing, for the river is down at last. The moving clouds are the drama of moonlight nights and never-failing entertainment of nightly travelers. You can never foretell the fate of the moon, — whether she will prevail over or be obscured by the clouds, half an hour hence. The traveler's sympathy with the moon makes the drama of the shifting clouds interesting. The fate of the moon will disappoint all expectations. Her own light creates the shadows in the advancing clouds, and exaggerates her destiny.

June 1, 1853. Quite a fog this morning. Does it not always follow the cooler nights after the first really warm weather about the end of May? — Saw a water-snake yesterday with its tail twisted about some dead-weed stubble, and quite dry and stiff, as if it were preparing to shed its skin. . . .

Bees are swarming now, and those who keep them often have to leave their work in haste to secure them.

P. M. To Walden. Summer begins now, about a week past, with the expanded leaves, the shade, and warm weather. Cultivated fields, too, are leaving out, that is, corn and potatoes coming up. Most trees have leaved and are now forming fruit. Young berries, too, are forming, and birds are being hatched. Dor-bugs and other insects have come forth, the first warm evening after showers. The birds have now [all?] come, and no longer fly in flocks. The hylodes are no longer heard; the bull-frogs begin to trump. Thick and extensive fogs in the morning begin. Plants are rapidly growing, shooting. Hoeing corn has commenced. The first bloom of the year is over. It is now the season of growth. Have not wild animals now henceforth their young, and fishes, too?

The pincushion galls on young white oaks are now among the most beautiful objects in the woods, — coarse, woolly, white, spotted with bright red or crimson on the exposed side. It is remarkable that a mere gall, which at first we are inclined to regard as something abnormal, should be made so beautiful, as if it were the flower of the tree; that a disease, an excrescence, should prove, perchance, the greatest beauty, as the tear of the pearl; beautiful scarlet sins they may be. Through our temptations, aye, and our falls, our virtues appear. As in many a character, many a poet, we see that beauty exhibited in a gall which was meant to have bloomed in a flower, unchecked. Such, however, is the accomplishment of the world. The poet cherishes his chagrin and sets his sighs to music. This gall is the tree's Ode to Dejection. How oft it chances that the apparent fruit of a shrub, its apple, is merely a gall or blight! How many men, meeting with some blast in the moist, growing days of their youth, so that what should have been a sweet and palatable fruit in them becomes a mere puff and excrescence, say that they have experienced religion! Their fruit is a gall, a puff, an excrescence, for want of moderation and continence. So many plants never ripen their fruit. . . .

The news of the explosion of the powder mills was not only carried seaward by the cloud which its smoke made, but more effectually, though more slowly, by the fragments which were floated thither by the river. M—— yesterday showed me quite a pile of fragments and short pieces of large timber, still black with powder, which he had saved as they were drifting by. . . . Some, no doubt,

were carried down to the Merrimack, and by the Merrimack to the ocean, till, perchance, they got into the Gulf Stream and were cast upon the coast of Norway, covered with barnacles, — or who can tell on what more distant strand? — still bearing traces of burnt powder, still capable of telling how and where they were launched to those who can read their signs. Mingling with wrecks of vessels, which told a different tale, this wreck of a powder-mill was cast up on some outlandish strand, and went to swell the pile of drift-wood — collected by some native — shouldered by whales, alighted on at first by the musk-rat and the peetweet, and finally, perhaps, by the stormy petrel and other beach birds. It is long before nature forgets it. How slowly the ruins are being dispersed. . . .

