BARBERRY

A WEEK: History has neither the venerableness of antiquity, nor the freshness of the modern. It does as if it would go to the beginning of things, which natural history might with reason assume to do; but consider the Universal History, and then tell us, — when did burdock and plantain sprout first?

barberry

Berberis vulgaris (EUROPEAN BARBERRY)[1]

In Europe, *Berberis vulgaris* was widely grown as hedging, as the source of a medication, and for its wood, which made good handles for tools. The fruit was a favorite for sauces, jellies, wines, and preserves and the bark provided a yellow dye. Farmers were aware that this shrub needed to be kept away from grain fields, because each plant would be at the center of a stem rust infection in their wheat, oats, barley, rye, and timothy, as

1.The other species of barberry that now occurs in the region, JAPANESE BARBERRY (Berberis thunbergii), was not introduced into New England until after Thoreau's death.

well as in various wild grasses. The Romans had a stem-rust god, whom they named Robigus, and a festival they called the Robigalia. In 1660 in Rouen, France the growing of barberry bushes had been forbidden by law. Early settlers had brought both the grains and barberries with them to North America, but already were aware that they needed to be careful to keep these crops separate from one another.

In 1726 the growing of barberry bushes was forbidden by law in Connecticut. In 1754 they were forbidden in Massachusetts. In 1766 they were forbidden in Middletown, Rhode Island, and in 1772 the General Assembly would extend this ban to cover all of Rhode Island. The crop infections were, however, intermittent,

and enforcement would therefore always be spotty.

An infected barberry leaf in the spring

In 1866, Heinrich Anton de Bary (1831-1888) discovered that both an infection that appeared on the leaves of *Berberidaceae* in the spring, and the stem rust that appeared on small grain cereals in the summer and the fall, were caused by the microorganism which Christiaan Hendrik Persoon (1761-1836) had in 1797 given the name *Puccina graminis*.

The spread of an infection from a bush into a field

In the 1916 crop there was a major outbreak of *Puccina graminis* rust, and in 1917 the growing of susceptible barberry bushes was

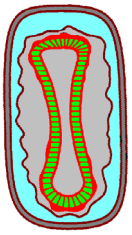
forbidden in North and South Dakota. In 1918 this ban was extended to Nebraska, Colorado, Minnesota, and Michigan, and in 1919 to Wyoming, Montana, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, and in 1923 to Washington, and in 1935 to Missouri, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Virginia, and in 1955 to Kansas.

1769

On the site of the old county house that had been destroyed by fire in Providence, Rhode Island, toward the base of Meeting Street, a brick schoolhouse was erected. The lower floor of this structure would be used as a grammar school, while the upper floor would be leased to the College of Rhode Island pending the availability of its University Hall at the top of the hill.

In this year the colony enacted a rather indefinite law granting tax exemption to property devoted to religious, charitable, and educational purposes. (This law would be made more specific in 1829 by limiting the tax exemption for religious and educational property to the buildings devoted to such purposes and the land on which they stood. Then, in 1850, largely in response to the presence of large numbers of Roman Catholics in the state, this tax exemption would be further limited, to three acres of land, so far as such land was used exclusively for religious and educational purposes, but this new stipulation would immediately become a political issue and would be repealed, with all such land "not leased or rented" being again free from taxation, and then in 1852 even this restriction would be removed and all property, whether real or personal, that was used in connection with religion and education, or the income of which was devoted to religion or education, would be made totally exempt from taxation. In 1870 the political winds would blow in the opposite direction and the exemption of the personal property of religious and charitable societies would be again restricted, with any such property having a value greater than $20,000 became taxable. In 1872 the anti-Catholic prejudice would again surface, and the tax exemption would be restricted again to only "buildings for free public schools or for religious worship" and one acre of the ground upon which they stood, and this only if both the land and the buildings were used for no purpose other than free public schooling plus religious worship. Rented property and invested funds of such institutions, and the school property of the Catholic church and other semi-private educations institutions, became taxable. In 1894 the schools of the Catholic church became again free from taxation, and added to that were the buildings of charitable institutions and one acre of the ground on which they stood.)

READ EDWARD FIELD TEXT



The Providence Town Meeting voted to set aside a place at which inoculations against the small pox could be carried out. (By some reports, it would be Moses Brown who would introduce smallpox vaccination to Rhode Island, but as yet I have been unable to substantiate such an assertion — or even to verify whether the reference it makes is to the process of variolation or the process of vaccination.)

It should be mentioned that Moses was no dummy. He understood, for instance, that when stem rust damaged his grain crops, the infection was spreading from nearby barberry bushes. (The growing of barberry bushes had for this reason been forbidden in Middletown, Rhode Island since 1766, and in 1772 the General Assembly would extend this ban to all of Rhode Island.)

Upon application of any freeholder, the person upon whose grounds they grew was required to cut them up within one month, or, in case of his neglect to do so, they might be destroyed by

warrant from a justice, at the expense of the complainant.

1839

November 16, Saturday: Edmund Quincy declared, in the Non-Resistant, that the distinction between resistance and Non-Resistance was that "the one believes that the evil which is in the world, is to be overcome by the infliction of suffering or death upon the evil-doer; the other, by the voluntary endurance of suffering or death themselves in their stead."

[Question: Would this not be the redeeming feature that Thoreau would see in Captain John Brown, not that he was willing to kill so that others could be free but that he became willing to himself die, to set an example so that others could be free?]

Jones Very's "The Barberry Bush" was published in the Salem Observer:

BARBERRY

THE BARBERRY BUSH.

The bush that has most briers and bitter fruit,
Wait till the frost has turned its green leaves red,
Its sweetened berries will thy palate suit,
And thou may'st find e'en there a homely bread.
Upon the hills of Salem scattered wide,
Their yellow blossoms gain the eye in Spring;
And straggling e'en upon the turnpike's side,
Their ripened branches to your hand they bring,
I've plucked them oft in boyhood's early hour,
That then I gave such name, and thought it true;
But now I know that other fruit as sour
Grows on what now thou callest *Me* and *You*;
Yet, wilt thou wait the autumn that I see,
Will sweeter taste than these red berries be.

1841

January: Mrs. Ellen Sturgis Hooper's poem "To the Ideal" appeared anonymously on page 400 of THE DIAL.

Waldo Emerson published his own poem "The Snow-Storm."

THE DIAL, JANUARY 1841

Emerson belatedly reviewed Jones Very's 1839 ESSAYS AND POEMS. BY JONES VERY:

> This little volume would have received an earlier notice, if we had been at all careful to proclaim our favorite books. The genius of this book is religious, and reaches an extraordinary depth of sentiment. The author, plainly a man of a pure and

kindly temper, casts himself into the state of the high and transcendental obedience to the inward Spirit. He has apparently made up his mind to follow all its leadings, though he should be taxed with absurdity or even with insanity. In this enthusiasm he writes most of these verses, which rather flow through him than from him. There is no *composition*, no elaboration, no artifice in the structure of the rhyme, no variety in the imagery; in short, no pretension to literary merit, for this would be departure from his singleness, and followed by loss of insight. He is not at liberty even to correct these unpremeditated poems for the press; but if another will publish them, he offers no objection. In this way they have come into the world, and as yet have hardly begun to be known. With the exception of the few first poems, which appear to be of an earlier date, all these verses bear the unquestionable stamp of grandeur. They are the breathings of a certain entranced devotion, which one would say, should be received with affectionate and sympathizing curiosity by all men, as if no recent writer had so much to show them of what is most their own. They are as sincere a litany as the Hebrew songs of David or Isaiah, and only less than they, because indebted to the Hebrew muse for their tone and genius. This makes the singularity of the book, namely, that so pure an utterance of the most domestic and primitive of all sentiments should in this age of revolt and experiment use once more the popular religious language, and so show itself secondary and morbid. These sonnets have little range of topics, no extent of observation, no playfulness; there is even a certain torpidity in the concluding lines of some of them, which reminds one of church hymns; but, whilst they flow with great sweetness, they have the sublime unity of the Decalogue or the Code of Menu, and if as monotonous, yet are they almost as pure as the sounds of Surrounding Nature. We gladly insert from a newspaper the following sonnet, which appeared since the volume was printed.

THE BARBERRY BUSH.

BARBERRY

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Its sweetened berries will thy palate suit,
And thou may'st find e'en there a homely bread.
Upon the hills of Salem scattered wide,
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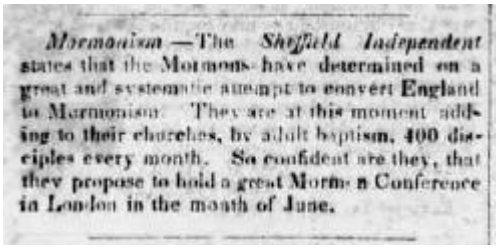
And straggling e'en upon the turnpike's side,
Their ripened branches to your hand they bring,
I've plucked them oft in boyhood's early hour,
That then I gave such name, and thought it true;
But now I know that other fruit as sour
Grows on what now thou callest *Me* and *You*;
Yet, wilt thou wait the autumn that I see,
Will sweeter taste than these red berries be.

1851

July 19, Saturday: It was being reported in the gazettes that in England a determined effort was being made to convert everyone to Mormonism.



Mormonism.—The *Sheffield Independent* states that the Mormons have determined on a great and systematic attempt to convert England to Mormonism. They are at this moment adding to their churches, by adult baptism, 400 disciples every month. So confident are they, that they propose to hold a great Mormon Conference in London in the month of June.

On November 20th, 1850, because he had been determinedly living beyond his means, Count Hippolyte Visart de Bocarmé had needed to invite his well-to-do one-legged young brother-in-law Gustave Fougnies to dinner at his château of Bury, Belgium and poison him (previously, using a false name, the count had consulted a professor of chemistry and had conducted experiments on cats and ducks to verify that the sort of alkaloids present in *Nicotiana tabacum* would indeed induce death, and had prepared two wine bottles containing concentrated nicotine). On this day the count was taken to the guillotine in one of the squares of Mons –the blade, at the convicted man's request, having been freshly sharpened– and his head was neatly taken off.

To the displeasure of the Belgian audience of thousands, Lydie Victoire Josèphe Fougnies, countess of Bocarmé, who had been a full participant in the murder and subsequent destruction of evidence, had been presumed to have been under duress (one may doubt that she even attended at the event of the demise of her

husband).

HEADCHOPPING

 July 19, Saturday: Here I am 34 years old, and yet my life is almost wholly unexpanded. How much is in the germ! There is such an interval between my ideal and the actual in many instances that I may say I am unborn. There is the instinct for society –but no society. Life is not long enough for one success. Within another 34 years that miracle can hardly take place. Methinks my seasons revolve more slowly than those of nature, I am differently timed. I am –contented. This rapid revolution of nature even of nature in me –why should it hurry me. Let a man step to the music which he hears however measured. Is it important that I should mature

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

as soon as an apple tree? Ye, as soon as an oak?[2] May not my life in nature, in proportion as it is supernatural, be only the spring & infantile portion of my spirit's life shall I turn my spring to summer? May I not sacrifice a hasty & petty completeness here –to entireness there? If my curve is large –why bend it to a smaller circle? My spirits unfolding observes not the pace of nature. The society which I was made for is not here, shall I then substitute for the anticipation of that this poor reality. I would have the unmixed expectation of that than this reality.

If life is a waiting –so be it. I will not be shipwrecked on a vain reality. What were any reality which I can substitute. Shall I with pains erect a heaven of blue glass over myself though when it is done I shall be sure to gaze still on the true etherial heaven –far above as if the former were not –that still distant sky oer arching that blue expressive eye of heaven. I am enamored of the blue eyed arch of heaven

I did not **make** this demand for a more thorough sympathy. This is not my idiosyncrasy or disease. He that made the demand will answer the demand.

My blood flows as slowly as the waves of my native Musketaquid –yet they reach the ocean sooner perchance than those of the Nashua.

Already the golden-rod is budded, but I can make no haste for that.

 July 19, Saturday: 2 Pm The weather is warm & dry –& many leaves curl. There is a threatening cloud in the SW. The farmers dare not spread their hay. It remains cocked in the fields. As you walk in the woods now

2. William M. White's version is:

Methinks my seasons revolve more slowly
Than those of nature;
I am differently timed.
I am contented.

This rapid revolution of nature,
Even of nature in me,
Why should it hurry me?

