THE PHILOSOPHERS' CAMP.

EMERSON, AGASSIZ, LOWELL, AND OTHERS IN THE ADIRONDACKS.

> Wise and polite,—and if I drew
> Their several portraits, you would own
> Chaucer had no such worthy crew,
> Nor Boccace in Decameron.
> —EMERSON, "The Adirondacs."

IN the days when the great wilderness in northern New-York, now generally known as the Adirondack region, was still little known, its only visitors being a few landscape-painters and sportsmen, I, then being of the former, became so deeply attracted to this almost undisturbed primeval forest that every summer drew me back to it; and during a short residence in Cambridge, my reports, and perhaps my enthusiasm, so impressed those with whom I was thrown into contact that on one of my returns I led back a company from the circle which had its center under the shadow of old Harvard. The first expedition included Lowell and several common friends, and was rather an exploration and verification of my reports than a serious undertaking, but was important, as it led to the formation of a club whose purpose was the recurrence of its members, for a short time each summer, to the undiluted influence of the great mother, Nature. We went from the Saranac waters down the Raquette, camping on Tupper's Lake, and then up Bog River to the sources of the Raquette, and so back to our point of departure.

The report of this trial trip was so satisfactory that I was requested to take the direction of a more important expedition the year following; and the company included Lowell, Emerson, Agassiz, Dr. Jeffries Wyman (that rare scientific genius, taken from his labors too soon for the honor of our country, if not for his own), Dr. Estes Howe, John Holmes (the brother of Oliver Wendell), Judge Hoar, Horatio Woodman, Amos Binney, and myself, Lowell being of course the leading spirit. It was decided to establish a camp at some central point of the forest, each member enjoying the freedom of the country, having his own guide and boat, and exploring on his own account or remaining at headquarters at pleasure. I went some days ahead of the company, and located the camp at Follansbee Pond, a lake of the Raquette chain, out of the track of hunters or chance tourists, but where game was still plentiful and good fishing not far away; for our main sustenance was to be what nature sent us.

The journey of the company, a few days later, gave rise to an incident which has often been incorrectly told, and which, as a curious comment on human fame, deserves to be told again. The coming of the party was of course made known along the track it would follow, and at Keeseville, where the common roads then ended, the town was agog to see the "philosophers," as they were at once collectively called. But neither Emerson nor Lowell was known, Agassiz being the only celebrity to that world, owing to his having recently refused the offer by the Emperor of France of the keepership of the Jardin des Plantes at Paris and a senatorship, with a large salary, he preferring to devote himself to science and America. The selectmen of the town waited on the visitors early the morning after their arrival, to pay their respects, they said, but really to see a man who had no regard for money and distinction. They were received formally, the spokesman bringing a copy of a periodical which contained a portrait of Agassiz, which he produced and carefully compared with the lineaments of the professor until he had satisfied himself of the authenticity of the individual, when he addressed his followers with, "Yes, it 's him!" and they then proceeded to shake hands with him, the rest of the party being ignored.

Follansbee was then a rare and beautiful piece of untouched nature, a *cul-de-sac* to be visited only for itself, for it was divided from the highway, the Raquette, by a marsh of several miles of weary navigating, shut in by the hills on all sides but that by which we entered, the forest still unscarred, and the tall white pines standing in files along the lake shores and up over the ridges, not a scar of ax or fire being visible as we searched the shore for a fitting spot to make our vacation lodging-place. Many things are requisite for a good camping-ground, and to fix one is a thing to be learned. First and indispensable is a spring of good water near by; then a dry and elevated plateau wooded with "hard wood,"—beeches, birch, and maple,—with level ground for the camp, free from the tangle of undergrowth which makes the fir thicket impenetrable; then a smooth sandy beach on which the boats may be drawn at night, and which may be approached without danger from the rocks, and on which loading or unloading is easy. Ours was one of the best I have ever seen—at the head of the lake, with beach, spring, and maple grove. Two of the hugest maples I ever saw formed the upper roof of our shelter and the supports to the camp walls. Here we placed our ridge-pole, laid our roof of bark of firs (stripped from trees far away in the forest, not to disfigure our dwelling-place with stripped and dying trees), cut an open path to the lake-side, and then left our house to the naiads and dryads, and hurried back to meet our guests at Martin's Landing.

