3 March 1859 T XVIII p.6

P.M. –Upriver to Nut Meadow Brook.

It is nearly as cold as yesterday. The piers of the bridge by the railroad bridge are adorned with very handsome salver or waiter shaped ice three or four feet in diameter (bottom upward), the crenate edges all around being adorned with bell-shaped pendants (produced by the melting (?) or perchance the water dashed against them).

3 March 1859 T XVIII p.8

P.M. –Upriver to Nut Meadow Brook.

. . .

And some still, muddy springs whose temperature is more equable than that of the brooks, while brooks and ditches are generally thickly frozen and concealed and the earth is covered with snow, and it is even cold, hard, and nipping winter weather, some fine grass which fills the water like a moss begins to lift its tiny spears or blades above the surface, which directly fall flat for half an inch or an inch along the surface and on these (though many are frostbitten) you may measure the length to which the spring has advanced,—has *sprung*. Very few indeed, even of botanists, are aware of this growth. Some of it appears to go on even under ice and snow, or, in such a place as I have described, if it is also sheltered by alders, or the like, you may see (as March 2d) a little green crescent of caltha leaves, raised an inch or so above the water, with leaves but partially unrolled and looking as if it would withdraw beneath the surface again at night. Very few indeed, even of botanists, are aware of this growth. Some of it appears to go on even under ice and snow, or, in such a place as I have described, if it is also sheltered by alders, or the like, you may see (as March 2d) a little green crescent of caltha leaves, raised an inch or so above the water, with leaves but partially unrolled and looking as if it would withdraw beneath the surface again at night. This, I think, must be the most conspicuous and forward greens of the spring. The small reddish radical leaves of the dock, too, are observed flat on the list ground as soon as the snow has melted there, as if they had grown beneath it.

5 March 1859 T XVIII p.16

I saw on the ice, quite alive, some of those black water-beetles, which apparently had been left above by arise of the river. Were they a *Gyrinus*?1

1No.

Location “the river”

6 March 1859 T XVIII p.18

There is a very picturesque large black oak on the Bee-Tree Ridge, of this form:

The Genista is not Evergreen, having turned brown, though it is still quite leafy. I could not find a single green shoot. It is correctly represented in Loudon’s “Arboretum,” in ’44, as “a deciduous under-shrub.” Yet in his “Encyclopædia,” in ’55, it is represented as “an Evergreen shrub.”

“The Bee-Tree Ridge…”

7 March 1859 T XVIII p.22

6:30 A.M.—To Hill.

. . .

I also see—but their appearance is a regular early spring, or late winter, phenomenon—a great many of those slender black-bodied insects from one quarter to (with the feelers) one inch long, with six legs and long gray wings, two feelers before, and two forks or tails like feelers behind. The last are sometimes concealed by the wings. This is what I did call for convenience *Perla*. They are crawling slowly about over the snow.

9 March 1859 T XVIII p.28

—P.M. To Lee’s Cliff with C.

. . .

The ice over the channel of the river, when not quite melted, is now generally mackerelled (the water representing the blue portions) with parallel openings, riddling it or leaving a sort of network of ice over it, answering to the ridges of the waves.

11 March 1859 T XVIII p.36

—P.M. To Hunt house.

. . .

It appears plainly, now that the frame is laid bare, that the eastern two-thirds of the main house is older than the western third, for you can see where the west part has been added on, at the line A B. All the joists in the old part are hewn; in the newer, sawn. But very extensive repairs had been made in the old part, probably at the same time with the addition. Also the back part had been added on to the new part, merely *butted* on at the side without tenant or mortise. The peculiar cedar laths were confined to the old part. The whole has oak sills and pine timbers. The two Homers were confident that the chimney was built at the same times with the new part, there was no break in the courses of the brick about them. On the chimney was the date 1703 (?), — I think that was it, — and if this was the date of the chimney, it would appear that the old part belonged to the Winthrops, and it may go back to near the settlement of the town.

11 March 1859 T XVIII p.36

—P.M. To Hunt house.

The laths long and slender of white cedar split. In the old part the ends of the timbers were not merely mortised into the posts, but rested on a shoulder thus:

11 March 1859 T XVIII p.37

—P.M. To Hunt house.

The fireplace measures twelve feet wide by three deep by four and a half high. mantel-tree The tree [of the fireplace? kk] is log, fourteen feet and some fifteen to sixteen feet square at the ends, but one half cut away diagonally between the ends, and now charred. It would take three men to handle it easily.