I am as white as a miller — a rye-miller, at least — with the lint from the young leaves and twigs. The tufts of pinks on the side of the peak by the pond grow raying out from a centre, somewhat like a cyme, on the warm, dry side hill, — some a lighter, some a richer and darker shade of pink. With what a variety of colors we are entertained! Yet most colors are rare or in small doses, presented to us as a condiment or spice; much of green, blue, black, and white, but of yellow and the different shades of red, far less. The eyes feast on the colors of flowers as on tidbits. I hear now, at five o'clock, a farmer's horn calling the hands in from the field to an early tea. Heard afar by the walker, over the woods, at this hour, or at noon, bursting upon the stillness of the air, putting life into some portion of the horizon, this is one of the most suggestive and pleasing of the country sounds produced by man. I know not how far it is peculiar to New England or the United States. I hear two or three prolonged blasts, as I am walking along, some sultry noon, in the midst of the still woods, — a sound which I know to be produced by human breath, the most sonorous parts of which alone reach me; and I see in my mind's eye the hired men and master dropping the implements of their labor in the field, and wending their way with a sober satisfaction toward the house. I see the well-sweep rise and fall. I see the preparatory ablutions, and the table laden with the smoking meal. It is a significant hum in a distant part of the hive. . . . How much lupine is now in full bloom on bare sandy brows or promontories, running into meadows where the sod is half worn away and the sand exposed! The geraniums are now getting to be common. *Hieracium venosum* just out on this peak, and the snapdragon catchfly is here, abundantly in blossom a little after five P. M., — a pretty little flower, the petals dull crimson beneath or varnished mahogany color, and rose-tinted white within or above. It closed on my way home, but opened again in water in the evening. Its opening in the night chiefly is a fact which interests and piques me. Do any insects visit it then? — Lambkill just beginning, — the very earliest. . . . New, bright, glossy, light-green leaves of the umbelled wintergreen are shooting on this hill-side, but the old leaves are particularly glossy and shining, as if varnished and not yet dry, or most highly polished. Did they look thus in the winter? I do not know any leaf so wet-glossy.

While walking up this hill-side I disturbed a night-hawk eight or ten feet from me, which went half fluttering, half hopping, the mottled creature, like a winged toad (as Nuttall says the French of Louisiana call it), down the hill as far as I could see. Without moving I looked about and saw its two eggs on the bare ground on a slight shelf of the hill, on the dead pine needles and sand, without any cavity or nest whatever; very obvious when once you had detected them, but not easily detected from their color, a coarse gray, formed of white spotted with bluish or slaty brown or amber, — a stone-granite color, like the places it selects. I advanced and put my hand on them, and while I stooped, seeing a shadow on the ground, looked up and saw the bird, which had fluttered down the hill so blind and helpless, circling low and swiftly past over my head, showing the white spot on each wing in true night-hawk fashion. When I had

gone a dozen rods it appeared again, higher in the air, with its peculiar limping kind of flight, all the while noiseless, and suddenly descending it dashed at me within ten feet of my head, like an imp of darkness; then swept away high over the pond, dashing now to this side, now to that, on different tracks, as if, in pursuit of its prey, it had already forgotten its eggs on the earth. I can see how it might easily come to be regarded with superstitious awe. — A cuckoo very plainly heard.

Within little more than a fortnight the woods, from bare twigs, have become a sea of verdure, and young shoots have contended with one another in the race. The leaves are unfurled all over the country. Shade is produced, the birds are concealed, their economies go forward uninterruptedly, and a covert is afforded to animals generally. But thousands of worms and insects are preying on the leaves while they are young and tender. Myriads of little parasols are suddenly spread all the country over to shield the earth and the roots of the trees from the parching heat, and they begin to flutter and to rustle in the breeze.

From Bare Hill there is a mist on the landscape, giving it a glaucous appearance. Now I see gentlemen and ladies sitting in boats at anchor on the lakes, in the calm afternoons, under parasols, making use of nature. The farmer, hoeing, is wont to look with scorn and pride on a man sitting in a motionless boat a whole half day, but he does not realize that the object of his own labor is perhaps merely to add another dollar to his heap, nor through what coarseness and inhumanity to his family and servants he often accomplishes this. He has an Irishman or a Canadian working for him by the month, and what, probably, is the lesson he is teaching him by precept and example? Will it make that laborer more of a man? this earth more like heaven?

June 1, 1857. P. M. To hill. The weather has been less reliable for a few weeks past than at any other season of the year. Though fair in the forenoon, it may rain in the afternoon, and the continuance of the showers surpasses all expectation. After several days of rain a fair day may succeed, and you close your eyes at night on a star-lit sky, but you awake unexpectedly to a steady rain in the morning.

A redwing's nest, four eggs, low in a tuft of sedge in an open meadow. What Champollion can translate the hieroglyphics on these eggs? It is always writing of the same character, though much diversified. While the bird picks up the material and lays this egg, who determines the style of the marking? When you approach, away dashes the dark mother, betraying her nest, and then chatters her anxiety from a neighboring bush, where she is soon joined by the red-shouldered male, who comes scolding over your head, chattering and uttering a sharp "phe phee-e."

