

**Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864)**

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**PASSAGES FROM THE  
AMERICAN NOTE-BOOKS  
OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE**

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## [1841]

*April 1841.*--. . . I have been busy all day, from early breakfast-time till late in the afternoon; and old Father Time has gone onward somewhat less heavily than is his wont when I am imprisoned within the walls of the Custom House. It has been a brisk, breezy day, an effervescent atmosphere, and I have enjoyed it in all its freshness,--breathing air which had not been breathed in advance by the hundred thousand pairs of lungs which have common and invisible property in the atmosphere of this great city. My breath had never belonged to anybody but me. It came fresh from the wilderness of ocean, . . . It was exhilarating to see the vessels, how they bounded over the waves, while a sheet of foam broke out around them. I found a good deal of enjoyment, too, in the busy scene around me; for several vessels were disgorging themselves (what an unseemly figure is this, "disgorge," quotha, as if the vessel were sick) on the wharf, and everybody seemed to be working with might and main. It pleased me to think that I also had a part to act in the material and tangible business of this life, and that a portion of all this industry could not have gone on without my presence. Nevertheless, I must not pride myself too much on my activity and utilitarianism. I shall, doubtless, soon bewail myself at being compelled to earn my bread by taking some little share in the toils of mortal men, . . .

Articulate words are a harsh clamor and dissonance. When man arrives at his highest perfection, he will again be dumb! for I suppose he was dumb at the Creation, and must go round an entire circle in order to return to that blessed state,

*Brook Farm, Oak Hill, April 13th, 1841.*--. . . Here I am in a polar Paradise! I know not how to interpret this aspect of nature,--whether it be of good or evil omen to our enterprise. But I reflect that the Plymouth pilgrims arrived in the midst of storm, and stepped ashore upon mountain snow-drifts; and, nevertheless, they prospered, and became a great people,--and doubtless it will be the same with us. I laud my stars, however, that you will not have your first impressions of (perhaps) our future home from such a day as this, . . . Through faith, I persist in believing that Spring and Summer will come in their due season; but the unregenerated man shivers within me, and suggests a doubt whether I may not have wandered within the precincts of the Arctic Circle, and chosen my heritage among everlasting snows, . . . Provide yourself with a good stock of furs, and, if you can obtain the skin of a polar bear, you will find it a very suitable summer dress for this region. . . .

I have not yet taken my first lesson in agriculture, except that I went to see our cows foddered, yesterday afternoon. We have eight of our own; and the number is now increased by a transcendental heifer belonging to Miss Margaret Fuller. She is very fractious, I believe, and apt to kick over the milk-pail. . . . I intend to convert myself into a milkmaid this evening, but I pray Heaven that Mr. Ripley may be moved

to assign me the kindest cow in the herd, otherwise I shall perform my duty with fear and trembling.

I like my brethren in affliction very well; and, could you see us sitting round our table at meal-times, before the great kitchen fire, you would call it a cheerful sight. Mrs. B---- is a most comfortable woman to behold. She looks as if her ample person were stuffed full of tenderness,--indeed, as if she were all one great, kind heart.

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*April 14th, 10 A.M.*--. . . I did not milk the cows last night, because Mr. Ripley was afraid to trust them to my hands, or me to their horns, I know not which. But this morning I have done wonders. Before breakfast, I went out to the barn and began to chop hay for the cattle, and with such "righteous vehemence," as Mr. Ripley says, did I labor, that in the space of ten minutes I broke the machine. Then I brought wood and replenished the fires; and finally went down to breakfast, and ate up a huge mound of buckwheat cakes. After breakfast, Mr. Ripley put a four-pronged instrument into my hands, which he gave me to understand was called a pitchfork; and he and Mr. Farley being armed with similar weapons, we all three commenced a gallant attack upon a heap of manure. This office being concluded, and I having purified myself, I sit down to finish this letter. . . .

Miss Fuller's cow hooks the other cows, and has made herself ruler of the herd, and behaves in a very tyrannical manner. . . . I shall make an excellent husbandman,--I feel the original Adam reviving within me.

*April 16th.*--. . . Since I last wrote, there has been an addition to our community of four gentlemen in sables, who promise to be among our most useful and respectable members. They arrived yesterday about noon. Mr. Ripley had proposed to them to join us, no longer ago than that very morning. I had some conversation with them in the afternoon, and was glad to hear them express much satisfaction with their new abode and all the arrangements. They do not appear to be very communicative, however,--or perhaps it may be merely an external reserve, like my own, to shield their delicacy. Several of their prominent characteristics, as well as their black attire, lead me to believe that they are members of the clerical profession; but I have not yet ascertained from their own lips what has been the nature of their past lives. I trust to have much pleasure in their society, and, sooner or later, that we shall all of us derive great strength from our intercourse with them. I cannot too highly applaud the readiness with which these four gentlemen in black have thrown aside all the fopperies and flummeries which have their origin in a false state of society. When I last saw them, they looked as heroically regardless of the stains and soils incident to our profession as I did when I emerged from the gold-mine, . . .

I have milked a cow!!! . . . The herd has rebelled against the usurpation of Miss Fuller's heifer; and, whenever they are turned out of the barn, she is compelled to take refuge under our protection. So much did she impede my labors by keeping close to me, that I found it necessary to give her two or three gentle pats with a shovel; but still she preferred to trust herself to my tender mercies, rather than venture among the horns of the herd. She is not an amiable cow; but she has a very intelligent face, and seems to be of a reflective cast of character. I doubt not that she will soon perceive the expediency of being on good terms with the rest of the sisterhood.

I have not yet been twenty yards from our house and barn; but I begin to perceive that this is a beautiful place. The scenery is of a mild and placid character, with nothing bold in its aspect; but I think its beauties will grow upon us, and make us love it the more, the longer we live here. There is a brook, so near the house that we shall be able to hear its ripple in the summer evenings, . . . but, for agricultural purposes, it has been made to flow in a straight and rectangular fashion, which does it infinite damage as a picturesque object. . . .

It was a moment or two before I could think whom you meant by Mr. Dismal View. Why, he is one of the best of the brotherhood, so far as cheerfulness goes; for if he do not laugh himself, he makes the rest of us laugh continually. He is the quaintest and queerest personage you ever saw,--full of dry jokes, the humor of which is so incorporated with the strange twistifications of his physiognomy, that his sayings ought to be written down, accompanied with illustrations by Cruikshank. Then he keeps quoting innumerable scraps of Latin, and makes classical allusions, while we are turning over the gold-mine; and the contrast between the nature of his employment and the character of his thoughts is irresistibly ludicrous.

I have written this epistle in the parlor, while Farmer Ripley, and Farmer Farley, and Farmer Dismal View were talking about their agricultural concerns. So you will not wonder if it is not a classical piece of composition, either in point of thought or expression.

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Mr. Ripley has bought four black pigs.

*April 22d.*--. . . What an abominable hand do I scribble! but I have been chopping wood, and turning a grindstone all the forenoon; and such occupations are likely to disturb the equilibrium of the muscles and sinews. It is an endless surprise to me how much work there is to be done in the world; but, thank God, I am able to do my share of it,--and my ability increases daily. What a great, broad-shouldered, elephantine personage I shall become by and by!

I milked two cows this morning, and would send you some of the milk, only that it is mingled with that which was drawn forth by Mr. Dismal View and the rest of the brethren.

*April 28th.--* . . . I was caught by a cold during my visit to Boston. It has not affected my whole frame, but took entire possession of my head, as being the weakest and most vulnerable part. Never did anybody sneeze with such vehemence and frequency; and my poor brain has been in a thick fog; or, rather, it seemed as if my head were stuffed with coarse wool. . . . Sometimes I wanted to wrench it off, and give it a great kick, like a football.

This annoyance has made me endure the bad weather with even less than ordinary patience; and my faith was so far exhausted that, when they told me yesterday that the sun was setting clear, I would not even turn my eyes towards the west. But this morning I am made all over anew, and have no greater remnant of my cold than will serve as an excuse for doing no work to-day.

