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 midsummer 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. Hoxing 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 drifted 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, afloat on at first by the musk-rat and the pecten-shouldered by whales, alighted a heap 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, afloat on at first by the musk-rat and the pecten-shouldered by whales, alighted on at first by the musk-rat and the pecten-shouldered by whales, alighted...
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 starlit 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. *Paulus majora canorus.* 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 *simpletin,* 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
Days in June.

June 2, 1841. I am brought into the near neighborhood, and 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 accoorden 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.

When I awake I hear the low, universal chirping or twittering of the chip-birds, thus bringing back the spring; earlier than the notes of most other birds, singing song is heard, as in the spring,—human hearts are stirred and escape. The light glisters as on the water in a tumbler,—so far off do the laws of reflection hold.

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 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.

June 2, 1853. Half past three A. M. When I awake I hear the low, universal chirping or twitting of the chip-birds, like the bursting head on the surface of the uncorked day. First come, first served. You must first 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 Nauset. 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 Nauset from the north side. I am aware that I yield to the same influence which inspires the birds and the cockerels whose hourest courage I hear now vaunted. I would crowd like a chasteleer 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 rest; with all the humility of the cock that takes his perch upon the highest rail and wakes the country with his clarion bray. Shall men not become inspired as much as cockerels? My feet are soon wet with fog. Is it indeed a vast dew. Are not the clouds another kind of dew? Cool nights produce them. I now have reached the hill-top above the fog at a quarter to five, about sunrise, and all around me is a sea of fog, wet with fog. It is indeed a vast dew.

It is just like the clouds beneath the glass by a window, the transparent fog by a window, 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 it would roll off over Ball's Hill, like a glorious ocean after a storm, just fit 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 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.

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Four P. M. To Conantum. Arethusa 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.

Clistosia borealis a day or two. Its beauty at present consists chiefly in its commonly three very handsome, rich, clear, dark-green leaves, which Biegelow describes truly as "more than half a foot long, oblongellate, smooth, and shining." They are perfect in form and color, broadly oblanceolate, with a deep channel down the middle, uninjured by...
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Chlitoria borealis a day or two. Its
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describes truly as "more than half a
foot long, oblanceolate, smooth, and
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color, broadly oblanceolate, with a deep
dunnel 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
hayday, 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 melaleuca has been
out a day or two, apparently,—another
green flower. . . .

June 2, 1878. P. M. Up Assabet to
Castilleja and Amursumack. While wait-
ing for — and S— I look now from
the yard to the waving and slightly
glaucon-tinged June meadows, edged
by the cool shade of shrubs and trees,—
a waving shore of shady bays and prom-
cinaries, 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 he-
roes 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 clear-
er first June days, full of flight, when this
aerial, twittering bird flutters from form to
form, willow to willow, and swings on the twigs,
showing his white-edged tail? The Azalea
vuliflora is about done, or there was
apparently little of it. — I see some
beams' nests near my old bathing place
above the stone heaps, with sharp, yel-
low, sandy edges, like a milk pan from
there are the interrupted and the cinnamon forenoon S-carnel, and exclaimed forgotten it. About the middle of the forenoon came out this splendid moth. I think it was on the 24th of May—

The Attacus cecropia which I found—and more backward... tufts, and the brakes standing singly, now commonly reddish fronds; and then expanding and fruiting at the same time, handsome flowering fern, now rapidly with ferns on its springy slopes. The small stone heaps formed... the creature unfold and expand before its wings hang down and develop them—

My Attacus cecropia had come out and that there was a moth on my window. 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 Adonis 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, 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 ash 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 the creature unfold and expand before 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 feebly, 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 Adonis 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, 1855. 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 Raïnia gigas in bloom, as we are whirled past. Arrived at Troy station at five minutes past eleven, and shouldered our knapsacks, steering north-east 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 of all things that wear well; color of Egypt—color of all things that endure, the color of all things that wear well; color of Egypt—

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, lie so hardy 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 a mid r. 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 serpentine 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 sit 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 hudsonia, which soon disappeared around a projecting rock. The nest was sunk in the ground by the side of a tuft of grass, and
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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 unhandscled 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-
Day in June.

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 ramble slowly around it at about the light 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 when it was needed, or of a bag in our spuce 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 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 bisexualis (its prolonged jingle as it sits on the top of a spuce), the chewink and the wood-thrush. Whether you have slept soundly or not, it is not easy to lie asleep 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 sallay 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 need.

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 stoned 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.