I hear the note of a bobolink concealed in the top of an apple-tree behind me. Though this bird's full strain is ordinarily somewhat trivial, this one appears to be meditating a strain as yet unheard in meadow or orchard. *Paulo majora canamus.* He is just touching the strings of his theorbo, his glassichord, his water organ, and one or two notes globe themselves and fall in liquid bubbles from his tuning throat. It is as if he touched his harp within a vase of liquid melody, and when he lifted it out the notes fell like bubbles from the trembling strings. Methinks they are the most liquidly sweet and melodious sounds I ever heard. They are as refreshing to my ear as the first distant tinkling and gurgling of a rill to a thirsty man. Oh, never advance farther in your art; never let us hear your full strain, sir! But away he launches, and the meadow is all bespattered with melody. Its notes fall with the apple blossoms in the orchard. The very divinest part of his strain drops from his overflowing breast *singultim*, in globes of melody. It is the foretaste of such strains as never fell on mortal ears, to hear which we should rush to our doors and contribute all that we possess and are. Or it seemed as if in that vase full of melody some notes

sphered themselves, and from time to time bubbled up to the surface, and were with difficulty repressed.

June 2, 1841. I am brought into the near neighborhood, and am become a silent observer, of the moon to-night by means of a glass, while the frogs are peeping all around me on the earth, and the sound of the accordion seems to come from some bright saloon yonder. I am sure the moon floats in a human atmosphere; it is but a distant scene of the world's drama. It is a wide theatre the gods have given us, and our actions must befit it. More sea and land, mountain and valley here is, — a further West, — a freshness and wildness in reserve when all the land shall be cleared.

I see three little lakes between the hills near its edge, reflecting the sun's rays. The light glimmers as on the water in a tumbler, — so far off do the laws of reflection hold. I seem to see the ribs of the creature. This is the aspect of their day, its outside, their heaven above their heads toward which they breathe their prayers. So much is between me and them. It is noon there, perchance, and ships are at anchor in their havens, or sailing on the seas, and there is a din in the streets, and in this light or shade some leisurely soul contemplates.

But now dor-bugs fly over its disk, and bring me back to earth and night.

June 2, 1853. Half past three A. M. When I awake I hear the low, universal chirping or twittering of the chip-birds, like the bursting head on the surface of the uncorked day. First come, first served. You must taste the first glass of the day's nectar if you would get all the spirit of it. Its fixed air begins to stir and escape. Also the robin's morning song is heard, as in the spring, — earlier than the notes of most other birds, thus bringing back the spring; now rarely heard or noticed in the course of the day.

Four A. M. To Nawshawtuck. I go to the river in a fog — through which I cannot see more than a dozen rods — three or four times as deep as the houses. As I row down the stream, the dark, dim outlines of the trees on the banks appear coming to meet me on the one hand, while they retreat and are soon concealed in it on the other. My strokes soon bring them behind me. The birds are wide awake, as if knowing that this fog presages a fair day. I ascend Nawshawtuck from the north side. I am aware that I yield to the same influence which inspires the birds and the cockerels whose hoarse courage I hear now vaunted. I would crow like chanticleer in the morning, with all the lustiness that the new day imparts, without thinking of the evening, when I and all of us shall go to roost; with all the humility of the cock that takes his perch upon the highest rail and wakes the country with his clarion brag. Shall not men be inspired as much as cockerels? My feet are soon wet with fog. It is indeed a vast dew. Are not the clouds another kind of dew? Cool nights produce them. Now I have reached the hill-top above the fog at a quarter to five, about sunrise, and all around me is a sea of fog, level and white, reaching nearly to the top of this hill, only the tops of a few high hills appearing as distant islands in the main. Wachusett is a more distant and larger island, an Atlantis in the west; there is hardly one to touch at between me and it. It is just like the clouds beneath you as seen from a mountain. It is a perfect level in some directions, cutting the hills near their summits with a geometrical line, but puffed up here and there, and more and more toward the east, by the influence of the sun. An early freight train is heard, not seen, rushing through the town beneath it. You can get here the impression which the ocean makes, without ever going to the shore. The sea-shore exhibits nothing more grand, or on a larger scale. How grand where it rolls off over Ball's Hill, like a glorious ocean after a storm, just lit by the rising sun. It is as boundless as the view from the highlands of Cape Cod. These are exaggerated billows, the ocean on a larger scale, the sea after some tremendous and unheard-of storm, for the actual sea never appears so tossed up and universally white