Let a man step to the music which he hears,
However measured.
Is it important that I should mature
As soon as an apple tree?
Aye, as soon as an oak?

a days the flies striking against your hat sound like rain drops. The stump or root fences on the Corner road remind me of fossil remains of mastodons &c exhumbed and bleached in sun & rain. To day I met with the first orange flower of autumn– What means this doubly torrid –this Bengal tint– Yellow took sun enough –but this is the fruit of a dogday sun. The year has but just produced it. Here is the Canada thistle in bloom visited by butterflies & bees The butterflies have swarmed within these few days especially about the milkweed's. The swamp pink still fills the air with its perfume in swamps & by the causeways –though it is far gone. The wild rose still scatters its petals over the leaves of neighboring plants. The wild morning glory or bind-weed with its delicate red & white blossoms– I remember it ever as a goblet full of purest morning air & sparkling with dew. showing the dew point –winding round itself for want of other support– It grows by the Hubbard bridge causeway near the Angelica. The cherry birds [Cedar Waxwing *Bombycilla cedrorum*] are making their seringo sound as they flit past. They soon find out the locality of the cherry trees. And beyond the bridge there is a golden rod partially blossomed. Yesterday it was spring & to-morrow it will be autumn– Where is the summer then? First came the St Johns wort & now the golden rod to admonish us. I hear too a cricket amid these stones under the blackbery vines –singing as in the fall. Ripe blackberries are multiplying. I see the red-spotted berries of the small solomons seal in my path. I notice in the decayed end of an oak post that the silver grain is not decayed –but remains sound in thin flakes alternating with the decayed portions, & giving the whole a honey-combed look.– Such an object supramundane –as even a swallow may descend to light on –a dry mullein stalk for instance – – I see that hens too follow the cows feeding near the house like the cowtroopial [Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater*] –& for the same object. They cannot so well scare up insects for themselves. This is the dog the cowbird uses to start its insect game

I see yellow butterflies in pairs pursuing each other –a rod or two into the air & now as he had bethought himself of the danger of being devoured by a passing birds he descends with a zig zag flight to the earth & the other follows. The black hucklberries are now so thick among the green ones that they no longer incur suspicion of being worm eaten. When formerly I was looking about to see what I could do for a living –some sad experience in conforming to the wishes of friends being fresh in my mind to tax my ingenuity –I thought often & seriously of picking huckleberries –that surely I could do, and its small profits might suffice. So little capital it required –so little distraction from my wonted thoughts I foolishly thought– While my acquaintances went unhesitatingly into trade or the professions I thought of this occupation as most like theirs. ranging the hills all summer to pick the berries which came in my way which I might carelessly dispose of –so to keep the flocks of king Admetus– My greatest skill has been to want but little. I also dreammed that I might gather the wild herbs –or carry evergreens to such villagers as love to be reminded of the woods & so find my living got.

But I have since learned that trade curses everything it handles. & though you **trade** in messages from heaven –the whole curse of trade attaches to the business.

The wind rises more & more The river & the pond are blacker than the threatening cloud in the south– The thunder mutters in the distance– The surface of the water is slightly rippled– Where the pads grow is a light green border– The woods roar. Small white clouds are hurrying across the dark blue ground of the storm –which rests on all the woods of the South horizon But still no rain now for some hours as if the clouds were dissipated as fast as they reached this atmosphere.

The barberry's fruit hangs yellowish green– What pretty covers the thick bush makes so large & wide & drooping. The Fringilla juncorum[3] sings still in spite of the coming tempest which perchance only threatens

BARBERRY

The wood chuck is a good native of the soils. The distant hills side & the grain fields & pastures are spotted yellow or white with his recent burrows –and the small mounds remain for many years Here where the clover has lately been cut, see what a yellow mound is brought to light!

Heavily hangs the Common Yellow lily Lilium Canadense in the meadows– In the thick alder copses by the causeway side I find the Lysimachia hybrida. Here is the Lactuca Sanguinea with its runcinate leaves –tall-stem & pale crimson ray. And that green stemmed one higher than my head resembled the last in its leaves –is perchance the "tall lettuce or Fire weed. Can that fine white flowered meadow plant with the leaf be a Thalictrum?

3. Thoreau could not have intended here the bird then known as *Fringilla* or *F.* or *linaria* (**Common Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*)**, for this record is for the month of July and that bird winters in Concord and summers in the far north. He must have intended the bird then known as *juncorum* (**Field Sparrow *Spizella pusilla*)**. So, can anyone explain why he wrote ***Fringilla juncorum***, other than as a mere slip of the pen?

August 21, Thursday: On Acton Common, a large choir directed by Colonel Winthrop E. Faulkner sang three Watts psalms: "Majesty," "Northfield," and "Truro." Prayer was offered by the Reverend Stinson and hymns written by the Reverend Richardson were sung. The cornerstone of the Davis Monument was laid. They had sealed beneath this cornerstone a copper box, containing some select writings:

- A letter of Josiah Adams to Lemuel Shattuck (author of a history of Concord written in 1835) vindicating the claims of Captain Isaac Davis to his share of the honors of Concord Fight, together with depositions of the witnesses to the facts.
- An address that Josiah Adams had delivered on July 21, 1835 upon the occasion of the 1st centennial of Acton's incorporation.
- An oration by Robert Rantoul, Jr. and an account of the union celebration at Concord on April 19, 1850.
- An address his Excellency George S. Boutwell had delivered to the two branches of the Massachusetts legislature on January 16, 1851.
- The annual report of the attorney general of Massachusetts for February 1851.
- Valuation of the real estate and the names of the owners in Acton as of November 2, 1850.
- Report of the joint standing committee of the militia, to which committee had been submitted the petition of Ivory Keyes and others for aid in building the monument.
- A statement in brief of the history of the Davis Monument together with several committees, cost, and certain statistical data concerning the town of Acton.

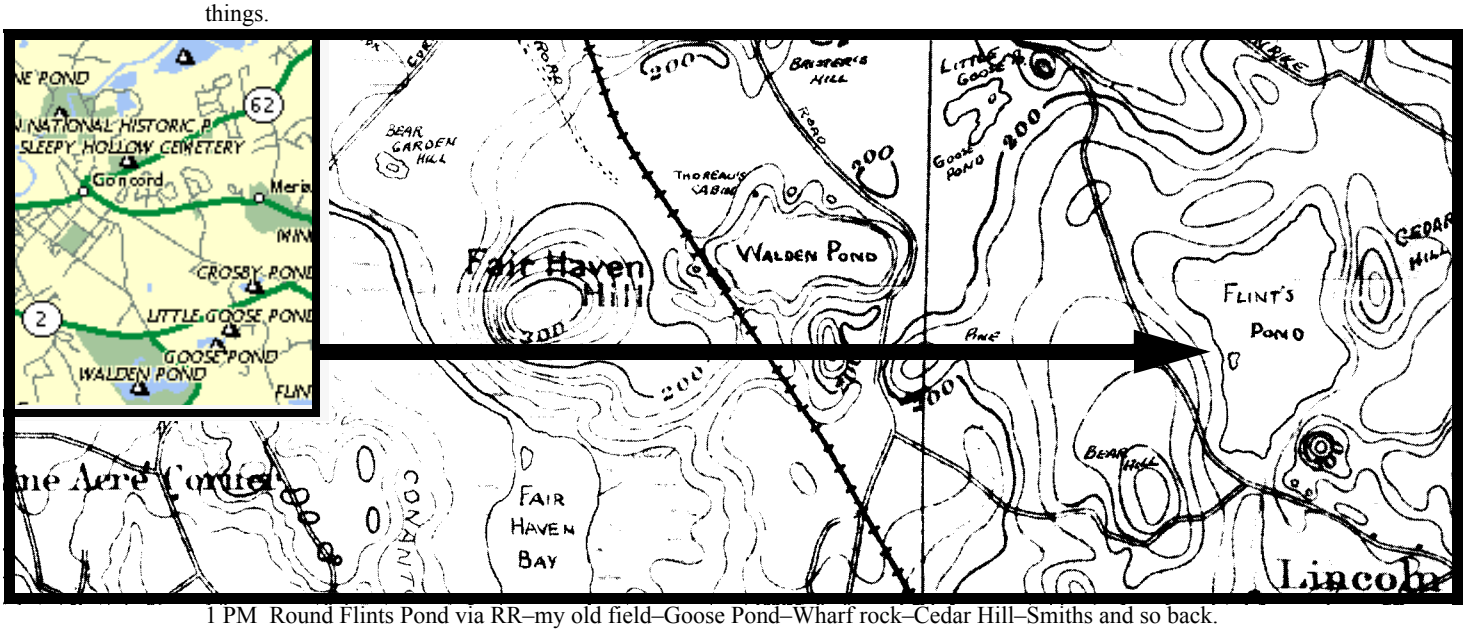
Henry Thoreau began a new journal volume, numbered VII.

August 21, Thursday: To a great extent the feudal system still prevails there (in Canada) and I saw that I should be a bad citizen–that any man who thought for himself and was only reasonably independent would naturally be a rebel. You could not read or hear of their laws without seeing that it was a legislating for a few & not for all. That certainly is the best government where the inhabitants are least often reminded of the government. Where a man cannot be a poet even without danger of his being made poet laureat–where he cannot be healthily neglected–& grow up a man, and not an Englishman merely.– Where it is the most natural thing in the world for a government that does not understand you, to let you alone! Oh–what a government were there my countrymen! It is a government that English one–& most other European ones that cannot afford to be forgotten–as you would naturally forget them–that cannot let you go alone, having learned to walk– It appears to me that a true Englishman can only speculate within bounds–he has to pay his respects to so many things that before he knows it he has paid all he is worth. The principle respect in which our government is more tolerable is in the fact that there is so much less of government with us. In the States it is only once in a dog's age that a man needs remember his government–but here he is reminded of it every day.– Government parades itself before you. It is in no sense the servant but the master.

What a faculty must that be which can paint the most barren landscape and humblest life in glorious colors It is pure & invigorated senses reacting on a sound & strong imagination. Is not that the poets case? The intellect of most men is barren. They neither fertilize nor are fertilized. It is the mariage of the soul with nature that makes the intellect fruitful–that gives birth to imagination. When we were dead & dry as the high-way some sense which has been healthily fed will put us in relation with nature in sympathy with her–some grains of fertilizing pollen floating in the air fall on us–& suddenly the sky is all one rain bow–is full of music & fragrance & flavor– The man of intellect only the prosaic man is a barren & stameniferous flower the poet is a fertile & perfect flower Men are such confirmed arithmeticians & slaves of business that I cannot easily find a blank book that has not a red line or a blue one for the dollars and cents, or some such purpose.

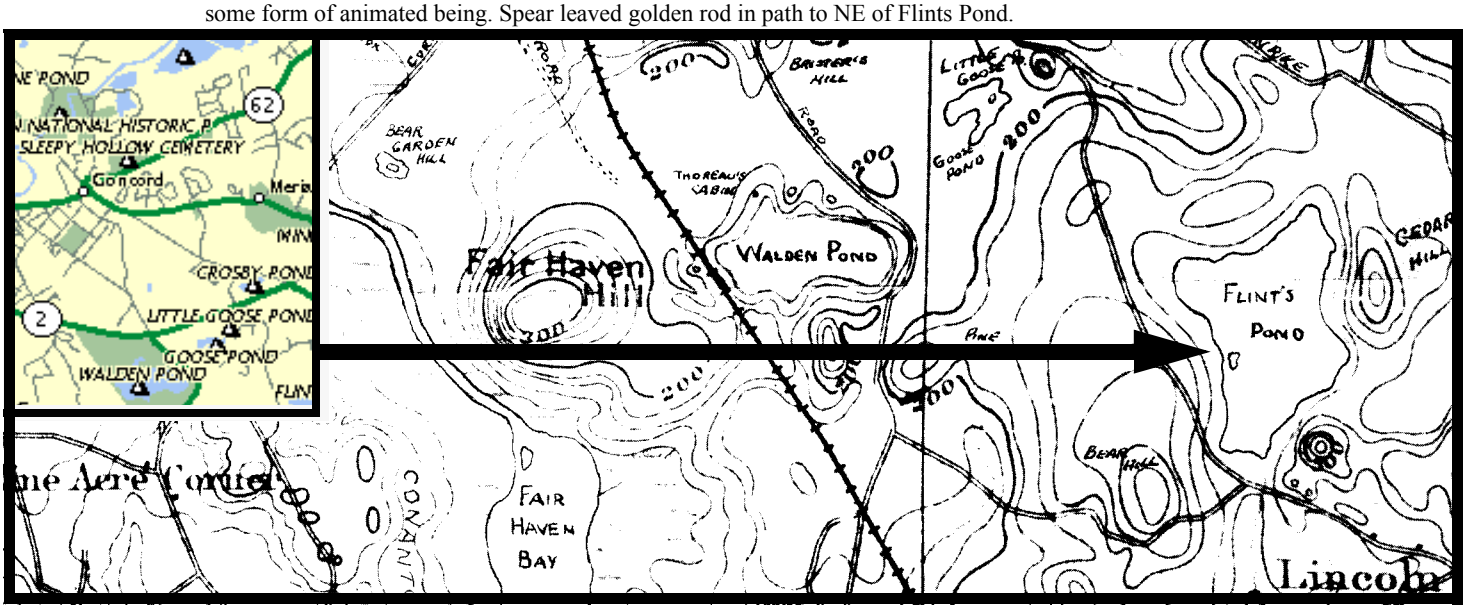
As is a man's intellectual character, is not such his physical after all? Can you not infer from knowing the intellectual characters of two which is most tenacious of life & will live the longest? Which is the toughest–which has most brute strength–which the most passive endurance– Methinks I could to some extent infer these

things.