A generation has gone by since that unique meet, and of those who were at it only Judge Hoar, John Holmes, and I survive. The voices of that merry assemblage of "wise and polite" vacation-keepers come to us from the land of dreams; the echoes they wakened in the wild-wood give place to the tender and tearful evocation of poetic memory; they and their summering have passed into the traditions of the later camp-fires, where the guides tell of the "Philosophers' Camp," of the very location of which they have lost the knowledge. But Emerson, the philosopher whose genius was fittest to the temple in which we all worshiped, its high priest and oracle, has left his history of the meeting in a poem, "The Adirondacs. A Journal. Dedicated to my fellow-travellers in August, 1858," and to which my prose may serve as commentary, to be written before I have done with the memory. I, the youngest, the steward of that memorable company, the master of the hunt, the insect preserved in the amber of the poet's verse,

> Our guide 's guide, and Commodore,
> Crusoe, Crusader, Pius Æneas,

purpose to frame, even if in a poor way, this picture of a gathering unique in the history of vacations; this record, which is to those who know and love unsophisticated Nature the most curiously truthful and interesting existing revelation of her aspect, seen for the first time with a mind trained to the finest shades of impression and reflection — the most Homeric and Hellenic of all nature-poems ever written.

This was not the solitude of Walden Pond, where isolation kept in the sound of a dinner-horn, and where no bird, leaf, or tree was ignorant of the daily footfall of idlers and curious, but a virgin forest, where the crack of our rifles reached no other human ear, and where the carelessly wandering foot found no path to lead it back to camp, and the inexpert, once out of hearing of camp-call or out of sight of the water, was in imminent danger of having his bones picked by the wolves that listened dismayed to the sounds of our unaccustomed invasion. This was "the forest primeval." Hardly a trace of it now exists as we then knew it. The lumberer, the reckless sportsman with his camp-fires and his more reckless and careless guide, the ax and the fire, have left no large expanse of virgin forest in all the Adirondack region, and every year effaces the original aspect of it more completely. Then there were no song-birds, companions of mankind; no familiar sound of the paternal fields greeted the wise men of the East: but the weird laugh of the loon, the scream of the osprey or the gray eagle, and of the minor featherlings, the friendly Canada jay or the chickadee, only greeted us.

I had done all I could to induce Longfellow and Oliver Wendell Holmes to join the party, but the latter was too closely identified with the Hub in all his mental operations to care for unhumanized nature, and Longfellow was too strongly attached to the conditions of completely civilized life to enjoy roughing it in flannels and sleeping on fir boughs. The company of his great-brained friends was a temptation at times, I think; but he hated killing animals, had no interest in fishing, and was too settled in his habits to enjoy so great a change. Possibly he was decided in his refusal by Emerson's purchase of a rifle. "Is it true that Emerson is going to take a gun?" he asked me. "Yes," I replied. "Then I shall not go," he said; "somebody will be shot."

Emerson's record plunges *in medias res.* He gives a line to Champlain:

> Thence, in strong country carts, rode up the forks
> Of the Ausable stream, intent to reach
> The Adirondac lakes. At Martin's Beach
> We chose our boats, each man a boat and guide,—
> Ten men, ten guides, our company all told.

But here I must correct my evangelist. I was Agassiz's guide, and rowed my own boat, sharing with the guides whatever work there was for all. I could not have kept in proper subordination so large a company of men, collected from all parts of the woods, though with all the care in selection possible under the circumstances, if I had not been ready to do my share of any work I called on them for. I not only rowed my own boat, but carried my own ax and rifle, and the boat when necessary. From one cause I missed, to my infinite regret, the hearing of Emerson's first impressions of the forest. I had been building a new boat for the occasion, and it lacked several hours' work when the company started up the lakes at midday, I only following toward sunset, and overtaking them at midnight at the "Indian Carry," then a mere pathway through dense pine groves, with a lumberer's hut at each end. A violent rain-storm greeted our entry into the wilderness, and I arrived after the company were dried and had eaten, myself drenched like a water-rat.