with foam and spray as this, now, far in the northeastern horizon, where mountain billows are breaking on some hidden reef or bank. It is tossed up toward the sun and by it into the most boisterous of seas, which no craft, no ocean steamer, is vast enough to sail on. Meanwhile, my hands are numb with cold, and my feet ache with it. Now, at quarter past five, before this southwest wind, it is already grown thin as gossamer in that direction, and woods and houses are seen through it, while it is heaped up toward the sun, and finally becomes so thick there that for a short time it appears in one place a dark, low cloud, such as else can only be seen from mountains; and now long, dark ridges of wood appear through it, and now the sun reflected from the river makes a bright glow in the fog, and now, at half past five, I see the green surface of the meadows, and the water through the trees sparkling with bright reflections. Men will go further and pay more to see a tawdry picture on canvas, a poor, painted scene, than to behold the fairest or grandest scene that nature ever displays in their immediate vicinity, although they may never have seen it in their lives. . . .

Cherry birds are the only ones I see in flocks now. I can tell them afar by their peculiar fine springy note. . . .

Four P. M. To Conantum. . . . Arethusas are abundant in what I may call Arethusa Meadow. They are the more striking for growing in such green localities in meadows where the brilliant purple, more or less red, contrasts with the green grass. Found four perfect arrowheads, and one imperfect, in the potato field just plowed up, for the first time that I remember, at the Hubbard bathing place. . . .

Clintonia borealis a day or two. Its beauty at present consists chiefly in its commonly three very handsome, rich, clear, dark-green leaves, which Bigelow describes truly as "more than half a foot long, oblanceolate, smooth, and shining." They are perfect in form and color, broadly oblanceolate, with a deep channel down the middle, uninjured by insects, arching over from a centre at the ground; and from their midst rises the scape, a foot high, with one or more umbels of "green, bell-shaped flowers," — yellowish-green, nodding or bent downward, but without fragrance. In fact, the plant is all green, both leaves and corolla. The leaves alone — and many have no scape — would detain the walker. Its berries are its flower. A single plant is a great ornament in a vase, from the beauty of its form and the rich, unspotted green of its leaves. The sorrel now reddens the fields far and wide. As I look over the fields thus reddened in extensive patches, now deeper, now passing into green, and think of the season now in its prime and heyday, it looks as if it were the blood mantling in the cheek of the youthful year, — the rosy cheek of its health, its rude June health. The *medeola* has been out a day or two, apparently, — another green flower. . . .

June 2, 1854. P. M. Up Assabet to Castilleja and Anursnack. While waiting for —— and S—— I look now from the yard to the waving and slightly glaucous-tinged June meadows, edged by the cool shade of shrubs and trees, — a waving shore of shady bays and promontories, yet different from the August shades. It is beautiful and Elysian. The air has now begun to be filled with a bluish haze. These virgin shades of the year, when everything is tender, fresh, and green, how full of promise! — promising bowers of shade in which heroes may repose themselves. I would fain be present at the birth of shadow. It takes place with the first expansion of the leaves. . . . The black willows are already beautiful, and the hemlocks with their bead-work of new green. Are these not kingbird-days, — these clearer first June days, full of light, when this aerial, twittering bird flutters from willow to willow, and swings on the twigs, showing his white-edged tail? The *Azalea nudiflora* is about done, or there was apparently little of it. — I see some breams' nests near my old bathing place above the stone heaps, with sharp, yellow, sandy edges, like a milk pan from

within. . . . Also there are three or four small stone heaps formed. . . .

The painted-cup meadow is all lit up with ferns on its springy slopes. The handsome flowering fern, now rapidly expanding and fruiting at the same time, colors these moist slopes afar with its now commonly reddish fronds; and then there are the interrupted and the cinnamon ferns in very handsome and regular tufts, and the brakes standing singly, and more backward. . . .