1 PM Round Flints Pond via RR–my old field–Goose Pond–Wharf rock–Cedar Hill–Smiths and so back.
Bigelow speaking of the spikes of the blue vervain (verbena hastata) says "The flowering commences at their base and is long in reaching their summit." I perceive that only one circle of buds about half a dozen blossoms at a time, and there are about 30 circles in the space of 3 inches–while the next circle of buds above at the same time shows the blue. Thus this triumphant blossoming circle travels upward driving the remaining buds off into space– I think it was the 16th of July when I first noticed them and now they are all within about half an inch of the top of the spikes– Yet the blossoms have got no nearer the top on long spikes which had many buds than on short ones only an inch long– Perhaps the blossoming commenced enough earlier on the long ones to make up for the difference in length. It is very pleasant to measure the progress of the season by this & similar clocks– So you get not the absolute time but the true time of the season.
The prevailing conspicuous flowers at present are. The early golden-rods–Tansy–The Life-everlastings–fleabane though not for its flower Yarrow (rather dry)–hardhack & meadow sweet (both getting dry also may-weed) Eupatorium purpureum–Scabish–Clethra (–really a fine sweet scented and this year particularly fair & fresh flower–some unexpanded buds at top tinged with red)–Rhexia Virginica–Thoroughwort–Polygala sanguinea–Prunella & Dogsbane–(getting stale) &c &c Touch-me-not (less observed) Canada Snap-Dragon by roadside (not conspicuous)
The purple Gerardia now–horse mint or mentha borealis–veronica scutellata marsh speedwell.– ranunculas acris–Tall Crowfoot still– Mowing to some extent improves the landscape to the eye of the walker. The aftermath–so fresh & green begins now to recall the spring to my mind–
In some fields fresh clover heads appear. This is certainly better than fields of lodged & withered grass.
I find ground nuts by the RR causeway $^{3}/_{4}$ inch long by $^{1}/_{3}$ inch. The epilobium still.
Cow wheat–melampyrum Americanum still flourish as much if not more than ever–& shrubby looking helps cover the ground where the wood has recently been cut off–like huckleberry bushes.
There is some advantage intellectually & spiritually in taking wide views with the bodily eye & not pursuing an occupation which holds the body prone– There is some advantage perhaps in attending to the general features of the landscape over studying the particular plants & animals which inhabit it. A man may walk abroad & no more see the sky than if he walked under a shed. The poet is more in the air than the naturalist though they may walk side by side.– Granted that you are out of door–but what if the outer door **is** open, if the inner door is shut. You must walk sometimes perfectly free–not prying nor inquisitive–not bent upon seeing things– Throw away a whole day for a single expansion. a single inspiration of air–
Any anomaly in vegetation makes nature seem more real & present in her working–as the various red & yellow excrescences on young oaks– I am affected as if it were a different Nature that produced them. As if a poet were born–who had designs in his head.
It is remarkable that animals are often obviously manifestly related to the plants which they feed upon or live among–as catterpillars–butterflies–tree toads–partridges **[Ruffed Grouse** ***Bonasa umbellus*****]**–chewinks–& this afternoon I noticed a yellow spider on a golden rod– As if every condition might have its expression in

some form of animated being. Spear leaved golden rod in path to NE of Flints Pond.



Hieracium Paniculatum a very delicate & slender hawkweed– I have now found all the hawkweeds. Singular these genera of plants–plants manifestly related yet distinct– They suggest a history to Nature– a Natural **history** in a new sense.

At wharf rock found water lobelia in blossom– I saw some smilax vines in the swamp which were connected with trees ten feet above the ground whereon they grew & 4 or 5 feet above the surrounding bushes– This slender vine which cannot stand erect how did it establish that connexion– Have the trees & shrubs by which it once climbed been cut down? Or perchance do the young & flexible shoots blow up in high winds & fix themselves? On Cedar Hill S side Pond I still hear the locust though it has been so much colder for the last week. It is quite hazy in the west–though comparitively clean in other directions. The barberry bushes with their drooping wreathes of fruit now turning red–bushed up with some other shrub or tree. BARBERRY

1853

January 25, Tuesday: The news of this morning was that a proposal had been presented to the federal congress, that the Constitution of the United States be amended, so as to vest power in Congress to establish a uniform system of marriage and to punish its violations.

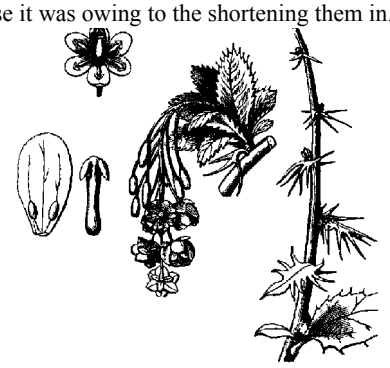
January 25th, 1853: Pm to Flints Pond Down RR.

There is something spring-like in this afternoon. The earth & sun appear to have approached some degrees– The banks seem to lie in the embrace of the sun. The ground is partly bare. The cress is fresh & green at the bottom of the brooks– What is that long leaved green plant in the brook in Hosmers meadow on the Turnpike? The buttercup leaves appear everywhere when the ground is bare. There are temporary ponds in the fields made by the rain & melted snow – which hardly have time freeze they soak up so fast. As I go up bare-hill – there being only snow enough there to whiten the ground the last year's stems of the blue berry – (vacillans) give a pink tinge to the hill-side –reminding me of red snow– though they do not semble it. I am surprised to see Flints Pond 1/4 part open –the middle– Walden which froze much later is nowhere open. But Flints feels the wind & is shallow.

I noticed on a small pitch pine In the axils close to the main stem little spherical bunches of buds an inch & more in diameter with short apparently abortive leaves from some– The leaves were nearly all single as in the plants of one or 2 years growth – and were finely serrate or toothed pectinate(?) On the lot I surveyed for Weston I found the Chestnut oak – (though the teeth are sharper than E's plate) a handsome leaf still on the young trees–

I had taken it for a chestnut before. It is hard to distinguish them by the trunk alone. I found some barberry sprouts when the bushes had been cut down not long since & they were covered with small withered leaves beset with stiff prickles on their edges–& you could see the thorns as it were gradually passing into leaves being on one stage the nerves of the leaf alone starlike & branched thorns – gradually as you descended the stem getting some pulp between them. I suppose it was owing to the shortening them in.

BARBERRY



I still pick chestnuts – some larger ones proved to contain double meats – divided as it were arbitrarily as with a knife each part having the common division without the brown skin transverse to this.
The pickerel of Walden– When I see them lying on the ice or in the well which the fisherman cuts in the ice – I am always surprised by their rare beauty –as if they were a fabulous fish– they are so foreign to the streets or even the woods handsome as flowers & gems –golden & emerald– a transcendent & dazzling beauty which separates by a wide interval from the cadaverous cod & haddock at least a day old which we see They are as foreign as arabia to our Concord life as if the 2 ends of the earth had come together. These are not green like the pines –or gray like the stones –or blue like the sky –but they have if possible to my eye yet rarer colors like precious stones. It is surprising that these fishes are caught here. They are something tropical. They are true topazes in as much as you can only conjecture what place they came from – the pearls of walden– Some animalized Walden water– That in this deep & capacious spring far beneath the rattling teams & chaises & tinkling sleighs that travel the Walden road this great gold & emerald fish swims!! I never chanced to see this kind of fish in any market. With a few convulsive quirks they give up their diluted ghosts
I have noticed that leaves are green & violets bloom later where a bank has been burnt over in the fall as if the fire warmed it. Saw today where a creeping Juniper had been burnt – radical leaves of Johnswort– thistle –clove a dandelion &c as well as sorrel & veronica.
Young white oaks retain their leaves & large ones on their lower parts.
Swamp whit oak(?)
Very young rock chestnut oaks.
The little chinquapin(?) "
Bear oak
The scarlet " (?)
The red "
Black? young trees.
The Witch hazel more or less
Carpinus Americana
Ostrya Virginica. somewhat
Sweet fern more or less
Andromeda
" Panicled(?)
Kalmia latifolia
" Angustifolia
Cranberry
The above are such as I think of which wear their leaves conspicuously now.

1856

January 22, Tuesday: Henry Thoreau wrote in his journal:

January 22, 1856: PM. — To Walden,

The Walden road is nearly full of snow still, to the top of the wall on the north side, though there has been no snow falling since the 14th. The snow lies particularly solid, Looking toward the sun, the surface consists of great patches of shining crust and dry driving snow, giving it a *watered* appearance.

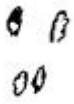
Miss Minott talks of cutting down the oaks about her house for fuel, because she cannot get her wood sledded home on account of the depth of the snow, though it lies all cut there. James, at R.W.E.'s, waters his cows at the door, because the brook is frozen.

If you wish to know whether a tree is hollow, or has a hole in it, ask the squirrels. They know as well as whether they have a home or not, Yet a man lives under it all his life without knowing, and the chopper must fairly cut it up before he ('an telL If there is a cleft in it, he is pretty sure to find some nutshell or materials of a bird's nest left in it.

At Brister's Spring I see where a squirrel has been to the spring and also sat on a low alder limb and eaten a hazelnut. Where does he find a sound haze1nut now? Has them in a hollow tree.

See tracks of fishermen and pickerel. *Vide* forward.

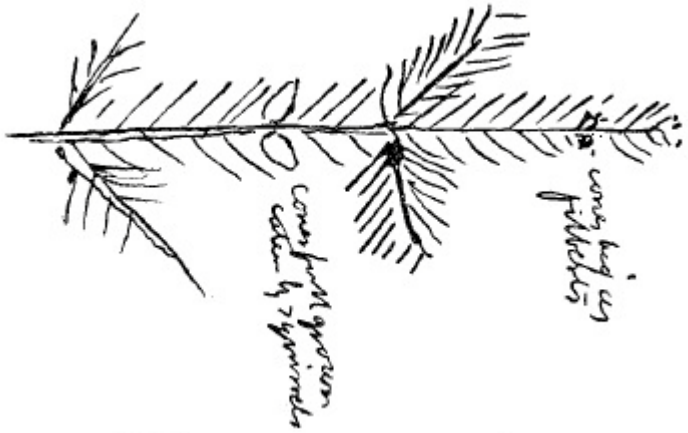
At Walden, near my old residence, I find that since I was here on the 11th, apparently within a day or two, some gray or red squirrel or squirrels have been feeding on the pitch pine cones extensively. The snow under one young pine is covered quite thick with the scales they have dropped while feeding overhead. I count the cores of thirty-four cones on the snow there, and that is not all. Under another pine there arc more than twenty, and a well-worn track from this to a fencepost three rods distant, under which are the cores of eight cones and a corresponding amount of scales.



[Going up the page.]

The track is like a very small rabbit. They have gnawed off the cones which were perfectly closed.

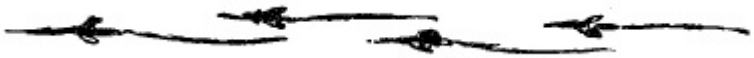
I see where one has taken one of a pair and left the other partly off. He had first sheared off the needles that were in the way, and then gnawed off the sides or cheeks of the twig to come at the stem of the cone, which as usual was cut by successive cuts as with a knife, while bending it.



One or two small, perhaps dead, [Probably died last summer when little over a year old.] certainly unripe ones were taken off and left unopened. I find that many of these young pines are now full of unopened cones, which apparently wi11 be two years old next summer, and these the squirrel now eats. There are also some of them open, perhaps on the most thrifty twigs.

F. Morton hears to-day from Plymouth that three men have just caught in Sandy Pond, in Plymouth, about two

hundred pounds of pickerel in two days.
Somebody has been fishing in the pond this morning, and the water in the holes is beginning to freeze. I see the track of a crow [American Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos*], the toes as usual less spread and the middle one making a more curved furrow in the snow than the partridge, as if they moved more unstably, recovering their balance, – feeble on their feet.