Emerson wrote out his "Adirondacs" after he had returned to Concord, and it is curious to see in what a Greek way he condensed and idealized his impressions, forgetting all details which interfered with symmetry.

Next morn we swept with oars the Saranac,
With skies of benediction, to Round Lake,
Where all the sacred mountains drew around us,
Taháwus, Seaward,[1] MacIntyre, Baldhead,
And other Titans without muse or name.
Pleased with these grand companions, we glide on,
Instead of flowers, crowned with a wreath of hills.
We made our distance wider, boat from boat,
As each would hear the oracle alone.
By the bright morn the gay flotilla slid
Through files of flags that gleamed like bayonets,
Through gold-moth-haunted beds of pickerel-flower,
Through scented banks of lilies white and gold,
Where the deer feeds at night, the teal by day.
On through the Upper Saranac, and up
Père Raquette stream, to a small tortuous pass
Winding through grassy shallows in and out,
Two creeping miles of rushes, pads, and sponge,
To Follansbee Water and the Lake of Loons.

The poet has painted his picture with the grouping of an artist's imagination. The drenching day of arrival, the night of discomfort at the hut on the "carry," and the "carry" itself, the journey through the "Spectacle Ponds," a curious and most picturesque part of the second day, with the row down the charming stream that forms the waterway to the Raquette proper—all are dismissed as useless detail, while the "two creeping miles" of the marshy outlet of Follansbee, up which we had to pole and push, are remembered through Agassiz's discovery there of a fresh-water sponge till then unknown. But to Emerson, as to most men who are receptive to Nature's message, the forest was the overpowering fact.

We climb the bank,
And in the twilight of the forest noon
Wield the first axe these echoes ever heard.

The "twilight of the forest noon" is the most concentrated expression of the one dominant sentiment of a poetic mind on first entering this eternal silence and shadow. His catalogue of trees is in error:

The wood was sovran with centennial trees—
Oak, cedar, maple, poplar, beech, and fir,
Linden and spruce.

There is no oak, linden, or poplar in these forests. He had passed them in the Ausable valley on his way up, and probably forgot their exact habitat. But the impression of the first night clung to him with all its detail. No modern man knew the "great god Pan" as Emerson knew him,—not even Keats,—and the falling asleep in the arms of the universal mother, whose dearest child Pan was, must have left its influence on him long after he had recorded the poetic version of the experience.

"Welcome!" the wood-god murmured through the leaves,—
"Welcome, though late, unknowing, yet known to me."
Evening drew on; stars peeped through maple-boughs,
Which o'erhung, *like a cloud*,[2] our camping-fire.
Decayed millennial trunks, like moonlight flecks,
Lit with phosphoric crumbs[3] the forest floor.

Lowell named the camping-place "Camp Maple," from the huge maples under which we had pitched our house of bark; but tradition has long known it as the "Philosophers' Camp," though, like Troy, its site is unknown to all the subsequent generations of guides, and I doubt if in all the Adirondack country there is a man except my old guide, Steve Martin, who could point out the place where it stood.

To me the forest was familiar. I knew it as a boy charged with sophomorical sentiment, casting about to find what inspiration I ought to borrow from nature; and I had plowed the field too often to find any genuine crop on it. I had passed months painting in the glades, had wandered and boated in the forest and on the streams till I felt the points of the compass in the dark, and knew its material fact as I knew my bedroom; but I had come to look on it as one does on one of those curious shells which some insects cast, and which keep the form from which the life has escaped. It was to me empty; it no longer lured me with any emotion beyond that of quiet, the charm of Lethe, the fascination of an almost complete negation of intellectual existence, and absolute rest. I was therefore profoundly interested in Emerson's first impressions, and we were much together. I rowed him into the innermost recesses of Follansbee Water, and would, at his request, sometimes land him in a solitary part of the lake-shore, and leave him to his emotions or studies. We had no post, and letters neither came nor went, and so probably none record the moment's mood; but well I remember how he marveled at the completeness of the circle of life in the forest. He examined the guides, and me as one of them, with the interest of a discoverer of a new race. Me he had known in another phase of existence—at the club, in the multitude, one of the atoms of the social whole. To find me ax in hand, ready for the elementary functions of a savage life,— to fell the trees, to kill the deer, or catch the trout, and at need to cook them,— in this to him new phenomenon of a rounded and self-sufficient individuality, waiting for and waited on by no one, he received a conception of life which had the same attraction in its completeness and roundness that a larger and fully organized existence would have had. It was a form of independence which he had never realized before, and he paid it the respect of a new discovery. He had become weary of the social completeness as a study, it seemed to me; it was too large and exacting. But now he found a man who could be taken up as a specimen, and studied as an individual, as Agassiz would have studied a fossil; and all this was new.

