NATURAL HISTORY OF MASSACHUSETTS.

Reports — on the Fishes, Reptiles, and Birds; the Herbaceous Plants and Quadrupeds; the Insects Injurious to Vegetation; and the Invertebrate Animals — of Massachusetts. Published agreeably to an Order of the Legislature, by the Commissioners on the Zoological and Botanical Survey of the State.

PRELIMINARY NOTE.

We were thinking how we might best celebrate the good deed which the State of Massachusetts has done, in procuring the Scientific Survey of the Commonwealth, whose result is recorded in these volumes, when we found a near neighbor and friend of ours, dear also to the Muses, an inhabitant of the town of Concord, who readily undertook to give us such comments as he had made on these books, and, better still, notes of his own conversation with nature in the woods and waters of this town. With all thankfulness we begged our friend to lay down the oar and fishing line, which none can handle better, and assume the pen, that Isaak Walton and White of Selborne might not want a successor, nor the fair meadows, to which we also have owed a home and the happiness of many years, their poet.

Concord, Mass.

Books of natural history make the most cheerful winter reading. I read in Audubon with a thrill of delight, when the snow covers the ground, of the magnolia, and the Florida keys, and their warm sea breezes; of the fence-rail, and the cotton-tree, and the migrations of the rice-bird; of the breaking up of winter in Labrador, and the melting of the snow on the forks of the Missouri; and owe an accession of health to these reminiscences of luxuriant nature.

Within the circuit of this plodding life
There enter moments of an azure hue,
Untarnished fair as is the violet
Or anemone, when the spring strews them
By some meandering rivulet, which make
The best philosophy untrue that aims
But to console man for his grievances.
I have remembered when the winter came,
High in my chamber in the frosty nights,
When in the still light of the cheerful moon,
On every twig and rail and jutting spout,
The icy spears were adding to their length
Against the arrows of the coming sun,
How in the shimmering noon of summer past
Some unrecorded beam slanted across
The upland pastures where the Johanswort grew;
Or heard, amid the verdure of my mind,
The bee's long smothered hum, on the blue flag
Loitering amidst the mead; or busy rill,
Which now through all its course stands still and dumb
Its own memorial,—purling at its play
Along the slopes, and through the meadows next,
Until its youthful sound was hushed at last
In the staid current of the lowland stream;
Or seen the furrows shine but late upturned,
And where the fieldfare followed in the rear,
When all the fields around lay bound and hoar
Beneath a thick intregument of snow.
So by God's cheap economy made rich
To go upon my winter's task again.

I am singularly refreshed in winter when I hear of service berries, poké-weed, juniper. Is not heaven made up
of these cheap summer glories? There is a singular health
in those words Labrador and East Main, which no desponding creed recognises. How much more than federal
are these states. If there were no other vicissitudes than the seasons, our interest would never tire. Much more is
adoing than Congress wots of. What journal do the persimmon and the buckeye keep, and the sharp-shinned hawk?
What is transpiring from summer to winter in the Carolinas, and the Great Pine Forest, and the Valley of the Mohawk? The merely political aspect of the land is never very cheering; men are degraded when considered as the members of a political organization. On this side all lands present only the symptoms of decay. I see but Bunker Hill and Sing-Sing, the District of Columbia and Sullivan's Island, with a few avenues connecting them. But paltry are they all beside one blast of the east or the south wind which blows over them.

In society you will not find health, but in nature. Unless our feet at least stood in the midst of nature, all our faces
would be pale and livid. Society is always diseased, and the best is the most so. There is no scent in it so wholesome
as that of the pines, nor any more restorative as the life-everlasting keep some book of natural history, of elixir, the reading of which sustains the system. To the sick, indeed, as well, a fountain of health. The portrait of natural beauty no hand can come. The doctrines of despair, of servitude, are never more delightful than the serenity of nature. Surely joy is the condition of a life unconfined, and the pine will not count some creeds in vestries and churches wrapped in furs by the Great Smokey sledge sledges are drawn by the northern night, the hunter the seal and walrus on the ice. Serenity or servitude, were never more seen alone under any circumstances.

Surely here on the Atlantic border, as in the Fur Countries. There is one under any circumstances.

What is any reason for those sedentary men in the shrouds and write the epitaph to being on a summer evening in the hyla with which the woods ring, the shrewdness of the butterfly carrying in a thousand hues upon its wing, stoutly stemming the current worn bright by the attrition is stilled.

We fancy that this din of philosophy, which is heard in pulpitudes through the universe, as in the creaking of the earth's axis, he will forget it all between the three-inch swing of a pendulum.
as that of the pines, nor any fragrance so penetrating and restorative as the life-everlasting in high pastures. I would keep some book of natural history always by me as a sort of elixir, the reading of which should restore the tone of the system. To the sick, indeed, nature is sick, but to the well, a fountain of health. To him who contemplates a trait of natural beauty no harm nor disappointment can come. The doctrines of despair, of spiritual or political tyranny or servitude, were never taught by such as shared the serenity of nature. Surely good courage will not flag here on the Atlantic border, as long as we are flanked by the Fur Countries. There is enough in that sound to cheer one under any circumstances. The spruce, the hemlock, and the pine will not countenance despair. Methinks some creeds in vestries and churches do forget the hunter wrapped in furs by the Great Slave Lake, and that the Esquimaux sledges are drawn by dogs, and in the twilight of the northern night, the hunter does not give over to follow the seal and walrus on the ice. They are of sick and diseased imaginations who would toll the world’s knell so soon. Cannot these sedentary sects do better than prepare the shrouds and write the epitaphs of those other busy living men? The practical faith of all men belies the preacher’s consolation. What is any man’s discourse to me, if I am not sensible of something in it as steady and cheery as the creak of crickets? In it the woods must be relieved against the sky. Men tire me when I am not constantly greeted and refreshed as by the flux of sparkling streams. Surely joy is the condition of life. Think of the young fry that leap in ponds, the myriads of insects ushered into being on a summer evening, the incessant note of the hyla with which the woods ring in the spring, the nonchalance of the butterfly carrying accident and change painted in a thousand hues upon its wings, or the brook minnow stoutly stemming the current, the lustre of whose scales worn bright by the attrition is reflected upon the bank.