11 March 1859 T XVIII p.37

—P.M. To Hunt house.

The timbers of the old part had been cased and the joists plastered over at some time, and, now that they were uncovered, you saw many old memorandums and scores in chalk on then, as “May ye 4th,” “Ephraim Brown,” “0—3s—4d,” “oxen [tally here],” —so they kept their score, or tally, —much as the butcher and baker sometimes make.

13 March 1859 T XVIII p.46

—P.M. To Hunt house.

The Hunt house, to draw from memory, —though I have given its measures within two years in my Journal, —looked like this: —

This is only generally correct, without a scale.

14 March 1859 T XVIII p.47

—P.M. To Hunt house.

Saw E. Hosmer take up the cellar stairs. They are of white oak, in form like one half of a squared white oak log sawed diagonally. These lie flat on their broadest sides on the slanting earth, resting near each end on a horse, which is a white oak stick with the bark on, hewed on the upper side and sunk in the earth, and they are fastened to this by two pins of wood placed as I have indicated.

14 March 1859 T XVIII p.47-8

—P.M. To Hunt house.

I judge by my eye that the house is fifteen feet high to the eaves. The posts are remarkably sawn and hewn away on account of the projection of the upper story, so that they are more than twice as large above as below, thus: [] the corner posts being cut on two sides or more than halfway (six inches cut off them) below the second story.

14 March 1859 T XVIII p.48

water’s edge, just below Dr. Bartlett’s.

I see a large flock of grackles searching for food along the water’s edge just below Dr. Bartlett’s. Some wade in the water. They are within a dozen rods of me and the road. It must be something just washed up that they are searching for, for the water has just risen and is still rising fast. Is it not insects and worms washed out of the grass? and perhaps the snails? When a grackle sings, it is as if his mouth were full of cotton, which he was trying to spit out.

17 March 1859 T XVIII p.57

“I find by measurement that there is from two to three inches fall in the middle between the piers of Flint’s Bridge, on the two sides of the bridge, supposing the planking to be level; but there is much more close to the abutments, for the water is very conspicuously heaped up in the middle in each case, or between each two piers, thus:—”

“Flint’s Bridge”

March 17, 1859

Page 57

“Flint’s Bridge”

“If you look from above, it is somewhat thus: — If I land now on any knoll which is left dry above the flood, an island in the meadow, and its surface is broken, I am pretty sure to find Indian relics. They pitched their wigwams on these highest places, near the water.”

March 18, 1859

Page 59

“The Winthrop’s Front Door”

“Consider how I discovered where the Winthrop family in this town placed their front door some two hundred years ago, without any verbal or written or ocular evidence. I first suspected [?] and then verified it. I, with others, saw by the frame of the old Hunt house that an addition had been made to its west end in 1703. This brought the front door, which was in the missile of the present, near one end of the original or Winthrop house. I, sitting at home, said to myself, having an occult sympathy with the Winthrops of that date, “The front door must originally have been in the middle of the old house, for symmetry and convenience required it, and if it was, I shall find traces of it; I shall find there where studs have been set into the frame in a different manner from the rest.” I went to the house and looked where the door should have been, and I found precisely the evidence I sought, and beside, where the timber above had been cut out just the width of the door. Indeed, if I had found no traces of the old door, I should have known that the present door was placed where it is after there house was built, for at this corner of the house the end of the sill chanced to be nearly round, the stick tapering, and the post was fitted upon [it] in a remarkable manner, thus: Oakwood had been thus laboriously fitted to it, but within three feet of the corner sill had been wholly cut away under the door to make room for it, for they certainly had not put in a piece of sill only three feet long and *of that form* there originally.”

March 19, 1859

Page 62

“behind Abel Hosmer’s”

“Walking afterward on the side of the hill behind Abel Hosmer’s, overlooking the russet interval, the ground being bare where corn was cultivated last year, I see that the sandy soil has been washed far down the hill for its whole length by the recent rains combined with the melting snow, and it forms on the nearly level ground at the base very distinct flat yellow sands, with a convex edge, contrasting with the darker soil there.

March 20, 1859

Page 68

“Up Assabet”

“Very strong northwest wind. When i get opposite the and of the willow-row, the sun comes out and they are very handsome, like a rosette, pale-tawny or fawn-colored at base and a rich yellow or orange yellow in the upper three or four feet. This is, methinks, the brightest object in the landscape these days. Nothing so betrays the spring sun. I am aware that the sun has come out of a cloud first by seeing it lighting up the osiers. Such a willow-row, cut off within a year or two, might be called a heliometer, or measure of the sun’s brightness.”

