

V

JANUARY, 1855

(ÆT. 37)

*Jan. 1.* P. M. — Skated to Pantry Brook with C.

All the tolerable skating was a narrow strip, often only two or three feet wide, between the frozen spew and the broken ice of the middle.

*Jan. 2.* I see, in the path near Goose Pond, where the rabbits have eaten the bark of smooth sumachs and young locusts rising above the snow; also barberry. Yesterday we saw the pink light on the snow within a rod of us. The shadow of the bridges, etc., on the snow was a dark indigo blue.

*Jan. 4.* To Worcester to lecture.

Visited the Antiquarian Library of twenty-two or twenty-three thousand volumes. It is richer in pamphlets and newspapers than Harvard. One alcove contains Cotton Mather's library, chiefly theological works, reading which exclusively you might live in his days and believe in witchcraft. Old leather-bound tomes, many of them as black externally as if they had been charred with fire. Time and fire have the same effect. Haven said that the Rev. Mr. Somebody had spent almost every day the past year in that alcove.

Saw after my lecture a young negro who introduced

himself as a native of Africa, Leo L. Lloyd, who lectures on "Young Africa!!" I never heard of anything but old Africa before.

Higginson told me of a simple, strong-minded man named Dexter Broad, who was at my lecture, whom I *should* see.

Jan. 5. A. M. — Walked to Quinsigamond Pond via Quinsigamond Village, to southerly end, and returned by Floating Bridge.

Saw the straw-built wigwam of an Indian from St. Louis (Rapids?), Canada, — apparently a half-breed. Not being able to buy straw, he had made it chiefly of dry grass, which he had cut in a meadow with his knife. It was against a bank and partly of earth all round, the straw or grass laid on horizontal poles and kept down by similar ones outside, like our thatching. Makes them of straw often in Canada. Can make one, if he has the straw, in one day. The door, on hinges, was of straw also, put on perpendicularly, pointed at top to fit the roof. The roof steep, six or eight inches thick. He was making baskets wholly of sugar maple; could find no black ash. Sewed or bound the edge with maple also. Did not look up once while [we] were there. There was a fireplace of stone, oven-like, running out one side and covered with earth. It was the nest of a large meadow mouse. Had he ever hunted moose? When he was down at Green Island. Where was that? Oh, far down, very far! Caught seals there. No books down that way.

Saw men catching minnows for fishing through

large holes in the ice of the Blackstone. At Quinsigamond Village, a Mr. Washburn showed me the wire rolling and drawing mill in which he is concerned. All sorts of scrap iron is first heated to a welding heat in masses of about two hundredweight, then rolled between vast iron rollers in successive grooves till it is reduced to long rods little more than [an] inch in diameter. These are cut up by powerful shears into lengths of about three feet, heated again, and rolled between other rollers in grooves successively of various forms, — square, oval, round, diamond, etc., which part of the work only one man in the concern fully understood and kept secret. It was here rolled and reduced to a large-sized wire maybe three eighths of an inch in diameter, of which screws are made. At this stage, first, it begins to be *drawn*, though it must be heated again in the course of the drawing to restore its ductility. Make a great deal of telegraph-wire, and for pail-bails, etc. About twenty miles of telegraph-wire in a day, of the best Swedish iron for strength. Cannot make so good iron in this country, because we cannot afford to work it over so much, labor being higher. Said they had but few competitors now in making telegraph-wire, all the mills in England being just now engaged in making wire for telegraph between England and Sevastopol. These were the first wheels turned by the Blackstone. Sometimes their great wheel breaks, yielding to the centrifugal force, though it is one man's duty to watch it, and immense masses are thrown through the roof or sides of the building. They commonly hear premonitory symptoms, when all run.

I saw a part of the glowing mass which had been heated to a welding heat, ready to be rolled, but had dropped on its way. I could still trace the outlines of the various scraps which composed it, — screws, bolts, bar iron, an old axe curiously twisted, etc., etc., — all which by mere pressure would have been rolled into a homogeneous mass. It was now in the condition of many a piece of composition, which, however, mere compression would weld together into a homogeneous mass or a continuous rod. Washburn said the workmen were like sailors; their work was exciting and they drank more spirit than other laborers. In hot weather would sometimes drink two quarts of water an hour and sweat as much. If they could not sweat, left off work. Showed me a peculiar coarse yellow sand which they imported from the shore of Long Island, whose quartz, examined by a microscope, was seen to be perfect crystals. This they used on the floor of their furnace to repair and level it when their iron bars had furrowed it. In the cavernous furnace I saw the roof *dripping* with dark stalactites from the mortar and bricks. In one place they boiled the wire in water and vitriol, which cleaned it and ate out grease and other foreign particles. Wire is hard drawn when it is rapidly reduced, *i. e.* from one size to another *much* smaller.

Higginson showed me a new translation of the Vishnu Sarma. Spoke of the autobiography of a felon older than Stephen Burroughs, one Fitch of Revolutionary days.

R. W. E. told [of] Mr. Hill, his classmate, of Bangor,

who was much interested in my "Walden," but relished it merely as a capital satire and joke, and even thought that the survey and map of the pond were not real, but a caricature of the Coast Surveys. Also of Mr. Frost, the botanist, of Brattleboro, who has found five or six new species of lichens thereabouts. George Emerson is aware that he has confounded two black oaks. One is found on Nantucket. Is it not the *Quercus nigra*, and have we not got it in C.?

Jan. 6. P. M. — To Great Meadows.

Saw one of those silver-gray cocoons which are so securely attached by the silk being wound round the leaf-stalk and the twig. This was more than a year old and empty and, having been attached to a red maple shoot, a foot or more above the meadow, it had girdled it just as a wire might, it was so unyielding, and the wood had overgrown it on each side.

What is that small insect with large, slender wings, which I see on the snow or fluttering in the air these days? Also some little black beetles on the ice of the meadow, ten rods from shore.

In many places near the shore the water has overflowed the ice to a great extent and frozen again with water between of a yellowish tinge, in which you see motes moving about as you walk. The skating is for the most part spoiled by a thin, crispy ice on top of the old ice, which is frozen in great crystals and crackles under your feet. This is apparently the puddles produced by the late thaw and rain, which froze thinly while the rest of the water was soaked up. A fine

snow is falling and drifting before the wind over the ice and lodging in shallow drifts at regular intervals.

I see where a woodpecker has drilled a hole about two inches over in a decayed white maple; quite recently, for the chippings are strewn over the ice beneath and were the first sign that betrayed it. The tree was hollow. Is it for a nest next season?<sup>1</sup> There was an old hole higher up.

I see that the locust pods are still closed, or but partially open, but they open wider after lying in my chamber.

Jan. 7. Sunday. P. M. — J. P. Brown road and Hubbard's Bridge.

Cloudy and misty. On opening the door I feel a very warm southwesterly wind, contrasting with the cooler air of the house, and find it unexpectedly wet in the street, and the manure is being washed off the ice into the gutter. It is, in fact, a January thaw. The channel of the river is quite open in many places, and in others I remark that the ice and water alternate like waves and the hollow between them. There are long reaches of open water where I look for muskrats and ducks, as I go along to Clamshell Hill. I hear the pleasant sound of running water. I see that black scum on the surface of water above the ice.

The delicious soft, spring-suggesting air, — how it fills my veins with life! Life becomes again credible to me. A certain dormant life awakes in me, and I begin to love nature again. Here is my Italy, my hea-

<sup>1</sup> [Probably for a winter lodging.]

ven, my New England. I understand why the Indians hereabouts placed heaven in the southwest, — the soft south.<sup>1</sup> On the slopes the ground is laid bare and radical leaves revealed, — crowfoot, shepherd's-purse, clover, etc., — a fresh green, and, in the meadow, the skunk-cabbage buds, with a bluish bloom, and the red leaves of the meadow saxifrage; and these and the many withered plants laid bare remind me of spring and of botany.

On the same bare sand is revealed a new crop of arrowheads. I pick up two perfect ones of quartz, sharp as if just from the hands of the maker.

Still birds are very rare. Here comes a little flock of titmice, plainly to keep me company, with their black caps and throats making them look top-heavy, restlessly hopping along the alders, with a sharp, clear, lispng note. There begin to be greenish pools in the fields where there is a bottom of icy snow. I saw what looked like clay-colored snow-fleas on the under side of a stone.

The bank is tinged with a most delicate pink or bright flesh-color — where the *Bæomyces roseus* grows. It is a lichen day. The ground is covered with cetrariæ, etc., under the pines. How full of life and of eyes is the damp bark! It would not be worth the while to die and leave all this life behind one.

The hillsides covered with the bear scrub oak, methinks, are of the deepest red at a distance. The pitch pine tops were much broken by the damp snow last month. I see where the birches which were weighed

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, p. 99.]

down and lay across the road have been cut off; and all their scales and seeds, shaken off by the sleighs, in one spot color the snow like thick sawdust. The sky, seen here and there through the wrack, bluish and greenish and, perchance, with a vein of red in the west, seems like the inside of a shell deserted of its tenant, into which I have crawled.<sup>1</sup>

The willow catkins *began* to peep from under their scales as early as the 26th of last month. Many buds have lost their scales.

Jan. 8. 7.30 A. M. — To river.

Still warm and cloudy, but with a great crescent of clear sky increasing in the north by west. The streets are washed bare down to the ice. It is pleasant to see the sky reflected in the open river-reach, now perfectly smooth.