We fancy that this din of religion, literature, and philosophy, which is heard in pulpits, lyceums, and parlors, vibrates through the universe, and is as catholic a sound as the creaking of the earth’s axle; but if a man sleep soundly, he will forget it all between sunset and dawn. It is the three-inch swing of a pendulum in a cupboard, which the
great pulse of nature vibrates by and through each instant. When we lift our eyelids and open our ears, it disappears with smoke and rattle like the cars on a railroad. When I detect a beauty in any of the recesses of nature, I am reminded, by the serene and retired spirit in which it requires to be contemplated, of the inexpressible privacy of a life,—how silent and unambitious it is. The beauty there is in mosses must be considered from the holiest, quietest nook. What an admirable training is science for the more active warfare of life. Indeed, the unchallenged bravery, which these studies imply, is far more impressive than the trumpeted valor of the warrior. I am pleased to learn that Thales was up and stirring by night not unfrequently, as his astronomical discoveries prove. Linnæus, setting out for Lapland, surveys his "comb" and "spare shirt," "leathern breeches" and "gauze cap to keep off gnats," with as much complacency as Bonaparte a park of artillery for the Russian campaign. The quiet bravery of the man is admirable. His eye is to take in fish, flower, and bird, quadruped and biped. Science is always brave, for to know, is to know good; doubt and danger quail before her eye. What the coward overlooks in his hurry, she calmly scrutinizes, breaking ground like a pioneer for the array of arts that follow in her train. But cowardice is unscientific; for there cannot be a science of ignorance. There may be a science of bravery, for that advances; but a retreat is rarely well conducted; if it is, then is it an orderly advance in the face of circumstances.

But to draw a little nearer to our promised topics. Entomology extends the limits of being in a new direction, so that I walk in nature with a sense of greater space and freedom. It suggests besides, that the universe is not rough-hewn, but perfect in its details. Nature will bear the closest inspection; she invites us to lay our eye level with the smallest leaf, and take an insect view of its plain. She has no interstices; every part is full of life. I explore, too, with pleasure, the sources of the myriad sounds which crowd the summer noon, and which seem the very grain and stuff of which eternity is made. Who does not remember the shrill roll-call of the harvest fly? There were ears for these sounds in Greece long ago, as Anacreon's ode will show.

"We pronounce thee hie For on the tops of the trees Drinking a little dew, Like any king thou sitst. For there are they all, Whatever thou seest in And whatever the world Thou art the friend of in no respect injuring Thou art honored Sweet prophet of suns The Muses love thee, And Phoebus himself And has given thee a Age does not wrack thee Thou art honored Unsuffering, bloodless Almost thou art like the

In the autumn days, the clouds are over all the land, and chiefly at night-fall, so that the world is ushered in the evening by the winds that vex the world after one has chosen. Every pulse-beat of the cricket's chant and the tick of the wall. Alternate with these is:

About two hundred and fifty species permanently in the State, or make us a passing visit. The hatch and chicadee flitting from autumn to spring, prey summers, the hawk with winter blasts of winter, the robin*.

*A white robin and a white quail mentioned in Audubon as remarks found on the ground; but this bird in the choice of a building spot.

thatched roof of a deserted barn, and
The beauty there is in the holiest, quietest nook. That for the more active engaged bravery, which is more active than the trumpet of war, which is not infrequently, as his astronauts, setting out for a poplar, to prepare shirt," "leathern coat to off gnats," with as a mark of artillery for the gunners. The glory of the man is advancing. Every pulse-beat is in exact time with the cricket's chant and the ticking of the deathwatch in the wall. Alternate with these if you can.

About two hundred and eighty birds either reside permanently in the State, or spend the summer only, or make us a passing visit. Those which spend the winter with us have obtained our warmest sympathy. The nut-hatch and chidacee sitting in company through the dells of the wood, the one harshly scolding at the intruder, the other with a faint lisping note enticing him on, the jay screaming in the orchard, the crow cawing in unison with the storm, the partridge, like a russet link extended over from autumn to spring, preserving unbroken the chain of summers, the hawk with warrior-like firmness abiding the blasts of winter, the robin* and lark lurking by warm

*A white robin and a white quail have occasionally been seen. It is mentioned in Audubon as remarkable that the nest of a robin should be found on the ground; but this bird seems to be less particular than most in the choice of a building spot. I have seen its nest placed under the thatched roof of a deserted barn, and in one instance, where the adjacent

In the autumn days, the creaking of crickets is heard at noon over all the land, and as in summer they are heard chiefly at night-fall, so then by their incessant chirp they usher in the evening of the year. Nor can all the vanities that vex the world alter one whit the measure that night has chosen. Every pulse-beat is in exact time with the cricket's chant and the ticking of the deathwatch in the wall. Alternate with these if you can.
springs in the woods, the familiar snow-bird culling a few
seeds in the garden, or a few crumbs in the yard, and occasion-
ally the shrike, with heedless and unfrozen melody
bringing back summer again;—

His steady sails he never furls
At any time o' year,
And perching now on Winter's curls,
He whistles in his ear.

As the spring advances and the ice is melting in the
river, our earliest and straggling visitors make their appearance. Again does the old Teian poet sing as well for New
England as for Greece, in the

RETURN OF SPRING.

"Behold, how spring appearing,
The Graces send forth roses;
Behold, how the wave of the sea
Is made smooth by the calm;
Behold, how the duck dives;
Behold, how the crane travels;
And Titan shines constantly bright.
The shadows of the clouds are moving;
The works of man shine; The earth puts forth fruits;
The fruit of the olive puts forth.
Along the leaves, along the branches,
The fruit, bending them down, flourishes."