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The family has been dismal and dolorous throughout the storm. The night before last, William Allen was stung by a wasp on the eyelid; whereupon the whole side of his face swelled to an enormous magnitude, so that, at the breakfast-table, one half of him looked like a blind giant (the eye being closed), and the other half had such a sorrowful and ludicrous aspect that I was constrained to laugh out of sheer pity. The same day, a colony of wasps was discovered in my chamber, where they had remained throughout the winter, and were now just bestirring themselves, doubtless with the intention of stinging me from head to foot. . . . A similar discovery was made in Mr. Farley's room. In short, we seem to have taken up our abode in a wasps' nest. Thus you see a rural life is not one of unbroken quiet and serenity.

If the middle of the day prove warm and pleasant, I promise myself to take a walk, . . . I have taken one walk with Mr. Farley; and I could not have believed that there was such seclusion at so short a distance from a great city. Many spots seem hardly to have been visited for ages,--not since John Eliot preached to the Indians here. If we were to travel a thousand miles, we could not escape the world more completely than we can here.

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I read no newspapers, and hardly remember who is President, and feel as if I had no more concern with what other people trouble themselves about than if I dwelt in another planet.

*May 1st.*-- . . . Every day of my life makes me feel more and more how seldom a fact is accurately stated; how, almost invariably, when a story has passed through the mind of a third person, it becomes, so far as regards the impression that it makes in further repetitions, little better than a falsehood, and this, too, though the narrator be the most truth-seeking person in existence. How marvellous the tendency is! . . . Is truth a fantasy which we are to pursue forever and never grasp?

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My cold has almost entirely departed. Were it a sunny day, I should consider myself quite fit for labors out of doors; but as the ground is so damp, and the atmosphere so chill, and the sky so sullen, I intend to keep myself on the sick-list this one day longer, more especially as I wish to read Carlyle on Heroes.

There has been but one flower found in this vicinity,--and that was an anemone, a poor, pale, shivering little flower, that had crept under a stone-wall for shelter. Mr. Farley found it, while taking a walk with me.

. . . This is May-Day! Alas, what a difference between the ideal and the real!

*May 4th.*-- . . . My cold no longer troubles me, and all the morning I have been at work under the clear, blue sky, on a hill-side. Sometimes it almost seemed as if I were at work in the sky itself, though the material in which I wrought was the ore from our gold-mine. Nevertheless, there is nothing so unseemly and disagreeable in this sort of toil as you could think. It defiles the hands, indeed, but not the soul. This gold ore is a pure and wholesome substance, else our mother Nature would not devour it so readily, and derive so much nourishment from it, and return such a rich abundance of good grain and roots in requital of it.

The farm is growing very beautiful now,--not that we yet see anything of the peas and potatoes which we have planted; but the grass blushes green on the slopes and hollows. I wrote that word "blush" almost unconsciously; so we will let it go as an inspired utterance. When I go forth afield, . . . I look beneath the stone-walls, where the verdure is richest, in hopes that a little company of violets, or some solitary bud, prophetic of the summer, may be there. . . . But not a wild-flower have I yet found: One of the boys gathered some yellow cowslips last Sunday; but I am well content not

to have found them, for they are not precisely what I should like to send to you, though they deserve honor and praise, because they come to us when no others will. We have our parlor here dressed in evergreen as at Christmas. That beautiful little flower-vase . . . stands on Mr. Ripley's study-table, at which I am now writing. It contains some daffodils and some willow-blossoms. I brought it here rather than keep it in my chamber, because I never sit there, and it gives me many pleasant emotions to look round and be surprised--for it is often a surprise, though I well know that it is there--by something connected with the idea [of a friend] .

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I do not believe that I should be patient here if I were not engaged in a righteous and heaven-blessed way of life. When I was in the Custom House and then at Salem I was not half so patient. . . .

We had some tableaux last evening, the principal characters being sustained by Mr. Farley and Miss Ellen Slade. They went off very well. . . .

I fear it is time for me--sod-compelling as I am--to take the field again.

*May 11th.*--. . . This morning I arose at milking-time in good trim for work; and we have been employed partly in an Augean labor of clearing out a wood-shed, and partly in carting loads of oak. This afternoon I hope to have something to do in the field, for these jobs about the house are not at all to my taste.

*June 1st.*--. . . I have been too busy to write a long letter by this opportunity, for I think this present life of mine gives me an antipathy to pen and ink, even more than my Custom House experience did. . . . In the midst of toil, or after a hard day's work in the gold-mine, my soul obstinately refuses to be poured out on paper. That abominable gold-mine! Thank God, we anticipate getting rid of its treasures in the course of two or three days! Of all hateful places that is the worst, and I shall never comfort myself for having spent so many days of blessed sunshine there. It is my opinion that a man's soul may be buried and perish under a dung-heap, or in a furrow of the field, just as well as under a pile of money.

Mr. George Bradford will probably be here to-day, so that there will be no danger of my being under the necessity of laboring more than I like hereafter. Meantime my health is perfect, and my spirits buoyant, even in the gold-mine.

*August 12th.*--. . . I am very well, and not at all weary, for yesterday's rain gave us a holiday; and, moreover, the labors of the farm are not so pressing as they have been. And, joyful thought! in a little more than a fortnight I shall be free from my bondage,-- . . . free to enjoy Nature,--free to think and feel! . . . Even my Custom House experience was not such a thralldom and weariness; my mind and heart were free. Oh, labor is the curse of the world, and nobody can meddle with it without becoming proportionably brutified! Is it a praiseworthy matter that I have spent five golden months in providing food for cows and horses? It is not so.

*August 18th.*--I am very well, only somewhat tired with walking half a dozen miles immediately after breakfast, and raking hay ever since. We shall quite finish haying this week, and then there will be no more very hard or constant labor during the one other week that I shall remain a slave.

*August 22d.*--. . . I had an indispensable engagement in the bean-field, whither, indeed, I was glad to betake myself, in order to escape a parting scene with ----. He was quite out of his wits the night before, and I sat up with him till long past midnight. The farm is pleasanter now that he is gone; for his unappeasable wretchedness threw a gloom over everything. Since I last wrote, we have done haying, and the remainder of my bondage will probably be light. It will be a long time, however, before I shall know how to make a good use of leisure, either as regards enjoyment or literary occupation. . . .

It is extremely doubtful whether Mr. Ripley will succeed in locating his community on this farm. He can bring Mr. E---- to no terms, and the more they talk about the matter, the further they appear to be from a settlement. We must form other plans for ourselves; for I can see few or no signs that Providence purposes to give us a home here. I am weary, weary, thrice weary, of waiting so many ages. Whatever may be my gifts, I have not hitherto shown a single one that may avail to gather gold. I confess that I have strong hopes of good from this arrangement with M----; but when I look at the scanty avails of my past literary efforts, I do not feel authorized to expect much from the future. Well, we shall see. Other persons have bought large estates and built splendid mansions with such little books as I mean to write; so that perhaps it is not unreasonable to hope that mine may enable me to build a little cottage, or, at least, to buy or hire one. But I am becoming more and more convinced that we must not lean upon this community. Whatever is to be done must be done by my own undivided strength. I shall not remain here through the winter, unless with an absolute certainty that there will be a house ready for us in the spring. Otherwise, I shall return to Boston,--still, however, considering myself an associate of the community, so that we may take advantage of any more favorable aspect of affairs. How much depends on these little books! Methinks if anything could draw out my whole strength, it would be the motives that now press upon me. Yet, after all, I must keep these considerations out of my mind, because an external pressure always disturbs instead of assisting me.