10 A. M. — To Easterbrooks place *via* old mill site.

It is now a clear warm and sunny day. The willow osiers by the Red Bridge decidedly are not bright now.<sup>2</sup> There is a healthy earthy sound of cock-crowing. I hear a few chickadees near at hand, and hear and see jays further off, and, as yesterday, a crow sitting sentinel on an apple tree. Soon he gives the alarm, and several more take their places near him. Then off they flap with their *caw* of various hoarseness. I see various caterpillars and grubs on the snow and in one place a reddish ant about a third of an inch long walking off. In the swamps you see the mouths of squirrels'

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, pp. 99, 100.]

<sup>2</sup> Were too old.

holes in the snow, with dirt and leaves and perhaps pine scales about them. The fever-bush is betrayed by its little spherical buds.

Jan. 9. P. M. — To Conantum.

A cloudy day, threatening snow; wet under foot. How pretty the evergreen radical shoots of the St. John's-wort now exposed, partly red or lake, various species of it. Have they not grown since fall? I put a stone at the end of one to try it. A little wreath of green and red lying along on the muddy ground amid the melting snows. I am attracted at this season by the fine bright-red buds of the privet andromeda, sleeping couchant along the slender light-brown twigs. They look brightest against a dark ground. I notice the pink shoots of low blueberries where they are thick. How handsome now the fertile fronds of the sensitive fern standing up a foot or more on the sides of causeways, the neat pale-brown stipe clothed with rich dark-brown fruit at top, — the pinnæ on one side and slightly curved, — "a one sided spike or raceme," — still full of seed! They look quite fresh though dry and rigid. Walked up on the river a piece above the Holden Swamp, though there were very few places where I could get on to it, it has so melted along the shore and on the meadows. The ice over the channel looks dangerously dark and rotten in spots. The oak leaves are of the various leather-colors. The white oak, which is least so and most curled and withered, has to my eye a tinge of salmon-color or pink in it. The black shrub oak is particularly dark-reddish

and firm. It is the black whose leaves are such a pale brown verging on yellowish, — sometimes reddish, — but well preserved.

This winter I hear the axe in almost every wood of any consequence left standing in the township.

Made a splendid discovery this afternoon. As I was walking through Holden's white spruce swamp, I saw peeping above the snow-crust some slender delicate evergreen shoots very much like the *Andromeda Polifolia*, amid sphagnum, lambkill, *Andromeda calyculata*, blueberry bushes, etc., though there was very little to be seen above the snow. It is, I have little doubt, the *Kalmia glauca* var. *rosmarinifolia* (?), with very delicate evergreen opposite linear leaves, strongly revolute, somewhat reddish-green above, slightly weather-beaten, — imbrowned or ripened by the winter, as it were, its cheeks made ruddy by the cold, — white glaucous beneath, with a yellow midrib (not veined nor mucronated nor alternate like the *Andromeda Polifolia*), on the ends of the twigs, which are sharply two-edged. The blossom-buds quite conspicuous. The whole aspect more tender and yellowish than the *Andromeda Polifolia*.<sup>1</sup> The pretty little blossom-buds arranged crosswise in the axils of the leaves as you look down on them.

What a strong and hearty but reckless, hit-or-miss style had some of the early writers of New England, like Josselyn and William Wood and others elsewhere in those days; as if they spoke with a relish, smacking their lips like a coach-whip, caring more to speak

<sup>1</sup> And green while that is mulberry now. *Vide* Jan. 10.

heartily than scientifically true. They are not to be caught napping by the wonders of Nature in a new country, and perhaps are often more ready to appreciate them than she is to exhibit them. They give you one piece of nature, at any rate, and that is themselves.<sup>1</sup> (Cotton Mather, too, has a rich phrase.) They use a strong, coarse, homely speech which cannot always be found in the dictionary, nor sometimes be heard in polite society, but which brings you very near to the thing itself described. The strong new soil speaks through them. I have just been reading some in Wood's "New England's Prospect." He speaks a good word for New England, indeed will come very near lying for her, and when he doubts the justness of his praise, he brings it out not the less roundly; as who cares if it is not so? we love her not the less for all that. Certainly that generation stood nearer to nature, nearer to the facts, than this, and hence their books have more life in them.

(Sometimes a lost man will be so beside himself that he will not have sense enough to trace back his own tracks in the snow.)

Expressions he uses which you now hear only in kitchens and barrooms, which therefore sound particularly fresh and telling, not book-worn. They speak like men who have backs and stomachs and bowels, with all the advantages and disadvantages that attach to them. Ready to find lions here, some having "heard such terrible roarings," "which must be either Devils or Lions; there being no other creatures which use

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, p. 271.]

to roar." What a gormandizing faith (or belief) he has, ready to swallow all kinds of portents and prodigies! Says the wolves have no joints from head to tail. Most admirable when they most outrage common taste and the rules of composition. Of mosquitoes he says those "that swell with their biting the first year, never swell the second."<sup>1</sup>

Jan. 10. P. M. — To Beck Stow's.

The swamp is suddenly frozen up again, and they are carting home the mud which was dug out last fall, in great frozen masses.

The twigs of the *Andromeda Polifolia*, with its rich leaves turned to a mulberry-color above by the winter, with a bluish bloom and a delicate bluish white, as in summer, beneath, project above the ice, the tallest twigs recurved at top, with the leaves standing up on the upper side like teeth of a rake. The intermingling shades of mulberry brown (?) and bluish bloom and glaucous white make it peculiarly rich, as it lies along the ice frozen in. The leaves uninjured by insects.

Then there is the *Andromeda calyculata*, its leaves (now (?)) appressed to the twigs, pale-brown beneath, reddish above, with minute whitish dots. As I go toward the sun now at 4 P. M., the translucent leaves are lit up by it and appear of a soft red, more or less brown, like cathedral windows, but when I look back from the sun, the whole bed appears merely gray and brown.

The leaves of the lambkill, now recurved, are more

<sup>1</sup> Vide forward.

or less reddish. The great buds of the swamp-pink, on the central twig, clustered together, are more or less imbrowned and reddened.

At European Cranberry Swamp, I saw great quantities of the seeds of that low three-celled rush or sedge, about the edge of the pool on the ice, black and elliptical, looking like the droppings of mice, this size: ○ ○ , so thick in many places that by absorbing the sun's heat they had melted an inch or more into the ice.<sup>1</sup> No doubt they are the food of some creatures. Saw a thorn with long thorns and its peculiarly shining varnished twigs.

Cold and blustering as it is, the crows are flapping and sailing about and buffeting one another as usual. It is hard to tell what they would be at.

Jan. 11. P. M. — Skated to Lee's Bridge and Farrar's Swamp — call it Otter Swamp.

A fine snow had just begun to fall, so we made haste to improve the skating before it was too late. Our skates made tracks often nearly an inch broad in the slight snow which soon covered the ice. All along the shores and about the islets the water had broadly overflowed the ice of the meadows, and frequently we had to skate through it, making it fly. The snow soon showed where the water was. It was a pleasant time to skate, so still, and the air so thick with snowflakes that the outline of near hills was seen against it and not against the more distant and higher hills. Single pines stood out distinctly against it in the near horizon.

<sup>1</sup> *Scheuchzeria palustris*.

The ground, which was two thirds bare before, began to gray about Fair Haven Pond, as if it were all rocks. There were many of those grubs and caterpillars on the ice half a dozen rods from shore, some sunk deep into it. This air, thick with snowflakes, making a background, enabled me to detect a very picturesque clump of trees on an islet at Pole Brook, — a red (?) oak in midst, with birches on each side.

*Jan. 12. P. M. — To Flint's Pond via Minott's meadow.*

After a spitting of snow in the forenoon, I see the blue sky here and there, and the sun is coming out. It is still and warm. The earth is two thirds bare. I walk along the Mill Brook below Emerson's, looking into it for some life.

Perhaps what most moves us in winter is some reminiscence of far-off summer. How we leap by the side of the open brooks! What beauty in the running brooks! What life! What society! The cold is merely superficial; it is summer still at the core, far, far within. It is in the cawing of the crow, the crowing of the cock, the warmth of the sun on our backs. I hear faintly the cawing of a crow far, far away, echoing from some unseen wood-side, as if deadened by the springlike vapor which the sun is drawing from the ground. It mingles with the slight murmur of the village, the sound of children at play, as one stream empties gently into another, and the wild and tame are one. What a delicious sound! It is not merely crow calling to crow, for it speaks to me too. I am part of

one great creature with him; if he has voice, I have ears.<sup>1</sup> I can hear when he calls, and have engaged not to shoot nor stone him if he will caw to me each spring. On the one hand, it may be, is the sound of children at school saying their a, b, ab's, on the other, far in the wood-fringed horizon, the cawing of crows from their blessed eternal vacation, out at their long recess, children who have got dismissed! While the vaporous incense goes up from all the fields of the spring — if it were spring. Ah, bless the Lord, O my soul! bless him for wildness, for crows that will not alight within gunshot! and bless him for hens, too, that croak and cackle in the yard!

Where are the shiners now, and the trout? I see none in the brook. Have the former descended to the deep water of the river? Ah, may I be there to see when they go down! Why can they not tell me? Or gone into the mud? There are few or no insects for them now.

The strong scent of this red oak, just split and corded, is a slight compensation for the loss of the tree.

How cheering the sight of the evergreens now, on the forest floor, the various pyrolas, etc., fresh as in summer!

What is that mint whose seed-vessels rubbed are so spicy to smell — minty — at the further end of the pond by the Gourgas wood-lot?<sup>2</sup>

On Flint's Pond I find Nat Rice fishing. He has not caught one. I asked him what he thought the best time to fish. He said, "When the wind first comes south after a cold spell, on a bright morning."

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, p. 100.]

<sup>2</sup> Lycopus.



Well may the tender buds attract us at this season, no less than partridges, for they are the hope of the year, the spring rolled up. The summer is all packed in them.