The ducks alight at this season in the still water, in
company with the gulls, which do not fail to improve an east
wind to visit our meadows, and swim about by twos and
threes, pluming themselves, and diving to peck at the root
of the lily, and the cranberries which the frost has not loos-
ened. The first flock of geese is seen beating to north, in
long harrows and waving lines, the gingle of the song-sparrow
salutes us from the shrubs and fences, the plaintive note of
the lark comes clear and sweet from the meadow, and the
bluebird, like an azure ray, glances past us in our walk.
The fish-hawk, too, is occasionally seen at this season sail-
ing majestically over the water, served it will not soon forget to
sails the air like a ship of the line, to the elements, falling back from
its beam ends, and holding its taut arrows, in the attitude of the master
of the elements, as of the master of rival aspirations, not quail before the owner of
like an intruder on its domains. Moving so steadily away, is a kind
of one of a pair of ospreys, which in this vicinity, shot by a neighbor
more than two feet in length, and with wings. Nuttall mentions that 'Aristotle, pretended that the os-
gaze at the sun, and those who
destroyed. Linnaeus even believed that one of the feet of this bird
while the other was partly webbed with one foot and grasp a fish.
An educated eye is now dim, and
Its shrill scream seems yet to roar of the sea in its wings. The
ting in its claws, and his wrath in
head and neck. It reminds me
motion, and would inspire the dull
nassus.

The booming of the bittern, of
Nuttall, is frequently heard in the
evening, sounding like a pump,
a frosty morning in some distant
in which this sound is produced is
described. On one occasion, the
of my neighbors to thrust its beak
up as much as it could hold, they
ed it out again with four or five
ning it two or three feet, and made
At length the summer's eterni-
cackle of the flicker among the
a new dynasty begins with calm,
In May and June the wood
and given the immense spaces of
ulling a few ards, and occa-
on melody in the their appear-
well for New

still water, in
prove an east
by twos and
back at the root
has not loos-
going to north, in
song-sparrow
in one note of
the machinery.

ospreys, which have for some years fished
in this vicinity, shot by a neighboring pond, measuring
more than two feet in length, and six in the stretch of its
wings. Nuttall mentions that “The ancients, particularly
Aristotle, pretended that the ospreys taught their young to
gaze at the sun, and those who were unable to do so were
destroyed. Linnaeus even believed, on ancient authority,
that one of the feet of this bird had all the toes divided,
while the other was partly webbed, so that it could swim
with one foot and grasp a fish with the other.” But that
educated eye is now dim, and those talons are nerveless.
Its shrill scream seems yet to linger in its throat, and the
roar of the sea in its wings. There is the tyranny of Jove
in its claws, and his wrath in the erectile feathers of
the head and neck. It reminds me of the Argonautic expedi-
tion, and would inspire the dullest to take flight over Par-
nassus.

The booming of the bittern, described by Goldsmith and
Nuttall, is frequently heard in our fens, in the morning and
evening, sounding like a pump, or the chopping of wood in
a frosty morning in some distant farm-yard. The manner
in which this sound is produced I have not seen anywhere
described. On one occasion, the bird has been seen by one
of my neighbors to thrust its bill into the water, and suck
up as much as it could hold, then raising its head, it pum-
ped it out again with four or five heaves of the neck, throw-
ing it two or three feet, and making the sound each time.

At length the summer’s eternity is ushered in by the
cackle of the flicker among the oaks on the hill-side, and
a new dynasty begins with calm security.

In May and June the woodland quire is in full tune,
and given the immense spaces of hollow air, and this curious
human ear, one does not see how the void could be better filled.

Each summer sound
Is a summer round.

As the season advances, and those birds which make us but a passing visit depart, the woods become silent again, and but few feathers ruffle the drowsy air. But the solitary rambler may still find a response and expression for every mood in the depths of the wood.

Sometimes I hear the veery's* clarion,
Or brazen trump of the impatient jay,
And in secluded woods the chicadee
Doles out her scanty notes, which sing the praise
Of heroes, and set forth the loveliness
Of virtue evermore.

The phoebe still sings in harmony with the sultry weather by the brink of the pond, nor are the desultory hours of noon in the midst of the village without their minstrel.

Upon the lofty elm tree sprays
The vireo rings the changes sweet,
During the trivial summer days,
Striving to lift our thoughts above the street.

With the autumn begins in some measure a new spring. The plover is heard whistling high in the air over the dry pastures, the finches flit from tree to tree, the bobolinks and flickers fly in flocks, and the goldfinch rides on the earliest blast, like a winged hyla peeping amid the rustle of the leaves. The crows, too, begin now to congregate; you may stand and count them as they fly low and straggling over the landscape, singly or by twos and threes, at intervals of half a mile, until a hundred have passed.

I have seen it suggested somewhere that the crow was brought to this country by the white man; but I shall as soon believe that the white man planted these pines and

* This bird, which is so well described by Nuttall, but is apparently unknown by the author of the Report, is one of the most common in the woods in this vicinity, and in Cambridge I have heard the college yard ring with its trill. The boys call it "perrick," from the sound of its querulous and chiding note, as it flits near the traveller through the underwood. The cowbird's egg is occasionally found in its nest, as mentioned by Audubon.

The late walker or sailer, in the hear the murmuring of the snipe, dows, the most spirit-like sound in the autumn, when the frost has tary loon pays a visit to our retire lurk undisturbed till the season making the woods ring with his wij the Great Northern Diver, well des pursued with a boat, it will dive, a der water, for sixty rods or more, a paddled, and its pursuer, if he would again, must put his ear to the surface. When it comes to the water off with one shake of its w about until again disturbed.

These are the sights and sounds oftentimes during the year. But some new note, which has for back group Mexicos than the books describe, a thology has done him no service.
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he is no spaniel to follow our steps; but rather
flits about the clearings like the dusky spirit of the Indian,
reminding me of Philip and Powhatan, than of
Winthrop and Smith. He is a relic of the dark ages.
By just so slight, by just so lasting a tenure does superstition
hold the world ever; there is the rook in England, and the
crow in New England.