March 21,1859

Page 70

“Sail to Fair Haven Pond”

“ I see a female marsh hawk sailing and hunting over Potter’s Swamp. I not only see the white rump but the very peculiar crescent-haled curve of its wings.”

March 23, 1859

Page 74

“Well Meadow”

“ As we enter Well Meadow, we saw a hen-hawk perch on the topmost plume of one of the tall pines at the head of the meadow. Soon another appeared, probably its mate, but we looked in vain for a nest there. It was a fine sight, their soaring above our heads, presenting a perfect outline and, as they came round, showing their rust-colored tails with a whitish rump, or, as they sailed away from us, that slight teetering or quivering motion of their dark-tipped wings seen edgewise, now on this side, now that, by which, they balanced and directed themselves. These are the most eagle-like of our common hawks. They very commonly perch upon the very topmost plume of a pine, and, if motionless, are rather hard to distinguish there.”

March 23, 1859

Page 78

“Fair Haven Pond”’

“Then I see come slowly flying from the southwest a great gull, of voracious form, which at length by a sudden and steep descent alights in Fair Haven Pond, scaring up a crow which was seeking its food on the edge of the ice. This shows that the crows get along the meadow’s edge also what has washed up.”

March 25, 1859

Page 81

“To Clamshell”

“Again I walk in the rain and see the rich yellowish browns of the moist banks. These Clamshell hills and neighboring promontories, though it is a dark and rainy day, reflect a certain yellowish light from the wet withered grass which is very grateful to my eyes, as also the darker more reddish browns, as the radical leaves of the *Andropogon scoparius* in low tufts here and there. (It culms, where they stand, are quite light yellow.) Surely russet is not the name which describes the fields and hillsides now, whether wet or dry. There is not red enough in it. I do not know a better name for this (when wet) yellowish brown than “tawny.” On the south side of these warm hills, it may perhaps be called one of the fawn-colors, *i.e.* brown inclining to green. Much of this peculiar yellowish color on the surface of the Clamshell plain is due to a little curled sedge or grass growing at short intervals, loosely covering the ground (with green mosses intermixed) in little tufts like curled hair.”

March 27,1859

Page 84

“Sail from Cardinal Shore up Otter Bay, close to Deacon Farrar’s”

“There is an abundance of low willows whose catkins are now consipicuous, rising fours to six or seven feet above the water, thickly placed on long wand-like oilers. They look, when you look from the sun, like dead gray twigs or branches (whose wood is exposed) of bushed in the light, but, nearer, are recognized for the pretty bright buttons of the willow. We sail by masses of these silvery buttons two or three rods long, rising above the water. By their color they must have relation to the white clouds and the sky and to the snow and ice still lingering in a few localities. In order to see these silvery buttons in the greatest profusion, you must sail amid them on some flooded meadow or swamp like this. Our whole course, as we wind about in this bay, is lined also with the alder, whose pretty tassels, now many of them in full bloom, are hanging straight down, suggesting in a peculiar manner the influence of gravity, or are regularly blown one side.”

March 28, 1859

Page 91

“the face of the earth”

“His bones would not prove any wit that wielded them, such as this work of his bones does. It is humanity inscribed on the face of the earth, patent to my eyes as soon as the snow goes off, not hidden away in some crypt or grave or under a pyramid. No disgusting mummy, but a clean stone, the best symbol or letter that could have been transmitted to me.

March 28, 1859

Page 95

“Ball’s Hill”

“If you scan the horizon at this season of the year you are very likely to detect a small flock of dark ducks moving with rapid wind athwart the sky, or see the undulating line of migrating geese against the sky.

Perhaps it is this easterly wind which brings geese, as it did on the 24th.”

March 28, 1859

Page 98

“…where in August the bittern booms in the grass…”

“Here, where in August the bittern booms in the grass, and mowers march *en échelon* and whet their scythes and crunch the ripe wool-grass, raised now a few feet, you scud before the wind in your tight bark and listen to the surge (or sough?) of the great waves sporting around you, while you hold the steering-oar and your mast bends to the gale and you stow all your ballast to windward. The crisped sound of surging waves that rock you, that ceaseless roll and gambol, and ever and anon break into your boat.”