Observed this afternoon the following oak leaves:—

1st, the white oak, the most withered and faded and curled; many spotted with black dot-lichens.

2d, the bear scrub, the most firm and fresh-colored and flat.

3d, the black, moderately firm, the darkest above, much curled.

4th, scarlet, firmest after the bear scrub, with much freshness and life; *some* conspicuously red still (unwithered); lobes remarkably distorted.

5th, red, considerably withered and lifeless and worn, thin and faded; some reddish slightly and not inclined to curl.

6th, swamp white, pretty firm and bright, but considerably curled.

7th, I suspect that the small chinquapin is deciduous, for I could not find one leaf in all my walk January 1st, though I looked along the Lupine Wall. Those on the ground are considerably withered, faded, and curled, yet pretty firm.

For color, perhaps all may be called brown, and vary into each other more or less.

The 1st, as both sides are seen, pale-brown with a salmon tinge beneath.

2d, clear reddish-brown, leather-like, above, often paler, whitish or very light beneath, silveryish.

3d, dusky-brown above (not always), clear tawny(?) brown beneath.

4th, clear pale-brown (except the unfaded red ones), leather-like, very generally reddish, nearly the same both sides.

5th, quite pale brown or slightly reddish, nearly the same both sides; some, prematurely dead, are yellowish.

6th, deep rusty-colored brown, often bright leather-red, silveryish-white beneath.

7th, leaves on ground pale-brown, much like a withered red, but whitish beneath *like* bear shrub.

The oak leaves now resemble the different kinds of calf, sheep, Russia leather, and Morocco (a few scarlet oaks), of different ages.

*Jan. 13.* Warm and wet, with rain-threatening clouds drifting from southwest. Muddy, wet, and slippery. Surprised to see oak balls on a red oak.

Picked up a pitch pine cone which had evidently been cut off by a squirrel. The successive grooves made by his teeth while probably he bent it down were quite distinct. The woody stem was a quarter of an inch thick, and I counted eight strokes of his chisel.

*Jan. 14.* Skated to Baker Farm with a rapidity which astonished myself, before the wind, feeling the rise and fall, — the water having settled in the suddenly cold night, — which I had not time to see. Saw the intestines of (apparently) a rabbit, — betrayed by a morsel of fur, — left on the ice, probably the prey of a fox. A man feels like a new creature, a deer, perhaps,

moving at this rate. He takes new possession of nature in the name of his own majesty. There was I, and there, and there, as Mercury went down the Idæan Mountains. I judged that in a quarter of an hour I was three and a half miles from home without having made any particular exertion. — *à la volaille*.

*Jan. 15. P. M.* — Skated to Bedford.

It had just been snowing, and this lay in shallow drifts or waves on the Great Meadows, alternate snow and ice. Skated into a crack, and slid on my side twenty-five feet.

The river-channel dark and rough with fragments of old ice, — polygons of various forms, — cemented together, not strong.

*Jan. 16. To Cambridge and Boston.*

Carried to Harris the worms — brown, light-striped — and fuzzy black caterpillars (he calls the first also caterpillars); also two black beetles; all which I have found within a week or two on ice and snow; thickest in a thaw. Showed me, in a German work, plates of the larvæ of dragon-flies and ephemeræ, such as I see — or their cases — on rushes, etc., over water. Says the ant-lion is found at Burlington, Vermont, and *may* be at Concord.

I can buy Indian coats in Milk Street from three and a half to six dollars, depending on the length; also leggins from \$1.50 to three or more dollars, also depending on the length.

Saw a Nantucket man, who said that their waters

were not so good as the south side of Long Island to steer in by sounding. Off Long Island it deepened a mile every fathom for at least forty miles, as he had proved, — perhaps eighty; but at Barnegat it was not so.

*Jan. 19. 7 A. M.* — Yesterday it rained hard all day, washing off the little snow that was left down to the ice, the gutters being good-sized mill-brooks and the water over shoes in the middle of the road.

In the night it turned to snow, which still falls, and now covers the wet ground three or four inches deep. It is a very damp snow or sleet, perhaps mixed with rain, which the strong northwest wind plasters to that side of the trees and houses. I never saw the blue in snow so bright as this damp, dark, stormy morning at 7 A. M., as I was coming down the railroad. I did not have to make a hole in it, but I saw it some rods off in the deep, narrow ravines of the drifts and under their edges or caves, like the serenest blue of heaven, though the sky was, of course, wholly concealed by the driving snow-storm; suggesting that in darkest storms we may still have the hue of heaven in us.

At noon it is still a driving snow-storm, and a little flock of redpolls is busily picking the seeds of the pig-weed, etc., in the garden. Almost all have more or less crimson; a few are very splendid, with their particularly bright crimson breasts. The white on the edge of their wing-coverts is very conspicuous.

*P. M.* — The damp snow still drives from the northwest nearly horizontally over the fields, while I go with C. toward the Cliffs and Walden. There is

not a single fresh track on the back road, and the aspect of the road and trees and houses is very wintry. Though considerable snow has fallen, it lies chiefly in drifts under the walls. We went through the Spring Woods, over the Cliff, by the wood-path at its base to Walden, and thence by the path to Brister's Hill, and by road home. It was worth the while to see what a burden of damp snow lay on the trees notwithstanding the wind. Pitch pines were bowed to the ground with it, and birches also, and white oaks. I saw one of the last, at least twenty-five feet high, splintered near the ground past recovery. All kinds of evergreens, and oaks which retain their leaves, and birches which do not, up to twenty-five feet or more in height, were bent to the earth, and these novel but graceful curves were a new feature in the woodland scenery. Young white pines often stood draped in robes of purest white, emblems of purity, like a maiden that has taken the veil, with their heads slightly bowed and their main stems slanting to one side, like travellers bending to meet the storm with their heads muffled in their cloaks. The windward side of the wood, and the very tops of the trees everywhere, for the most part, were comparatively bare, but within the woods the whole lower two thirds of the trees were laden with the snowy burden which had sifted down on to them. The snow, a little damp, had lodged not only on the oak leaves and the evergreens, but on every twig and branch, and stood in upright walls or ruffs five or six inches high, like miniature Chinese walls, zigzag over hill and dale, making more conspicuous than ever the

arrangement and the multitude of the twigs and branches; and the trunks also being plastered with snow, a peculiar soft light was diffused around, very unlike the ordinary darkness of the forest, as if you were inside a drift or snow house. This even when you stood on the windward side. In most directions you could not see more than four or five rods into this labyrinth or maze of white arms. This is to be insisted on. On every side it was like a snow-drift that lay loose to that height. They were so thick that they left no crevice through which the eye could penetrate further. The path was for the most part blocked up with the trees bent to the ground, which we were obliged to go round by zigzag paths in the woods, or carefully creep under at the risk of getting our necks filled with an avalanche of snow. In many places the path was shut up by as dense a labyrinth, high as the tree-tops and impermeable to vision, as if there had never been a path there. Often we touched a tree with our foot or shook it with our hand, and so relieved it of a part of its burden, and, rising a little, it made room for us to pass beneath. Often singular portals and winding passages were left between the pitch pines, through [which], stooping and grazing the touchy walls, we made our way. Where the path was open in the midst of the woods, the snow was about seven or eight inches deep. The trunks of the trees so uniformly covered on the northerly side, as happens frequently every winter, and sometimes continuing so for weeks, suggested that this might be a principal reason why the lichens watered by the melting snow

flourished there most. The snow lay in great continuous masses on the pitch pines and the white, not only like napkins, but great white table-spreads and counterpanes, when you looked off at the wood from a little distance. Looking thus up at the Cliff, I could not tell where it lay an unbroken mass on the smooth rock, and where on the trees, it was so massed on the last also. White pines were changed into firs by it, and the limbs and twigs of some large ones were so matted together by the weight that they looked like immense solid fungi on the side of the trees, or those nests of the social grosbeak (?)<sup>1</sup> of Africa which I have seen represented. Some white pine boughs hung down like fans or the webbed feet of birds. On some pitch pines it lay in fruit-like balls as big as one's head, like cocoanuts. Where the various oaks were bent down, the contrast of colors of the snow and oak leaves and the softened tints through the transparent snow — often a delicate fawn-color — were very agreeable.

As we returned over the Walden road the damp, driving snowflakes, when we turned partly round and faced them, hurt our eyeballs as if they had been dry scales.<sup>2</sup>

It may be that the linarias come into the gardens now not only because all nature is a wilderness to-day, but because the woods where the wind has not free play are so snowed up, the twigs are so deeply covered, that they cannot readily come at their food. In many

<sup>1</sup> [The sociable weaver-bird is doubtless referred to.]

<sup>2</sup> [Channing, p. 112.]

places single trees, or clumps of two or three drooping and massed together by the superincumbent weight, made a sort of roof, tent-like, under which you might take shelter. Under one pitch pine, which shut down to the ground on every side, you could not see the sky at all, but sat in a gloomy light as in a tent. We saw only one indistinct, snow-covered trail of an animal. Where are the crows now? I never see them at such a time. The water of yesterday is very high now on the meadows over the ice, but the snow has mingled with it so densely that it is mere slosh now. The channel ice is lifted up by the freshet, and there is dry white snow, but on each side are broad dirty or yellowish green strips of slosh. Whence comes this green color?

One of the first snows of the winter was a similar damp one which lodged on the trees and broke them down. And the sides of woodland roads were strewn with birch-tops which had obstructed the way and which travellers had been obliged to cut off.

There are plenty of those shell-like drifts along the south sides of the walls now. There are countless perforations<sup>1</sup> through which the fine snow drives and blinds you.