Thou dusky spirit of the wood,
Bird of an ancient brood,
Flitting thy lonely way,
A meteor in the summer's day,
From wood to wood, from hill to hill,
Low over forest, field and rill,
What wouldst thou say?
Why shouldst thou haunt the day?
What makes thy melancholy float?
What bravery inspires thy throat,
And bears thee up above the clouds,
Over desponding human crowds.
Which far below
Lay thy haunts low?

The late walker or sailor, in the October evenings, may
hear the murmuring of the snipe, circling over the mea-
dows, the most spirit-like sound in nature; and still later in
the autumn, when the frosts have tinged the leaves, a soli-
itary loon pays a visit to our retired ponds, where he may
lurk undisturbed till the season of moulting is passed,
making the woods ring with his wild laughter. This bird,
the Great Northern Diver, well deserves its name; for when
pursued with a boat, it will dive, and swim like a fish un-
der water, for sixty rods or more, as fast as a boat can be
paddled, and its pursuer, if he would discover his game
again, must put his ear to the surface to hear where it
comes up. When it comes to the surface, it throws the
water off with one shake of its wings, and calmly swims
about untill again disturbed.

These are the sights and sounds which reach our senses
oftenest during the year. But sometimes one hears a quite
new note, which has for background other Carolinas and
Mexicos than the books describe, and learns that his ornith-
ology has done him no service.
It appears from the Report that there are about forty quadrupeds belonging to the State, and among these one is glad to hear of a few bears, wolves, lynxes, and wildcats. When our river overflows its banks in the spring, the wind from the meadows is laden with a strong scent of musk, and by its freshness advertises me of an unexplored wildness. Those backwoods are not far off then. I am affected by the sight of the cabins of the musk-rat, made of mud and grass, and raised three or four feet along the river, as when I read of the barrows of Asia. The musk-rat is the beaver of the settled States. Their number has even increased within a few years in this vicinity. Among the rivers which empty into the Merrimack, the Concord is known to boatmen as a dead stream. The Indians are said to have called it Musketaquid, or Prairie river. Its current being much more sluggish, and its water more muddy than the rest, it abounds more in fish and game of every kind. According to the History of the town, "The fur trade here was once very important. As early as 1641, a company was formed in the colony, of which Major Willard of Concord was superintendent, and had the exclusive right to trade with the Indians in furs and other articles; and for this right they were obliged to pay into the public treasury one twentieth of all the furs they obtained." There are trappers in our midst still, as well as on the streams of the far west, who night and morning go the round of their traps, without fear of the Indian. One of these takes from one hundred and fifty to two hundred musk-rats in a year, and even thirty-six have been shot by one man in a day. Their fur, which is not nearly as valuable as formerly, is in good condition in the winter and spring only; and upon the breaking up of the ice, when they are driven out of their holes by the water, the greatest number is shot from boats, either swimming or resting on their stools, or slight supports of grass and reeds, by the side of the stream. Though they exhibit considerable cunning at other times, they are easily taken in a trap, which has only to be placed in their holes, or wherever they frequent, without any bait being used, though it is sometimes rubbed with their musk. In the winter the hunter cuts holes in the ice, and shoots them when they come to the surface. Their burrows are usually in the high banks of the river, with their nests, composed of flags, may be discovered where the ground is from three to seven or eight yards high.

Frequently, in the morning, I have seen in the still water, where the current is less strong, a musk-rat, with only its nose above the water, sometimes a green bough in its mouth. When it finds itself observed, it will retire to its hole, or the weeds. It will remain for long minutes at a time, and on occasion, when undisturbed, to form an arch, which contracted and expanded itself. When it suspects danger on shore, it slaps a leaf like a squirrel, and survey its neighbourhood without moving.

In the fall, if a meadow intersects the river and the stream, they erect cabins, or four feet high, near its edge. Sometimes, though young are sometimes freshets but rather their habit of resort in the winter with their food consists chiefly of flags and shells of the latter being left in their lodges in the spring.

The Penobscot Indian wears the musk-rat, with the legs and tail dangling under his girdle, for a pouch, into which he puts his tackle, and essences to scent his persons.

The bear, wolf, lynx, wildcat, and the mink have disappeared; the otter is rare, and the mink is less common than before. Perhaps of all our untamed animals, none have continued the widest and most famous of the old tales of Pilpay and Aesop to the present day, those tracks still give variety to a winding path, as if I were on the track of some animal or which perhaps I have started my expectation, as if I were on the track of some animal.
that there are about forty otters, and among these one flowers, lynxes, and wildcats. On the banks in the spring, the filled with a strong scent of principles me of an unexplored are not far off then. I am otters of the musk-rat, made three or four feet along the barrows of Asia. The United States. Their numbers few years in this vicinity. into the Merrimack, the has as a dead stream. The Musketaquid, or Prairie more sluggish, and its water abounds more in fish and going to the History of the very important. As early colony, of which the superintendent, and had the Indians in furs and they were obliged to pay tenth of all the furs they in our midst still, as well who night and morning without fear of the Indian. hundred and fifty to two hundred thirty-six have been their fur, which is not nearly condition in the winter breaking up of the ice, their holes by the water, the boats, either swimming or supports of grass and reeds, though they exhibit considerable are easily taken in a trap, or wherever being used, though it is is a musk. In the winter the shoots them when they burrows are usually in the

high banks of the river, with the entrance under water, and rising within to above the level of high water. Sometimes their nests, composed of dried meadow grass and flags, may be discovered where the bank is low and spongy, by the yielding of the ground under the feet. They have from three to seven or eight young in the spring.

Frequently, in the morning or evening, a long ripple is seen in the still water, where a musk-rat is crossing the stream, with only its nose above the surface, and sometimes a green bough in its mouth to build its house with. When it finds itself observed, it will dive and swim five or six rods under water, and at length conceal itself in its hole, or the weeds. It will remain under water for ten minutes at a time, and on one occasion has been seen, when undisturbed, to form an air bubble under the ice, which contracted and expanded as it breathed at leisure. When it suspects danger on shore, it will stand erect like a squirrel, and survey its neighborhood for several minutes, without moving.