April 1, 1859

Page 105

“To Assabet over meadows in boat…”

“I land again at the (now island) rock, on Simon Brown’s land, and look for arrowheads, and picked [sic] up two pieces of soapstone pottery. One was probably part of the same which C. found with me there the other day. C.’s piece was one side of a shallow dish, say an inch and a half deep, four eights to six eights of an inch thick, with a sort of ear for handle on one side, — almost a leg. His piece, like mine, looks as if it had been scratched all over on the outside by a nail, and it is evident that this is the way it was fashioned. It was scratched with some hard, sharp-pointed stone and so crumbled and worn away.”

April 2, 1859

Page 107

“…on top pf Lee’s Cliff”

“In the wood on top of Lee’s Cliff, where the other day I noticed that the chimaphila leaves had been extensively eaten and nibbled off and left on the ground, I find under one small pitch pine tree a heap of the cones which have been striped of their scales, evidently by the red squirrels, the last winter and fall, they having sat upon some dead limbs above. They were all stripped regularly from the base upward, excepting the five to seven uppermost and barren scales, making a pretty figure like this:—

April 3, 1859

Page 112

“the pond”

“The pond is quite high (like Walden, which, as I noticed the 30th *ult.,* had risen about twi feet since January, and perhaps within a shorter period), and the white sand beach is covered. The water being quite shallow on it, it is very handsomely and freshly ripple-marked for a rod or more in width, the ripples only two or three inches apart and very regular and parallel, but occasionally there is a sort of cell a foot long (a split at each end) in one. In some parts, indeed, it reminded me of a cellular tissue, but the last foot next the shore had no ripple-marks; These were most conspicuous where a dark sediment, the dead wood or crumbled leaves, perchance, from the forest, lay in the furrows contrasted with the white sand. The cells were much more numerous and smaller in proportion that I represent them.

April 4, 1859

Page 114

“To Cliffs”

“The epigæ looks as if it would open in two or three days at least, — showing much color and this form: The flower-buds are protected by the withered leaves, oak leaves, which partly cover them, so that you must look pretty sharp to detect the first flower. These plants blossom by main strength, as it were, or the virtue that is in them, — not growing by water, as most early flowers, — in dry copses.”

April 7th, 1859

Page 117

“Up Assabet with Pratt”

“Standing under the north side of the hill, I hear the rather innocent *phe phe, phe phe, phe phe, phe* of a fish hawk (for it is not a scream, but a rather soft and innocent note), and, looking up, see one come sailing from over the hill. The body looks quite short in proportion to the spread of the wings, which are quite dark or blackish above. He evidently has something in his talons. We soon after disturb him again, and, at length, after circling around over the hill and adjacent fields, he alights in plain sight on one of the hals-dead white oaks on the top of the hill, where probably he sat before. As I look through my glass, he is perched on a large dead limb and is evidently standing on a fish (I had noticed something in his talons as he flew), for he stands high and uneasily, finding it hard to keep his balance in the wind. He is disturbed by our neighborhood and does not proceed at once to eat his meal. I see the tail of the fish hanging over the end of the limb. Now and then he pecks at it. I see the white on the crown of the hawk. It is a very large black bird as seen against the sky. Soon he sails away again, carrying his fish, as before, horizontally beneath his body, and he circles about over the adjacent pasture like a hawk hunting, though he can only be looking for a suitable place to eat his fish or waiting for us to be gone.

April 8th, 1859

Page 119

“To epigæ and Well Meadow”

“I see on the west side of the railroad causeway a peculiar early willow, now just beginning to bloom with the common *Salix discolor* there, perhaps (as I remember) some thirty rods beyond the wall, against A. Wheeler’s land. The catkins (sterile) are peculiarly long and tapering, and grayish or mouse-color, beginning to open low on one side, while the points have comparatively little down on them. I find no description of it. Perhaps rather more than one inch long. The most decidedly opening first on one side near the base of any. Call it the gray bodkin-pointed.