It was surprising to see what a burden of snow had lodged on the trees, especially the pitch pines in secluded dells in the woods out of the way of the wind. White oaks also, six inches in diameter and twenty-five feet high, were bent to the ground and sometimes broken or splintered by it. Maybe the white oaks are more flexible than the others, or their leaves are higher

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, p. 112.]

up and they are more slender below. Some are split in the crotch. It lay on the smaller shrubs and bushes through which you walked, like lightest down, only the lightest part sifting down there.

The houses have that peculiarly wintry aspect now on the west side, being all plastered over with snow adhering to the clapboards and half concealing the doors and windows.

The trees were everywhere bent into the path like bows tautly strung, and you had only to shake them with your hand or foot, when they rose up and made way for you. You went winding between and stooping or creeping under them, fearing to touch them, lest they should relieve themselves of their burden and let fall an avalanche or shower of snow on to you. Ever and anon the wind shook down a shower from high trees. You would not have believed there were so many twigs and branches in a wood as were revealed by the snow resting on them; perfect walls of snow; no place for a bird to perch.<sup>1</sup>

*Jan. 20.* Our lesser redpoll is said to be the same with the European, which is called *Le Sizerin* by Buffon. (This in Bewick.) I heard its mew about the house early this morning before sunrise.

In many instances the snow had lodged on trees yesterday in just such forms as a white napkin or counterpane dropped on them would take, — protuberant in the middle, with many folds and dimples. An ordinary leafless bush supported so much snow

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* 20th and 26th *inst.*

on its twigs — a perfect maze like a whirligig, though not in one solid mass — that you could not see through it. We heard only a few *chic-a-dees*. Sometimes the snow on the bent pitch pines made me think of rams' or elephants' heads, ready to butt you. In particular places, standing on their snowiest side, the woods were incredibly fair, white as alabaster. Indeed the young pines reminded you of the purest statuary, and the stately full-grown ones towering around affected you as if you stood in a titanic sculptor's studio, so purely and delicately white, transmitting the light, their dark trunks all concealed. And in many places, where the snow lay on withered oak leaves between you and the light, various delicate fawn-colored and cinnamon tints, blending with the white, still enhanced the beauty.

A fine, clear day, not very cold.

P. M. — To Conantum and C. Miles place with Tappan.



There was a high wind last night, which relieved the trees of their burden almost entirely, but I may still see the drifts. The surface of the snow everywhere in the fields, where it is hard blown, has a fine grain with low shelves, like a slate stone that does not split well. We cross the fields behind Hubbard's and suddenly slump into dry ditches concealed by the snow, up to the middle, and flounder out again. How new all things seem! Here is a broad, shallow pool in the fields, which yesterday was slosh, now converted into a soft, white, fleecy snow ice, like bread that has spewed out and baked outside the pan. It is like the

beginning of the world. There is nothing hackneyed where a new snow can come and cover all the landscape. The snow lies chiefly behind the walls. It is surprising how much a straggling rail fence detains it, and it forms a broad, low swell beyond it, two or three rods wide, also just beyond the brow of a hill where it begins to slope to the south. You can tell by the ridges of the drifts on the south side of the walls which way the wind was. They all run from north to south; *i. e.*, the common drift is divided into ridges or plaits in this direction, frequently down to the ground between; which separate drifts are of graceful outlines somewhat like fishes, with a sharp ridge or fin gracefully curved, both as you look from one side and down on them, their sides curving like waves about to break. The thin edge of some of these drifts at the wall end, where the air has come through the wall and made an eddy, are remarkably curved, like some shells, even thus, more than once round: I would not have believed it.

The world is not only new to the eye, but is still as at creation; every blade and leaf is hushed: not a bird or insect is heard; only, perchance, a faint tinkling sleigh-bell in the distance.

As there was water on the ice of the river, which the snow converted into slosh, now, frozen, it looks like fleece.

The snow still adheres conspicuously to the north-west sides of the stems of the trees quite up to their summits, with a remarkably sharp edge in that direc-

tion, — in a horizontal section like this:  It would be about as good as a compass to steer  by in a cloudy day or by night. You see where the trees have deposited their load on the snow beneath, making it uneven. Saw suddenly, directly overhead, a remarkable mackerel sky, with peculiarly soft, large flakes, — polyhedrons, — showing the celestial blue between them, soft and duskyish, like new steam. This covered the greater part of the sky. In the zenith, a more leaden blue; in the crevices on the sides, a more celestial. This was just beyond the Holden Swamp. We admired the C. Miles elms, their strong branches now more conspicuous, zigzag or gracefully curved.

We came upon the tracks of a man and dog, which I guessed to be Channing's. Further still, a mile and a half from home, as I was showing to T. under a bank the single flesh-colored or pink apothecium of a *bæomyces* which was not covered by the snow, I saw the print of C.'s foot by its side and knew that his eyes had rested on it that afternoon. It was about the size of a pin's head. Saw also where he had examined the lichens on the rails. Now the mackerel sky was gone and all was clear again, and I could hardly realize that low, dark stratum far in the east was it, still delighting, perchance, some sailor on the Atlantic, in whose zenith it was, whose sky it occupied.

T. admired much the addition to the red house, with its steep bevelled roof. Thought he should send Mr. Upjohn to see it. The whole house, methought, was well planted, rested solidly on the earth, with its great bank (green in summer) and few stately elms

before, it [was] so much simpler and more attractive than a front yard with its knickknacks. To contrast with this pleasing structure, which is painted a whole-



some red, was a modern addition in the rear, perhaps no uglier than usual, only by contrast, — such an outline alone as our carpenters have learned to produce. I see that I cannot draw anything so bad as the reality. So you will often see an ugly new barn beside a pleasing old house.

Causeways are no sooner made than the swamp white oak springs up by their sides, its acorns probably washed there by the freshets.

In Sagard's History I read, "The villager did not wish to hear the Huguenot minister, saying that there was not yet any ivy on the walls of his church, and that ours were all gray with age" (*chenues de vieillesse*). The walls of the Protestant church in their turn have now got some ivy on them, and the villager does not wish to hear the preacher of any new church which has not.

In Bewick's Birds it is said of the night-jar (also called goat-sucker, dor-hawk, or fern owl) (*Caprimulgus Europeanus*), — *L'Engoulevent* (Buffon): "When perched the Night-Jar sits usually on a bare twig, its head lower than its tail, and in this attitude utters its jarring note ["by which," he says elsewhere, "it is peculiarly distinguished"].<sup>1</sup> It is likewise distinguished by a sort of buzzing which it makes while on the wing, and which has been compared to the noise caused by the quick rotation of a spinning-wheel, from which, in

<sup>1</sup> [The brackets are Thoreau's.]

some places, it is called the Wheel Bird." "It is seldom seen in the daytime." This last sound is apparently the same which I hear our whip-poor-will make, and which I do not remember to have heard described.<sup>1</sup>

On the sides of dry hills the dried heads of the hardhack, rising above the snow, are very perfect and handsome now. I think it may be owing to the drought of the last summer, which caused them to dry up prematurely, but before they began to be brittle and to crumble. This on the first cladonia pasture of Conantum. I sit there looking up at the mackerel sky and also at the neighboring wood so suddenly relieved of its snowy burden. The pines — mostly white — have at this season a warm brown or yellowish tinge, and the oaks — chiefly young white ones — are *comparatively red*. The black oak I see is more yellowish. You have these colors of the evergreens and oaks in winter for warmth and contrast with the snow.

Seeds are still left on the birches, which, after each new snow, are sprinkled over its surface, apparently to keep the birds supplied with food.

You see where yesterday's snowy billows have broken at last in the sun or by their own weight, their curling edges fallen and crumbled on the snow beneath.

I see the tracks of countless little birds, probably redpolls, where these have run over broad pastures and visited every weed, — johnswort and coarse grasses, — whose oat-like seed-scales or hulls they have scattered about. It is surprising they did not sink deeper in the light snow. Often the impression is so

<sup>1</sup> [Four interrogation-points in pencil follow this.]

faint that they seem to have been supported by their wings.

The pines and oaks in the deepest hollows in the woods still support some snow, but especially the low swamps are half filled with snow to the height of ten feet, resting on the bent underwood, as if affording covert to wolves.

Very musical and even sweet now, like a horn, is the hounding of a foxhound heard now in some distant wood, while I stand listening in some far solitary and silent field.

I doubt if I can convey an idea of the appearance of the woods yesterday, as you stood in their midst and looked round on their boughs and twigs laden with snow. It seemed as if there could have been none left to reach the ground. These countless zigzag white arms crossing each other at every possible angle completely closed up the view, like a light drift within three or four rods on every side. The wintriest prospect imaginable. That snow which sifted down into the wood-path was much drier and lighter than elsewhere.

*Jan. 21. 2.30 P. M.* — The sky has gradually become overcast, and now it is just beginning to snow. Looking against a dark roof, I detect a single flake from time to time, but when I look at the dark side of the woods two miles off in the horizon, there already is seen a slight thickness or mistiness in the air. In this way, perhaps, may it first be detected.

*P. M.* — To Andromeda Ponds *via* railroad; return by base of Cliffs.

The snow is turning to rain through a fine hail.

Pines and oaks seen at a distance — say two miles off — are considerably blended and make one harmonious impression. The former, if you attend, are seen to be of a blue or misty black, and the latter form commonly a reddish-brown ground out of which the former rise. These colors are no longer in strong contrast with each other.

Few twigs are conspicuous at a distance like those of the golden willow. The tree is easily distinguished at a distance by its color.

Saw in an old white pine stump, about fifteen inches from the ground, a hole pecked about an inch and a half in diameter. It was about six inches deep downward in the rotten stump and was bottomed with hypnum, rabbit's fur, and hair, and a little dry grass. Was it a mouse-nest? or a nuthatch's, creeper's, or chickadee's nest? <sup>1</sup> It has a slight musky smell.