In the fall, if a meadow intervene between their burrows and the stream, they erect cabins of mud and grass, three or four feet high, near its edge. These are not their breeding places, though young are sometimes found in them in late freshets but rather their hunting lodges, to which they resort in the winter with their food, and for shelter. Their food consists chiefly of flags and fresh water muscles, the shells of the latter being left in large quantities around their lodges in the spring.

The Penobscot Indian wears the entire skin of a muskrat, with the legs and tail dangling, and the head caught under his girdle, for a pouch, into which he puts his fishing tackle, and essences to scent his traps with.

The bear, wolf, lynx, wildcat, deer, beaver, and marten, have disappeared; the otter is rarely if ever seen at present; and the mink is less common than formerly.

Perhaps of all our untamed quadrupeds, the fox has obtained the widest and most familiar reputation, from the time of Pilpay and Aesop to the present day. His recent tracks still give variety to a winter's walk. I tread in the steps of the fox that has gone before by some hours, or which perhaps I have started, with such a tiptoe of expectation, as if I were on the trail of the Spirit itself which
resides in the wood, and expected soon to catch it in its lair. I am curious to know what has determined its graceful curvatures, and how surely they were coincident with the fluctuations of some mind. I know which way a mind wended, what horizon it faced, by the setting of these tracks, and whether it moved slowly or rapidly, by their greater or less intervals and distinctness; for the swiftest step leaves yet a lasting trace. Sometimes you will see the trails of many together, and where they have gambolled and gone through a hundred evolutions, which testify to a singular listlessness and leisure in nature.

When I see a fox run across the pond on the snow, with the carelessness of freedom, or at intervals trace his course in the sunshine along the ridge of a hill, I give up to him sun and earth as to their true proprietor. He does not go in the sun, but it seems to follow him, and there is a visible sympathy between him and it. Sometimes, when the snow lies light, and but five or six inches deep, you may give chase and come up with one on foot. In such a case he will show a remarkable presence of mind, choosing only the safest direction, though he may lose ground by it. Notwithstanding his fright, he will take no step which is not beautiful. His pace is a sort of leopard canter, as if he were in no wise impeded by the snow, but were husbanding his strength all the while. When the ground is uneven, the course is a series of graceful curves, conforming to the shape of the surface. He runs as though there were not a bone in his back, occasionally dropping his muzzle to the ground for a rod or two, and then tossing his head aloft, when satisfied of his course.

Of fishes, seventy-five genera and one hundred and seven species are described in the Report. The fisherman will be startled to learn that there are but about a dozen kinds in the ponds and streams of any inland town; and almost nothing is known of their habits. Only their names and residence make one love fishes. I would know even the number of their fin rays, compose the lateral line. I am curious to know what has determined their graceful curvatures, and how surely they were coincident with the fluctuations of some mind. I know which way a mind wended, what horizon it faced, by the setting of these tracks, and whether it moved slowly or rapidly, by their greater or less intervals and distinctness; for the swiftest step leaves yet a lasting trace. Sometimes you will see the trails of many together, and where they have gambolled and gone through a hundred evolutions, which testify to a singular listlessness and leisure in nature.

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even the number of their fin rays, and how many scales
compose the lateral line. I am the wiser in respect to all
knowledges, and the better qualified for all fortunes, for
knowing that there is a minnow in the brook. Methinks
I have need even of his sympathy and to be his fellow in
a degree.
I have experienced such simple delight in the trivial
matters of fishing and sporting, formerly, as might have in-
spired the muse of Homer or Shakspeare; and now when I
theory the plates of the Angler's Sou-
'st these things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud?"

Next to nature it seems as if man's actions were the
most natural, they so gently accord with her. The small
seines of flax stretched across the shallow and transparent
parts of our river, are no more intrusion than the cobweb
in the sun. I stay my boat in mid current, and look down
in the sunny water to see the civil meshes of his nets,
and wonder how the blustering people of the town could
have done this elvish work. The twine looks like a new
river weed, and is to the river as a beautiful memento of
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In the brooks is heard the slight grating sound of small
cakes of ice, floating with various speed, full of content and promise, and where the water gurgles under a natural bridge, you may hear these hasty rafts hold conversation in an undertone. Every rill is a channel for the juices of the meadow. In the ponds the ice cracks with a merry and inspiring din, and down the larger streams is whirled, grating hoarsely, and crashing its way along, which was so lately a highway for the woodman’s team and the fox, sometimes with the tracks of the skaters still fresh upon it, and the holes cut for pickerel. Town committees anxiously inspect the bridges and causeways, as if by mere eye-force to intercede with the ice, and save the treasury.

The river swelleth more and more,
Like some sweet influence stealing o’er
The passive town; and for a while
Each tufted makes a tiny isle,
Where, on some friendly Ararat,
Resteth the weary water-rat.

No ripple shows Musketaquid,
Her very current e’en is hid,
As deepest souls do calmest rest,
When thoughts are swelling in the breast,
And she that in the summer’s drought
Doth make a rippling and a rout,
Sleeps from Nahshawtuc to the Cliff,
Unruffled by a single skiff.
But by a thousand distant hills
The louder roar a thousand rills,
And many a spring which now is dumb,
And many a stream with smothered hum,
Doth swifter well and faster glide,
Though buried deep beneath the tide.

Our village shows a rural Venice,
Its broad lagoons where yonder fen is;
As lovely as the Bay of Naples
Yon placid cove amid the maples;
And in my neighbor’s field of corn
I recognise the Golden Horn

Here Nature taught from year to year,
When only red men came to hear,
The fisherman now repairs and launches his boat. The best time for spearing is at this season, before the weeds have begun to grow, and while the fishes lie in the shallow water; for in summer they prefer the cool depths, and in the autumn they are still more or less concealed by the grass. The first requisite is fuel for your crate; and for this purpose the roots of the pitch pine are commonly used, found under decayed stumps, where the trees have been felled eight or ten years.