June 2, 1855. From that cocoon of the *Attacus cecropia* which I found — I think it was on the 24th of May — came out this forenoon a splendid moth. I had pinned the cocoon to the sash at the upper part of my window, and quite forgotten it. About the middle of the forenoon S—— came in, and exclaimed that there was a moth on my window. My *Attacus cecropia* had come out and dropped down to the window-sill, where it hung on the side of a slipper, to let its wings hang down and develop themselves. At first the wings were not only not unfolded laterally, but not longitudinally, the thinner ends of the foremost ones for perhaps three fourths of an inch being very feeble, and occupying very little space. It was surprising to see the creature unfold and expand before our eyes, the wings gradually elongating, as it were, by their own gravity, and from time to time the insect assisting this operation by a slight shake. It was wonderful how it waxed and grew, revealing some new beauty every fifteen minutes, which I called S—— to see, but never losing its hold on the shoe. It looked like a young emperor just donning the most splendid ermine robes, the wings every moment acquiring greater expansion, and their at first wrinkled edge becoming more tense. At first, they appeared double, one within the other. But at last it advanced so far as to spread its wings completely, but feebly, when we approached. This process occupied several hours. It continued to hang to the shoe, with its wings ordinarily closed erect behind its back, the rest of the day, and at dusk, when apparently it was waving them preparatory to its evening flight, I gave it ether, and so saved it in a perfect state. As it lies, not outspread to the utmost, it is five and nine tenths inches by two and one fourth. . . .

The *Azalea nudiflora* now in its prime. What splendid masses of pink, with a few glaucous green leaves sprinkled here and there, — just enough for contrast!

June 2, 1858. Half past eight A. M. Start for Monadnock. Between Shirley Village and Lunenburg I notice, in a meadow on the right hand, close to the railroad, the *Kalmia glauca* in bloom, as we are whirled past. Arrived at Troy station at five minutes past eleven, and shouldered our knapsacks, steering northeast to the mountain, its top some four miles off. It is a pleasant, hilly road, leading past a few farm-houses, where you already begin to sniff the mountain or at least up-country air. Almost without interruption we had the mountain in sight before us, its sublime gray mass that antique, brownish-gray, Ararat color. Probably these crests of the earth are for the most part of one color in all lands, — that gray color of antiquity which nature loves, the color of unpainted wood, weather stain, time stain; not glaring nor gaudy; the color of all roofs, the color of all things that endure, the color that wears well; color of Egyptian ruins, of mummies, and all antiquity, baked in the sun, done brown, — not scarlet, like the crest of the bragging cock, but that hard, enduring gray, a terrene sky color, solidified air with a tinge of earth.

We left the road at a school-house, and, crossing a meadow, began to ascend gently through very rocky pastures. . . . The neighboring hills began to sink, and entering the wood we soon passed Fassett's shanty, he so busily at work inside that he did not see us, and we took our dinner by the rocky brookside in the woods just above. A dozen people passed us early in the afternoon while we sat there, — men and women on their way down from the summit, this suddenly very pleasant day after a lowering one having attracted them. . . .

Having risen above the dwarfish

woods (in which mountain ash was very common) which reached higher up along the ravine we had traversed than elsewhere, and nearly all the visitors having descended, we proceeded to find a place for and to prepare our camp at mid P. M. We wished it to be near water, out of the way of the wind — which was northwest — and of the path, and also near to spruce-trees, for a bed. There is a good place, if you would be near the top, within a stone's-throw of it, on the north side, under some spruce-trees. We chose a sunken yard in a rocky plateau on the southeast side of the mountain, perhaps half a mile from the summit by the path, a rod and a half wide by many more in length, with a mossy and bushy floor about five or six feet beneath the general level, where a dozen black spruce-trees grew, though the surrounding rock was generally bare. There was a pretty good spring within a dozen rods, and the western wall shelved over a foot or two. We slanted two scraggy spruce-trees, long since bleached, from the western wall, and, cutting many spruce boughs with our knives, made a thick bed and walls on the two sides, to keep out the wind. Then, putting several poles transversely across our two rafters, we covered them with a thick roof of spruce twigs, like shingles. The spruce, though harsh for a bed, was close at hand, we cutting away one tree to make room. We crawled under the low eaves of this roof, about eighteen inches high, and our extremities projected about a foot.