*Jan. 22.* Heavy rain in the night and half of to-day, with very high wind from the southward, washing off the snow and filling the road with water. The roads are well-nigh impassable to foot-travellers.

*P. M.* — To stone bridge, Loring's Pond, Derby's, and Nut Meadow.

It is a good lichen day, for the high wind has strewn the bark over the fields and the rain has made them very bright. In some places for fifteen rods the whole road is like a lake from three to fifteen inches deep. It is very exciting to see, where was so lately only ice

<sup>1</sup> Probably last.



and snow, dark wavy lakes, dashing in furious torrents through the commonly dry channels under the causeways, to hear only the rush and roar of waters and look down on mad billows where in summer is commonly only dry pebbles. Great cakes of ice lodged and sometimes tilted up against the causeway bridges, over which the water pours as over a dam. After their passage under these commonly dry bridges the crowding waters are at least six or eight inches higher than those of the surrounding meadow. What a tumult at the stone bridge, where cakes of ice a rod in diameter and a foot thick are carried round and round by the eddy in circles eight or ten rods in diameter, and rarely get a chance to go down-stream, while others are seen coming up edgewise from below in the midst of the torrent!

The muskrats driven out of their holes by the water are exceedingly numerous, yet many of their cabins are above water on the south branch. Here there are none. We saw fifteen or twenty, at least, between Derby's Bridge and the Tarbell Spring, either swimming with surprising swiftness up or down or across the stream to avoid us, or sitting at the water's edge, or resting on the edge of the ice (one refreshed himself there after its cold swim regardless of us, probed its fur with its nose and scratched its ear like a dog) or on some alder bough just on the surface. They frequently swam toward an apple tree in the midst of the water in the vain hope of finding a resting-place and refuge there. I saw one, looking quite a reddish brown, busily feeding on some plant just at the water's edge, thrust-

ing his head under for it. But I hear the sound of Goodwin's gun up-stream and see his bag stuffed out with their dead bodies.

The radical leaves of the yellow thistle are now very fresh and conspicuous in Tarbell's meadow, the rain having suddenly carried off the snow.

*Jan. 23. P. M.* — The water is still higher than yesterday. I found [it] just over the Red Bridge road, near the bridge. The willow-row near there is not now bright, but a dull greenish below, with a yard at the ends of the twigs red. The water in many hollows in the fields has suddenly fallen away, run off, or soaked up, leaving last night's ice to mark its height around the edges and the bushes. It has fallen two feet in many cases, leaving sometimes a mere feathery crystallization to supply its place. I was pleased to see the vapor of Sam Barrett's fall and, after, the icy cases of the alder and willow stems below. But the river is higher than ever, especially the North River. I was obliged after crossing Hunt's Bridge to keep on round to the railroad bridge at Loring's before I could recross, it being over the road with a roar like a mill-dam this side the further stone bridge, and I could not get over dry for the feebleness and incontinuity of the fence. In front of G. M. Barrett's was a great curving bay which crossed the road between him and Heywood's, and by Fort Pond Bridge at Loring's it had been over for ten rods in the night. A great cake a foot thick stands on end against the railroad bridge. I do not quite like to see so much bare ground in mid-

winter. The radical leaves of the shepherd's-purse, seen in green circles on the water-washed plowed grounds, remind me of the internal heat and life of the globe, anon to burst forth anew.

Yesterday I met Goodwin shooting muskrats and saw the form and bloody stains of two through his game-bag. He shot such as were close to the shore where he could get them, for he had no dog, the water being too cold, he said. I saw one poor rat lying on the edge of the ice reddened with its blood, half a dozen rods from the shore, which he had shot but was unwilling to wade for.

It is surprising how much work will be accomplished in such a night as the last, so many a brook will have run itself out and now be found reduced within reasonable bounds. This settling away of the water leaves much crackling white ice in the roads.

*Jan. 24.* I am [reading] William Wood's "New England's Prospect." He left New England August 15th, 1633, and the last English edition referred to in this American one of 1764 is that of London, 1639.

The wild meadow-grasses appear to have grown more rankly in those days. He describes them as "thick and long, as high as a man's middle; some as high as the shoulders." (*Vide* Indian book.)<sup>1</sup> Strawberries too were more abundant and large before they were so cornered up by cultivation, "some being two inches about; one may gather half a bushel in a fore-

<sup>1</sup> [Thoreau's note-book on the Indians is doubtless referred to.]

noon;" and no doubt many other berries were far more abundant, as goosberries, raspberries, and especially currants, which last so many old writers speak of, but so few moderns find wild. We can perhaps imagine how the primitive wood looked from the sample still left in Maine. He says, "The timber of the country grows strait, and tall, some trees being twenty, some thirty foot high, before they spread forth their branches; generally the trees be not very thick, tho' there be many that will serve for mill-posts, some being three foot and an half over." One would judge from accounts that the woods were clearer than the primitive wood that is left, on account of Indian fires, for he says you might ride a-hunting in most places. "There is no underwood, saving in swamps," which the Indian fires did not burn. (*Vide* Indian book.) "Here no doubt might be good done with saw mills; for I have secne of these stately high grown trees [he is speaking of pines particularly] ten miles together close by the river [probably Charles River]<sup>1</sup> side." He says at first "fir and pine," as if the fir once grew in this part of the State abundantly, as now in Maine and further west. Of the oaks he says, "These trees afford much mast for hogs, especially every third year." Does not this imply many more of them than now? "The hornbound tree is a tough kind of wood, that requires so much pains in riving as is almost incredible, being the best to make bowls and dishes, not being subject to crack or leak," and [he] speaks, both in prose and verse, of the vines being particu-

<sup>1</sup> [The brackets are Thoreau's.]

larly inclined to run over this tree. If this is the true hornbeam it was probably larger then, but I am inclined to think it the tupelo, and that it was both larger and more abundant than commonly now, for he says it was good for bowls, and it has been so used since. Of the plums of the country he says, "They be black and yellow, about the bigness of damsons, of a reasonable good taste." Yet Emerson has not found the yellow plum, *i. e.* Canada, growing wild in Massachusetts.

Of quadrupeds no longer found in Concord, he names the lion, — that Cape Ann Lion "which some affirm that they have seen," which may have been a cougar, for he adds, "Plimouth men have traded for Lions skins in former times," — bear, moose, deer, porcupines, "the grim-fac'd Ounce, and rav'nous howling Wolf," and beaver. Martens.

"For Bears they be common, being a black kind of Bear, which be most fierce in strawberry time, at which time they have young ones; at which time likewise they will go upright like a man, and climb trees, and swim to the islands;" etc. (*Vide* Indian book.) In the winter they lie in "the cliffs of rocks and thick swamps." The wolves hunt these in packs and "tear him as a Dog will tear a Kid." "They never prey upon the English cattle, or offer to assault the person of any man," unless shot. Their meat "esteemed . . . above venison."

For moose and deer see Indian book.

Complains of the wolf as the great devourer of bear, moose, and deer, which kept them from mul-

tipling more. "Of these Deer [*i. e.* the small] <sup>1</sup> there be a great many, and more in the Massachusetts-Bay, than in any other place." "Some have killed sixteen Deer in a day upon this island," so called because the deer swam thither to avoid the wolves.<sup>2</sup>

For porcupine and raccoon *vide* Indian book.

Gray squirrels were evidently more numerous than now.

I do not know whether his ounce or wild cat is the Canada lynx <sup>3</sup> or wolverine. He calls it wild cat and does not describe the little wildcat. (*Vide* Indian book.) Says they are accounted "very good meat. Their skins be a very deep kind of fur, spotted white and black on the belly." Audubon and Bachman make the *Lynx rufus* black and white beneath. For wolf *vide* Indian book. He says: "These be killed daily in some places or other. . . . Yet is there little hope of their utter destruction." "Travelling in the swamp by kennels."

Says the beaver are so cunning the English "seldom or never kill any of them, being not patient to lay a long siege" and not having experience.

Eagles are probably less common; pigeons of course (*vide* Indian book); heath cocks all gone (price "four pence"); and turkeys (good cock, "four shillings"). Probably more owls then, and cormorants, etc., etc., sea-fowl generally (of humilities he "killed twelve score at two shots"), and swans. Of pigeons, "Many of them build among the pine trees, thirty miles to the north-cast of our plantations; joining nest to nest,

<sup>1</sup> [The brackets are Thoreau's.]

<sup>2</sup> [Deer Island in Boston Harbor.]

<sup>3</sup> Probably this.

and tree to tree by their nests, so that the Sun never sees the ground in that place, from whence the Indians fetch whole loads of them." And then for turkeys, tracking them in winter, or shooting them on their roosts at night. Of the crane, "almost as tall as a man," probably blue heron, — possibly the whooping crane or else the sandhill, — he says, "I have seen many of these fowls, yet did I never see one that was fat, though very sleeky;" neither did I. "There be likewise many Swans, which frequent the fresh ponds and rivers, seldom consorting themselves with ducks and geese; these be very good meat, the price of one is six shillings." Think of that! They had not only brant and common gray wild geese, but "a white Goose," probably the snow goose; "sometimes there will be two or three thousand in a flock;" continue six weeks after Michaelmas and return again north in March. Peabody says of the snow goose, "They are occasionally seen in Massachusetts Bay."

Sturgeon were taken at Cape Cod and in the Merrimack especially, "pickled and brought to England, some of these be 12, 14, and 18 feet long." An abundance of salmon, shad, and bass, —

"The stately Bass old Neptune's fleeting post,  
That tides it out and in from sea to coast;"

"one of the best fish in the country," taken "sometimes two or three thousand at a set," "some four foot long," left on the sand behind the seine; sometimes used for manure. "Alewives . . . in the latter end of April come up to the fresh rivers to spawn, in such multitudes as is almost incredible, pressing up in such

shallow waters as will scarce permit them to swim, having likewise such longing desire after the fresh water ponds, that no beatings with poles, or forcive agitations by other devices, will cause them to return to the sea, till they have cast their spawn."