With a crate, or jack, made of iron hoops, to contain your fire, and attached to the bow of your boat about three feet from the water; a fish-spear with seven tines, and fourteen feet long, a large basket, or barrow, to carry your fuel and bring back your fish, and a thick outer garment, you are equipped for a cruise. It should be a warm and still evening; and then with a fire crackling merrily at the prow, you may launch forth like a cucullo into the night. The dullest soul cannot go upon such an expedition without some of the spirit of adventure; as if he had stolen the boat of Charon and gone down the Styx on a midnight expedition into the realms of Pluto. And much speculation does this wandering star afford to the musing night-walker, leading him on and on, jack-o'lantern-like, over the meadows; or if he is wiser, he amuses himself with imagining what of human life, far in the silent night, is flitting moth-like round its candle. The silent navigator shoves his craft gently over the water, with a smothered pride and sense of benefaction, as if he were the phosphor, or light-bringer, to these dusky realms, or some sister moon, blessing the spaces with her light. The waters, for a rod or two on either hand and several feet in depth, are lit up with more than noon-day distinctness, and he enjoys the opportunity which so many have desired, for the roofs of a city are indeed raised, and he surveys the midnight economy of the fishes. There they lie in every variety of posture, some on their backs, with their white bellies uppermost, some suspended in mid water, some sculling gently along
with a dreamy motion of the fins, and others quite active and wide awake,—a scene not unlike what the human city would present. Occasionally he will encounter a turtle selecting the choicest morsels, or a musk-rat resting on a tussock. He may exercise his dexterity, if he sees fit, on the more distant and active fish, or fork the nearer into his boat, as potatoes out of a pot, or even take the sound sleepers with his hands. But these last accomplishments he will soon learn to dispense with, distinguishing the real object of his pursuit, and find compensation in the beauty and never ending novelty of his position. The pines growing down to the water's edge will show newly as in the glare of a conflagration, and as he floats under the willows with his light, the song-sparrow will often wake on her perch, and sing that strain at midnight, which she had meditated for the morning. And when he has done, he may have to steer his way home through the dark by the north star, and he will feel himself some degrees nearer to it for having lost his way on the earth.

The fishes commonly taken in this way are pickerel, suckers, perch, eels, pouts, breams, and shiners,—from thirty to sixty weight in a night. Some are hard to be recognised in the unnatural light, especially the perch, which his dark bands being exaggerated, acquires a ferocious aspect. The number of these transverse bands, which the Report states to be seven, is, however, very variable, for in some of our ponds they have nine and ten even.

It appears that we have eight kinds of tortoises, twelve snakes,—but one of which is venomous,—nine frogs and toads, nine salamanders, and one lizard, for our neighbors. I am particularly attracted by the motions of the serpent tribe. They make our hands and feet, the wings of the bird, and the fins of the fish seem very superfluous, as if nature had only indulged her fancy in making them. The black snake will dart into a bush when pursued, and circle round and round with an easy and graceful motion, amid the thin and bare twigs, five or six feet from the ground, as a bird flits from bough to bough, or hangs in festoons between the forks. Elasticity and flexibleness in the simpler forms of animal life are equivalent to a complex system of limbs in the higher; and we have only to be as wise and wily as the serpent, to perceive the vulgar assistance of hands and feet.

In April, the snapping turtle is frequently taken on the meadow by the fisherman, taking sight over the snout projecting above the water, and easily secures his prey by disturbing the water by swimming, and drawing its head under, it remains a clump of grass. Its eggs, when from the water, in some soft place frequently devoured by the skunk, as a toad catches flies, a current fluid from its mouth to attract Nature has taken more care in the education and refinement of the silent influence which flowers the ditcher in the meadow than the world.

I walk in the woods, I am not; I have been there before me; my neighbors typified there. I am struck with the many and unanimitous of nature, as the mouth of a stream, the form of their leaves and flowers. You will see delicate wreaths of vapor, dew-lines, suggest a high refinement, a nobility were. It is not hard to account for this, to represent this light grace, this spray from the wood, or a crystal tear on your mantel, and your plebeian beside its nobler fashion superior there, as if used to a radius. It has a salute and a rejoicing and heroism.

In the winter, I stop short and would like to turn back. Trees grow up without forethought and circumstances. They do not now is the golden age of the tree, of the rain, are occasion enough; the centuries. The "winter of our life. Witness the buds of the native daffodil, the frost on the sides of its br
Massachusetts. [July,

Ins, and others quite active but unlike what the human
fly he will encounter a tur
or a muskrat resting on
this dexterity, if he sees fit,
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ight. Some are hard to be
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eggs, which are buried at a distance
quently devoured by the skunk.

Nature has taken more care than the fondest parent for
the education and refinement of her children. Consider
the silent influence which flowers exert, no less upon the
ditcher in the meadow than the lady in the bower.
When I walk in the woods, I am reminded that a wise purveyor
has been there before me; my most delicate experience is
typified there.

In the winter, I stop short in the path to admire how the
trees grow up without forethought, regardless of the time
and circumstances. They do not wait as man does, but
now is the golden age of the sapling. Earth, air, sun, and
rain, are occasion enough; they were no better in primeval
centuries. The "winter of their discontent" never comes.
Witness the buds of the native poplar standing gaily out to
the frost on the sides of its bare switch. They express a

and wily as the serpent, to perform as difficult feats without
the vulgar assistance of hands and feet.

In April, the snapping turtle, Emysaurus serpentina, is
frequently taken on the meadows and in the river. The
fisherman, taking sight over the calm surface, discovers its
snout projecting above the water, at the distance of many
rods, and easily secures his prey through its unwillingness to
disturb the water by swimming hastily away, for, gradually
drawing its head under, it remains resting on some limb or
clump of grass. Its eggs, which are buried at a distance
from the water, in some soft place, as a pigeon bed, are
quently devoured by the skunk. It will catch fish by day-
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naked confidence. With cheerful heart one could be a sojourner in the wilderness, if he were sure to find there the catkins of the willow or the alder. When I read of them in the accounts of northern adventurers, by Baffin's Bay or Mackenzie's river, I see how even to me it might be possible to dwell. They are our little vegetable redeemers. Methinks our virtue will hold out till they come again. They are worthy to have had a greater than Minerva or Ceres for their inventor. Who was the benignant goddess that bestowed them on mankind?