Having left our packs here, and made all ready for the night, we went up to the summit to see the sun set. Our path lay through a couple of small swamps, and then up the rocks. Forty or fifty rods below the very apex, or quite on the top of the mountain, I saw a little bird flit from beneath a rock close by the path, where there were only a very few scattered dwarf black spruces about, and looking I found a nest with three eggs. It was the *Fringilla hiemalis*, which soon disappeared around a projecting rock. The nest was sunk in the ground by the side of a tuft of grass, and was pretty deep, made of much fine, dry grass or [sedge?]. The eggs were three, of a regular oval form, faint-bluish-white, sprinkled with fine pale-brown dots, in two of the three condensed into a ring about the larger end. They had just begun to develop. The nest and tuft were covered by a projecting rock. Brewer says that only one nest is known to naturalists. We saw many of these birds flitting about the summit, perched on the rocks and the dwarf spruces, and disappearing behind the rocks. It is the prevailing bird now on the summit. They are commonly said to go to the fur countries to breed, though Wilson says that some breed in the Alleghanies. The New York Reports make them breed in the Catskills and some other mountains of that State. This was a quite interesting discovery. They probably are never seen in the surrounding low grounds at this season. . . . Now that the season is advanced, migrating birds have gone to the extreme north or to the mountain tops. By its color it harmonized with the gray and brownish-gray rocks. We felt that we were so much nearer to perennial spring and winter. . . .

We heard the hylodes peeping from a rain-water pool, a little below the summit, toward night. As it was quite hazy we could not see the shadow of the mountain well, and so returned just before sunset to our camp. We lost the path coming down, for nothing is easier than to lose your way here, where so little trail is left upon the rocks, and the different rocks and ravines are so much alike. Perhaps no other equal area is so bewildering in this respect as a rocky mountain summit, though it has so conspicuous a central point. Notwithstanding the newspaper and egg-shell left by visitors, these parts of nature are still peculiarly unhandseled and untracked. The natural terraces of rock are the steps of this temple, and it is the same whether it rises above the desert or a New England village. Even the inscribed rocks are as solemn as most ancient grave-stones, and nature reclaims them with bog and lichen. These sculp-

tors seemed to me to court such alliance with the grave as they who put their names over tombstones along the highway. One, who was probably a blacksmith, had sculptured the emblems of his craft, an anvil and hammer, beneath his name. Apparently, a part of the regular outfit of mountain climbers is a hammer and cold chisel, and perhaps they allow themselves a supply of garlic also. But no Old Mortality will ever be caught renewing their epitaphs. It reminds one what kind of steep do climb the false pretenders to fame, whose chief exploit is the carriage of the tools with which to inscribe their names. For speaking epitaphs they are, and the mere name is a sufficient revelation of the character. They are all of one trade, — stone-cutters, defacers of mountain tops. "Charles and Lizzie!" Charles carried the sledge-hammer, and Lizzie the cold chisel. Some have carried up a paint pot, and painted their names on the rocks.

We returned to our camp, and got our tea in our sunken yard. While one went for water to the spring, the other kindled a fire. The whole rocky part of the mountain, except the extreme summit, is strewn with the relics of spruce-trees a dozen or fifteen feet long, and long since dead and bleached, so that there is plenty of dry fuel at hand. We sat out on the brink of the rocky plateau, near our camp, taking our tea in the twilight, and found it quite dry and warm there, though you would not have thought of sitting out at evening in the surrounding valleys. I have often perceived the warm air high on the sides of hills, while the valleys were filled with a cold, damp night-air, as with water, and here the air was warmer and drier the greater part of the night. We perceived no dew there this or the next night. This was our parlor and supper-room; in another direction was our wash-room. The chewink sang before night, and this, as I have before observed, is a very common bird on mountain tops; the wood-thrush sang, too, indefinitely far or near, a little more distant and unseen, as great poets are. It seems to love a cool atmosphere, and sometimes lingers quite late with us. Early in the evening the night-hawks were heard to *speek* and boom over these bare gray rocks, and such was our serenade at first as we lay on our spruce bed. We were left alone with the night-hawks. These withdrawn, bare rocks must be a very suitable place for them to lay their eggs, and their dry and unmusical, yet supra-mundane and spirit-like voices and sounds gave fit expression to the rocky mountain solitude. It struck the very key-note of that stern, gray, and barren region. It was a thrumming of the mountain's rocky chords; strains from the music of chaos, such as were heard when the earth was rent and these rocks heaved up. Thus they went *speeking* and booming while we were courting the first access of sleep, and I could imagine their dainty, limping flight, inclining over the kindred rocks with a spot of white quartz in their wings. No sound could be more in harmony with that scenery. Though common below, it seemed peculiarly proper here. But erelong the night-hawks are stilled, and we hear only the sound of our companion's breathing, or of a bug in our spruce roof. I thought I heard once, faintly, the barking of a dog far down under the mountain.