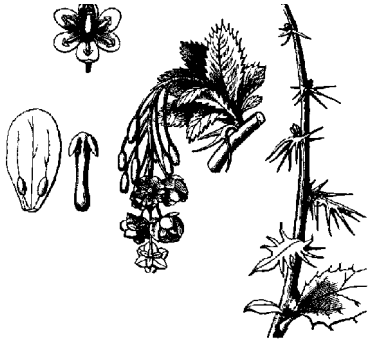
The inner toe a little the nearest to the middle one. This track goes to every hole but one or two out of a dozen, – directly from hole to hole, sometimes flying a little, – and also to an apple-core on the snow. I am pretty sure that this bird was after the bait which is usually dropped on the ice or in the hole. E. Garfield says they come regularly to his holes for bait as soon as he has left. So, if the pickerel are not fed, it is. It had even visited, on the wing, a hole, now frozen and snowed up, which I made far from this in the middle of the pond several days since, as I discovered by its droppings, the same kind that it had left about the first holes.
I was surprised, on breaking with my foot the ice in a pickerel-hole near the shore, evidently frozen only last night, to see the water rise at once half an inch above it. Why should the ice be still sinking? Is it growing more solid and heavier?
:Most were not aware of the size of the great elm till it was cut down. I surprised some a few days ago by saying that when its trunk should lie prostrate it would be higher than the head of the tallest man m the town, and that two such trunks could not stand in the chamber we were then in, which was fifteen feet across; that there would be ample room for a double bedstead on the trunk, nay, that the very dinner-table we were sitting at, with our whole party of seven, chairs and all, around it, might be set there. On the decayed part of the butt end there were curious fine black lines, giving it a geographical look, here and there, half a dozen inches long, sometimes following thc line of the rings; the boundary of a part which had reached a certain stage of decay.

The force on the pulleys broke off more than a foot in width in the middle of the tree, much decayed.
I have attended the felling and, so to speak, the funeral of this old citizen of the town, - I who commonly do not attend funerals,- as it became me to do. I was the chief if not the only mourner there. I have taken the measure of his grandeur; have spoken a few words of eulogy at his grave, remembering the maxim *de mortuis nil nisi bonum* (in this case *magnum*). But there were only the choppers and the passers-by to hear me. Further the town was not represented; the fathers of the town, the selectmen, the clergy were not there. But I have not known a fitter occasion for a sermon of late. Travellers whose journey was for a short time delayed by its prostrate body Were forced to pay it some attention and respect, but the axe-boys had climbed upon it like ants, and commenced chipping at it before it had fairly ceased groaning. There was a man already bargaining for some part. How have the mighty fallen! Its history extends back over more than half the whole history of the town. Since its kindred could not conveniently attend, I attended. Methinks its fall marks an epoch in the history of the town. It has passed away together with thc clergy of the old school and the stage-coach which used to rattle beneath it. Its virtue was that it steadily grew and expanded from year to year to the very last. How much of old Concord falls with it! The town clerk will not chronicle its fall. I will, for it is of greater moment to the town than that of many a human inhabitant would be. Instead of erecting a monument to it, we take all possible pains to obliterate its stump, the only monument of a tree which is commonly allowed to stand. Another link that bound us to the past is broken. How much of old Concord was cut away with it! A few such elms would alone constitute a township. They might claim to send a representative to the General Court to look after their interest.'i, if a fit one could bc found, a native American one in a true and worthy sense, with catholic principles. Our town has lost some of its venerableness. No longer will our eyes rest on its massive gray trunk, like a vast Corinthian column by the wayside; no longer shall we walk in the shade of its lofty, spreading dome. It is as if you had laid the axe at the feet of some venerable Buckley or Hipley. You have laid the axe, you have made fast your tackle, to one of the king-posts of the town. I feel the whole building wracked by it. Is it not sacrilege to cut down the tree which has so long looked over Concord beneficently?
Supposing the first fifteen feet to average six feet in diameter, they would contain more than three cords and a foot of wood; but probably not more than three cords.
'With what feelings should not the citizens hear that the biggest tree in the town has fallen! A traveller passed through the town and saw the inhabitants cutting it up without regret.
The tracks of the partridges by the sumachs, made before the 11th, are perhaps more prominent now than ever, for they have consolidated the snow under them so that as it settled it has left them alto-relievo. They look like

broad chains extending straight far over the snow.
I brought home and examined some of the droppings of the crow mentioned four pages back. They were brown and dry, though partly frozen.

After a long study with a microscope, I discovered that they consisted of the seeds and skins and other indigestible parts of red cedar berries and some barberries (I detected the imbricated scale-like leaves of a berry stem and then the seeds and now black skins of the cedar berries, but easily the large seeds of the barberries) and perhaps something more, and I knew whence it had probably come, *i.e.* from the cedar woods and barberry bushes by Flint's Pond. These, then, make part of the food of crows in severe weather when the snow is deep, as at present.

BARBERRY



William M. White's version of a portion of the journal entry is:

If you would be convinced
how differently armed the squirrel is naturally
for dealing with pitch pine cones,
just try to get one off with your teeth.
He who extracts the seeds from a single closed cone
with the aid of a knife
will be constrained to confess
that the squirrel earns his dinner.
It is a rugged customer,
and will make your fingers bleed.
But the squirrel has the key
to this conical and spiny chest
of many apartments.
He sits on a post,
vibrating his tail,
and twirls it as a plaything.

1857

October 18, Sunday, 1857: P.M. –To Conantum.

Clear and pleasant afternoon, but cooler than before. At the brook beyond Hubbard's Grove, I stand to watch the water-bugs (Gyrinus). The shallow water appears now more than usually clear there, as the weather is cooler, and the shadows of these bugs on the bottom, half a dozen times as big as themselves, are very distinct and interesting, with a narrow and well-defined halo about them. But why are they composed, as it were, of two circles run together, the foremost largest? Is it owing to the manner in which the light falls on their backs, in two spots? You think that the insect must be amused with this pretty shadow. I also see plainly the shadows of ripples they make, which are scarcely perceptible on the surface.

Many alders and birches just bare.

I should say that the autumnal change and brightness of foliage began fairly with the red maples (not to speak of a very few premature trees in water) September 25th, and ends this year, say generally October 22d, or maybe two or three days earlier. The fall of the leaf, in like way, began fairly with the fall of the red maple leaves, October 13th, and ended at least as early as when the pitch pines had generally fallen, November 5th (the larches are about a week later). The red maples are now fairly bare, though you may occasionally see one full of leaves. So gradually the leaves fall, after all, –though individuals will be completely stripped in one short windy rain-storm, –that you scarcely miss them out of the landscape; but the earth grows more bare, and the fields more hoary, and the heavy shadows that began in June take their departure, November being at hand.

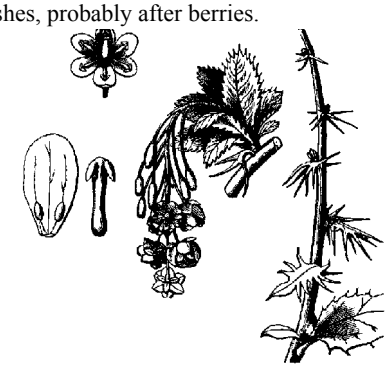
I go along the sunny west side of the Holden wood. Snakes lie out now on sunny banks, amid the dry leaves, now as in spring. They are chiefly striped ones. They crawl off a little into the bushes, and rest there half-concealed till I am gone.

The bass and the black ash are completely bare; how long? Red cedar is fallen and falling. Looking across to the sprout-land beneath the Cliffs, I see that the pale brown of withered oak leaves begins to be conspicuous, amid the red, in sprout-lands.

In Lee's Wood, white pine leaves are now fairly fallen (not pitch pine yet), –a pleasant, soft, but slippery carpet to walk on. They sometimes spread leafy twigs on floors. Would not these be better? Where the pines stand far apart on grassy pasture hillsides, these tawny patches under each tree contrast singularly with the green around. I see them under one such tree completely and evenly covering and concealing the grass, and more than an inch deep, as they lie lightly. These leaves, like other, broader ones, pass through various hues (or shades) from green to brown, –first yellow, giving the tree that parti-colored look, then pale brown when they fall, then reddish brown after lying on the ground, and then darker and darker brown when decaying.

I see many robins on barberry bushes, probably after berries.

BARBERRY



The red oaks I see to-day are full of leaves, –a brownish yellow (with more or less green, but no red or scarlet). I find an abundance of those small, densely clustered grapes, –not the smallest quite, –still quite fresh and full on green stems, and leaves crisp but not all fallen; so much later than other grapes, which were further advanced October 4th when it was too late to get many. These are not yet ripe and may fairly be called frost grapes. Half-way up Blackberry Steep, above the rock. The huckleberries on Conantum appear to have been softened and spoilt by the recent rain, for they are quite thick still on many bushes. Their leaves have fallen. So many leaves have now fallen in the woods that a squirrel cannot run after a nut without being heard.

As I was returning over Hubbard's stump fence pasture, I heard some of the common black field crickets[4] (three

4.Acheta abbreviata.

quarters of an inch long), two or three rods before me, make, as I thought, a peculiar shrilling, like a clear and sharp twittering of birds, [so] that I looked up for some time to see a flock of small birds going over, but they did not arrive. These fellows were, one or two, at the mouth of their burrows, and as I stood over one I saw how he produced the sound, by very slightly lifting his wing-cases (if that is the name of them), and shuffling them (transversely of course) over each other about an eighth of an inch, perhaps three or four times, and then stopping. Thus they stand at the mouths of their burrows, in the warm pastures, near the close of the year, shuffling their wing-cases over each other (the males only), and produce this sharp but pleasant creaking sound, –helping to fetch the year about. Thus the sounds of human industry and activity –the roar of cannon, blasting of rocks, whistling of locomotives, rattling of carts, tinkering of artisans, and voices of men– may sound to some distant ear like an earth-song and the creaking of crickets. The crickets keep about the mouths of their burrows as if apprehending cold.
The fringed gentian closes every night and opens every morning in my pitcher.

October 20, Tuesday: An advertisement for a runaway slave appeared in the Baltimore Sun:

> $200 REWARD - Ran away from the subscriber, living near Reisterstown, Baltimore county, on the night of the 4th of October, 1857, my negro man, named CHARLES HARDEN, belonging to the undersigned. Charles is about five feet seven or eight inches high,[5] stout built, has pretty much of a down look when spoken to, and has a scar on one of his fore-fingers, supposed to be on his right hand, occasioned by a felon, and appears to be a little stiff in one of his knees when he walks. There was another boy in company with him belonging to Mr. Daniel Banks. I will give the above reward for his apprehension and delivery to me, on in the city of Baltimore or Baltimore county jail, so that I can get him.
> JESSE STOCKSDALE,
> near Reisterstown, Baltimore county,
> State of Maryland

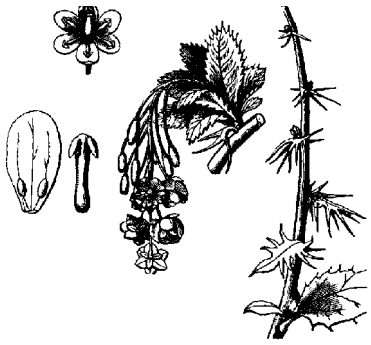
> *Know all men by these presents that I,* ***Ben W. Keyser*** *of Washington County in the District of Columbia for and in consideration of the sum of one hundred and fifty dollars to me paid, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged have and by these presents do bargain and sell and convey to* ***Margaret Henson*** *and her heirs, of the said District of Columbia, my Negro man servant* ***Otho Henson****, purchased by me from Susan Evans, relict of John Evans.*
> *Witness my hand and seal this 20th day of October 1857.*
> *Ben W. Keyser {seal}*
> *Witness*
> *Peter A. Reller*

An incident of this day on the old Carlisle Road has found its way into John Hanson Mitchell's WALKING TOWARDS WALDEN: A PILGRIMAGE IN SEARCH OF PLACE (Reading MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1995), pages 198-199:

5. In descriptions of runaway slaves, 5 feet 5 or 6 inches was the average height.

October 20, Tuesday, 1857: P.M. –To the Easterbrooks Country.
I go along the riverside and by Dakin the pumpmaker's. There is a very strong northwest wind, Novemberish and cool, raising waves on the river and admonishing to prepare for winter.
I see two Chenopodium album with stems as bright purple and fair as the poke has been, and the calyx lobes enveloping the seeds the same color.Apples are gathered; only the ladders here and there, left leaning against the trees.
I had gone but little way on the old Carlisle road when I saw Brooks Clark, who is now about eighty and bent like a bow, hastening along the road, barefooted, as usual, with an axe in his hand; was in haste perhaps on account of the cold wind on his bare feet. It is he who took the Centinel so long. When he got up to me, I saw that besides the axe in one hand, he had his shoes in the other, filled with knurly apples and a dead robin. He stopped and talked with me a few moments; said that we had had a noble autumn and might now expect some cold weather. I asked if he had found the robin dead. No, he said, he found it with its wing broken and killed it. He also added that he had found some apples in the woods, and as he had n't anything to carry them in, he put 'em in his shoes. They were queer-looking trays to carry fruit in. How many he got in along toward the toes, I don't know. I noticed, too, that his pockets were stuffed with them. His old tattered frock coat was hanging in strips about the skirts, as were his pantaloons about his naked feet. He appeared to have been out on a scout this gusty afternoon, to see what he could find, as the youngest boy might. It pleased me to see this cheery old man, with such a feeble hold on life, bent almost double, thus enjoying the evening of his days. Far be it from me to call it avarice or penury, this childlike delight in finding something in the woods or fields and carrying it home in the October evening, as a trophy to be added to his winter's store. Oh, no; he was happy to be Nature's pensioner still, and birdlike to pick up his living. Better his robin than your turkey, his shoes full of apples than your barrels full; they will be sweeter and suggest a better tale. He can afford to tell how he got them, and we to listen. There is an old wife, too, at home, to share them and hear how they were obtained. Like an old squirrel shuffling to his hole with a nut. Far less pleasing to me the loaded wain, more suggestive of avarice and of spiritual penury.
This old man's cheeriness was worth a thousand of the church's sacraments and memento mori's. It was better than a prayerful mood. It proves to me old age as tolerable, as happy, as infancy. I was glad of an occasion to suspect that this afternoon he had not been at "work "but living somewhat after my own fashion (though he did not explain the axe), –had been out to see what nature had for him, and now was hastening home to a burrow he knew, where he could warm his old feet. If he had been a young man, he would probably have thrown away his apples and put on his shoes when he saw me coming, for shame. But old age is manlier; it has learned to live, makes fewer apologies, like infancy. This seems a very manly man. I have known him within a few years building stone wall by himself, barefooted. I keep along the old Carlisle road. The leaves having mostly fallen, the country now seems deserted, and you feel further from home and more lonely. I see where squirrels, apparently, have gnawed the apples left in the road. The barberry bushes are now alive with, I should say, thousands of robins feeding on them. They must make a principal part of their food now. I see the yellowish election-cake fungi. Those large chocolate-colored ones have been burst some days (at least).