Nature is mythical and mystical always, and works with the license and extravagance of genius. She has her luxurious and florid style as well as art. Having a pilgrim's cup to make, she gives to the whole, stem, bowl, handle, and nose, some fantastic shape, as if it were to be the car of some fabulous marine deity, a Nereus or Triton.

In the winter, the botanist needs not confine himself to his books and herbarium, and give over his out-door pursuits, but study a new department of vegetable physiology, what may be called crystalline botany, then. The winter of 1837 was unusually favorable for this. In December of that year the Genius of vegetation seemed to hover by night over its summer haunts with unusual persistency. Such a hoar-frost, as is very uncommon here or anywhere, and whose full effects can never be witnessed after sunrise, occurred several times. As I went forth early on a still frosty morning, the trees looked like airy creatures of darkness caught napping, on this side huddled together with their grey hairs streaming in a secluded valley, which the sun had not penetrated, on that hurrying off in Indian file along some water-course, while the shrubs and grasses, like elves and fairies of the night, sought to hide their diminished heads in the snow. The river, viewed from the high bank, appeared of a yellowish green color, though all the landscape was white. Every tree, shrub, and spire of grass, that could raise its head above the snow, was covered with a dense ice-foliage, answering, as it were, leaf for leaf to its summer dress. Even the fences had put forth leaves in the night. The centre, diverging, and more minute fibres were perfectly distinct, and the edges regularly indented. These leaves were on the side of the twig or stubble opposite to the sun, meeting it for the most part at right angles, and there were others standing out at these and upon one another, with not supporting them. When the first rays of the scene, the grasses seemed hung with pearls, which jingled merrily as they were moved by the traveller, and reflected all the light he moved from side to side. It struck the leaves and the green ones whose forms were creatures of but one law; that in order to the vegetable juices swell gradually in the one hand, and the crystalline on the other, they were indifferent, but the law one and all in the spring but pushed up in a moment and eternal mould, which, summer is waiting to be filled.

This foliate structure is common plumage of birds, and to how large an inanimate nature. The same independence is observable in many other instances, the rhymes, when some animal form, or the crown of some vegetable. As, apply an eternal melody, independent of time.

As confirmation of the fact, that the law of crystallization, every one may observe the edge of the melting frost on the winter, particles are bundled together so as to form with grain, or shocks rising he from stubble; on one side the vegetation towering palms and wide-spread boughs in pictures of oriental scenery; on the other stiff frozen, with downcast branches.

Vegetation has been made to the same as in crystals the law is more obvious, more simple, and for the most part fleeting, would it not be as philosophers consider all growth, all filling up with but a crystallisation more or less rapid?

On this occasion, in the side of the river, wherever the water or other current, its throat and outer edge, like that bristled with a glistening ice-arm,
and there were others standing out at all possible angles upon these and upon one another, with no twig or stubble supporting them. When the first rays of the sun slanted over the scene, the grasses seemed hung with innumerable jewels, which jingled merrily as they were brushed by the foot of the traveller, and reflected all the hues of the rainbow as he moved from side to side. It struck me that these ghost leaves and the green ones whose forms they assume, were the creatures of but one law; that in obedience to the same law the vegetable juices swell gradually into the perfect leaf, on the one hand, and the crystalline particles troop to their standard in the same order, on the other. As if the material were indifferent, but the law one and invariable, and every plant in the spring but pushed up into and filled a permanent and eternal mould, which, summer and winter, forever is waiting to be filled.

This foliate structure is common to the coral and the plumage of birds, and to how large a part of animate and inanimate nature. The same independence of law on matter is observable in many other instances, as in the natural rhymes, when some animal form, color, or odor, has its counterpart in some vegetable. As, indeed, all rhymes imply an eternal melody, independent of any particular sense.

As confirmation of the fact, that vegetation is but a kind of crystallization, every one may observe how, upon the edge of the melting frost on the window, the needle-shaped particles are bundled together so as to resemble fields waving with grain, or shocks rising here and there from the stubble; on one side the vegetation of the torrid zone, high towering palms and wide-spread bannians, such as are seen in pictures of oriental scenery; on the other, arctic pines stiff frozen, with downcast branches.

Vegetation has been made the type of all growth; but as in crystals the law is more obvious, their material being more simple, and for the most part more transient and fleeting, would it not be as philosophical as convenient, to consider all growth, all filling up within the limits of nature, but a crystallization more or less rapid?

On this occasion, in the side of the high bank of the river, wherever the water or other cause had formed a cavity, its throat and outer edge, like the entrance to a citadel, bristled with a glistening ice-armour. In one place you
might see minute ostrich feathers, which seemed the waving plumes of the warriors filing into the fortress; in another, the glancing, fan-shaped banners of the Lilliputian host; and in another, the needle-shaped particles collected into bundles, resembling the plumes of the pine, might pass for a phalanx of spears. From the under side of the ice in the brooks, where there was a thicker ice below, depended a mass of crystallization, four or five inches deep, in the form of prisms, with their lower ends open, which, when the ice was laid on its smooth side, resembled the roofs and steeples of a Gothic city, or the vessels of a crowded haven under a press of canvas. The very mud in the road, where the ice had melted, was crystallized with deep rectilinear fissures, and the crystalline masses in the sides of the ruts resembled exactly asbestos in the disposition of their needles. Around the roots of the stubble and flower-stalks, the frost was gathered into the form of irregular conical shells, or fairy rings. In some places the ice-crystals were lying upon granite rocks, directly over crystals of quartz, the frost-work of a longer night, crystals of a longer period, but to some eye unprejudiced by the short term of human life, melting as fast as the former.