April 12, 1859

Page 135

“…base of Lupine Hill or Promontory”

“I see half a dozen sheldrakes very busily fishing around the base of Lupine Hill or Promontory. There are two full-plumaged males and the rest females, or perhaps some of them young males. They are coasting along swiftly with their bodies uno low and their heads half under, looking for their prey, one behind another, frequently turning and passing over the same ground again. Their crests are very conspicuous, thus: When one sees a fish he at first swims rapidly after it, and then, if necessary, flies close over the water after it, and this excites all the rest to follow, swimming or flying, and if one seizes the fish, which I suspect is commonly a pickerel, they all pursue the lucky fisher, and he makes the water fly far in his efforts to get away and gulp dow his fish. I can see the fish in his bill all the while, and he must swallow it very skillfully and quickly, if at all. I was first attracted to them by seeing these great birds rushing, shooting, thus swiftly through the air and water and throwing the water high about them. Sometimes they dive and swim quietly beneath, looking for their game. At length they spy me or my boat, and [I] hear a faint quack indicative of alarm, and suddenly all arise and go off. In the meanwhile I see two black ducks sailing with them along the shore. These look considerably smaller, and of course carry their heads more erect. They have a raw, gosling look beside the others, and I see their light bills against their dusky necks and heads. At length, when I get near them, I hear their peculiar quack also, and off they go. The sheldrakes appear to be a much more lively bird than the black duck. How different from the waddling domestic duck! The former are all alive, eagerly fishing, quick as thought, as they need to be to catch a pickerel.”

April 15, 1859

Page 145

“…beyond the Smallpox Burying-Ground”

“Observe in the small shallow rills in the sandy road beyond the Smallpox Burying-Ground, made by the snow of the morning, now melted, very interesting ripples over a pebbly or uneven bottom on this side or that. The beauty of these little ripples was occasioned by their shadows amid the bright water. They were so arranged with remarkable order as to resemble the bright scaled of a portion of a snake’s skin, thus: with geometrical regularity, seven to eight parallel rows in a triangular form, successively diminishing in size. The ripple is occasioned merely by the impetuosity of the water meeting some slight obstacle. Thus you see in the very ripples on a rill a close resemblance in arrangement to the bright scales of a fish, and it [would] greatly help to conceal a fish if it could lie under them. The water was generally less than an inch deep on a sandy bottom.”

April 18, 1859

Page 151

“An aquarium”

“Ed. Emerson shows me his aquarium. He has two minnows from the brook, which I think must be the banded minnow; a little more than an inch long with very conspicuous broad black transverse bars. Some Rana sylvatica spawn just begun to flat out. Also several kinds of larvæ in the water,— one very like a dragonfly, with three large feather-like appendages to the tail, small gyrinus, which he says nibbled off the legs of the skater (?), etc., etc., but no dragonfly grubs. Two salamanders, one from Ripple Lake and the other from the pool behind my house that was. One some four inches long, with a carinated and waved (crenated) edged tail as well as light-vermilion spots on the back, evidently the *Salamandra dorsalis.* (This I suspect is what I called S. *symmetrica* last fall.) (This is pale-brown above.) The other two thirds as large, a very handsome bright orange salmon, also with vermilion spots, which must be the true S. *symmetrica.* Both thickly sprinkled with black dots. The latter’s tail comparatively thick and straight-edged.”

April 22, 1859

Page 154

“Ripple Lake”

“I go by a *Populous grandidentata* on the eastern sand slope of the Deep Cut just after entering, whose aments (which apparently here began to shed pollen yesterday) in scattered clusters at the ends of the bare twigs, but just begun to shed their pollen, not hanging loose and straight yet, but curved, are a very rich crimson, like some ripe fruit, as mulberries, seen against the sand. I cannot represent the number in a single cluster, but they are much the handsomest now before the crimson anthers have burst, and are all the more remarkable for the very open and bare habit of the tree.”

April 24, 1859

Page 161

“Lighting Hillside”

“Sitting on Lightning Hillside and looking over Heywood’s meadow, I am struck by the vivid greenness of the tips of the sedge just pushing up out of its dry tussocks in the water. I observed it here on the *22*d. It is some six inches high or more. All the lower, or the greater, part of the tussock is brown and sere and prostrate withered blades of last year, while from the top spring up ranks of green life like a fire, from amid the withered blades. This new grass is green beneath, but yellow-tipped, perhaps on account of the recent snow or higher water. It is the renewal of life. The contrast of life with death, spring with winter, is nowhere more striking. Such is the regularity [of] life. The contrast of life with death, spring with winter, is nowhere more striking. Such is the regularity [of] the growth and of the fallen grass that it affects you like a geometrical figure. The fallen dead and decaying last year’s grass is dead past all resurrection, perfectly brown and lifeless, while this vivid green that has shot up from its midst close upon the heels of winter, even through snow, is like the first phalanx of Spring’s forces.”