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[1] Mount Seward, south of the Saranacs, the common name being repudiated by Emerson.

[2] This is a singularly faithful expression of the appearance of the massive foliage of those lofty trees lighted by the camp-fires beneath.

[3] The decayed tree-trunks, falling into ruin, often looked like glow-worms in the dark of night, their phosphorescence being frequently brilliant.

Emerson, as I read him, had no self-sufficiency. He lived and felt with the minimum of personal color, reflecting nature and man; and the study of the guide, the savage man thrown out of society like a chip from a log under the ax of the chopper, returning to the status of pure individuality,— men such as our guides were,— aroused in the philosopher the enthusiasm of a new fact. He often spoke of it, and watched the men as a naturalist does the animals he classifies. I remember Longfellow's once saying of Emerson that he used his friends as he did lemons — when he could squeeze nothing more from them, he threw them away; but this, while in one sense true, does Emerson a radical injustice. He had no vanity, no self-importance; truth and philosophy were so supreme in their hold on him that neither himself nor any other self was worth so much as the solution of a problem in life. To get this solution he was willing to squeeze himself like a lemon, if need were; and why should he be otherwise disposed to his neighbor? There are others who knew Emerson better than I did or could, and possibly Longfellow did, though that observation makes me doubt that there was any real sympathy between them. But what seems to me the truth is that Emerson instinctively divided men into two classes, with one of which he formed personal attachments which, though tranquil and undemonstrative as was his nature, were lasting; in the other he simply found his objects of study, problems to be solved and their solutions recorded. There was the least conceivable self-assertion in him; he was the best listener a genuine thinker, or one whom he thought to be such, ever had; and always seemed to prefer to listen rather than to talk, to observe and study rather than to discourse. So he did not say much before Nature; he took in her influences as the earth takes the rain. He was minutely interested in seeing how the old guides reversed the tendencies of civilization: how when they went to sleep on the ground they put on their coats, but took them off when they got up; wore their hats in camp, but went on the lake bareheaded.

The entire absorption of his personality in the subject-matter of study was childlike; he left no cranny of novelty unsearched. I remember that one Sunday morning when the state of the larder made it necessary for the guides to get a deer, Emerson was more disposed for quiet meditation; having at that time no interest in the hunt; so I took him in my boat, and while those of the company whose habits did not interfere with the enjoyment of the chase on Sunday went to the watching-posts with the guides, we sought the remotest nook of the lake-shore. It was a magnificent morning, and in the silence of the forest the baying of the hounds, as they took the scent on the hills above us and followed the deer in his doublings and evasions, filled the air, and the echoes redoubled the music. When the deer are in good condition, as in August, they generally take a long run before they come to water, and we heard the dogs sweeping round over the hills at the further end of the lake, and coming back, ranging to and fro, till the expectancy and the new sensation grew in effect on Emerson, and he could resist no longer. "Let us go after the deer!" he exclaimed, and though, having come out for meditation, we had no gun with us, we were soon flying down the lake from our remotest corner to where the baying led to the shore. But we were too late: Lowell had already killed the deer before we got there.