Salem, *September 3d.*--. . . But really I should judge it to be twenty years since I left Brook Farm; and I take this to be one proof that my life there was an unnatural and unsuitable, and therefore an unreal, one. It already looks like a dream behind me. The real Me was never an associate of the community; there has been a spectral Appearance there, sounding the horn at daybreak, and milking the cows, and hoeing potatoes, and raking hay, toiling in the sun, and doing me the honor to assume my name. But this spectre was not myself. Nevertheless, it is somewhat remarkable that my hands have, during the past summer, grown very brown and rough, insomuch that many people persist in believing that I, after all, was the aforesaid spectral horn-sounder, cow-milker, potato-hoer, and hay-raker. But such people do not know a reality from a shadow. Enough of nonsense. I know not exactly how soon I shall return to the farm. Perhaps not sooner than a fortnight from to-morrow.

Salem, *September 14th.*--. . . Master Cheever is a very good subject for a sketch, especially if he be portrayed in the very act of executing judgment on an evil-doer. The little urchin may be laid across his knee, and his arms and legs, and whole person indeed, should be flying all abroad, in an agony of nervous excitement and corporeal smart. The Master, on the other hand, must be calm, rigid, without anger or pity, the very personification of that immitigable law whereby suffering follows sin. Meantime the lion's head should have a sort of sly twist on one side of its mouth, and a wink of one eye, in order to give the impression that, after all, the crime and the punishment are neither of them the most serious things in the world. I could draw the sketch myself, if I had but the use of ----'s magic fingers.

Then the Acadians will do very well for the second sketch. They might be represented as just landing on the wharf; or as presenting themselves before Governor Shirley, seated in the great chair. Another subject might be old Cotton Mather, venerable in a three-cornered hat and other antique attire, walking the streets of Boston, and lifting up his hands to bless the people, while they all revile him. An old dame should be seen, flinging water, or emptying some vials of medicine, on his head from the latticed window of an old-fashioned house; and all around must be tokens of pestilence and mourning,--as a coffin borne along,--a woman or children weeping on a doorstep. Can the tolling of the Old South bell be painted?

If not this, then the military council, holden at Boston by the Earl of Loudon and other captains and governors, might be taken,--his lordship in the great chair, an old-fashioned, military figure, with a star on his breast. Some of Louis XV.'s commanders will give the costume. On the table, and scattered about the room, must be symbols of warfare,--swords, pistols, plumed hats, a drum, trumpet, and rolled-up banner in one heap. It were not amiss to introduce the armed figure of an Indian chief, as taking part in the council,--or standing apart from the English, erect and stern.

Now for Liberty Tree. There is an engraving of that famous vegetable in Snow's History of Boston. If represented, I see not what scene can be beneath it, save poor Mr. Oliver, taking the oath. He must have on a bag-wig, ruffled sleeves, embroidered

coat, and all such ornaments, because he is the representative of aristocracy and an artificial system. The people may be as rough and wild as the fancy can make them; nevertheless, there must be one or two grave, puritanical figures in the midst. Such an one might sit in the great chair, and be an emblem of that stern, considerate spirit which brought about the Revolution. But this would be a hard subject.

But what a dolt am I to obtrude my counsel, . . .

*September 16th.*--. . . I do not very well recollect Monsieur du Miroir, but, as to Mrs. Bullfrog, I give her up to the severest reprehension. The story was written as a mere experiment in that style; it did not come from any depth within me,--neither my heart nor mind had anything to do with it. I recollect that the Man of Adamant seemed a fine idea to me when I looked at it prophetically; but I failed in giving shape and substance to the vision which I saw. I don't think it can be very good. . . .

I cannot believe all these stories about ----, because such a rascal never could be sustained and countenanced by respectable men. I take him to be neither better nor worse than the average of his tribe. However, I intend to have all my copyrights taken out in my own name; and, if he cheat me once, I will have nothing more to do with him, but will straightway be cheated by some other publisher,--that being, of course, the only alternative.

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Governor Shirley's young French wife might be the subject of one of the cuts. She should sit in the great chair,--perhaps with a dressing-glass before her,--and arrayed in all manner of fantastic finery, and with an *outré* French air, while the old Governor is leaning fondly over her, and a puritanic councillor or two are manifesting their disgust in the background. A negro footman and a French waiting-maid might be in attendance.

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In Liberty Tree might be a vignette, representing the chair in a very shattered, battered, and forlorn condition, after it had been ejected from Hutchinson's house. This would serve to impress the reader with the woful vicissitudes of sublunary things. . . .

Did you ever behold such a vile scribble as I write since I became a farmer? My chirography always was abominable, but now it is outrageous.

*Brook Farm, September 22d, 1841.*-- . . . Here I am again, slowly adapting myself to the life of this queer community, whence I seem to have been absent half a lifetime,-- so utterly have I grown apart from the spirit and manners of the place. . . . I was most kindly received; and the fields and woods looked very pleasant in the bright sunshine of the day before yesterday. I have a friendlier disposition towards the farm, now that I am no longer obliged to toil in its stubborn furrows. Yesterday and to-day, however, the weather has been intolerable,--cold, chill, sullen, so that it is impossible to be on kindly terms with Mother Nature. . . .

I doubt whether I shall succeed in writing another volume of Grandfather's Library while I remain here. I have not the sense of perfect seclusion which has always been essential to my power of producing anything. It is true, nobody intrudes into my room; but still I cannot be quiet. Nothing here is settled; everything is but beginning to arrange itself, and though I would seem to have little to do with aught beside my own thoughts, still I cannot but partake of the ferment around me. My mind will not be abstracted. I must observe, and think, and feel, and content myself with catching glimpses of things which may be wrought out hereafter. Perhaps it will be quite as well that I find myself unable to set seriously about literary occupation for the present. It will be good to have a longer interval between my labor of the body and that of the mind. I shall work to the better purpose after the beginning of November. Meantime I shall see these people and their enterprise under a new point of view, and perhaps be able to determine whether we have any call to cast in our lot among them.

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I do wish the weather would put off this sulky mood. Had it not been for the warmth and brightness of Monday, when I arrived here, I should have supposed that all sunshine had left Brook Farm forever. I have no disposition to take long walks in such a state of the sky; nor have I any buoyancy of spirit. I am a very dull person just at this time.

*September 25th.*--. . . One thing is certain. I cannot and will not spend the winter here. The time would be absolutely thrown away so far as regards any literary labor to be performed. . . .

The intrusion of an outward necessity into labors of the imagination and intellect is, to me, very painful. . . .

I had rather a pleasant walk to a distant meadow a day or two ago, and we found white and purple grapes in great abundance, ripe, and gushing with rich, pure juice when the hand pressed the clusters. Did you know what treasures of wild grapes there are in this land? If we dwell here, we will make our own wine, . . .

*September 27th.*--. . . Now, as to the affair with ----, I fully confide in your opinion that he intends to make an unequal bargain with poor, simple, innocent me,--never having doubted this myself. But how is he to accomplish it? I am not, nor shall be, the least in his power, whereas he is, to a certain extent, in mine. He might announce his projected Library, with me for the editor, in all the newspapers in the universe; but still I could not be bound to become the editor, unless by my own act; nor should I have the slightest scruple in refusing to be so, at the last moment, if he persisted in treating me with injustice. Then, as for his printing "Grandfather's Chair," I have the copyright in my own hands, and could and would prevent the sale, or make him account to me for the profits, in case of need. Meantime he is making arrangements for publishing the Library, contracting with other booksellers, and with printers and engravers, and, with every step, making it more difficult for himself to draw back. I, on the other hand, do nothing which I should not do if the affair with--were at an end; for, if I write a book, it will be just as available for some other publisher as for him. Instead of getting me into his power by this delay, he has trusted to my ignorance and simplicity, and has put *himself* in *my* power.

He is not insensible of this. At our last interview, he himself introduced the subject of the bargain, and appeared desirous to close it. But I was not prepared,--among other reasons, because I do not yet see what materials I shall have for the republications in the Library; the works that he has shown me being ill adapted for that purpose; and I wish first to see some French and German books which he has sent for to New York. And, before concluding the bargain, I have promised George Hillard to consult him, and let him do the business. Is not this consummate discretion? and am I not perfectly safe? . . . I look at the matter with perfect composure, and see all round my own position, and know that it is impregnable.