"The Oysters be great ones in form of a shoe-horn, some be a foot long; these breed on certain banks that are bare every spring tide. This fish without the shell is so big, that it must admit of a division before you can well get it into your mouth." For lobsters, "their plenty makes them little esteemed and seldom eaten." Speaks of "a great oyster bank" in the middle of Back Bay, just off the true mouth of the Charles, and of another in the Mistick. These obstructed the navigation of both rivers. *Vide* book of facts.

#### P. M. — To Walden and Andromeda Ponds.

The river is remarkably high for this season. Meeks, the carpenter, said that he could not get home to-night if he could not find Rhoades, with whom he rode into town, for the water was more than a foot deep over half the causeway. This was at 8 P. M.

But the ice is not thick enough on the meadows, so I go to Walden a-skating. Yet, to my surprise, it is thinly frozen over those parts of the river which are commonly open even in the coldest weather (as at Cheney's), probably because, it being spread over the meadows, there is not so much current there now.

On the 19th Walden was covered with slosh four or five inches deep, but the rain of the 22d turned it all to water, — or chiefly, — leaving it pretty smooth

in the main, but at different levels. Under the higher levels are many handsome white figures one to two feet long, where water has flowed, now empty and white, in form of trees or cladonia lichens, very handsome. I saw a meadow full of lambkill turned reddish the other day, which looked quite handsome with the sun on it.

Those Andromeda Ponds are very attractive spots to me. They are filled with a dense bed of the small andromeda, a dull red mass as commonly seen, brighter or translucent red looking toward the sun, grayish looking from it, two feet or more high, as thick as a moss bed, springing out of a still denser bed of sphagnum beneath. Above the general level rise in clumps here and there the panicled andromeda, with brown clustered fruit, and the high blueberry. But I observe that the andromeda does not quite fill the pond, but there is an open wet place, with coarse grass, swamp loosestrife, and some button-bush, about a rod wide, surrounding the whole. Those little hummocks or paps of sphagnum, out of which the andromeda springs, as bouquets are tied up in the same to keep them fresh, are very beautiful. Now, where the frost has touched them, they are hoary protuberances, — perhaps inclining to ridges, now frozen firmly, — green beneath and within; general aspect now perhaps pale withered brownish, the green only driven in a little deeper, spotted with more or less bright reddish stars; where drier, frequently beautiful crimson stars amid the hoary portions; a beautiful soft bed, of a myriad swelling bosoms, out of which the andromeda springs.

I got a load once to stuff into the chinks in a well I was [walling up] — to keep the sand out, but, it being covered, it died, and I believe I only filled the water with motes and worms ever after. A beautiful pale-brown and hoary-red and crimson ground of swelling bosoms. Dr. Harris spoke of this andromeda as a *rare* plant in Cambridge. There was one pond-hole where he had found it, but he believed they had destroyed it now getting out the mud. What can be expected of a town where this is a rare plant? Here is Nature's parlor; here you can talk with her in the *lingua vernacula*, if you can speak it, — if you have anything to say, — her little back sitting-room, her withdrawing, her *keeping* room.

I was surprised to find the ice in the middle of the last pond a beautiful delicate rose-color for two or three rods, deeper in spots. It reminded me of red snow, and may be the same. I tried to think it the blood of wounded muskrats, but it could not be. It extended several inches into the ice, at least, and had been spread by the flowing water recently. As for vegetable pigments, there were button-bushes in and about it. It was this delicate rose tint, with internal bluish tinges like mother-o'-pearl or the inside of a conch. It was quite conspicuous fifteen rods off, and the color of spring-cranberry juice. This beautiful blushing ice! What are we coming to?

Was surprised to see oak-balls on a bear scrub oak. Have them, then, on black, scarlet, red, and bear scrub.

Saw a young (apparently) red oak (it did not taste

bitter) (another in same state has an oak-ball on it!) ten feet high, the ends of whose twigs looked at first sight as if they had been twisted off by some hungry browsing bird, leaving the fibres streaming. These I found were the strong woody fibres of last year's leaf-stalk, standing out white, in some cases two inches in all directions, from the ends of the twigs, in others rolled together like strong twine, and commonly this twine of different leaf-stalks with the flapping of the leaves twisted together; sometimes four or five leaf-stalks' fibres, with wonderful regularity, as if braided, -- like braided horse-tails. On other oaks the leaves still remained with their leaf-stalks thus reduced to fibres and twisted together. It was wonderful how they could have become so wonderfully knotted or braided together, but Nature had made up in assiduity for want of skill. In one instance four leaf-stalks, reduced to fine white fibres and rolled and twisted into strong twine, had afterwards been closely braided together for half an inch in length and in the course of it tied twice round the twig. I think it must be that these leaves died (perhaps in the great drought of last year) while their fibres were still strongly united with their twigs and so preserving their flexibility without losing their connection, and so the wind flap-



ping the leaves, which hang short down, has twisted them together and commonly worn out the leaves entirely, without loosening or breaking the tough leaf-stalk. Here is self-registered the flutterings of a leaf in this twisted, knotted, and braided twine. So fickle and

unpredictable, not to say insignificant, a motion does yet get permanently recorded in some sort. Not a leaf flutters, summer or winter, but its variation and dip and intensity are registered in THE BOOK.

Old Wood in his "New England's Prospect" says, Englishmanlike: "It is thought there can be no better water in the world, yet dare I not prefer it before good beer, as some have done, but any man will choose it before bad beer, whey, or buttermilk. Those that drink it be as healthful, fresh, and lusty, as they that drink beer."

Jan. 25. P. M. — To Andromeda Ponds.

This morning was a perfect hunter's morn, for it snowed about three quarters of an inch last evening, covering land and ice. Is not good skating a sign of snow? In the swamps, however, where there was water oozed out over the ice, there is no snow, but frozen slosh to-day, *i. e.* a rotten, roughish, dull-white ice. It is a rare day for winter, clear and bright, yet warm. The warmth and stillness in the hollows about the Andromeda Ponds are charming. You dispense with gloves. I see " mice-tracks in the fields and meadows like this: " four together, rabbit-like, four or five inches apart and one and a quarter broad. Are they the " same with the " " " ? I think so. I see rabbit-tracks, pretty large, maybe white ones, two feet " " apart. I suspect that in each case they are com- " " ing down the page.<sup>1</sup> In the partridge-tracks the side toes are more spread

<sup>1</sup> Yes.

than in crows; and I believe the hind one is not so long. Both trail the middle toe. The partridge-track looks like this:



I see the tracks apparently of many hunters that hastened out this morning.

I have come with basket and hatchet to get a specimen of the rose-colored ice. It is covered with snow. I push it away with my hands and feet. At first I detect no rose tint, and suspect it may have disappeared, — faded or bleached out, — or it was a dream. But the surrounding snow and the little body of the ice I had laid bare was what hindered. At length I detect a faint tinge; I cut down a young white oak and sweep bare a larger space; I then cut out a cake. The redness is all about an inch below the surface, the little bubbles in the ice there for half an inch vertically being coated interruptedly within or without with what looks like a minute red dust when seen through a microscope, as if it had dried on. Little balloons, with some old paint almost scaled off their spheres. It has no beauty nor brightness thus seen, [no] more than brick-dust. And this it is which gave the ice so delicate a tinge, seen through that inch of clear white ice. What is it? Can it be blood?

I find an abundance of the seeds of sweet-gale frozen in in windrows on the ice of the river meadows as I return, which were washed out by the freshet. I color my fingers with them. And thus they are planted, then, — somewhat, perhaps, in waving lines, as they wash up. Returning over the fields, the shallow pools made by the rain and thaw, whose water has almost

entirely settled away, — and the ice rests on the ground, — where they are bare of snow, now that the sun is about a quarter of an hour high, looking east are quite green. For a week or two the days have been sensibly longer, and it is quite light now when the five-o'clock train comes in.

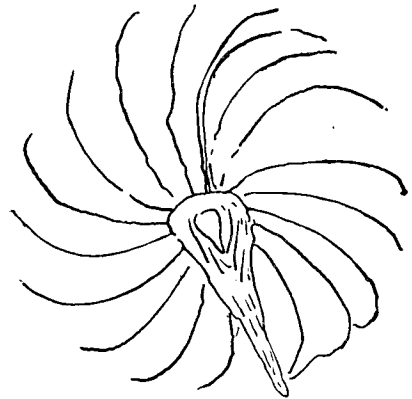
Sagard says of the hares (*lièvres*) of the Huron country, “*Les sapinières* and little woods are the places of their retreat.” Such is their taste now. Says the muskrats “feed on *l'herbe* on land and the white of the *joncs* at the bottom of the lakes and rivers.”

A pine cone blossoms out now fully in about three days, in the house. They begin to open about half-way up. They are exceedingly regular and handsome; the scales with shallow triangular or crescent-shaped extremities, the prickle pointing downward, are most open above, and are so much recurved at the base of the cone that they lie close together and almost flat there, or at right



End of scale on side of cone.

angles with the stem, like a shield of iron scales, making a perfectly regular figure of thirteen (in one instance) curved rays, thus: — only far more regular.



There are just thirteen rays in each of the three I have!!! These vary in their roundness or the flatness of the cone; so the white pine cones in their length. I find just five such rays (the number of the needles in a fascicle) in each white pine cone I have, and each goes round once. A larch cone has five rows. Four hemlock cones have five each, like white pine, but little twisted.