It was interesting to see how Emerson grew into the camp life. As at first he had refused to carry a rifle, and decided to take one only for uniformity, so in the early days of our forest residence he declined to take any part in the hunting or fishing: but we had not been long in camp before he caught the temper of the occasion, and began to desire to kill his deer. Luck failed him in the drives in which he took part, the deer always coming in to some other watcher, and we decided to try night-hunting; *i. e.*, stealing up to the deer as they browse in the pads along the shallow water, carrying in the bow of the boat a light which blinds the animal, the lantern throwing all its light forward and the hunter sitting invisible in the shadow. This manner of hunting is possible only on very dark nights, and was resorted to only when venison was needed and the drive had failed. If the man who paddles the boat is dexterous, the deer can be approached to within a few yards without being alarmed; but in the darkness it is very difficult for those not accustomed to the appearance of the animal to distinguish him from the rocks or shrubs around, for in the intent examination of the strange phenomenon of the light he remains motionless, except that now and then he will beat the water with his hoofs to drive away the flies. We took the best guide at the paddle, Emerson taking the firing-seat behind the lamp, and I in the middle with my rifle, ready in case he missed his shot.

We went down the lake to the large bay at the left of the outlet, now noted on the map of the State survey as "Agassiz Bay," which is a mistake, for we named this "Osprey Bay," from the osprey nest in one of its tall pines, the bay opposite the camp at the south end of the lake being named in honor of Agassiz. The shore is an alternation of stretches of sandy beach where the white pond-lily thrives, and offers food for the deer, and rocky points separate the beaches as if by screens, so that any movement in one of the little bays is not visible in another. There is something weird in silently gliding along a spectral diorama of irrecognizable landscape, with rocks and trees slipping by like phantasms; for the motion of the boat is not distinguishable, and the only sound is the occasional grating of the rushes on the bottom of the boat. It is, in fact, the most exciting form of deer-hunting for certain temperaments, and the poet was strongly impressed. The practised ear of the guide soon caught the sound of the footfall of a deer making his way down to the shore, and he turned the glare of the lamp on the beach, moving directly on him till he was within twenty yards. The signal to fire was given and repeated, but Emerson could distinguish nothing. "Shoot!" finally whispered the guide in the faintest breath. "Shoot!" I repeated nearer. But the deer was invisible to him, and we drifted to a boat's length from him before the animal took fright, and bolted for the woods, undisturbed by a hasty shot I sent after him, and we heard his triumphant whistle and gallop dying away in the forest depths. Emerson was stupefied. We rounded the next point, and found a deer already on the feeding-ground, to repeat the experience. The deer stood broadside to him, in full view, in the shallow water; but straining his vision to the utmost, he could distinguish nothing like a deer, and when we had got so near that the same result was imminent, I fired, and the buck fell dead. "Well," said Emerson, "if that was a deer, I shall fire at the first square thing I see"; but we saw no more that night. He records the impression:

> Or, later yet, beneath a lighted jack,
> In the boat's bows, a silent night-hunter
> Stealing with paddle to the feeding-grounds
> Of the red deer, to aim at a square mist.
> Hark to that muffled roar! A tree in the woods
> Is fallen: but hush! it has not scared the buck,
> Who stands astonished at the meteor light,
> Then turns to bound away,— is it too late?

Each disappointment, however, plunged him more deeply into the excitement of the chase, and he was most anxious to kill his deer before he went home, unable to resist the contagion of the passion for it. He said to me one day, "I must kill a deer before we go home, even if the guide has to hold him by the tail." At that season of the year, when the deer are in their short coat, the body sinks at once if shot in the deep water; and on overtaking the quarry in the lake, if the deerslayer was not sure of his shot, the guide used to run the boat alongside of it, and catch it by the tail, when the shot became a sure one. As we hunted only when we needed the meat, we did not risk the loss of the deer, and when a poor shot held the gun, the quarry was caught by the tail and killed in this unsportsmanlike way. That survival of the earliest passion of the primitive man, the passion of the chase, overcame even the philosophic mind of Emerson, once exposed to the original influences, and he recognized his ancestral bent. Few of us who live an active life fail to be attracted by this first of all occupations of the yet uncivilized man. Emerson never had the gratification of his desire; the deer never came to him on the drive, and his repetition of the night-hunt was no more successful.