BARBERRY



Warren Brown, who owns the Easterbrooks place, the west side the road, is picking barberries. Allows that the soil thereabouts is excellent for fruit, but it is so rocky that he has not patience to plow it. That is the reason this tract is not cultivated. The yellow birches are generally bare. The sassafras in Sted Buttrick's pasture near to E. Hubbard's Wood, nearly so; leaves all withered. Much or most of the fever-bush still green, though somewhat wrinkled.[6]
There was Melvin, too, a-barberrying and nutting. He had got two baskets, one in each hand, and his game-bag, which hung from his neck, all full of nuts and barberries, and his mouth full of tobacco. Trust him to find where the nuts and berries grow. He is hunting all the year and he marks the bushes and the trees which are fullest, and when the time comes, for once leaves his gun, though not his dog, at home, and takes his baskets to the spot. It

6.Fever-bush in '61, October 9th, at height of change!!

is pleasanter to me to meet him with his gun or with his baskets than to meet some portly caterer for a family, basket on arm, at the stalls of Quincy Market. Better Melvin's pignuts than the others' shagbarks. It is to be observed that the best things are generally most abused, and so are not so much enjoyed as the worst. Shagbarks are eaten by epicures with diseased appetites; pignuts by the country boys who gather them. So fagots and rubbish yield more comfort than sound wood.

Melvin says he has caught partridges **[Ruffed Grouse** ***Bonasa umbellus*** (~~Partridge~~)**]** in his hands. If there's only one hole, knows they've not gone out. Sometimes shoots them through the snow.

What a wild and rich domain that Easterbrooks Country! Not a cultivated, hardly a cultivatable field in it, and yet it delights all natural persons, and feeds more still. Such great rocky and moist tracts, which daunt the farmer, are reckoned as unimproved land, and therefore worth but little; but think of the miles of huckleberries, and of barberries, and of wild apples, so fair, both in flower and fruit, resorted to by men and beasts; Clark, Brown, Melvin, and the robins, these, at least, were attracted thither this afternoon. There are barberry bushes or clumps there, behind which I could actually pick two bushels of berries without being seen by you on the other side. And they are not a quarter picked at last, by all creatures together. I walk for two or three miles, and still the clumps of barberries, great sheaves with their wreaths of scarlet fruit, show themselves before me and on every side, seeming to issue from between the pines or other trees, as if it were they that were promenading there, not I.

That very dense and handsome maple and pine grove opposite the pond-hole on this old Carlisle road is Ebby Hubbard's.[7] Melvin says there are those alive who remember mowing there. Hubbard loves to come with his axe in the fall or winter and trim up his woods.

Melvin tells me that Skinner says he thinks he heard a wildcat scream in E. Hubbard's Wood, by the Close. It is worth the while to have a Skinner in the town; else we should not know that we had wildcats. They had better look out, or he will skin them, for that seems to have been the trade of his ancestors. How long Nature has manoeuvred to bring our Skinner within ear-shot of that wildcat's scream! Saved Ebby's wood to be the scene of it! Ebby, the wood-saver.

Melvin says that Sted sold the principal log of one of those pasture oaks to Garty for ten dollars and got several cords besides. What a mean bribe to take the life of so noble a tree!

Wesson is so gouty that he rarely comes out-of-doors, and is a spectacle in the street; but he loves to tell his old stories still! How, when he was stealing along to get a shot at his ducks, and was just upon them a red squirrel sounded the alarm, chickaree chickaree chickaree, and off they went; but he turned his gun upon the squirrel to avenge himself.

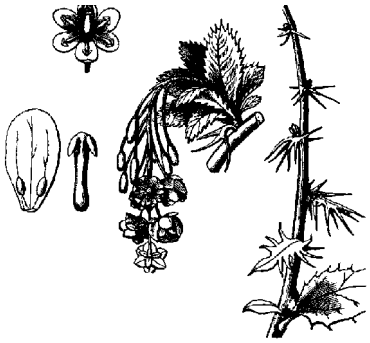
It would seem as if men generally could better appreciate honesty of the John Beatton stamp, which gives you your due to a mill, than the generosity which habitually throws in the half-cent.

7.Sted Buttrick's, according to Melvin.

Mitchell's WALKING TOWARDS WALDEN also refers to WALDEN as "Thoreau's monumental, sustained essay on the sense of place" and refers to WEEK as "a Luminist painting, … a Taoist landscape: the narrator ascends [*sic*] the Concord and Merrimack rivers, climbs through the foothills, ascends Mt. Washington (the sacred mountain of the local Indians), and then, at the very summit, describes nothing, a caesura, an American version of the Taoist concept of *wu*, the emptiness where all things are contained, where the transcendental Oversoul exists. There is even a blank space at that point in the narrative in early editions of the book."

November 3, Tuesday, 1857: P.M. –To the Easterbrooks moraine via Ponkawtasset-top.
Islands, pale-brown grassy isles, are appearing again in the meadow as the water goes down. From this hilltop, looking down-stream over the Great Meadows away from the sun, the water is rather dark, it being windy, but about the shores of the grassy isles is a lighter-colored smooth space.
Pitch pine needles are almost all fallen.There is a wild pear tree on the east side of Ponkawtasset, which I find to be four and a half feet in circumference at four feet from the ground.
Looking westward now, at 4 P.M., I see against the sunlight, where the twigs of a maple and black birch intermingle, a little gossamer or fine cobwebs, but much more the twigs, especially of the birch, waving slightly, reflect the light like cobwebs. It is a phenomenon peculiar to this season, when the twigs are bare and the air is clear. I cannot easily tell what is cobweb and what twig, but the latter often curve upward more than the other.
I see on many rocks, etc., the seeds of the barberry, which have been voided by birds, –robins, no doubt, chiefly. How many they must thus scatter over the fields, spreading the barberry far and wide! That has been their

business for a month.



Follow up the Boulder Field northward, and it terminates in that moraine. As I return down the Boulder Field, I see the now winter-colored –i. e. reddish (of oak leaves)– horizon of hills, with its few white houses, four or five miles distant southward, between two of the boulders, which are a dozen rods from me, a dozen feet high, and nearly as much apart, –as a landscape between the frame of a picture. But what a pictureframe! These two great slumbering masses of rock, reposing like a pair of mastodons on the surface of the pasture, completely shutting out a mile of the horizon on each side, while between their adjacent sides, which are nearly perpendicular, I see to the now purified, dry, reddish, leafy horizon, with a faint tinge of blue from the distance. To see a remote landscape between two near rocks! I want no other gilding to my picture-frame. There they lie, as perchance they tumbled and split from off an iceberg. What better frame could you have? The globe itself, here named pasture, for ground and foreground, two great boulders for the sides of the frame, and the sky itself for the top! And for artists and subject, God and Nature! Such pictures cost nothing but eyes, and it will not bankrupt one to own them. They were not stolen by any conqueror as spoils of war, and none can doubt but they are really the works of an old master. What more, pray, will you see between any two slips of gilded wood in that pasture you call Europe and browse in sometimes? It is singular that several of those rocks should be thus split into twins. Even very low ones, just appearing above the surface, are divided and parallel, having a path between them.

It would be something to own that pasture with the great rocks in it! And yet I suppose they are considered an incumbrance only by the owner.

LIME KILNS

I came along the path that comes out just this side the lime-kiln.

Coming by Ebby Hubbard's thick maple and pine wood, I see the rays of the sun, now not much above the horizon, penetrating quite through it to my side in very narrow and slender glades of light, peculiarly bright. It seems, then, that no wood is so dense but that the rays of the setting sun may penetrate twenty rods into it. The other day (November 1st), I stood on the sunny side of such a wood at the same season, or a little earlier. Then I saw the lit sides of the tree stems all aglow with their lichens, and observed their black shadows behind. Now I see chiefly the dark stems massed together, and it is the warm sunlight that is reduced to a pencil of light; i. e., then light was the rule and shadow the exception, now shadow the rule and light the exception.

I notice some old cow-droppings in a pasture, which are decidedly pink. Even these trivial objects awaken agreeable associations in my mind, connected not only with my own actual rambles but with what I have read of the prairies and pampas and Eastern land of grass, the great pastures of the world.

November 14, Saturday: An advertisement for a runaway slave appeared in the Baltimore Sun:

> $200 REWARD - Ran away from my Farm at Reisterstown, Baltimore county, on Saturday, the 24th of October, my colored boy STEPHEN BROWN, supposed with a slave of Mr. Stocksdale; about 20 years old, not very dark, thick lips, stout for his age, stoops or rather leans forward in walking, has a drawling manner of speaking, and I think but am not sure has his name written on his arm with India ink. The above reward will be taken if brought back or lodged in jail so that I get him again. D.B. BANKS[8]

LIME KILNS

November 14, Saturday, 1857: ...in the most southwesterly quarry, I noticed in the side of an upright sliver of rock, where the limestone had formerly been blasted off, the bottom of the nearly perpendicular hole which had been drilled for that purpose, two or three inches deep and about two and a half feet from the ground.[9] In this I found two fresh chestnuts, a dozen or more amphicarpaea seeds, as many apparently either prinos (?) or rose (?) seeds (single seeds and fresh), and several fresh barberry seeds mixed with a little earth and rubbish. What placed them there? Squirrel, mouse, jay, or crow?

At first I thought that a quadruped could hardly have reached this hole, but probably it could easily, and it was a very cunning place for such a deposit.[10] I brought them all home in order to ascertain what the seeds were and how they came there. Examining the chestnuts carefully in the evening and wondering if so small a bird as a chickadee could transport one, I observed near the larger end of one some very fine scratches, which it seemed to me might have been made by the teeth of a very small animal when carrying it, but certainly not by the bill of a bird, since they had pricked sharply into the shell, rucking it up one way. I then looked to see where the teeth of the other jaw had scratched it, but could discover no marks and was therefore still somewhat in doubt. Coming up-stairs an hour afterward, I examined those scratches with a microscope, and saw plainly that they had been made by some fine and sharp cutting instrument like a fine chisel, a little concave, and had plowed under the surface of the shell a little, toward the big end of the nut, raising it up; and, looking farther, I now discovered, on the larger end of the nut, at least two corresponding marks made by the lower incisors, plowing toward the first and about a quarter of an inch distant. These were a little less obvious to the unarmed eye, but no less plain through the glass. I now had no doubt that they were made by the incisors of a mouse, and, comparing them with the incisors of a deer mouse (Mus leucopus) whose skull I have, I found that one or two of the marks were just the width of its two incisors combined (a twentieth of an inch), and the others, though finer, might have been made by them. On one side, at least, it had taken fresh hold once or twice. I have but little doubt that these seeds were placed there by a Mus leucopus, our most common wood mouse. The other nut, which had no marks on it, I suppose was carried by the star end, which was gone from both. There was no chestnut tree within twenty rods. These seeds thus placed in this recess will account for chestnut trees, barberry bushes, etc., etc., growing in chinks and clefts where we do not see how the seeds could have fallen. There was earth enough even in this little hole to keep some very small plant alive.