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I was elected to two high offices last night,--viz. to be a trustee of the Brook Farm estate, and Chairman of the Committee of Finance! . . . From the nature of my office, I shall have the chief direction of all the money affairs of the community, the making of bargains, the supervision of receipts and expenditures, etc., etc., etc. . . .

My accession to these august offices does not at all decide the question of my remaining here permanently. I told Mr. Ripley that I could not spend the winter at the farm, and that it was quite uncertain whether I returned in the spring. . . .

Take no part, I beseech you, in these magnetic miracles. I am unwilling that a power should be exercised on you of which we know neither the origin nor consequence, and the phenomena of which seem rather calculated to bewilder us than to teach us any truths about the present or future state of being. . . . Supposing that the power arises from the transfusion of one spirit into another, it seems to me that the sacredness of an individual is violated by it; there would be an intruder into

the holy of holies, . . . I have no faith whatever that people are raised to the seventh heaven, or to any heaven at all, or that they gain any insight into the mysteries of life beyond death, by means of this strange science. Without distrusting that the phenomena have really occurred, I think that they are to be accounted for as the result of a material and physical, not of a spiritual, influence. Opium has produced many a brighter vision of heaven, I fancy, and just as susceptible of proof, as these. They are dreams. . . . And what delusion can be more lamentable and mischievous, than to mistake the physical and material for the spiritual? What so miserable as to lose the soul's true, though hidden, knowledge and consciousness of heaven in the mist of an earth-born vision? If we would know what heaven is before we come thither, let us retire into the depths of our own spirits, and we shall find it there among holy thoughts and feelings; but let us not degrade high heaven and its inhabitants into any such symbols and forms as Miss L---- describes; do not let an earthly effluence from Mrs. P----'s corporeal system bewilder and perhaps contaminate, something spiritual and sacred. I should as soon think of seeking revelations of the future state in the rottenness of the grave,--where so many do seek it, . . .

The view which I take of this matter is caused by no want of faith in mysteries; but from a deep reverence of the soul, and of the mysteries which it knows within itself, but never transmits to the earthly eye and ear. Keep the imagination sane,--that is one of the truest conditions of communion with heaven.

*Brook Farm, September 26th.*--A walk this morning along the Needham road. A clear, breezy morning, after nearly a week of cloudy and showery weather. The grass is much more fresh and vivid than it was last month, and trees still retain much of their verdure, though here and there is a shrub or a bough arrayed in scarlet and gold. Along the road, in the midst of a beaten track, I saw mushrooms or toad-stools which had sprung up probably during the night.

The houses in this vicinity are, many of them, quite antique, with long, sloping roofs, commencing at a few feet from the ground, and ending in a lofty peak. Some of them have huge old elms overshadowing the yard. One may see the family sleigh near the door, it having stood there all through the summer sunshine, and perhaps with weeds sprouting through the crevices of its bottom, the growth of the months since snow departed. Old barns, patched and supported by timbers leaning against the sides, and stained with the excrement of past ages.

In the forenoon I walked along the edge of the meadow towards Cow Island. Large trees, almost a wood, principally of pine with the green pasture-glades intermixed, and cattle feeding. They cease grazing when an intruder appears, and look at him with long and wary observation, then bend their heads to the pasture again. Where the firm ground of the pasture ceases, the meadow begins,--loose, spongy, yielding to the tread, sometimes permitting the foot to sink into black mud, or perhaps over ankles in water. Cattle-paths, somewhat firmer than the general surface, traverse the dense shrubbery which has overgrown the meadow. This shrubbery consists of small birch, elders, maples, and other trees, with here and there white-pines of larger

growth. The whole is tangled and wild and thick-set, so that it is necessary to part the nestling stems and branches, and go crashing through. There are creeping plants of various sorts which clamber up the trees; and some of them have changed color in the slight frosts which already have befallen these low grounds, so that one sees a spiral wreath of scarlet leaves twining up to the top of a green tree, intermingling its bright hues with their verdure, as if all were of one piece. Sometimes, instead of scarlet, the spiral wreath is of a golden yellow.

Within the verge of the meadow, mostly near the firm shore of pasture ground, I found several grapevines, hung with an abundance of large purple grapes. The vines had caught hold of maples and alders, and climbed to the summit, curling round about and interwreathing their twisted folds in so intimate a manner that it was not easy to tell the parasite from the supporting tree or shrub. Sometimes the same vine had enveloped several shrubs, and caused a strange, tangled confusion, converting all these poor plants to the purpose of its own support, and hindering their growing to their own benefit and convenience. The broad vine-leaves, some of them yellow or yellowish-tinged, were seen apparently growing on the same stems with the silver-mapled leaves, and those of the other shrubs, thus married against their will by the conjugal twine; and the purple clusters of grapes hung down from above and in the midst, so that one might "gather grapes," if not "of thorns," yet of as alien bushes.

One vine had ascended almost to the tip of a large white-pine, spreading its leaves and hanging its purple clusters among all its boughs,--still climbing and clambering, as if it would not be content till it had crowned the very summit with a wreath of its own foliage and bunches of grapes. I mounted high into the tree, and ate the fruit there, while the vine wreathed still higher into the depths above my head. The grapes were sour, being not yet fully ripe. Some of them, however, were sweet and pleasant.

*September 27th.*--A ride to Brighton yesterday morning, it being the day of the weekly cattle-fair. William Allen and myself went in a wagon, carrying a calf to be sold at the fair. The calf had not had his breakfast, as his mother had preceded him to Brighton, and he kept expressing his hunger and discomfort by loud, sonorous baas, especially when we passed any cattle in the fields or in the road. The cows, grazing within hearing, expressed great interest, and some of them came galloping to the roadside to behold the calf. Little children, also, on their way to school, stopped to laugh and point at poor little Bossie. He was a prettily behaved urchin, and kept thrusting his hairy muzzle between William and myself, apparently wishing to be stroked and patted. It was an ugly thought that his confidence in human nature, and nature in general, was to be so ill rewarded as by cutting his throat, and selling him in quarters. This, I suppose, has been his fate before now!

It was a beautiful morning, clear as crystal, with an invigorating, but not disagreeable coolness. The general aspect of the country was as green as summer,--greener indeed than mid or latter summer, and there were occasional interminglings of the brilliant hues of autumn, which made the scenery more beautiful, both visibly and in sentiment. We saw no absolutely mean nor poor-looking abodes along the road. There were warm and comfortable farm-houses, ancient, with the porch, the

sloping roof, the antique peak, the clustered chimney, of old times; and modern cottages, smart and tasteful; and villas, with terraces before them, and dense shade, and wooden urns on pillars, and other such tokens of gentility. Pleasant groves of oak and walnut, also, there were, sometimes stretching along valleys, sometimes ascending a hill and clothing it all round, so as to make it a great clump of verdure. Frequently we passed people with cows, oxen, sheep, or pigs for Brighton Fair.