June14, 1859

Page 202

“To Flint’s Pond”

“A pout’s nest (at Pout’s Nest) with a straight entrance some twenty inches long and a simple round nest at end. The young just hatched, all head, light-colored, under a mass of weedy hummock which is all under water.”

June 16, 1859

Page 204

“Paddle to Great Meadows”

“Examined a kingfisher’s nest, —though there is a *slight* doubt if I found a spot. It was formed singularly like that of the bank swallow, i.e flat-elliptical, thus: some eight inches as I remember, in the largest diameter, and located just like a swallow’s, in a sand-bank, some twenty inches below the surface. Could feel nothing in it, but it may have been removed. Have an egg from this.

July 10, 1859

Page 231

“Sudbury meadows”

“Paddling through the wild Sudbury meadows, I am [struck](http://www.apple.com) with the regularity with which the phalanxes of bulrushes (*Scirpus lacustris*) occur. They do not grow in a continuous line, like pipes or pontederia, but in small isolated patches. At each bend, though it does not appear on Baldwin’s map, there is a bay-like expansion of the river, now half emerged, thus: — where the more stagnant water has deposited mud, and in each such place, with remarkable regularity, a phalanx of bulrushes presents itself as you ascend.”

July 10, 1859

Page 232

“Bittern Cliff”

“I notice at Bittern Cliff that the sparganium floats upstream, probably because the wind has blow thus.”

July 16, 1859

Page 241

“Eddy Bridge”

“The bars and banks of this stream are peculiar, *i.e* of fine sand without mud. This indicated a fall and swifter water, and consequently it is on such a stream the mills are built and sawdust and shavings are mixed with such sand to form the bank. One such bank at the swift place has been recently raised four to five feet above there present level by freshets. It is apparently advancing down-stream.”

July 19, 1859

Page 243

“Up Assabet”

“It is remarkable how the river, while it may be coaching on the bank on one side, preserves its ordinary breadth by filling up the other side. Generally speaking, up and down this and the other stream, where there is a swift place once the bank worn away on one side, — which, other things being equal, would leave the river wider there, — a bank or island or bar is being built up on the other, cine the eddy where, on one side, sand, etc., are deposited is produced by the rapidity of the current, thus: — e.g. north side of Egg Rock, at Hemlocks, at Pigeon Rock Bend, at Swift Place Bank, etc., and on main stream deposits sand, etc., close by on one side and a little offshore, leaving finally a low meadow outside where was once the bed of the river. There are countless places where the one shore is thus advancing and, as it were, dragging the other after it.”

July 20, 1859

Page 245

“To Eddy’s Bridge”

“Hosmer says that the eddy and wearing away of the bank has been occasioned wholly by the bridge; that there was only the regular bend there before. He had thought that it was in consequence of the bridge being askew or diagonally with the stream, so that the abutments turned the water and gave it a slant into the banks, thus: I think that this did not create, only increased, the evil.

July 22,1859

Pages 250-251

“The Falls”

“For the last mile above the Falls the river becomes rocky, the rocks gradually increasing in number, until at the Falls its bed is crowded with them. Some of the rocks are curiously with them. Some of the rocks are curiously water-worn. They are, as usual in our black river, almost as black as ink, — the parts much submerged, — and I noticed that bricks and white crockery on the bottom acquire the same color from the water, as if painted black. The water of this river is a black paint-brush which coats all things with fast colors. Rocks half a dozen feet in diameter which were originally of the usual lumpish form are worn thus by the friction of the pebbles, etc., washed against them by the stream at high water. Several of them have this peculiar sheaf-like form; and black as ink. But, though evidently worn into this form by the rush of water, they are by no means worn smooth, but are as rough as a grater, such being their composition. These are just above the Fordway. There are two pleasant old houses neat the Fordway on the east side.

I was surprised to see on the upright sides of these rocks, one to two feet above the present water, very distinct white spots, looking like white paint across the river. Examining, I found them to be three fourths to one inch in diameter of an oval or circular form; the white coating spreading on to the rock in an irregular fringe like the feet of an insect, increasing their resemblance to a bug, and they were raised one eight or one tenth of an inch and finely dotted with the contained ova, reminding me of coins, —shaped like bugs or coins, —and I at first bent to read the inscriptions as if they were a work of art. They were full of ova with much water in them or other liquid.”