*Jan. 26.* This morning it snows again, — a fine dry snow with no wind to speak of, giving a wintry aspect to the landscape.

What a Proteus is our weather! Let me try to remember its freaks. We had remarkably steady sleighing, on a little snow some six inches deep, from the 5th of December all through the month, and some way into January. It came damp and froze up solid. Yet there was none in Boston the while. There was, however, a little rain near the end of December, and occasional slight flurries of snow.

January 6th, after some comparatively pleasant days, there was a raw northerly wind and fine drifting or driving snow in the afternoon, as I walked over the Great Meadows, forming shallow drifts on the ice, but it soon stopped.

January 7th, I was surprised when I opened the door in the afternoon by the warm south wind and sudden softening and melting of the snow. It was a January thaw without rain, the manure beginning to wash off the ice in the streets. The winter's back was broken, and I dreamed of spring, etc., etc.

January 8th, the same. The ice in roads washed bare, the brooks full of melted snow; but it is still clear weather and warm.

January 9. A cloudy day, wet underfoot, threatening snow; difficult to get on to the river; yellow water many rods wide each side over the ice.

January 10. Suddenly cold again and blustering. All waters frozen up. Go on to the swamps, keeping ears covered.

January 11. Make haste to improve the skating in the afternoon, though it is beginning to snow, and the [ice] is soon covered half an inch. Then it stops at night.

January 12. After another slight spitting of snow in the forenoon, it clears up very pleasant and warm in the afternoon, and I walk by the brooks, looking for fish, hearing the crows caw in the horizon and thinking of spring.

January 13. Still warm. In roads, both muddy, wet, and slippery where ice; thick and misty air, threatening rain.

January 14. Clear and cold. All things frozen again. Excellent skating on meadows. Skated to Baker Farm.

January 15. In the forenoon, spit a little snow, making shallow drifts on the ice, through which I skated in the afternoon to Bedford. Stopped snowing.

January 16. Snowed a little again, spoiling the skating.

January 17. Forget.

January 18. Rained hard all day; washed off the little snow left, down to the ice. Stayed in all day. Water



over shoes in the middle of the road. The gutters turned to mill-brooks. Few go out.

January 19. In the night, rain turned to damp snow, which at first made slosh, then for most part prevailed over the water, which ran off underneath; stuck to the houses and trees and made a remarkable winter scene. A driving damp snow with a strong northwest wind all day, lodging on the trees *within* the woods beyond all account. Walked in woods in midst of it to see the pines bent down and the white oaks, etc., and broken. Snowbirds, *i. e.* linarias, in yard. Making drifts by walls.

January 20. Still higher wind in night (snow over), shaking the snow from trees. Now almost bare. Snow seven or eight inches on level in woods, but almost all in drifts under the walls in fields. The sudden-frozen slosh ponds, partly run off, like spewed bread. Hardly bear yet. Not very cold. Go studying drifts. Fine clear weather.

January 21. Becomes overcast at noon. A fine snow spits, then turns to fine hail, then rain, glazing a little.

January 22. Rained all night. Walking now worse than ever this year, midleg deep in gutters. Lakes in the street. River risen, — a freshet, — breaking up ice a foot thick, flows under dry causeway, bridges a torrent; muskrats driven out by hundreds and shot; dark angry waves where was lately ice and snow. Earth washed bare. Radical leaves appear and russet hills. Still rains a *little*.

January 23. Fair weather. Water still rising over the Red Bridge road, though suddenly fallen in many

hollows in fields, leaving thin ice two feet above it around and by clumps. Great work done by brooks last night. Have to go round two or three miles to find a dry causeway. Not strong enough for skating.

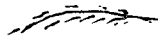
January 24. Not strong enough to skate on meadows. Went to Walden. At dusk, snowed three quarters of an inch and spoiled prospect of skating.



January 25. Clear, bright, and mild. Water still higher than before; over the causeways.

January 26. A fine snow falling, spoiling all prospect of skating on this broad ice. Is not good skating the surest sign of snow or foul weather?

To continue the 26th:—

P. M. — To Walden.

A thick, driving snow, something like, but less than, that of the 19th. There is a strong easterly wind and the snow is very damp. In the deepest hollows on the Brister Hill path it has already lodged handsomely. Suppose you descend into the deepest circular one, far beneath the sweep of the blustering wind, where the flakes at last drop gently to their resting-places. There is a level, white circular floor, indicating ice beneath, and, all around, the white pines, under an accumulating snowy burthen, are hung with drooping white wreaths or fans of snow. The snow on pitch pines takes the forms of large balls, on white pines often of great rolling-pins. Already the trees are bending in all directions into the paths and hollows as here. The birches here are  bowed inward to the open circle of the pond-hole, their

tops apparently buried in the old snow. Nothing can be prettier than the snow on the leafless shrub oaks, the twigs are so small and numerous, little snowy arms crossing each other at every imaginable angle, like a whirligig. It is surprising what a burden of snow already rests on little bare twigs hardly bigger than a knitting-needle, both as they stand perpendicularly and horizontally. The great damp flakes come and soon bridge across the interval, even two inches over, between the forks of such twigs where they are horizontal, one sticking to another. It rests on such horizontal twigs commonly in the form of a prism resting on one corner  (vertical section where no wind). And in many places, where the wind is felt, the little walls of snow are built out at an angle with the perpendicular, in the direction whence the snow comes:  (a vertical section or end). Damp as it is, it [is] like swan's-down, as if it lay as light as well as thick. As it is with these shrub oaks, so with the largest trees in the stiller parts of the woods, and even the lowest dead limbs of the white pines are not prevented by the upper from bearing their part of the burden.

I am afraid I have not described vividly enough the aspect of that Lodging Snow of the 19th and to-day partly. Imagine the innumerable twigs and boughs of the forest (as you stand in its still midst), crossing each other at every conceivable angle on every side from the ground to thirty feet in height, with each its zigzag wall of snow four or five inches high, so innumerable at different distances one behind another that they completely close up the view like

a loose-woven downy screen, into which, however, stooping and winding, you ceaselessly advance. The wintriest scene, — which perhaps can only be seen in perfection while the snow is yet falling, before wind and thaw begin. Else you miss, you lose, the delicate touch of the master. A coarse woof and warp of snowy batting, leaving no space for a bird to perch.

I see where a partridge has waddled through the snow still falling, making a continuous track. I look in the direction to which it points, and see the bird just skimming over the bushes fifteen rods off.

The plumes of pitch pines are first filled up solid, then they begin to make great snowy *casse-têtes*, or pestles. In the fields the air is thick with driving snow. You can only see a dozen rods into its woof and warp. It fills either this ear or that and your eyes with hard, cutting, blinding scales if you face it. It is forming shelly drifts behind the walls, and stretches in folds across the roads; but in deep, withdrawn hollows in the woods the flakes at last come gently and deviously down, lodging on every twig and leaf, and forming deep and downy and level beds between and on the ice of the pools. The lowermost twigs support not less snow but more.

In many places where you knew there was a thrifty young wood, there appears to be none, for all is bent down and almost completely buried in the snow, and you are stepping over them. The pitch pines are most round-headed, and the young white oaks are most leaved at top, and hence suffer most.

What changes in the aspect of the earth! one day

russet hills, and muddy ice, and yellow and greenish pools in the fields; the next all painted white, the fields and woods and roofs laid on thick. The great sloshy pools in the fields, freezing as they dried away, look like bread that has spewed in the baking, the fungi of a night, an acre in extent; but trust not your feet on it, for the under side is not done; there the principle of water still prevails.

Methinks that after any great storm in winter, whether of snow or rain, the equilibrium of the air is again disturbed and there comes a high wind shaking down the snow and drying up the water.




*Jan. 27.* Yesterday's driving easterly snow-storm turned to sleet in the evening, and then to rain, and this morning it is clear and pretty cold, the wind westerly, the snow settled to three or four inches on a level, with a frozen crust and some water beneath in many places. It seems as if the sky could not bear to look down on smooth ice, and so made haste to cover it up.

One is educated to believe, and would rejoice if the rising generation should find no occasion to doubt, that the State and the Church are on the side of morality, that the voice of the people is the voice of God. Harvard College was partly built by a lottery. My father tells me he bought a ticket in it. Perhaps she thus laid the foundation of her Divinity School. Thus she teaches by example. New England is flooded with the "Official Schemes of the Maryland State Lotteries," and in this that State is no less unprincipled than in

her slaveholding. Maryland, and every fool who buys a ticket of her, is bound straight to the bottomless pit. The State of Maryland is a moral fungus. Her offense is rank; it smells to heaven. Knowing that she is doing the devil's work, and that her customers are ashamed to be known as such, she advertises, as in the case of private diseases, that "the strictest confidence will be observed." "Consolidated" Devilry!

P. M. — Up meadow to Cliffs and Walden road.

A cold, cutting southwesterly wind. The crust bears where the snow is very shallow, but lets you through to water in many places on the meadow. The river has not yet fallen much. The muskrats have added to their houses in some places. So they still use them. Started a hare among shrub oaks. It had been squatting in a slight hollow, rather concealed than sheltered. They always look poverty-stricken.

Some ice organ-pipes at the Cliffs. They appear to be formed of successive rings about half an inch thick and diameter  lessening with more or less regularity to the point:  Sometimes the point split in two. Then the  rocks are incased with ice under which water flows, — thin sheets of rippling water frozen as it flowed, — and, with the sun, again apparently thawing beneath and giving room to a new sheet of water, for under the south side of the rocks it melts almost every day.