BARBERRY

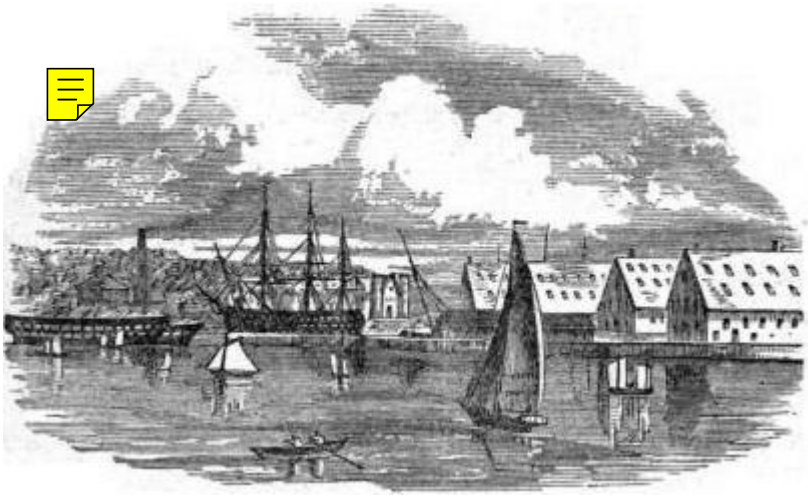
8. In 1834, a Stephen Brown had been listed in the Class Records of the Asbury Chapel (not the Reisterstown United Methodist Church) as one of 47 colored slaves who had obtained permission to hold class meetings at the chapel. Stephen Brown was listed as one of the original slaves but the record indicates "he was believed to have run off." Might this Stephen Brown of 24 years later be a son of the Stephen Brown who had escaped from slavery in 1834?

9. When Nathaniel Hawthorne visited the limestone beds near Adams, Massachusetts during the 1850s, he thought that what the men were burning in their kilns there was "blocks and fragments of marble." Well, all right, limestone is marble in the sense in which Hawthorne is profound. He described how the shattered stones would be thrown into the kiln from the top, and the fire stoked from below. The lime burner had to keep the fire going for a week or so, and yet keep the fire from getting so hot that the limestone melted into useless slag. The result of the burning was a fine powder which had to be packed into water-tight casks for shipment, as when it absorbed water it would either solidify or burst into flames:

10.Vide November 19th.

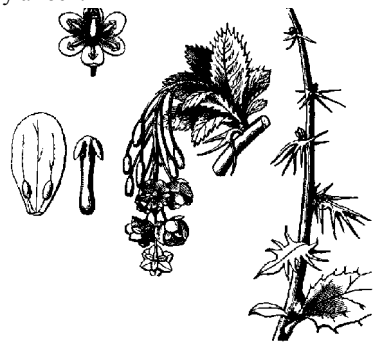
1858

August 6, Friday: The USS *Constellation* arrived at the Boston Navy Yard: "Hove up the anchor and stood up to the Navy Yard in tow of steam tugs. Ship in charge of pilot. Secured ship to the wharf. At 2:30 transferred to the receiving ship "Ohio" the Seamen, Ord. Sea., Landsmen and boys: Sent the Marines to the Marine Barracks and remainder of crew ashore on liberty."



August 6, 1858: P.M. –Walk to Boulder Field.
The broom is quite out of bloom; probably a week or ten days. It is almost ripe, indeed. I should like to see how rapidly it spreads. The dense roundish masses, side by side, are three or four feet over and fifteen inches high. They have grown from near the ground this year. The whole clump is now about eighteen feet from north to south by twelve wide. Within a foot or two of its edge, I detect many slender little plants springing up in the grass, only three inches high, but, on digging, am surprised to find that they are two years old. They have large roots, running down straight as well as branching, much stouter than the part above ground. Thus it appears to spread slowly by the seed falling from its edge, for I detected no runners. It is associated there with indigo, which is still abundantly in bloom.
I then looked for the little groves of barberries which some two months ago I saw in the cow-dung thereabouts, but to my surprise I found some only in one spot after a long search. They appear to have generally died, perhaps dried up. These few were some two inches high; the roots yet longer, having penetrated to the soil beneath. Thus, no doubt, some of those barberry clumps are formed; but I noticed many more small barberry plants standing single, most commonly protected by a rock.

BARBERRY



Cut a couple of those low scrub apple bushes, and found that those a foot high and as wide as high, being clipped

by the cows, as a hedge with shears, were about twelve years old, but quite sound and thrifty.
If our sluggish river, choked with potamogeton, might seem to have the slow-flying bittern for its peculiar genius, it has also the sprightly and aerial kingbird [**Eastern Kingbird** ***Tyrannus tyrannus***] to twitter over and lift our thoughts to clouds as white as its own breast.
Emerson is gone to the Adirondack country with a hunting party. Eddy says he has carried a double-barrelled gun, one side for shot, the other for ball, for Lowell killed a bear there last year. But the story on the Mill-Dam is that he has taken a gun which throws shot from one end and ball from the other!
I think that I speak impartially when I say that I have never met with a stream so suitable for boating and botanizing as the Concord, and fortunately nobody knows it. I know of reaches which a single country seat would spoil beyond remedy, but there has not been any important change here since I can remember. The willows slumber along its shore, piled in light but low masses, even like the cumuli clouds above. We pass haymakers in every meadow, who may think that we are idlers. But Nature takes care that every nook and crevice is explored by some one. While they look after the open meadows, we farm the tract between the river's brinks and behold the shores from that side. We, too, are harvesting an annual crop with our eyes, and think you Nature is not glad to display her beauty to us?
Early in the day we see the dewdrops thickly sprinkled over the broad leaves of the potamogeton. These cover the stream so densely in some places that a web-footed bird can almost walk across on them.
Nowadays we hear the squealiny notes of young hawks. The kingfisher is seen hovering steadily over one spot, or hurrying away with a small fish in his mouth, sounding his alarum nevertheless. The note of the wood pewee is now more prominent, while birds generally are silent.
This is pure summer; no signs of fall in this, though I have seen some maples, as above the Assabet Spring, already prematurely reddening, owing to the water, and for some time the Cornus sericea has looked brownish red.
Every board and chip cast into the river is soon occupied by one or more turtles of various sizes. The sternothaerus oftenest climbs up the black willows, even three or more feet.
I hear of pickers ordered out of the huckleberry-fields, and I see stakes set up with written notices forbidding any to pick there. Some let their fields, or allow so much for the picking. Sic transit gloria ruris. We are not grateful enough that we have lived part of our lives before these evil days came. What becomes of the true value of country life? What if you must go to market for it? Shall things come to such a pass that the butcher commonly brings round huckleberries in his cart? It is as if the hangman were to perform the marriage ceremony, or were to preside at the communion table. Such is the inevitable tendency of our civilization, –to reduce huckleberries to a level with beef-steak. The butcher's item on the door is now "calf's head and huckleberries." I suspect that the inhabitants of England and of the Continent of Europe have thus lost their natural rights with the increase of population and of monopolies. The wild fruits of the earth disappear before civilization, or are only to be found in large markets. The whole country becomes, as it were, a town or beaten common, — & the fruits left are a few hips & haws.

HANGING

October 29, Friday: A store was established in Colorado to service the miners working the placer gold deposits along the Rocky Mountain Front Range (in a month, in an attempt to curry favor with Kansas Territorial Governor James W. Denver, this little frontier community being sponsored by real estate promoter William H. Larimer, Jr. would assign itself the name "Denver").

October 29: 6.30 A.M.– Very hard frost these mornings; the grasses, to their finest branches, clothed with it.
The cat comes stealthily creeping towards some prey amid the withered flowers in the garden, which being disturbed by my approach, she runs low toward it with an unusual glare or superficial light in her eye, ignoring her oldest acquaintance, as wild as her remotest ancestor; and presently I see the first tree sparrow hopping there. I hear them also amid the alders by the river, singing sweetly, – but a few notes.
Notwithstanding the few handsome scarlet oaks that may yet be found, and the larches and pitch pines and the few thin-leaved *Populus grandidentata*, the brightness of the foliage, generally speaking, is past.

CAT

P.M.– To Baker Farm, on foot.
The *Salix Torreyana* [wand willow] on the right has but few leaves near the extremities (like the S. sericea [silky willow] of the river), and is later to fall than the *S. rostrata* [Bebb willow] near by. Its leaves turn merely a brownish yellow, and not scarlet like the *cordata* [wand willow], so that it is not allied to that in this respect. (In *S. tristis* [dwarf gray willow] path about Well Meadow Field the *S. tristis* is mostly fallen or withered on the twigs, and the curled leaves lie thickly like ashes about the bases of the shrubs.)
Notice the fuzzy black and reddish caterpillars on ground.

I look north from the causeway at Heywood's meadow. How rich some scarlet oaks imbosomed in pines, their branches (still bright) intimately intermingled with the pine! They have their full effect there. The pine boughs are the green calyx to its [*sic*] petals. Without these pines for contrast the autumnal tints would lose a considerable part of their effect.
The white birches being now generally bare, they stand along the east side of Heywood's meadow slender, parallel white stems, revealed in a pretty reddish maze produced by their fine branches. It is a lesser and denser smoke (?) than the maple one. The branches must be thick, like those of maples and birches, to give the effect of smoke, and most trees have fewer and coarser branches, or do not grow in such dense masses.
Nature now, like an athlete, begins to strip herself in earnest for her contest with her great antagonist Winter. In the bare trees and twigs what a display of muscle!
Looking toward Spanish Brook, I see the white pines, a clear green, rising amid and above the pitch pines, which are parti-colored, glowing internally with the warm yellow of the old leaves. Of our Concord evergreens, only the white and pitch pines are interesting in their change, for only their leaves are bright and conspicuous enough.
I notice a barberry bush in the woods [And elsewhere the same.] still thickly clothed, but merely yellowish-green, not showy. Is not this commonly the case with the introduced European plants? Have they not European habits? And are they not also late to fall, killed before they are ripe? – *e.g.* the quince, apple, pear(?), barberry, silvery abele, privet, plum(?), white willow, weeping willow, lilac, hawthorn (the horse-chestnut and European mountain-ash are distincter yellow, and the Scotch larch is at least as bright as ours at same time; the Lombardy poplar is a handsome yellow (some branches early), and the cultivated cherry is quite handsome orange, often yellowish), which, with exceptions in parenthesis, are inglorious in their decay.
As the perfect winged and usually bright-colored insect is but short-lived, so the leaves ripen but to fall.
I go along the wooded hillside southwest of Spanish Brook. With the fall of the white pine, etc., the *Pyrola umbellata* and the Iycopodiums, and even evergreen ferns, suddenly emerge as from obscurity. If these plants are to be evergreen, how much they require this brown and withered carpet to be spread under them for effect. Now, too, the light is let in to show them. Cold(?)-blooded wood frogs hop [Or earlier?] about amid the cool ferns and Iycopodiums.
Am surprised to see, by the path to Baker Farm, a very tall and slender large *Populus tremuliformis* [quaking aspen] still thickly clothed with leaves which are merely yellowish-green, later than any *P. grandidentata* [bigtooth aspen] I know. It must be owing to its height above frosts, for the leaves of sprouts are fallen and withered some time, and of young trees commonly. Afterwards, when on the Cliff, I perceive that, birches being bare (or as good as bare), one or two poplars –I am not sure which species– take [*Tremuloides*, bright at distance. *Vide* November 2.] their places on the Shrub Oak Plain, and are brighter than they were, for they hold out to burn longer than the birch. The birch has now generally dropped its golden spangles, and those oak sprout-lands where they glowed are now an almost uniform brown red. Or, strictly speaking, they are pale-brown, mottled with dull red where the small scarlet oak stands. [Shrub oaks withered. *Vide* November 2.]
I find the white pine cones, which have long since opened, hard to come off.
The thickly fallen leaves make it slippery in the woods, especially climbing hills, as the Cliffs. The late wood tortoise and squirrel betrayed.
Apple trees, though many are thick-leaved, are in the midst of their fall. Our English cherry has fallen. The silvery abele is still densely leaved, and green, or at most a yellowish green. The lilac still thickly leaved; a yellowish green or greenish yellow as the case may be. Privet thickly leaved, yellowish-green.
If these plants acquire brighter tints in Europe, then one would say that they did not fully ripen their leaves here before they were killed. The orchard trees are not for beauty, but use. English plants have English habits here: they are not yet acclimated; they are early or late as if ours were an English spring or autumn; and no doubt in course of time a change will be produced in their constitutions similar to that which is observed in the English man here.

BARBERRY

JAMES BAKER

October 31, Sunday: The Reverend Leonard Withington went into semi-retirement, becoming senior pastor at 1st Church Congregational in Newbury, Massachusetts.