July 29, 1859

Page 261

“To Fair Haven Hill Shore”

“I examined some of these bream nests left dry at Cardinal Shore. These were a foot or two wide and excavated five inches deep (as I measured) in hard sand. The fishes must have worked hard to make these holes. Sometimes they are amid or in pebbles, where it is harder yet.There are now left at their bottoms, high and dry, a great many snails (*Paludina decisa*, also), young and old, some very minute.

July 31, 1859

Page 269

“The Beaver-Hole Meadows”

“About the Sudbury line the river becomes much narrower and generally deeper, as it enters the first large meadows, the Sudbury meadows, and is very winding, — as indeed the Ox-Bow was. It is only some thirty or forty feet wide, yet with firm upright banks a foot or two high, —canal-like. This canal-like reach is the transition from the Asset to the lake-like or Musketaquid portion. At length, off Pelham Pond, it is almost lost in the weeds of the reeds meadow, being still more narrowed and very weedy, with grassy and muddy banks. This meadow, which it enters about the Sudbury line, is a very wild and almost impenetrable one, it is so wet and muddy. It is called the Beaver-Hole Meadows and is a white peculiar meadow, the chief growth being, not the common sedges, but the great bur-reed, five or six feet high and all over it, mixed with flags, *Scirpus fluviatilis,* and wool-grass, and rank canary grass. Very little of this meadow can be worth cutting, even if the water be low enough. This great sparganium was now in fruit (and a very little in flower). I was surprised by the sight of the great bur-like fruit, and inch to an inch and a half in diameter, the fruit-stems much branded and three or four feet high. It is a bur of sharp-pointed cones; stigmas linear. I can hardly believe that this is the same species that grows in C. It is apparently much earlier than ours. Yet ours may be a feeble growth from its very seeds floated down.”

August 5th, 1859

Page 279

“…near the water at the stone bridge”

“The lowest dark-colored rocks near the water at the stone bridge (*i.e.* part of the bridge) are prettily marked with (apparently) mosses, which have adhered to them at higher water and [are] now withered and bleached on, — in face are transferred, — and by their whitish color are seen very distinctly on the dark stone and have a very pretty effect. They are quite like sea-mosses in their delicacy, though not equally fine with many. These are very permanently and closely fastened to the rock. This is a phenomenon of low water. Also see them transferred to wood, as pieces of bridges.”

August 11th, 1859

Page 283

“Up Assabet to stone bridge”

“As I paddle up this stream this forenoon, the river gently rising as usual in the forenoon (in consequence of raising the gates of the various mill-ponds on and near to it, which had been shut in the night,) I meet with many a clam which comes floating down in midstream, nicely poised on the water with its pearly concave side uppermost. These have been opened and left by the musquash during the night on the shore, or often on the rocks in the stream, and now the water rising gently sets them afloat, as with care you can float an iron pot. But soon a strong wind or eddy will cause the water to break over them and they will at once sink to the bottom. Last night it lay half buried in mud and sand at the bottom. The musquash has devoured its tenant, and now it floats seaward, a pearly skiff set afloat by the industrious millers. I met with as many as a dozen of them coming down the stream this forenoon, the valves at an angle of 45° [sic], sometimes a single valve, but the least touch of my oars would sink them.”

August 14th, 1859

Page 286

“The Sabbath-Keeping River”

“The arch may be lengthened or shortened, single or double, but the great spear-shaped bill and head are ever the same. A great hammer or pick, prepared to transfix fish, frog, or bird. At last, the water becoming too deep for wading, this one takes easily to wing — though up to his body in water — and flies a few rods to the shore. It rather flies, then, than swims. It was evidently scared. These were probably birds of this season. I saw some distinct ferruginous on the angle of the wing. There they stood in the midst of the open river, on this shallow and weedy bar in the sun, the leisurely sentries, lazily pluming themselves, as if the day were too long for them. They gave a new character to the stream. Adjutant they were to my idea of the river, these two winged men.”

August 14th, 1859

Page 287

“The Sabbath-Keeping River”

“In 1677 the town’s “brandmarke” as fixed by the State was [image]”

September 4th, 1859

Page 316

“The State Muster”

“See a very large mass of spikenard berried family ripening, eighteen inches long.”