I came upon a fox's track under the north end of the Cliffs and followed it. It was made last night, after the sleet and probably the rain was over, before it

froze; it must have been at midnight or after. The tracks were commonly ten or twelve inches apart and each one and three quarters or two inches wide. Sometimes there was a longer interval and two feet fell nearer together, as if in a canter. It had doubled directly on its track in one place for a rod or two, then went up the north end of the Cliff where it is low and went along southward just on its edge, ascending gradually. In one place it had made water like a dog, and I perceived the peculiar rank fox odor without stooping. It did not wind round the prominent rocks, but leaped upon them as if to reconnoitre. Its route was for the most part a little below the edge of the Cliff, occasionally surmounting it. At length, after going perhaps half a mile, it turned as if to descend a dozen rods beyond the juniper, and suddenly came to end. Looking closely I found the entrance (apparently) to its hole, under a prominent rock which seemed to lie loose on the top of the ledge and about two feet from the nearest track. By stooping it had probably squeezed under this and passed into its den beneath. I could find no track leading from it.

Their tracks are larger than you would expect, as large as those of a much heavier dog, I should think. What a life is theirs, venturing forth only at night for their prey, ranging a great distance, trusting to pick up a sleeping partridge or a hare, and at home again before morning! With what relish they must relate their midnight adventures to one another there in their dens by day, if they have society! I had never associated that rock with a fox's den, though perhaps I

had sat on it many a time. There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, etc., etc. They are the only outlaws, the only Robin Hoods, here nowadays. Do they not stand for gypsies and all outlaws? Wild dogs, as Indians are wild men.

People will tell you of the Cold Winter, clear bright days when for six weeks the eaves did not run once.

As I went through the woods toward the railroad, the sun setting, there were many small violet-colored, *i. e.* lilac-tinted, clouds scattered along the otherwise clear western horizon.

I often see the mincing tracks of a skunk. I came upon the track of a woodchopper, who had gone to his work early this morning across Fair Haven Pond. It suggested his hard work and little pecuniary gain, but simple life and health and contentment. As I took the back track on his trail, comparing his foot and stride with mine, I was startled to detect a slight aberration, as it were sliding in his tread, or as if he had occasionally stopped and made a fresh impress not exactly coincident with the first. In short, I discovered ere long that he had had a companion; perchance they were two thieves trying to pass for one, thought I; but the truth was the second, to save his strength in this long walk to his work through the crusty snow, had stepped with more or less precision in the tracks of his predecessor. The snow was three or four inches deep. I afterwards used the track of a horse in like manner to my advantage; so that my successor might have thought that a sleigh had gone along drawn by a man.

*Jan. 28. Sunday.* Grew warmer toward night and snowed; but this soon turned to heavy rain in the night, which washed all the snow off the ice, leaving only bare ground and ice the county over by next morning.

*Jan. 29.* Not cold. Sun comes out at noon.

*Jan. 30.* Clear and not cold, and now fine skating, the river rising again to the height it had attained the 24th, which (with this) I think remarkable for this season. It is now about a foot lower than on the 24th (it had fallen over eighteen inches since then), but is rising. It is unusual for the river to be so much swollen in midwinter, because it is unusual to have so much rain at this season. Both these — or this whole rise — are owing to heavy rains on the frozen ground carrying off what snow there was, and now soaking up. The hills shed it all like a roof into the valleys. It is up to the hubs on the causeways, and foot-travellers have to cross on the river and meadows. Melvin and others are out after muskrats again, and [I] see them with their pouches stuffed out with their round bodies.

Minott to-day enumerates the red, gray, black, and what he calls the Sampson fox. He says, "It's a sort of yaller fox, but their pelts ain't good for much." He never *saw* one, but the hunters have told him of them. He never saw a gray nor a black one. Told how Jake Lakin lost a dog, a very valuable one, by a fox leading him on to the ice on the Great Meadows and drowning him. Said the raccoon made a track very

much like a young child's foot. He had often seen it in the mud of a ditch.

*Jan. 31. Wednesday.* A clear, cold, beautiful day. Fine skating. An unprecedented expanse of ice.

At 10 A. M., skated up the river to explore further than I had been. The water within ten inches of the height at which it stood April 23d, '52, as I noticed at the stone bridge.<sup>1</sup>

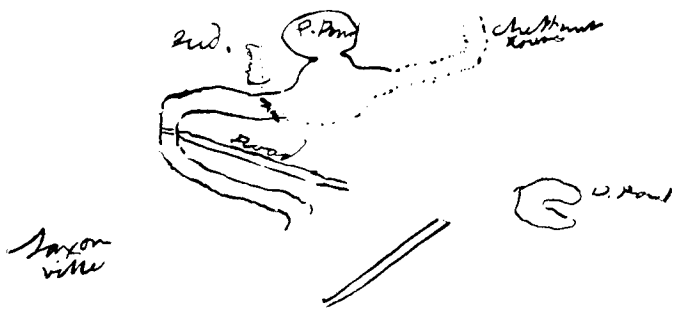
At 8 A. M., the river rising, the thin yellowish ice of last night, next the shore, is, as usual, much heaved up in ridges, as if beginning to double on itself, and here and there at 9 o'clock, being cracked thus in the lowest parts, the water begins to spurt up in some places in a stream, as from an ordinary pump, and flow along these valleys; and thus we have soon reëstablished an edging of shallow yellowish or oil-colored water all along the river and meadows, covered with floating snow-fleas.

By noon, though it was a pretty cool day, the water had generally burst through and overflowed the ice along the shore and once more stood at a level there; *i. e.*, water and ice made a level where the ice was uneven before. Before skating up-stream I tried my boat-sail on the meadow in front of the house and found that I could go well enough before the wind, resting the mast on my hip and holding by the middle with one hand, but I could not easily tack.

The country thus almost completely bare of snow, — only some ice in the roads and fields, — and the frozen

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Feb. 1st.

freshet at this remarkable height, I skated up as far as the boundary between Wayland and Sudbury just above Pelham's Pond, to a point which a woman called about one and a half miles from Saxonville, about twelve miles, between 10 A. M. and one, quite leisurely. There I found the river open unexpectedly, as if there were a rapid there, and as I walked up it some three quarters of a mile, it was still open before me a half-mile further at least, or probably to the falls.<sup>1</sup> Somewhat like this:—



All the open part, one and a half miles at least, was pretty closely hemmed in by highlands. I skated about twelve miles and walked three quarters of a mile further. It was, all the way that I skated, a chain of meadows, with the muskrat-houses still rising above the ice, commonly on the bank of the river, and marking it like smaller haycocks amid the large ones still left. I skated past three bridges above Sherman's — or nine in all (?) — and walked to the fourth. The next, or fifth, would probably be that in middle

<sup>1</sup> [Three interrogation-points inserted here, evidently at a later time.]

of Saxonville. *Viz.* Causeway bridges, Mill Village Bridge at Larned Brook, Pelham Pond Bridge, and that on road from Dudley Pond to Southboro and Marlboro.

As I skated near the shore under Lee's Cliff, I saw what I took to be some scraggs or knotty stubs of a dead limb lying on the bank beneath a white oak, close by me. Yet while I looked directly at them I could not but admire their close resemblance to partridges. I had come along with a rapid whir and suddenly halted right against them, only two rods distant, and, as my eyes watered a little from skating against the wind, I was not convinced that they were birds till I had pulled out my glass and deliberately examined them. They sat and stood, three of them, perfectly still with their heads erect, some darker feathers like ears, methinks, increasing their resemblance to scraggs [*sic*], as where a small limb is broken off.



I was much surprised at the remarkable stillness they preserved, instinctively relying on the resemblance to the ground for their protection, *i. e.* withered grass, dry oak leaves, dead scraggs, and broken twigs. I thought at first that it was a dead oak limb with a few stub ends or scraggs [*sic*] sticking up, and for some time after I had noted the resemblance to birds, standing only two rods off, I could not be sure of their character on account of their perfect motionlessness, and it was not till I brought my glass to bear on them and saw their eyes distinctly, steadily glaring on me, their necks and every muscle tense with anxiety, that I was convinced. At length, on some signal

which I did not perceive, they went with a whir, as if shot, off over the bushes.

It was quite an adventure getting over the bridge-ways or causeways, for on every shore there was either water or thin ice which would not bear. Sometimes I managed to get on to the timbers of a bridge, the end of a projecting "tie" (?), and off the same way, thus straddling over the bridges and the gulf of open water about them on to the edge of the thick ice, or else I swung myself on to the causeways by the willows, or crawled along a pole or rail, catching at a tree which stood in the water, — or got in. At the bend above the Pantry, there was [a] sort of canal or crack quite across the river and meadow, excepting a slight bridge of ice. As I passed the mouth of Larned Brook, off Wayland meeting-house, I pulled out my glass and saw that it was 12.30 o'clock. In each town I found one or two trappers come forth to shoot muskrats. As a regular thing they turned out after dinner, buttoning up their greatcoats. All along the river their cabins had been torn to pieces by them, and in one place I saw two men sitting over the hole where they had just demolished one, one with a pistol ready pointed to the water where he expected the rat to come up, the other with a gun. In this twelve miles of the river there would be two or three at least pretty sure to turn out such a day and take to the ice for muskrats. I saw again an abundance of sweet-gale seed on the ice, frozen in, near Pelham's Pond. This seed is thus dispersed regularly on a large scale. It lies as it was washed along the edge of an overflow. Beside

a dilapidated muskrat's house, lay the wretched carcass of its former occupant on the ice, stripped of its hide, — black, even without its skin, with veins of red. Returning, I saw a large hawk flapping and sailing low over the meadow. There was some dark color to its wings.

You were often liable to be thrown when skating fast, by the shallow puddles on the ice formed in the middle of the day and not easy to be distinguished. These detained your feet while your unimpeded body fell forward.