On arriving at Brighton, we found the village thronged with people, horses, and vehicles. Probably there is no place in New England where the character of an agricultural population may be so well studied. Almost all the farmers within a reasonable distance make it a point, I suppose, to attend Brighton Fair pretty frequently, if not on business, yet as amateurs. Then there are all the cattle-people and butchers who supply the Boston market, and dealers from far and near; and every man who has a cow or a yoke of oxen, whether to sell or buy, goes to Brighton on Monday. There were a thousand or two of cattle in the extensive pens belonging to the tavern-keeper, besides many that were standing about. One could hardly stir a step without running upon the horns of one dilemma or another, in the shape of ox, cow, bull, or ram. The yeomen appeared to be more in their element than I have ever seen them anywhere else, except, indeed, at labor,--more so than at musterings and such gatherings of amusement. And yet this was a sort of festal day, as well as a day of business. Most of the people were of a bulky make, with much bone and muscle, and some good store of fat, as if they had lived on flesh-diet; with mottled faces, too, hard and red, like those of persons who adhered to the old fashion of spirit-drinking. Great, round-paunched country squires were there too, sitting under the porch of the tavern, or waddling about, whip in hand, discussing the points of the cattle. There were also gentlemen-farmers, neatly, trimly, and fashionably dressed, in handsome surtouts, and trousers strapped under their boots. Yeomen, too, in their black or blue Sunday suits, cut by country tailors, and awkwardly worn. Others (like myself) had on the blue stuff frocks which they wear in the fields, the most comfortable garments that ever were invented. Country loafers were among the throng,--men who looked wistfully at the liquors in the bar, and waited for some friend to invite them to drink,--poor, shabby, out-at-elbowed devils. Also, dandies from the city, corseted and buckramed, who had come to see the humors of Brighton Fair. All these, and other varieties of mankind, either thronged the spacious bar-room of the hotel, drinking, smoking, talking, bargaining, or walked about among the cattle-pens, looking with knowing eyes at the horned people. The owners of the cattle stood near at hand, waiting for offers. There was something indescribable in their aspect, that showed them to be the owners, though they mixed among the crowd. The cattle, brought from a hundred separate farms, or rather a thousand, seemed to agree very well together, not quarrelling in the least. They almost all had a history, no doubt, if they could but have told it. The cows had each given her milk to support families,--had roamed the pastures, and come home to the barn-yard, had been looked upon as a sort of member of the domestic circle, and was known by a name, as Brindle or Cherry. The oxen, with their necks bent by the heavy yoke, had toiled in the plough-field and in haying-time for many years, and knew their master's stall as well as the master himself knew his own table. Even the young steers and the little calves had something of domestic sacredness about them; for children had watched their growth, and petted them, and played with them. And here they all were, old and young, gathered from their thousand homes to Brighton Fair; whence the great chance was that they

would go to the slaughter-house, and thence be transmitted, in surloins, joints, and such pieces, to the tables of the Boston folk.

William Allen had come to buy four little pigs to take the places of four who have now grown large at our farm, and are to be fatted and killed within a few weeks. There were several hundreds, in pens appropriated to their use, grunting discordantly, and apparently in no very good humor with their companions or the world at large. Most or many of these pigs had been imported from the State of New York. The drovers set out with a large number, and peddle them along the road till they arrive at Brighton with the remainder. William selected four, and bought them at five cents per pound. These poor little porkers were forthwith seized by the tails, their legs tied, and they thrown into our wagon, where they kept up a continual grunt and squeal till we got home. Two of them were yellowish, or light gold-color, the other two were black and white speckled; and all four of very piggish aspect and deportment. One of them snapped at William's finger most spitefully and bit it to the bone.

All the scene of the Fair was very characteristic and peculiar,--cheerful and lively, too, in the bright, warm sun. I must see it again; for it ought to be studied.

*September 28th.*--A picnic party in the woods, yesterday, in honor of little Frank Dana's birthday, he being six years old. I strolled out, after dinner, with Mr. Bradford, and in a lonesome glade we met the apparition of an Indian chief, dressed in appropriate costume of blanket, feathers, and paint, and armed with a musket. Almost at the same time, a young gypsy fortune-teller came from among the trees, and proposed to tell my fortune. While she was doing this, the goddess Diana let fly an arrow, and hit me smartly in the hand. The fortune-teller and goddess were in fine contrast, Diana being a blonde, fair, quiet, with a moderate composure; and the gypsy (O. G.) a bright, vivacious, dark-haired, rich-complexioned damsel,--both of them very pretty, at least pretty enough to make fifteen years enchanting. Accompanied by these denizens of the wild wood, we went onward, and came to a company of fantastic figures, arranged in a ring for a dance or a game. There was a Swiss girl, an Indian squaw, a negro of the Jim Crow order, one or two foresters, and several people in Christian attire, besides children of all ages. Then followed childish games, in which the grown people took part with mirth enough,--while I, whose nature it is to be a mere spectator both of sport and serious business, lay under the trees and looked on. Meanwhile, Mr. Emerson and Miss Fuller, who arrived an hour or two before, came forth into the little glade where we were assembled. Here followed much talk. The ceremonies of the day concluded with a cold collation of cakes and fruit. All was pleasant enough,--an excellent piece of work,--"would't were done!" It has left a fantastic impression on my memory, this intermingling of wild and fabulous characters with real and homely ones, in the secluded nook of the woods. I remember them, with the sunlight breaking through overshadowing branches, and they appearing and disappearing confusedly,--perhaps starting out of the earth; as if the every-day laws of nature were suspended for this particular occasion. There were the children, too, laughing and sporting about, as if they were at home among such strange shapes,--and anon bursting into loud uproar of lamentation, when the rude gambols of the merry archers chanced to overturn them. And apart, with a shrewd,

Yankee observation of the scene, stands our friend Orange, a thick-set, sturdy figure, enjoying the fun well enough, yet, rather laughing with a perception of its nonsensicalness than at all entering into the spirit of the thing.

This morning I have been helping to gather apples. The principal farm labors at this time are ploughing for winter rye, and breaking up the greensward for next year's crop of potatoes, gathering squashes, and not much else, except such year-round employments as milking. The crop of rye, to be sure, is in process of being threshed, at odd intervals.

I ought to have mentioned among the diverse and incongruous growths of the picnic party our two Spanish boys from Manilla,--Lucas, with his heavy features and almost mulatto complexion; and José, slighter, with rather a feminine face,--not a gay, girlish one, but grave, reserved, eying you sometimes with an earnest but secret expression, and causing you to question what sort of person he is.

*Friday, October 1st.*--I have been looking at our four swine,--not of the last lot, but those in process of fattening. They lie among the clean rye straw in the sty, nestling close together; for they seem to be beasts sensitive to the cold, and this is a clear, bright, crystal morning, with a cool northwest-wind. So there lie these four black swine, as deep among the straw as they can burrow, the very symbols of slothful ease and sensuous comfort. They seem to be actually oppressed and overburdened with comfort. They are quick to notice any one's approach, and utter a low grunt thereupon,--not drawing a breath for that particular purpose, but grunting with their ordinary breath,--at the same time turning an observant, though dull and sluggish eye upon the visitor. They seem to be involved and buried in their own corporeal substance, and to look dimly forth at the outer world. They breathe not easily, and yet not with difficulty nor discomfort; for the very unreadiness and oppression with which their breath comes appears to make them sensible of the deep sensual satisfaction which they feel. Swill, the remnant of their last meal, remains in the trough, denoting that their food is more abundant than even a hog can demand. Anon they fall asleep, drawing short and heavy breaths, which heave their huge sides up and down; but at the slightest noise they sluggishly unclose their eyes, and give another gentle grunt. They also grunt among themselves, without any external cause; but merely to express their swinish sympathy. I suppose it is the knowledge that these four grunters are doomed to die within two or three weeks that gives them a sort of awfulness in my conception. It makes me contrast their present gross substance of fleshly life with the nothingness speedily to come. Meantime the four newly bought pigs are running about the cow-yard, lean, active, shrewd, investigating everything, as their nature is. When I throw an apple among them, they scramble with one another for the prize, and the successful one scampers away to eat it at leisure. They thrust their snouts into the mud, and pick a grain of corn out of the rubbish. Nothing within their sphere do they leave unexamined, grunting all the time with infinite variety of expression. Their language is the most copious of that of any quadruped, and, indeed, there is something deeply and indefinitely interesting in the swinish race. They appear the more a mystery the longer one gazes at them. It seems as if there were an important meaning to them, if one could but find it out. One interesting trait in them

is their perfect independence of character. They care not for man, and will not adapt themselves to his notions, as other beasts do; but are true to themselves, and act out their hoggish nature.

*October 7th.*--Since Saturday last (it being now Thursday), I have been in Boston and Salem, and there has been a violent storm and rain during the whole time. This morning shone as bright as if it meant to make up for all the dismalness of the past days. Our brook, which in the summer was no longer a running stream, but stood in pools along its pebbly course, is now full from one grassy verge to the other, and hurries along with a murmuring rush. It will continue to swell, I suppose, and in the winter and spring it will flood all the broad meadows through which it flows.