A little after one A. M. I woke and found that the moon had risen, and heard some little bird near by sing a short strain of welcome to it, song-sparrow-like. Before dawn the night-hawks commenced their sounds again, which were as good as a clock to us, telling how the night got on. At length, by three o'clock, June 3d, the signs of dawn appear, and soon we hear the robin and the *Fringilla hiemalis* (its prolonged jingle as it sat on the top of a spruce), the chewink and the wood-thrush. Whether you have slept soundly or not, it is not easy to lie abed under these circumstances, and we rose at half past three, in order to see the sun rise from the top and get our breakfast there. It was still hazy, and we did not see the shadow of the mountain until it was comparatively short, nor did

we get the most distant views, as of the Green and White mountains, while we were there. . . .

We concluded to explore the whole rocky part of the mountain in this wise: to saunter slowly around it at about the height and distance from the summit of our camp, or say half a mile, more or less, first going north, and returning by the western semicircle, and then exploring the east side, completing the circle, and returning over the summit at night. . . .

During this walk, in looking toward the summit, I first observed that its steep, angular projections and the brows of the rocks were the parts chiefly covered with dark brown lichens, *umbilicaria*, etc., as if they were to grow on the ridge and slopes of a man's nose only. It was the steepest and most exposed parts of the high rocks alone on which they grew, where you would think it most difficult for them to cling. They also covered the more rounded brows on the sides of the mountain, especially on the east side, where they were very dense, fine, crisp, and firm, like a sort of shagreen, giving a firm hold to the feet where it was needed. It was these that gave that Ararat brown color of antiquity to these portions of the mountain, which a few miles distant could not be accounted for, compared with the more prevalent gray. From the sky blue you pass through the misty gray of the rocks to this darker and more terrene color. The temples of the mountain are covered with lichens, which color it for miles. . . .

We had thus made a pretty complete survey of the top of the mountain. It is a very unique walk, and would be almost equally interesting to take, if it were not elevated above the surrounding valleys. It often reminded me of my walks on the beach, and suggested how much both depend for their sublimity on solitude and dreariness. In both cases we feel the presence of some vast, titanic power. The rocks and valleys and bogs and rain pools of the mountain are so wild and unfamiliar still that you do not recognize the one you left fifteen minutes before. This rocky region, forming what you may call the top of the mountain, must be more than two miles long by one wide in the middle, and you would need to ramble round it many times before it would begin to be familiar. . . .

We proceeded to get our tea on the summit, in the very place where I had made my bed for a night some fifteen years before. . . . It was interesting to watch from that height the shadows of fair weather clouds passing over the landscape. You could hardly distinguish them from forests. It reminded me of similar shadows seen on the sea from the high bank of Cape Cod beach. There the perfect equality of the sea atoned for the comparatively slight elevation of the bank. . . . In the valley or on the plain you do not commonly notice the shadow of a cloud unless you are in it, but on a mountain top or on a lower elevation in a plane country, or by the sea-side, the shadows of clouds flitting over the landscape are a never-failing source of amusement. It is commonly easy enough to refer a shadow to its cloud, since in one direction its form is perceived with sufficient accuracy. Yet I was surprised to observe that a long, straggling, downy cumulus, extending north and south a few miles east of us, when the sun was perhaps an hour high, cast its shadow along the base of the Peterboro hills, and did not fall on the other side, as I should have expected. It proved the clouds not so high as I had supposed. . . . It was pleasant enough to see one man's farm in the shadow of a cloud, which perhaps he thought covered all the Northern States, while his neighbor's farm was in sunshine.

June 4th. At six A. M. we began to descend. As you are leaving a mountain and looking back at it from time to time, it is interesting to see how it gradually gathers up its slopes and spurs to itself into a regular whole, and makes a new and total impression.