

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE "Excursions" of the present volume follow the arrangement of the volume bearing that title in the Riverside Edition, which differed somewhat as to contents from the "Excursions" collected by Thoreau's sister after his death, and published in 1863 by Messrs. Ticknor & Fields. The Biographical Sketch by Emerson which prefaced the latter appears in the first volume of the present edition.

"A Yankee in Canada," which here, as in the Riverside Edition, is made the first of the series of Excursions, was formerly published in a volume with "Anti-Slavery and Reform Papers." Thoreau made this excursion to Canada with his friend Ellery Channing, and sent his narrative to Mr. Greeley, who wrote him regarding it, March 18, 1852: "I shall get you some money for the articles you sent me, though not immediately. As to your long account of a Canadian tour, I don't know. It looks unmanageable. Can't you cut it into three or four, and omit all that relates to time? The cities are described to death, but I know you are at home with Nature, and that *she* rarely and slowly changes. Break this up, if you can, and I will try to have it swallowed and digested." Thoreau appears to have taken Greeley's advice, and the narrative was divided into chapters. But after it had been begun in *Putnam's* in January, 1853, where it was entitled "Excursion to Canada," the

author and the editor, who appears from the following letter to have been Mr. G. W. Curtis, disagreed regarding the expediency of including certain passages, and Thoreau withdrew all after the third chapter. The letter is as follows:—

NEW YORK, January 2, 1853.

FRIEND THOREAU. . . . I am sorry you and C. cannot agree so as to have your whole MS. printed. It will be worth nothing elsewhere after having partly appeared in *Putnam's*. I think it is a mistake to conceal the authorship of the several articles, making them all (so to speak) *editorial*; but *if* that is done, don't you see that the elimination of very flagrant heresies (like your defiant Pantheism) becomes a necessity? If you had withdrawn your MS. on account of the abominable misprints in the first number, your ground would have been far more tenable. However, do what you will. Yours,

HORACE GREELEY.

“Natural History of Massachusetts” was contributed to *The Dial*, July, 1842, nominally as a review of some recent State reports. “A Walk to Wachusett” was printed in *The Boston Miscellany*, 1843. Mr. Sanborn, in his volume on Thoreau, prints a very interesting letter written by Margaret Fuller in 1841, in criticism of the verses which stand near the beginning of the paper, offered at that time for publication in *The Dial*. “The Landlord” was printed in *The Democratic Review* for October, 1843. “A Winter Walk” appeared in *The Dial* in the same month and year. Emerson in a letter to Thoreau, September 8, 1843, says: “I mean to send the

‘Winter’s Walk’ to the printer to-morrow for *The Dial*. I had some hesitation about it, notwithstanding its faithful observation and its fine sketches of the pickerelfisher and of the woodchopper, on account of *mannerism*, an old charge of mine, — as if, by attention, one could get the trick of the rhetoric; for example, to call a cold place sultry, a solitude public, a wilderness *domestic* (a favorite word), and in the woods to insult over cities, armies, etc. By pretty free omissions, however, I have removed my principal objections.” The address “The Succession of Forest Trees” was printed first in *The New York Tribune*, October 6, 1860, and was perhaps the latest of his writings which Thoreau saw in print.

After his death the interest which had already been growing was quickened by the successive publication in *The Atlantic Monthly* of “Autumnal Tints” and “Wild Apples” in October and November, 1862, and “Night and Moonlight” November, 1863. The last named appeared just before the publication of the volume “Excursions,” which collected the several papers.

“May Days” and “Days and Nights in Concord,” which were printed in the Riverside Edition, are now omitted as consisting merely of extracts from Thoreau’s Journal and therefore superseded by the publication of the latter in its complete form.

A few of Thoreau’s poems, taken from the “Week” and elsewhere, were added by Mr. Emerson to the volume entitled “Letters to Various Persons” which he brought out in 1865, but it was not till the volume of “Miscellanies” was issued in the Riverside Edition that

the otherwise unpublished verse of his that had appeared in *The Dial* was gathered into a single volume. Besides the *Dial* contributions, the Riverside "Miscellanies" contained a few poems that first found publication in Mr. Sanborn's *Life of Thoreau*. But the collection was not intended to be complete.

Many of Thoreau's poems, including his translations from the Anacreontics, are imbedded in the "Week," "Walden," and "Excursions," and it seemed best not to reproduce them in another volume. In 1895, shortly after the publication of the Riverside Thoreau, Mr. Henry S. Salt and Mr. Frank B. Sanborn brought out a book entitled "Poems of Nature by Henry David Thoreau," in which were collected "perhaps two thirds of [the poems] which Thoreau preserved." "Many of them," says the Introduction to that volume, "were printed by him, in whole or in part, among his early contributions to Emerson's *Dial*, or in his own two volumes, the *Week* and *Walden*. . . . Others were given to Mr. Sanborn for publication, by Sophia Thoreau, the year after her brother's death (several appeared in the *Boston Commonwealth* in 1863); or have been furnished from time to time by Mr. Blake, his literary executor." This volume contained a number of poems which had not before appeared in any of Thoreau's published books. Such poems are now added to those of the Riverside Edition. The present collection, however, no more than its predecessors pretends to completeness. It includes only those of Thoreau's poems which have been previously published and which are not contained in other volumes of this series. A list of

the poems and scattered bits of verse printed in the other volumes will be found in an Appendix. The *Journal* also contains, especially in the early part, a number of heretofore unpublished poems which it seems best to retain in their original setting.