I have taken a long walk this forenoon along the Needham road, and across the bridge, thence pursuing a cross-road through the woods, parallel with the river, which I crossed again at Dedham. Most of the road lay through a growth of young oaks principally. They still retain their verdure, though, looking closely in among them, one perceives the broken sunshine falling on a few sere or bright-hued tufts of shrubbery. In low, marshy spots, on the verge of the meadows or along the river-side, there is a much more marked autumnal change. Whole ranges of bushes are there painted with many variegated hues, not of the brightest tint, but of a sober cheerfulness. I suppose this is owing more to the late rains than to the frost; for a heavy rain changes the foliage somewhat at this season. The first marked frost was seen last Saturday morning. Soon after sunrise it lay, white as snow, over all the grass, and on the tops of the fences, and in the yard, on the heap of firewood. On Sunday, I think, there was a fall of snow, which, however, did not lie on the ground a moment.

There is no season when such pleasant and sunny spots may be lighted on, and produce so pleasant an effect on the feelings, as now in October. The sunshine is peculiarly genial; and in sheltered places, as on the side of a bank, or of a barn or house, one becomes acquainted and friendly with the sunshine. It seems to be of a kindly and homely nature. And the green grass, strewn with a few withered leaves, looks the more green and beautiful for them. In summer or spring, Nature is farther from one's sympathies.

*October 8th.*--Another gloomy day, lowering with portents of rain close at hand. I have walked up into the pastures this morning, and looked about me a little. The woods present a very diversified appearance just now, with perhaps more varieties of tint than they are destined to wear at a somewhat later period. There are some strong yellow hues, and some deep red; there are innumerable shades of green, some few having the depth of summer; others, partially changed towards yellow, look freshly verdant with the delicate tinge of early summer or of May. Then there is the solemn and dark green of the pines. The effect is, that every tree in the wood and every bush among the shrubbery has a separate existence, since, confusedly intermingled, each wears its peculiar color, instead of being lost in the universal emerald of summer.

And yet there is a oneness of effect likewise, when we choose to look at a whole sweep of woodland instead of analyzing its component trees. Scattered over the pasture, which the late rains have kept tolerably green, there are spots or islands of dusky red, --a deep, substantial hue, very well fit to be close to the ground,--while the yellow, and light, fantastic shades of green soar upward to the sky. These red spots are the blueberry and whortleberry bushes. The sweet-fern is changed mostly to russet, but still retains its wild and delightful fragrance when pressed in the hand. Wild China asters are scattered about, but beginning to wither. A little while ago, mushrooms or toadstools were very numerous along the wood-paths and by the roadsides, especially after rain. Some were of spotless white, some yellow, and some scarlet. They are always mysteries and objects of interest to me, springing as they do so suddenly from no root or seed, and growing one wonders why. I think, too, that some varieties are pretty objects, little fairy tables, centre-tables, standing on one leg. But their growth appears to be checked now, and they are of a brown tint and decayed.

The farm business to-day is to dig potatoes. I worked a little at it. The process is to grasp all the stems of a hill and pull them up. A great many of the potatoes are thus pulled, clinging to the stems and to one another in curious shapes,--long red things, and little round ones, imbedded in the earth which clings to the roots. These being plucked off, the rest of the potatoes are dug out of the hill with a hoe, the tops being flung into a heap for the cow-yard. On my way home, I paused to inspect the squash-field. Some of the squashes lay in heaps as they were gathered, presenting much variety of shape and hue,--as golden yellow, like great lumps of gold, dark green, striped and variegated; and some were round, and some lay curling their long necks, nestling, as it were, and seeming as if they had life.

In my walk yesterday forenoon I passed an old house which seemed to be quite deserted. It was a two-story, wooden house, dark and weather-beaten. The front windows, some of them, were shattered and open, and others were boarded up. Trees and shrubbery were growing neglected, so as quite to block up the lower part. There was an aged barn near at hand, so ruinous that it had been necessary to prop it up. There were two old carts, both of which had lost a wheel. Everything was in keeping. At first I supposed that there would be no inhabitants in such a dilapidated place; but, passing on, I looked back, and saw a decrepit and infirm old man at the angle of the house, its fit occupant. The grass, however, was very green and beautiful around this dwelling, and, the sunshine falling brightly on it, the whole effect was cheerful and pleasant. It seemed as if the world was so glad that this desolate old place, where there was never to be any more hope and happiness, could not at all lessen the general effect of joy.

I found a small turtle by the roadside, where he had crept to warm himself in the genial sunshine. He had a sable back, and underneath his shell was yellow, and at the edges bright scarlet. His head, tail, and claws were striped yellow, black, and red. He withdrew himself as far as he possibly could into his shell, and absolutely refused to peep out, even when I put him into the water. Finally, I threw him into a deep pool and left him. These mailed gentlemen, from the size of a foot or more down to an inch, were very numerous in the spring; and now the smaller kind appear again.

*Saturday, October 9th.*--Still dismal weather. Our household, being composed in great measure of children and young people, is generally a cheerful one enough, even in gloomy weather. For a week past we have been especially gladdened with a little seamstress from Boston, about seventeen years old; but of such a *petite* figure, that, at first view, one would take her to be hardly in her teens. She is very vivacious and smart, laughing and singing and talking all the time,--talking sensibly; but still, taking the view of matters that a city girl naturally would. If she were larger than she is, and of less pleasing aspect, I think she might be intolerable; but being so small, and with a fair skin, and as healthy as a wild-flower, she is really very agreeable; and to look at her face is like being shone upon by a ray of the sun. She never walks, but bounds and dances along, and this motion, in her diminutive person, does not give the idea of violence. It is like a bird, hopping from twig to twig, and chirping merrily all the time. Sometimes she is rather vulgar, but even that works well enough into her character, and accords with it. On continued observation, one discovers that she is not a little girl, but really a little woman, with all the prerogatives and liabilities of a woman. This gives a new aspect to her, while the girlish impression still remains, and is strangely combined with the sense that this frolicsome maiden has the material for the sober bearing of a wife. She romps with the boys, runs races with them in the yard, and up and down the stairs, and is heard scolding laughingly at their rough play. She asks William Allen to place her "on top of that horse," whereupon he puts his large brown hands about her waist, and, swinging her to and fro, lifts her on horseback. William threatens to rivet two horseshoes round her neck, for having clambered, with the other girls and boys, upon a load of hay, whereby the said load lost its balance and slid off the cart. She strings the seed-berries of roses together, making a scarlet necklace of them, which she fastens about her throat. She gathers flowers of everlasting to wear in her bonnet, arranging them with the skill of a dressmaker. In the evening, she sits singing by the hour, with the musical part of the establishment, often breaking into laughter, whereto she is incited by the tricks of the boys. The last thing one hears of her, she is tripping up stairs to bed, talking lightsomely or warbling; and one meets her in the morning, the very image of bright morn itself, smiling briskly at you, so that one takes her for a promise of cheerfulness through the day. Be it said, with all the rest, that there is a perfect maiden modesty in her deportment. She has just gone away, and the last I saw of her was her vivacious face peeping through the curtain of the cariole, and nodding a gay farewell to the family, who were shouting their adieus at the door. With her other merits, she is an excellent daughter, and supports her mother by the labor of her hands. It would be difficult to conceive beforehand how much can be added to the enjoyment of a household by mere sunniness of temper and liveliness of disposition; for her intellect is very ordinary, and she never says anything worth hearing, or even laughing at, in itself. But she herself is an expression well worth studying.

