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*Jan 1*

There are many words which are genuine and indigenous and have their root in our natures, not made by scholars, and as well understood by the illiterate as others. There are also a great many words which are spurious and artificial, and can only be used in a bad sense, since the thing they signify is not fair and substantial—such as the *church, the judiciary, to impeach,* etc., etc. They who use them do not stand on solid ground. It is in vain to try to preserve them by attaching other words to them such as *true* church, etc. It is like towing a sinking ship with a canoe.

I have lately been surveying the Walden woods so extensively and minutely that I now see it mapped in my mind’s eye—as, indeed, on paper—as so many men’s woodlots, and am aware when I walk there that I am at a given moment passing form such a one’s woodlot to another’s. I fear this particular dry knowledge may affect my imagination and fancy, that it will not be easy to see so much wildness and native vigor there as formerly. No thicket will seem so unexplored now that I know that a stake and stones may be found in it. In these respects those Main woods differed essentially from ours. There you are never reminded that the wilderness which you are threading is, after all, some villager’s familiar woodlot from which his ancestors have sledded their fuel for generations, or some widow’s thirds, minutely described in some old deed, which is recorded, of which the owner has got a plan, too, and old bound marks may be found every forty rods if you will search. What a history of Concord wilderness which I affect so much may have had! How many old deeds describe it—some particular wild spot—hot is passed from Cole to Robinson, and Robinson to Jones, and Jones finally to Smith in the course of years! Some have cut it over three times during their lives, and some have burned it and sowed it with rye, and built walls and made a pasture of it, perchance. All have renewed the bounds and reblazed the trees many times. Here you are not reminded of these things. ‘Tis true the map informs you that you stand on land granted by the State to such an academy, or on Bingham’s Purchase, but these names do not impose on you, for you see nothing to remind you of the academy or of Bingham.

*Jan 3. Sunday.*

I see a flock of *F. hyemalis* this afternoon, the weather is hitherto so warm.

About, in his lively “Greece and the Greeks,” says, “These are the most exquisite delights to be found in Greece, next to, or perhaps before, the pleasure of admiring the masterpieces of art—a little cool water under a genial sun.” I have no doubt that this is true. Why, then, travel so far when the same pleasures may be found near home?

The slosh on Walden had so much water in it that it has now frozen perfectly smooth and looks like a semi-transparent marble. Being, however, opaque, it reminds one the more of some vast hall or corridor’s floor, yet probably not a human foot has trodden it yet. Only the track-repairers and stokers have cast stones and billets of wood onto it to prove it.

Going to Andromeda Ponds, I was greeted by the warm brown-red glow of the *Andromeda calyculata* toward the sun. I see where I have been through, the more reddish under sides apparently being turned up. It is long since a human friend has met me with such a glow.

*Jan. 4 P.M.* —The weather is still remarkable warm; the ice is too soft for skating. I go through by the Andromeda Ponds and down river from Fair Haven. I am encouraged by the sight of men fishing in Fair Haven Pond, for it reminds me that they have animal spirits for such adventures. I am glad to be reminded that nay go a-fishing. When I get down near to Cardinal Shore, the sun near setting, its light is wonderfully reflected from a narrow edging of yellowish stubble at the end of the meadow ice and foot of the hill, an edging only two or three feet wide, and the stubble but a few inches high. (I am looking East). It is remarkable because the ice is but a dull lead-color (it is so soft and sodden), reflecting no light, and the hill beyond is a dark russet, here and there patched with snow, but this narrow intermediate line of stubble is all aglow…

*Jan 5. P.M.* —I see one of those fuzzy winter caterpillars, black at the two ends and brow-red in the middle, crawling on a rock by the Hunt’s Bridge causeway.

Mr. Hosmer is loading hay in his barn. It is meadow-hay, and I am interested in it chiefly as a botanist. If meadow-hay is of less worth at the market, it is more interesting to the poet. In this there is a large proportion of *Osmunda regalis*. But I fear that in the long run it is not so interesting to the cattle to contemplate and chew this as English hay and clover. How completely a load of hay in the winter revives the memory of past summers! Summer in us is only a little dried like it. The rowen in Hosmer’s barn has a finer and greener look than the first crop. And so the ferns in coal remind us of summer still longer past.