September 14th, 1859

Page 326

“The yellow lily (*Nuphar advena*) fruit, now green and purplish, is ripening under water, of this form and size: full of yellow seeds: The white lily, when stripped of the blackened and decaying petals, etc., is of this form: [image]

September 14th, 1859

Page 327

“…west of Nut Meadow…”

“They are catching pigeons nowadays. Coombs has a stand west of Nut Meadow, and he says that he has just shot fourteen hawks there, which were after the pigeons. I have one which he has shot within a day or two and calls a pigeon hawk. It is about twenty inches in alar extent. Above dark-slate or brownish with the edges, *i.e.* tips, of the feathers (especially of wing-coverts) rufous. The primaries and secondaries dark or blackish brown, barred with black, and only a [*sic*] some white concealed on the inner vanes near the base. wings beneath white or whitish, thickly, barred with dark. Scapulars with white spots. Head much mutilated, but no “black spots’ visible, but apparently the dark brown mixed or edged with rufous. Cere, etc., said to have been green. Beneath brownish-white, centered with brown, with a darker line through that. Femoral still more rustyish brown, with central dashes. Legs yellowish. Tail slate, with four black bars half an inch or more wide, the edge slate, with a very narrow edging of white; beneath the slate is almost white.”

September 15th, 1859

Page 328

“To Annursnack”

“Dense flocks of pigeons hurry-skurry over the hill. Pass near Brooks’s pigeon-stands. There was a flock perched on his poles, and they sat so still and in such regular order there, being also the color of the wood, that I thought they were wooden figures at first. They were perched not only in horizontal straight lines one above the other, which the cross-bars required, but at equal distances apart on these perches, which must be their own habit; and it struck me that they made just such a figure seen against the sky as pigeonholes cut in a doves’ house do, *i.e.* a more or less triangular future, thus: and possibly the seeing them thus perched might have originally suggested this arrangement of the holes.”

September 21st, 1859

Page 338

“White Pond”

“We are having our dog-days now and of late, methinks, having had none to speak of in August; and now at last I see a few toadstools, — the election-cake (the yellowish, glazed over) and the taller, brighter-yellow above. Those shell-less slugs which eat apples eat these also.”

September 22nd, 1859

Page 342

“Rank Vegetation”

“There is mallow with its pretty little button-shaped fruit, which children eat and call cheeses, — eaten green. There are several such fruits discoverable and edible by children.”

September 25th, 1859

Page 353-354

“To Emerson’s Cliff”

“The very crab-grass in our garden is for the most part a light straw-color and whiteness, probably by the frosts of the 15th and 16th, looking almost as white as the sort; and hundreds of sparrows (chip-birds?) find their food and amid it. The same frosts that kill and whiten the corn whiten many grasses thus.”

October 16th, 1859

Page 392

“A narrow glade…”

“A narrow glade stretching east and west between a dense birch wood, now half bare, and a ruddy ask wood on the upper side, a ground covered with tawny stubble and fine withered grass and costumes. Looking westward along it, your eye fell on these lit tufts of andropogon, their glowing half raised a foot or more above the ground, a lighter and more brilliant whiteness than the downiest cloud presents (though seen on one side they are grayish.) Even the lespedzas stand like frost-covered wands, and now hoary goldenrods and some bright-red blackberry vines amid the tawny grass are in harmony with the rest; and if you sharpen and rightly intend your eye you see the gleaming lines of gossamer (stretching from stubble to stubble over the whole surface) which you are breaking. How cheerful these cold but bright white waving tufts! They reflect all the sun’s light without a particle of his heat, or yellow rays. A thousand such tufts now catch up the sun and send to us its light but not heat. His heat is being steadily withdrawn from us. Light without heat is getting to be the prevailing phenomenon of the day now. We economize all the warmth we get now.”

October 20th, 1859

Page 410

“To Ripple Lake”

“Dug some artichokes behind Alcott’s, the largest about one inch in diameter. Now apparently is the time to begin to dig them, the plant being considerably frost-bitten. Tried two or three roots. The main root ran down straight about six inches and then terminated abruptly, thus: They have quite a nutty taste eaten raw.”

November 25, 1859

Page 451

“Paddle to Baker Farm”

“There is a thin ice for half a rod in width along the shore, which shivers and brake in the undulations of my boat. Those bayonet rushes still standing are much curved.”

November 29th, 1859

Page 456

“To Copan”

“There is a white birch on Copan which has many of the coon birch fungus of a very peculiar and remarkable form, not flat thus: but shaped like a bell or short horn, thus: as if composed of a more flowing material which had settled downward like a drop. As C. said, they were shaped like icicles, especially those short and spreading ones about bridges.”