*Brook Farm, October 9th.*--A walk this afternoon to Cow Island. The clouds had broken away towards noon, and let forth a few sunbeams, and more and more blue sky ventured to appear, till at last it was really warm and sunny,--indeed, rather too warm in the sheltered hollows, though it is delightful to be too warm now, after so much stormy chillness. Oh the beauty of grassy slopes, and the hollow ways of paths winding between hills, and the intervals between the road and wood-lots, where

Summer lingers and sits down, strewing dandelions of gold, and blue asters, as her parting gifts and memorials! I went to a grapevine, which I have already visited several times, and found some clusters of grapes still remaining, and now perfectly ripe. Coming within view of the river, I saw several wild ducks under the shadow of the opposite shore, which was high, and covered with a grove of pines. I should not have discovered the ducks had they not risen and skimmed the surface of the glassy stream, breaking its dark water with a bright streak, and, sweeping round, gradually rose high enough to fly away. I likewise started a partridge just within the verge of the woods, and in another place a large squirrel ran across the wood-path from one shelter of trees to the other. Small birds, in flocks, were flitting about the fields, seeking and finding I know not what sort of food. There were little fish, also, darting in shoals through the pools and depths of the brooks, which are now replenished to their brims, and rush towards the river with a swift, amber-colored current.

Cow Island is not an island,--at least, at this season,--though, I believe, in the time of freshets, the marshy Charles floods the meadows all round about it, and extends across its communication with the mainland. The path to it is a very secluded one, threading a wood of pines, and just wide enough to admit the loads of meadow hay which are drawn from the splashy shore of the river. The island has a growth of stately pines, with tall and ponderous stems, standing at distance enough to admit the eye to travel far among them; and, as there is no underbrush, the effect is somewhat like looking among the pillars of a church.

I returned home by the high-road. On my right, separated from the road by a level field, perhaps fifty yards across, was a range of young forest-trees, dressed in their garb of autumnal glory. The sun shone directly upon them; and sunlight is like the breath of life to the pomp of autumn. In its absence, one doubts whether there be any truth in what poets have told about the splendor of an American autumn; but when this charm is added, one feels that the effect is beyond description. As I beheld it to-day, there was nothing dazzling; it was gentle and mild, though brilliant and diversified, and had a most quiet and pensive influence. And yet there were some trees that seemed really made of sunshine, and others were of a sunny red, and the whole picture was painted with but little relief of darksome hues,--only a few evergreens. But there was nothing inharmonious; and, on closer examination, it appeared that all the tints had a relationship among themselves. And this, I suppose, is the reason that, while nature seems to scatter them so carelessly, they still never shock the beholder by their contrasts, nor disturb, but only soothe. The brilliant scarlet and the brilliant yellow are different hues of the maple-leaves, and the first changes into the last. I saw one maple-tree, its centre yellow as gold, set in a framework of red. The native poplars have different shades of green, verging towards yellow, and are very cheerful in the sunshine. Most of the oak-leaves have still the deep verdure of summer; but where a change has taken place, it is into a russet-red, warm, but sober. These colors, infinitely varied by the progress which different trees have made in their decay, constitute almost the whole glory of autumnal woods; but it is impossible to conceive how much is done with such scanty materials. In my whole walk I saw only one man, and he was at a distance, in the obscurity of the trees. He had a horse and a wagon, and was getting a load of dry brushwood.

*Sunday, October 10th.*--I visited my grapevine this afternoon, and ate the last of its clusters. This vine climbs around a young maple-tree, which has now assumed the yellow leaf. The leaves of the vine are more decayed than those of the maple. Thence to Cow Island, a solemn and thoughtful walk. Returned by another path, of the width of a wagon, passing through a grove of hard wood, the lightsome hues of which make the walk more cheerful than among the pines. The roots of oaks emerged from the soil, and contorted themselves across the path. The sunlight, also, broke across in spots, and otherwheres the shadow was deep; but still there was intermingling enough of bright hues to keep off the gloom from the whole path.

Brooks and pools have a peculiar aspect at this season. One knows that the water must be cold, and one shivers a little at the sight of it; and yet the grass about the pool may be of the deepest green, and the sun may be shining into it. The withered leaves which overhanging trees shed upon its surface contribute much to the effect.

Insects have mostly vanished in the fields and woods. I hear locusts yet, singing in the sunny hours, and crickets have not yet finished their song. Once in a while I see a caterpillar,--this afternoon, for instance, a red, hairy one, with black head and tail. They do not appear to be active, and it makes one rather melancholy to look at them.

*Tuesday, October 12th.*--The cawing of the crow resounds among the woods. A sentinel is aware of your approach a great way off, and gives the alarm to his comrades loudly and eagerly,--Caw, caw, caw! Immediately the whole conclave replies, and you behold them rising above the trees, flapping darkly, and winging their way to deeper solitudes. Sometimes, however, they remain till you come near enough to discern their sable gravity of aspect, each occupying a separate bough, or perhaps the blasted tip-top of a pine. As you approach, one after another, with loud cawing, flaps his wings and throws himself upon the air.

There is hardly a more striking feature in the landscape nowadays than the red patches of blueberry and whortleberry bushes, as seen on a sloping hill-side, like islands among the grass, with trees growing in them; or crowning the summit of a bare, brown hill with their somewhat russet liveliness; or circling round the base of an earth-imbedded rock. At a distance, this hue, clothing spots and patches of the earth, looks more like a picture than anything else,--yet such a picture as I never saw painted.

The oaks are now beginning to look sere, and their leaves have withered borders. It is pleasant to notice the wide circle of greener grass beneath the circumference of an overshadowing oak. Passing an orchard, one hears an uneasy rustling in the trees, and not as if they were struggling with the wind. Scattered about are barrels to contain the gathered apples; and perhaps a great heap of golden or scarlet apples is collected in one place.

*Wednesday, October 13th.*--A good view, from an upland swell of our pasture, across the valley of the river Charles. There is the meadow, as level as a floor, and

carpeted with green, perhaps two miles from the rising ground on this side of the river to that on the opposite side. The stream winds through the midst of the flat space, without any banks at all; for it fills its bed almost to the brim, and bathes the meadow grass on either side. A tuft of shrubbery, at broken intervals, is scattered along its border; and thus it meanders sluggishly along, without other life than what it gains from gleaming in the sun. Now, into the broad, smooth meadow, as into a lake, capes and headlands put themselves forth, and shores of firm woodland border it, covered with variegated foliage, making the contrast so much the stronger of their height and rough outline with the even spread of the plain. And beyond, and far away, rises a long, gradual swell of country, covered with an apparently dense growth of foliage for miles, till the horizon terminates it; and here and there is a house, or perhaps two, among the contiguity of trees. Everywhere the trees wear their autumnal dress, so that the whole landscape is red, russet, orange, and yellow, blending in the distance into a rich tint of brown-orange, or nearly that,--except the green expanse so definitely hemmed in by the higher ground.

I took a long walk this morning, going first nearly to Newton, thence nearly to Brighton, thence to Jamaica Plain, and thence home. It was a fine morning, with a northwest-wind; cool when facing the wind, but warm and most genially pleasant in sheltered spots; and warm enough everywhere while I was in motion. I traversed most of the by-ways which offered themselves to me; and, passing through one in which there was a double line of grass between the wheel-tracks and that of the horses' feet, I came to where had once stood a farmhouse, which appeared to have been recently torn down. Most of the old timber and boards had been carted away; a pile of it, however, remained. The cellar of the house was uncovered, and beside it stood the base and middle height of the chimney. The oven, in which household bread had been baked for daily food, and puddings and cake and jolly pumpkin-pies for festivals, opened its mouth, being deprived of its iron door. The fireplace was close at hand. All round the site of the house was a pleasant, sunny, green space, with old fruit-trees in pretty fair condition, though aged. There was a barn, also aged, but in decent repair; and a ruinous shed, on the corner of which was nailed a boy's windmill, where it had probably been turning and clattering for years together, till now it was black with time and weather-stain. It was broken, but still it went round whenever the wind stirred. The spot was entirely secluded, there being no other house within a mile or two.