Henry Thoreau wrote to Friend Daniel Ricketson

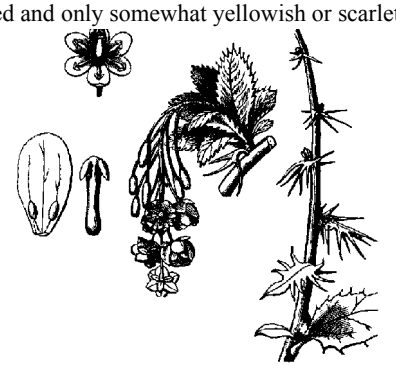
Concord Oct 31
1858
Friend Ricketson,
I have not seen anything of your English Australian yet. Edward Hoar, my companion in Maine and at the White Mts., his sister Eliz-

abeth, and a Miss Prichard, another neighbor of ours, went to Europe in the Niagara on the 6th. I told them to look out for you under the Yardley oaks, but it seems that they will not find you there.
I had a pleasant time in Tuckerman's Ravine at the White Mts in July, entertaining four beside myself under my little tent through some soaking rains; & more recently I have taken an interesting walk with Channing about Cape Ann. We were obliged to "dipper it" a good way, on account of the scarcity of fresh water, for we got most of our meals by the Shore.
C. is understood to be here for the winter, – but I rarely see him.
I should be pleased to see your face here in the course of the Indian summer, which may still be expected – if any authority can tell us when that phenomenon does occur. We would like to hear the story of your travels – for if you have not been fairly intoxicated with Europe, you have been half-seas-over, & so probably can tell more about it–
{One-third page missing}
Your truly
Henry D. Thoreau



October 31, 1858: P.M.– To Conantum.
Our currants bare; how long?
The Italian poplars are now a dull greenish yellow, not nearly so fair as the few leaves that had turned some time ago. Some silvery abeles are the same color. [But both turn more yellow.] I go over the Hubbard Bridge causeway. The young *Salix alba* osiers are just bare, or nearly so, and the yellow twigs accordingly begin to show.
It is a fine day, Indian-summer-like, and there is considerable gossamer on the causeway and blowing from all trees. That warm weather of the l9th and 20th was, methinks, the same sort of weather with the most pleasant in November (which last alone some allow to be Indian summer), only more to be expected.
I see many red oaks, thickly leaved, fresh and at the height of their tint. These are pretty clear yellow. It is much clearer yellow than any black oak, but some others are about bare. These and scarlet oaks, which are yet more numerous, are the only oaks not withered that I notice to-day, except one middle-sized white oak probably protected from frost under Lee's Cliff.
Between the absolutely deciduous plants and the evergreens are all degrees, not only those which retain their withered leaves all winter, but those, commonly called evergreen, which, though slow to change, yet acquire at last a ruddy color while they keep their leaves, as the lambkill and water andromeda (?).
Get a good sight on Conantum of a sparrow (such as I have seen in flocks some time), which utters a sharp *te-te-te* quickly repeated as it flies, sitting on a wall three or four rods off. I see that it is rather long and slender, is perhaps dusky-ash above with some black backward; has a pretty long black bill, a white ring about eye, white chin and line under cheek, a black (or dark) spotted breast and dirty cream-color beneath; legs long and slender and perhaps reddish-brown, two faint light bars on wings; but, what distinguishes it more, it keeps gently jerking or tossing its tail as it sits, and when a flock flies over you see the tails distinctly black beneath. Though I detected no yellow, yet I think from the note that it must be the shore lark (such as I saw March 24th) in their fall plumage. They are a common bird at this season, I think. [Titlarks?]
I see a middle-sized red oak side by side with a black one under Lee's Cliff. The first is still pretty fresh, the latter completely withered. The withered leaves of the first are flat, apparently thin, and a yellowish brown; those of the black are much curled and a very different and dark brown, and look thicker.

Barberry generally is thickly leaved and only somewhat yellowish or scarlet, say russet.



BARBERRY

I tasted some of the very small grapes on Blackberry Steep, such as I had a jelly made of. Though shrivelled, and therefore ripe, they are very acid and inedible.

The slippery elm has a few scattered leaves on it, while the common close by is bare. So I think the former is later to fall. You may well call it bare.

ELM FOLIAGE

The cedar at Lee's Cliff has apparently just fallen, – almost.

As I sit on the Cliff there, the sun-is now getting low, and the woods in Lincoln south and east of me are lit up by its more level rays, and there is brought out a more brilliant redness in the scarlet oaks, scattered so equally over the forest, than you would have believed was in them. Every tree of this species which is visible in these directions. even to the horizon, now stands out distinctly red. Some great ones lift their red backs high above the woods near the Codman place, like huge roses with a myriad fine petals, and some more slender ones, in a small grove of white pines on Pine Hill in the east, in the very horizon, alternating with the pines on the edge of the grove and shouldering them with their red coats, – an intense, burning red which would lose some of its strength, methinks, with every step you might take toward them, – look like soldiers in red amid hunters in green. This time it is *Lincoln* green, too. Until the sun thus lit them up you would not have believed that there were so many redcoats in the forest army. Looking westward, their colors are lost in a blaze of light, but in other directions the whole forest is a flower-garden, in which these late roses burn, alternating with green, while the so-called "gardeners," working here and there, perchance, beneath, with spade and water-pot, see only a few little asters amid withered leaves, for the shade that lurks amid their foliage does not report itself at this distance. They are unanimously red. The focus of their reflected [color] is in the atmosphere far on this side. Every such tree, especially in the horizon, becomes a nucleus of red, as it were, where, with the declining sun, the redness grows and glows like a cloud. It only has some comparatively dull-red leaves for a nucleus and to start it, and it becomes an intense scarlet or red mist, or fire which finds fuel for itself in the very atmosphere. I have no doubt that you would be disappointed in the brilliancy of those trees if you were to walk to them. You see a redder tree than exists. It is a strong red, which gathers strength from the air on its way to your eye. It is partly borrowed fire, borrowed of the sun. The scarlet oak asks the clear sky and the brightness of the Indian summer. These bring out its color. If the sun goes into a cloud they become indistinct.

These are my China asters, my late garden flowers. It costs me nothing for a gardener. The falling leaves, all over the forest, are protecting the roots of my plants. Only look at what is to be seen, and you will have garden enough, without deepening the soil of your yard. We have only to elevate our view a little to see the whole forest as a garden. [Excursions, pp. 282-284; River, 346-349]

To my surprise, the only yellow that I see amid the universal red and green and chocolate is one large tree-top in the forest, a mile off in the east, across the pond, which by its form and color I know to be my late acquaintance the tall aspen (*tremuliformis*) of the 29th. It, too, is far more yellow at this distance than it was close at hand, and so are the Lombardy poplars in our streets. The *Salix alba*, too, looks yellower at a distance now. Their dull-brown and green colors do not report themselves so far, while the yellow *crescit eundo*, and we see the sun reflected in it. After walking for a couple of hours the other day through the woods, I came to the base of a tall aspen, which I do not remember to have seen before, standing in the midst of the woods in the next town, still thickly leaved and turned to greenish yellow. It is perhaps the largest of its species that I know. It was by merest accident that I stumbled on it, and if I had been sent to find it, I should have thought it to be, as we say, like looking for a needle in a haymow. All summer, and it chances for so many years, it has been concealed to me; but now, walking in a different direction, to the same hilltop from which I saw the scarlet oaks, and looking off just before sunset, when all other trees visible for miles around are reddish or green, I distinguish my new acquaintance by its yellow color. Such is its fame, at last, and reward for living in that solitude and obscurity. It is the most distinct tree in all the landscape, and would be the cynosure of all eyes here. Thus it plays its part in the choir. I made a minute of its locality, glad to know where so large an aspen grew. Then it

seemed peculiar in its solitude and obscurity. It seemed the obscurest of trees. Now it was seen to be equally peculiar for its distinctness and prominence. Each tree (in October) runs up its flag and we know [what] colors it sails under. The sailor sails, and the soldier marches, under a color which will report his virtue farthest, and the ship's "private signals" must be such as can be distinguished at the greatest distance. The eye, which distinguishes and appreciates color, is itself the seat of color in the human body.
It is as if it recognized me too, and gladly, coming half-way to meet me, and now the acquaintance thus propitiously formed will, I trust, be permanent.
Of the three (?) mocker-nuts on Conantum top only the southernmost is bare, the rest are thickly leaved yet. The *Viburnum Lentago* is about bare.
That hour-glass apple shrub near the old Conantum house is full of small yellow fruit. Thus it is with them. By the end of some October, when their leaves have fallen, you see them glowing with an abundance of wild fruit, which the cows cannot get at over the bushy and thorny hedge which surrounds them. [Excursions, p. 306; River, 376] Such is their pursuit of knowledge through difficulties. [Excursions, p. 307; River, 377] Though they may have taken the hour-glass form, think not that their sands are run out. So is it with the rude, neglected genius from amid the country hills; he suffers many a check at first, browsed on by fate, springing in but a rocky pasture, the nursery of other creatures there, and he grows broad and strong, and scraggy and thorny, hopelessly stunted, you would say, and not like a sleek orchard tree all whose forces are husbanded and the precious early years not lost, and when at first, within this rind and hedge, the man shoots up, you see the thorny scrub of his youth about him, and he walks like an hour-glass, aspiring above, it is true, but held down and impeded by the rubbish of old difficulties overcome, and you seem to see his sands running out. But at length, thanks to his rude culture, he attains to his full stature, and every vestige of the thorny hedge which clung to his youth disappears, and he bears golden crops of Porters or Baldwins, whose fame will spread through all orchards for generations to come, while that thrifty orchard tree which was his competitor will, perchance, have long since ceased to bear its engrafted fruit and decayed. [See Excursions, p. 307; River, 377.]
The beach plum is withering green, say with the apple trees, which are half of them bare. Larches fairly begun to fall; so they are at height.

1859

September 24, Saturday: The Reverend Reuben Bates stepped down as minister at the First Parish Church, Unitarian Universalist, of Stow and Acton on account of ill health. He would linger until December 1, 1862. There would not be another minister in this church until April 23, 1862, when the Reverend George F. Clark would be installed there.


September 24, 1859: P.M.– To Melvin's Preserve.
Was that a flock of grackles on the meadow? I have not seen half a dozen blackbirds, methinks, for a month.
I have many affairs to attend to, and feel hurried these days. Great works of art have endless leisure for a background, as the universe has space. Time stands still while they are created. The artist cannot be in [A] hurry. The earth moves round the sun with inconceivable rapidity, and yet the surface of the lake is not ruffled by it. It is not by a compromise, it is not by a timid and feeble repentance, that a man will save his soul and *live*, at last. He has got to *conquer* a clear field, letting Repentance & Co. go. That's a well-meaning but weak firm that has assumed the debts of an old and worthless one. You are to fight in a field where no allowances will be made, no courteous bowing to one-handed knights. You are expected to do your duty, not in spite of every thing but *one*, but in spite of *everything*.
See a green snake.
Stedman Buttrick's handsome maple and pine swamp is full of cinnamon ferns. I stand on the elevated road, looking down into it. The trees are very tall and slender, without branches for a long distance. All the ground, which is perfectly level, is covered and concealed, as are the bases of the trees, with the tufts of cinnamon fern, now a pale brown. It is a very pretty sight, these northern trees springing out of a ground-work of ferns. It is like pictures of the tropics, except that here the palms are the undergrowth. You could not have arranged a nosegay more tastefully. It is a rich groundwork, out of which the maples and pines spring. [*Vide* August 23d, 1858.] But outside the wood and by the roadside, where they are exposed, these ferns are withered, shrivelled, and brown, for they are tenderer than the dicksonia. The fern, especially if large, is so foreign and tropical that these remind me of artificial groundworks set in sand, to set off other plants. These ferns (like brakes) begin to decay, *i.e.* to

turn yellow or brown and ripen, as here, before they are necessarily frost-bitten. Theirs is another change and decay, like that of the brake and sarsaparilla in the woods and swamps, only later, while the exposed ones are killed before they have passed through all their changes. The exposed ones attained to a brighter yellow early and were then killed; the shaded ones pass through various stages of rich, commonly pale brown, as here, and last much longer. The brown ones are the most interesting.