In the Report on the Invertebrate Animals, this singular fact is recorded, which teaches us to put a new value on time and space. "The distribution of the marine shells is well worthy of notice as a geological fact. Cape Cod, the right arm of the Commonwealth, reaches out into the ocean, some fifty or sixty miles. It is nowhere many miles wide; but this narrow point of land has hitherto proved a barrier to the migrations of many species of Mollusca. Several genera and numerous species, which are separated by the intervention of only a few miles of land, are effectually prevented from mingling by the Cape, and do not pass from one side to the other. * * * * Of the one hundred and ninety-seven marine species, eighty-three do not pass to the south shore, and fifty are not found on the north shore of the Cape."

That common muscle, the Unio complanatus, or more properly fluviotilis, left in the spring by the musk-rat upon rocks and stumps, appears to have been an important article of food with the Indians. In one place, where they are said to have feasted, they are found in large quantities, at an elevation of thirty feet above the depth of a foot, and mingled remains.

The works we have placed with as much license as the press such as imply more labor than we wanted complete catalogues of important facts merely as would have a value independent of the reports. Those on Herbaceous Plants have much value, as long as Bigelow serves but to indicate, what species are found in the errors ourselves, and a more precise list would expand the list. The Quadrupeds deserve a more expanded report than they have obtained.

These volumes deal much in your descriptions, not interesting to the reptile here and there a colored sentence plants growing in dark forest without blossoms. But the truth. It is astonishing how few added in a century to the natural history of man himself, written. Men are knowing every countryman and dairyman the fourth stomach of the calf part particular mushroom is a safe one cannot go into any field or without every stone had been turned, and ripped up. But after all, it is to see when the cover is off. "the attitude of inspection is prospect, but behold. We must can see. Slow are the begin..."
which seemed the wavering fortress; in an irregular disposition of the Lilliputian particles collected from the pine, might pass beneath the ice below, depend-ingly, inches deep, in the ice below, depending upon the open, which, when emulated the roofs of a crowded ice-crystals and very mud in the middle, crystallized with deep masses in the sides which, in the disposition of the stubble and flower-scissors, form of irregular composition, embraces the ice-crystals slightly over crystals of a longer and the ice-crystals of a longer term of excellence, the marine shells is by the short term of the marine shells.

Animals, this singular and but a new value on the marine shells is Cape Cod, the marine shells is many miles wide; the marine shells is a barrier to Mollusca. Several species are separated by the musk-rat upon the north shore.

implanatus, or more the musk-rat upon the north shore.

an elevation of thirty feet above the river, filling the soil to the depth of a foot, and mingled with ashes and Indian remains.

The works we have placed at the head of our chapter, with as much license as the preacher selects his text, are such as imply more labor than enthusiasm. The State wanted complete catalogues of its natural riches, with such additional facts merely as would be directly useful.

The Report on Fishes, Reptiles, Insects, and Invertebrate Animals, however, indicate labor and research, and have a value independent of the object of the legislature.

Those on Herbaceous Plants and Birds cannot be of much value, as long as Bigelow and Nuttall are accessible. They serve but to indicate, with more or less exactness, what species are found in the State. We detect several errors ourselves, and a more practised eye would no doubt expand the list.

The Quadrupeds deserve a more final and instructive report than they have obtained.

These volumes deal much in measurements and minute descriptions, not interesting to the general reader, with only here and there a colored sentence to allure him, like those plants growing in dark forests, which bear only leaves without blossoms. But the ground was comparatively unbroken, and we will not complain of the pioneer, if he raises no flowers with his first crop. Let us not underrate the value of a fact; it will one day flower in a truth. It is astonishing how few facts of importance are added in a century to the natural history of any animal. The natural history of man himself is still being gradually written. Men are knowing enough after their fashion. Every countryman and dairymaid knows that the coats of the fourth stomach of the calf will curdle milk, and what particular mushroom is a safe and nutritious diet. You cannot go into any field or wood, but it will seem as if every stone had been turned, and the bark on every tree ripped up. But after all, it is much easier to discover than to see when the cover is off. It has been well said that "the attitude of inspection is prone." Wisdom does not inspect, but behold. We must look a long time before we can see. Slow are the beginnings of philosophy. He has
something demoniacal in him, who can discern a law, or couple two facts. We can imagine a time when, — “Water runs down hill,” — may have been taught in the schools. The true man of science will know nature better by his finer organization; he will smell, taste, see, hear, feel, better than other men. His will be a deeper and finer experience. We do not learn by inference and deduction, and the application of mathematics to philosophy, but by direct intercourse and sympathy. It is with science as with ethics, we cannot know truth by contrivance and method; the Baconian is as false as any other, and with all the helps of machinery and the arts, the most scientific will still be the healthiest and friendliest man, and possess a more perfect Indian wisdom.

GIFTS.

A DROPPING shower of spray
Filled with a beam of light,
The breath of some soft day,
The groves by wan moonlight;
Some river's flow,
Some falling snow,
Some bird's swift flight;
A summer field o'erstrown
With gay and laughing flowers,
And shepherd's-clock half-blown,
That tell the merry hours;
The waving grain,
And spring-soft rain; —
Are these things ours?

The Lover's Song. — Sex

Bex in the deep flower-bells
Brook in the cavern dim
Fawn in the woodland dells
Hideth him.

I hide in thy deep flower-eyes
In the well of thy dark heart
In thy heart my feelings rise
There they say the

Sing, love, — sing, for thy sweet
Filleth the life of my mind
Thou bendest my woes along
Like a wind

Green of the spring, and flo
Fruit of the summer day
Midnight and moonlit hour,
What say the

Centre of them thou art,
Building that point on
Sun — for it is in thy heart
Will not die

SEA SONG.

Our boat, to the waves go free;
By the bending tide where the curled
Like the track of the wind on the wh
Away, away, — 'tis a path o'er

Blasts may rave — spread the sa
For our spirits can wrest the power f
And the gray clouds yield to the sun
Fear not we the whirl of the ga