No language can give an idea of the beauty and glory of the trees, just at this moment. It would be easy, by a process of word-daubing, to set down a confused group of gorgeous colors, like a bunch of tangled skeins of bright silk; but there is nothing of the reality in the glare which would thus be produced. And yet the splendor both of individual clusters and of whole scenes is unsurpassable. The oaks are now far advanced in their change of hue; and, in certain positions relatively to the sun, they light up and gleam with a most magnificent deep gold, varying according as portions of the foliage are in shadow or sunlight. On the sides which receive the direct rays, the effect is altogether rich; and in other points of view it is equally beautiful, if less brilliant. This color of the oak is more superb than the lighter yellow of the maples and walnuts. The whole landscape is now covered with this indescribable

pomp; it is discerned on the uplands afar off; and Blue Hill in Milton, at the distance of several miles, actually glistens with rich, dark light,--no, not glistens, nor gleams,--but perhaps to say glows subduedly will be a truer expression for it.

Met few people this morning; a grown girl, in company with a little boy, gathering barberries in a secluded lane; a portly, autumnal gentleman, wrapped in a great-coat, who asked the way to Mr. Joseph Goddard's; and a fish-cart from the city, the driver of which sounded his horn along the lonesome way.

*Monday, October 18th*--There has been a succession of days which were cold and bright in the forenoon, and gray, sullen, and chill towards night. The woods have now taken a soberer tint than they wore at my last date. Many of the shrubs which looked brightest a little while ago are now wholly bare of leaves. The oaks have generally a russet-brown shade, although some of them are still green, as are likewise other scattered trees in the forests. The bright yellow and the rich scarlet are no more to be seen. Scarcely any of them will now bear a close examination; for this shows them to be rugged, wilted, and of faded, frost-bitten hue; but at a distance, and in the mass, and enlivened by the sun, they have still somewhat of the varied splendor which distinguished them a week ago. It is wonderful what a difference the sunshine makes; it is like varnish, bringing out the hidden veins in a piece of rich wood. In the cold, gray atmosphere, such as that of most of our afternoons now, the landscape lies dark,--brown, and in a much deeper shadow than if it were clothed in green. But, perchance, a gleam of sun falls on a certain spot of distant shrubbery or woodland, and we see it brighten with many hues, standing forth prominently from the dimness around it. The sunlight gradually spreads, and the whole sombre scene is changed to a motley picture,--the sun bringing out many shades of color, and converting its gloom to an almost laughing cheerfulness. At such times I almost doubt whether the foliage has lost any of its brilliancy. But the clouds intercept the sun again, and lo! old Autumn appears, clad in his cloak of russet-brown.

Beautiful now, while the general landscape lies in shadow, looks the summit of a distant hill (say a mile off), with the sunshine brightening the trees that cover it. It is noticeable that the outlines of hills, and the whole bulk of them at the distance of several miles, become stronger, denser, and more substantial in this autumn atmosphere and in these autumnal tints than in summer. Then they looked blue, misty, and dim. Now they show their great humpbacks more plainly, as if they had drawn nearer to us.

A waste of shrubbery and small trees, such as overruns the borders of the meadows for miles together, looks much more rugged, wild, and savage in its present brown color than when clad in green.

I passed through a very pleasant wood-path yesterday, quite shut in and sheltered by trees that had not thrown off their yellow robes. The sun shone strongly in among them, and quite kindled them; so that the path was brighter for their shade than if it had been quite exposed to the sun.

In the village graveyard, which lies contiguous to the street, I saw a man digging a grave, and one inhabitant after another turned aside from his way to look into the grave and talk with the digger. I heard him laugh, with the traditionary mirthfulness of men of that occupation.

In the hollow of the woods, yesterday afternoon, I lay a long while watching a squirrel, who was capering about among the trees over my head (oaks and white-pines, so close together that their branches intermingled). The squirrel seemed not to approve of my presence, for he frequently uttered a sharp, quick, angry noise, like that of a scissors-grinder's wheel. Sometimes I could see him sitting on an impending bough, with his tail over his back, looking down pryingly upon me. It seems to be a natural posture with him, to sit on his hind legs, holding up his fore paws. Anon, with a peculiarly quick start, he would scramble along the branch, and be lost to sight in another part of the tree, whence his shrill chatter would again be heard. Then I would see him rapidly descending the trunk, and running along the ground; and a moment afterwards, casting my eye upward, I beheld him flitting like a bird among the high limbs at the summit, directly above me. Afterwards, he apparently became accustomed to my society, and set about some business of his own. He came down to the ground, took up a piece of a decayed bough (a heavy burden for such a small personage), and, with this in his mouth, again climbed up and passed from the branches of one tree to those of another, and thus onward and onward till he went out of sight. Shortly afterwards he returned for another burden, and this he repeated several times. I suppose he was building a nest,--at least, I know not what else could have been his object. Never was there such an active, cheerful, choleric, continually-in-motion fellow as this little red squirrel, talking to himself, chattering at me, and as sociable in his own person as if he had half a dozen companions, instead of being alone in the lonesome wood. Indeed, he flitted about so quickly, and showed himself in different places so suddenly, that I was in some doubt whether there were not two or three of them.

I must mention again the very beautiful effect produced by the masses of berry-bushes, lying like scarlet islands in the midst of withered pasture-ground, or crowning the tops of barren hills. Their hue, at a distance, is lustrous scarlet, although it does not look nearly as bright and gorgeous when examined close at hand. But at a proper distance it is a beautiful fringe on Autumn's petticoat.

*Friday, October 22d.*--A continued succession of unpleasant, Novembery days, and autumn has made rapid progress in the work of decay. It is now somewhat of a rare good fortune to find a verdant, grassy spot, on some slope, or in a dell; and even such seldom-seen oases are bestrewn with dried brown leaves, --which, however, methinks, make the short, fresh grass look greener around them. Dry leaves are now plentiful everywhere, save where there are none but pine-trees. They rustle beneath the tread, and there is nothing more autumnal than that sound. Nevertheless, in a walk this afternoon, I have seen two oaks which retained almost the greenness of summer. They grew close to the huge Pulpit Rock, so that portions of their trunks appeared to grasp the rough surface; and they were rooted beneath it, and, ascending

high into the air, overshadowed the gray crag with verdure. Other oaks, here and there, have a few green leaves or boughs among their rustling and rugged shade.

Yet, dreary as the woods are in a bleak, sullen day, there is a very peculiar sense of warmth and a sort of richness of effect in the slope of a bank and in sheltered spots, where bright sunshine falls, and the brown oaken foliage is gladdened by it. There is then a feeling of comfort, and consequently of heart-warmth, which cannot be experienced in summer.

I walked this afternoon along a pleasant wood-path, gently winding, so that but little of it could be seen at a time, and going up and down small mounds, now plunging into a denser shadow, and now emerging from it. Part of the way it was strewn with the dusky, yellow leaves of white-pines,--the cast-off garments of last year; part of the way with green grass, close-cropped, and very fresh for the season. Sometimes the trees met across it; sometimes it was bordered on one side by an old rail-fence of moss-grown cedar, with bushes sprouting beneath it, and thrusting their branches through it; sometimes by a stone-wall of unknown antiquity, older than the wood it closed in. A stone-wall, when shrubbery has grown around it, and thrust its roots beneath it, becomes a very pleasant and meditative object. It does not belong too evidently to man, having been built so long ago. It seems a part of nature.

Yesterday I found two mushrooms in the woods, probably of the preceding night's growth. Also I saw a mosquito, frost-pinched, and so wretched that I felt avenged for all the injuries which his tribe inflicted upon me last summer, and so did not molest this lone survivor.

Walnuts in their green rinds are falling from the trees, and so are chestnut-burrs.

I found a maple-leaf to-day, yellow all over, except its extremest point, which was bright scarlet. It looked as if a drop of blood were hanging from it. The first change of the maple-leaf is to scarlet; the next, to yellow. Then it withers, wilts, and drops off, as most of them have already done.

*October 27th.*--Fringed gentians,--I found the last, probably, that will be seen this year, growing on the margin of the brook.

[1842]