Going along this old Carlisle road, – road for walkers, for berry-pickers, and no more worldly travellers; road for Melvin and Clark; not for the sheriff nor butcher nor the baker's jingling cart; road where all wild things and fruits abound, where there are countless rocks to jar those who venture there in wagons; which no jockey, no wheelwright in his right mind, drives over, no little spidery gigs and Flying Childers; road which leads to and through a great but not famous garden, zoölogical and botanical garden, at whose gate you never arrive, [*Vide* forward.] – as I was going along there, I perceived the grateful scent of the dicksonia fern, now partly decayed, and it reminds me of all up-country with its springy mountainsides and unexhausted vigor. Is there any essence of dicksonia fern, I wonder? Surely that giant who, my neighbor expects, is to bound up the Alleghanies will have his handkerchief scented with that. In the lowest part of the road the dicksonia by the wall-sides is more than half frost-bitten and withered, –a sober Quaker-color, brown crape!– though not so tender or early [?] as the cinnamon fern; but soon I rise to where they are more yellow and green, and so my route is varied. On the higher places there are very handsome tufts of it, all yellowish outside and green within. The sweet fragrance of decay! When I wade through by narrow cow-paths, it is as if I had strayed into an ancient and decayed herb-garden. Proper for old ladies to scent their handkerchiefs with. Nature perfumes her garments with this essence now especially. She gives it to those who go a-barberrying and on dank autumnal walks. The essence of this as well as of new-mown hay, surely! The very scent of it, if you have a decayed frond in your chamber, will take you far up country in a twinkling. You would think you had gone after the cows there, or were lost on the mountains. It will make you as cool and well as a frog, – a wood frog, *Rana sylvatica*. It is the scent the earth yielded in the saurian period, before man was created and fell, before milk and water were invented, and the mints. Far wilder than they. Rana sylvatica passed judgment on it, or rather that peculiar-scented *Rana palustris*. It was in his reign it was introduced. That is the scent of the Silurian Period precisely, and a modern beau may scent his handkerchief with it. Before man had come and the plants that chiefly serve him. There were no *Rosaceæ* nor mints then. So the earth smelled in the Silurian (?) Period, before man was created and any soil had been debauched with manure. The saurians had their handkerchiefs scented with it. For all the ages are represented still and you can smell them out.

A man must attend to Nature closely for many years to know when, as well as where, to look for his objects, since he must always anticipate her a little. Young men have not learned the phases of Nature; they do not know what constitutes a year, or that one year is like another. I would know when in the year to expect certain thoughts and moods, as the sportsman knows when to look for plover.

Though you may have sauntered near to heaven's gate, when at length you return toward the village you give up the enterprise a little, and you begin to fall into the old ruts of thought, like a regular roadster. Your thoughts very properly fail to report themselves to headquarters. Your thoughts turn toward night and the evening mail and become begrimed with dust, as if you were just going to put up at (with?) the tavern, or even come to make an exchange with a brother clergyman here on the morrow.

Some eyes cannot see, even through a spy-glass. I showed my spy-glass to a man whom I met this afternoon, who said that he wanted to see if he could look through it. I tried it carefully on him, but he failed. He said that he tried a lot lately on the muster-field but he never could see through them, somehow or other everything was all a blur. I asked him if he considered his eyes good. He answered that they were good to see far. They looked like two old-fashioned china saucers. He kept steadily chewing his quid all the while he talked and looked. This is the case with a great many, I suspect. Everything is in a blur to them. He enjoys the distinction of being the only man in the town who raises his own tobacco. Seeing is not in them. No focus will suit them. You wonder how the world looks to them, – if those are *eyes* which they have got, or bits of old china, familiar with soap-suds.

As I stood looking over a wall this afternoon at some splendid red sumach bushes, now in their prime, I saw Melvin the other side of the wall and hailed him. "What are *you* after there?" asked he. "After the same thing that you are, perhaps," answered I. But I mistook, this time, for he said that he was looking amid the huckleberry bushes for some spectacles which a woman lost there in the summer. It was his mother, no doubt.

Road –that old Carlisle one– that leaves towns behind; where you put off worldly thoughts; where you do not carry a watch, nor remember the proprietor; where the proprietor is the only trespasser, –looking after *his* apples!– the only one who mistakes his calling there, whose title is not good; where fifty may be a-barberrying and you do not see one. It is an endless succession of glades where the barberries grow thickest, successive yards amid the barberry bushes where you do not see out. There I see Melvin and the robins, and many a nut-brown maid *sashé*-ing [*sic*] to the barberry bushes in hoops and crinoline, and none of them see me. The world-surrounding hoop! faery rings! Oh, the jolly cooper's trade it is the best of any! Carried to the furthest isles where civilized man penetrates. This the girdle they've put round the world! Saturn or Satan set the example.

Large and small hogsheads, barrels, kegs, worn by the misses that go to that lone schoolhouse in the Pinkham notch. The lonely horse in its pasture is glad to see company, comes forward to be noticed and takes an apple from your hand. Others are called *great* roads, but this is greater than they all. The road is only laid out, offered to walkers, not *accepted* by the town and the travelling world. To be represented by a dotted line on charts, or drawn in lime-juice, undiscoverable to the uninitiated, to be held to a warm imagination. No guide-boards indicate it. No odometer would indicate the miles a wagon had run there. Rocks which the druids *might* have raised – if they could. There I go searching for malic acid of the right quality, with my tests. The process is simple. Place the fruit between your jaws and then endeavor to make your teeth meet. The very earth contains it. The Easterbrooks Country contains malic acid.

To my senses the dicksonia fern has the most wild and primitive fragrance, quite unalloyed and untamable, such as no human institutions give out, – the early morning fragrance of the world, antediluvian, strength and hope imparting. They who scent it can never faint. It is ever a new and untried field where it grows, and only when we think original thoughts can we perceive it. If we keep that on [*sic*] our boudoir we shall be healthy and evergreen as hemlocks. Older than, but related to, strawberries. Before strawberries were, it was, and it will outlast them. Good for the trilobite and saurian in us; death to dandies. It yields its scent most morning and evening. Growing without manure; older than man; refreshing him; preserving his original strength and innocence. When the New Hampshire farmer, far from travelled roads, has cleared a space for his mountain home and conducted the springs of the mountain to his yard, already it grows about the sources of that spring, before any mint is planted in his garden. There his sheep and oxen and he too scent it, and he realizes that the world is new to him. There the pastures are rich, the cattle do not die of disease, and the men are strong and free. The wild original of strawberries and the rest.

Nature, the earth herself, is the only panacea. They bury poisoned sheep up to the necks in earth to take the poison out of them.

After four days cloud and rain we have fair weather. A great many have improved this first fair day to come a-barberrying to the Easterbrooks fields. These bushy fields are all alive with them, though I scarcely see one. I meet Melvin loaded down with barberries, in bags and baskets, so that he has to travel by stages and is glad to stop and talk with me. It is better to take thus what Nature offers, in her season, than to buy an extra dinner at Parker's.

The sumach berries are probably past their beauty. Fever-bush berries are scarlet now, and also green. They have a more spicy taste than any of our berries, carrying us in thought to the spice islands. Taste like lemon-peel. The panicled andromeda berries (?) begin to brown. The bayberry berries are apparently ripe, though not so gray as they will be, – more lead-colored. They bear sparingly here. Leaves not fallen nor changed, and I the more easily find the bushes amid the changed huckleberries, brakes, etc., by their greenness.

The poke on Eb. Hubbard's hillside has been considerably frost-bitten before the berries are one-third ripe. It is in flower still. Great drooping cylindrical racemes of blackish-purple berries, six inches or more in length, tapering a little toward the end; great flat blackish and ripe berries at base, with green ones and flowers at the other end; all on brilliant purple or crimson-purple peduncle and pedicels. [THE WORD "POKE" APPEARS HERE, DRAWN ACROSS THE PAGE IN LARGE CHARACTERS NOW (1906) OF A DIRTY LIGHT-BROWN COLOR. THE STAIN IS DOUBTLESS WHAT REMAINS OF THE POKE BERRY'S PURPLE JUICE.]

HENRY L. SHATTUCK

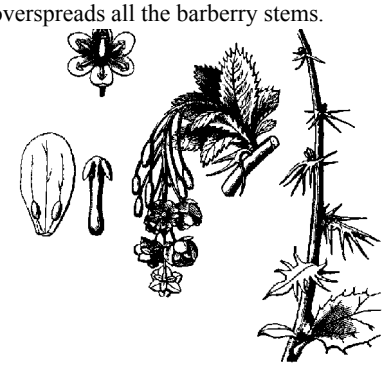
Those thorns by Shattuck's barn, now nearly leafless, have hard green fruit as usual.

The shrub oak is apparently the most fertile of our oaks. I count two hundred and sixty-six acorns on a branch just two feet long. Many of the cups are freshly empty now, showing a pretty circular pink scar at the bottom, where the acorn adhered. They are of various forms and sizes on different shrubs; are now turning dark-brown and showing their converging meridional light-brown lines. Never fear for striped squirrels in our shrub oak land.

Am surprised to find, by Botrychium Swamp, a *Rhus radicans* which is quite a tree by itself. It is about nine feet high by nine in width, growing in the midst of a clump of barberry bushes, which it overhangs. It is now at the height of its change, very handsome, scarlet and yellow, and I did not at first know what it was. I found it to consist of three or four branches, each nearly two inches thick and covered with those shaggy fibres, and these are twined round some long-since rotted barberry stems, and around one another, and now make a sizable-looking trunk, which rises to the height of four feet before it branches, and then spreads widely every way like an oak. It was, no doubt, indebted to the barberry for support at first, but now its very branches are much larger

than that, and it far overtops and overspreads all the barberry stems.

BARBERRY



1860

February 21, Tuesday: The New York Evening Post carried, on page 4 under "New Publications," a review of James Redpath's THE PUBLIC LIFE OF CAPT. JOHN BROWN: WITH AN AUTO-BIOGRAPHY OF HIS CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH that noted that the book was dedicated "to Wendell Phillips, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry D. Thoreau, defenders of the faithful, who, when the mob shouted 'Madman!' said 'Saint!'"

DEDICATION.

TO

WENDELL PHILLIPS, RALPH WALDO EMERSON,

AND HENRY D. THOREAU,

DEFENDERS OF THE FAITHFUL,

WHO, WHEN THE MOB SHOUTED, "MADMAN!" SAID, "SAINT!"

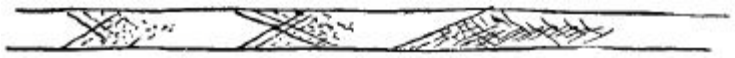
I HUMBLY AND GRATEFULLY

Dedicate this Work.

JAMES REDPATH.

THE PUBLIC LIFE OF BROWN

Feb. 21. 2 P.M. — Thermometer forty-six and snow rapidly melting. It melts first and fastest where the snow is so thin that it feels the heat reflected from the ground beneath.
I see now, in the ruts in sand on hills in the road, those interesting ripples which I only notice to advantage in very shallow running water, a phenomenon almost, as it were, confined to melted snow running in ruts in the road in a thaw, especially in the spring. It is a spring phenomenon. The water, meeting with some slight obstacle, ever and anon appears to shoot across diagonally to the opposite side, while ripples from the opposite side intersect the former, producing countless regular and sparkling diamond-shaped ripples.



If you hold your head low and look along up such a stream in a right light, it is seen to have a regularly braided surface, tress-like, preserving its figures as if it were solid, though the stream is seen pulsing high through the middle ripples in the thread of the stream. The ripples are as rectilinear as ice-crystals. When you see the sparkling stream from melting snow in the ruts, know that then is to be seen this braid of the spring.
It was their very admiration of nature that made the ancients attribute those magnanimous qualities which are rarely to be found in man to the lion as her masterpiece, and it is only by a readiness, or rather preparedness, to see more than appears in a creature that one can appreciate what is manifest.
It is remarkable how many berries are the food of birds, mice, etc. Perhaps I may say that all are, however hard or bitter. This I am inclined to say, judging of what I do not know from what I do. For example, mountain-ash, prinos, skunk-cabbage, sumach, chokecherry, cornels probably, elder-berry, viburnums, rose hips, arum, poke, thorn, barberry, grapes, tupelo, amphicarpaea, thistle-down, bayberry (?), *Cornus florida*, checkerberry, hemlock, larch, pines, etc., birch, alder, juniper. The berries and seeds of wild plants generally, however little it is suspected by us, are the food of birds, squirrels, or mice.

BARBERRY

1898

Wheat rust cost the US $67,000,000. By 1904 significant research programs would be established to discover control measures. The German scientist H. de Bary had earlier detailed the life cycle of wheat rust, but it would not be until 1917 that sufficient study would be completed to support a barberry eradication program, and the eradication of barberry bushes would be legalized in North Dakota.

Bayer pharmaceutical corporation registered and marketed Felix Hoffman's diacetylmorphine under the brand name "Heroin," from the German *heroisch* meaning heroic, as a substitute for morphine and codeine cough suppressants which had proven to offer difficulties. Their marketers may have chosen this designation because of the ease with which this opium derivative reduced pain and eased the breathing, or they may have chosen it because of the way test subjects described its effects.

"The first cause of problems is solutions."

By 1917 this new drug would be causing such problems of its own that its use in over-the-counter cough syrups would be discontinued.

PLANTS

"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

– Remark by character "Garin Stevens" in William Faulkner's INTRUDER IN THE DUST

Prepared: September 30, 2013

ARRGH AUTOMATED RESEARCH REPORT

GENERATION HOTLINE

This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, upon someone's request we have pulled it out of the hat of a pirate that has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (depicted above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of data modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture. This is data mining. To respond to such a request for information, we merely push a button.

Commonly, the first output of the program has obvious deficiencies and so we need to go back into the data modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and do a recompile of the chronology — but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary "writerly" process which you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
Place your requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>.
Arrgh.