The starry magnificence of those nights, with their pure mountain air, was another source of delight hardly to be imagined by those who have not known it by experience. There seemed to be more stars visible than anywhere else I had ever been, and we were often out on the lake till near midnight;

> Or, in the evening twilight's latest red,
> Beholding the procession of the pines,—

a curious phenomenon, now, with the ravages of fire and ax, become a thing of the past. The tall white pines, which when full grown rise from one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet, towering nearly half their height above the mass of deciduous trees, and beyond the protection which the solid forest gives against the dominant west winds, acquire a leaning to the east; and as they grew in long lines along the shores, or followed the rocky ridges up the mountain sides, they seemed to be gigantic human beings moving in procession to the east. I had, the year before, painted a picture of the subject, and Emerson had been struck by it at the Athenæum exhibition; and when we were established in camp, almost the first thing he asked to see was the "procession of the pines"; and our last evening on the lake was spent together watching the glow dying out behind a noble line of the marching pines on the shore of Follansbee Water.

In memory of that summer, and the intimacy of camp life which strips the man of all disguises, Emerson seems to me to be magnified with the lapse of time, as Mont Blanc towers above his fellows with distance. For Lowell I had a passionate personal attachment to which death and time have only given a twilight glory; for Agassiz I had the feeling which all had who came under the magic of his colossal individuality — the myriad-minded one to whom nothing came amiss or unfamiliar, and who had a facet for every man he came in contact with. His inexhaustible *bonhomie* won even the guides to a personal fealty they showed no other of our band; his wide science gave us continual lectures on all the elements of nature — no plant, no insect, no quadruped hiding its secret from him. The lessons he taught us of the leaves of the pine, and of the vicissitudes of the Laurentian range, in one of whose hollows we lay; the way he drew new facts from the lake, and knew them when he saw them, as though he had set his seal on them before they were known; the daily dissection of the fish, the deer, the mice (for which he had brought his traps) were studies in which we were his assistants and pupils. All this made being with him not only "a liberal education," but perpetual sunshine and good fortune. When we went out, I at the oars and he at the dredge or insect-net, or examining the plants by the marsh-side, his spirit was a perpetual spring of science. When he and Wyman entered on the discussion of a scientific subject (and they always worked together), science seemed as easy as versification when Lowell was in the mood, and all sat around inhaling wisdom with the mountain air. Nothing could have been, to any man with the scientific bent, more intensely interesting than the academy of two of the greatest scientists of their day. Wyman's was a gentle, womanlike nature, modest to a fault, utterly absorbed in his science, and free from a shadow of pretension. He was held by many to be the greater scientist, but the personality of Agassiz towered over every other about him, and won all suffrages for the day. But, looking back across the gulf which hides all the details of life, the eternal absence which forgets personal qualities, the calm, platonic serenity of Emerson stands out from all our company as a crystallization of impersonal and universal humanity; no vexation, no mishap could disturb his philosophy, or rob him of its lesson.

At our dinners, the semblance of which life will never offer me again, the gods sent their best accompaniments and influences — health, appetite, wit, and poetry, with good digestion.

Our foaming ale we drank from hunters' pans —
Ale, and a sup of wine. Our steward gave
Venison and trout, potatoes, beans, wheat-bread.
All ate like abbots, and, if any missed
Their wonted convenance, cheerly hid the loss
With hunter's appetite and peals of mirth.

Lowell was the Magnus Apollo of the camp. His Castalian humor, his unceasing play of wit and erudition,— poetry and the best of the poets always on tap at the table,— all know them who knew him well, though not many as I did; but when he sat on one side of the table, and Judge Hoar (the most pyrotechnical wit I have ever known) and he were matching table-talk, with Emerson and Agassiz to sit as umpires and revive the vein as it menaced to flag, Holmes and Estes Howe not silent in the well-matched contest, the forest echoed with such laughter as no club ever knew, and the owls came in the trees overhead to wonder. These were symposia to which fortune has invited few men, and which no one invited could ever forget.

The magical quality of the forest is that of oblivion of all that is left in the busy world — of past trouble and coming care. The steeds that brought us in had no place behind for black care. We lived, as Emerson says,

Lords of this realm,
Bounded by dawn and sunset, and the day
Rounded by hours where each outdid the last
In miracles of pomp, we must be proud,
As if associates of the sylvan gods.
We seemed the dwellers of the zodiac,
So pure the Alpine element we breathed,
So light, so lofty pictures came and went.

At sunrise the guides and we who had cares of the camp were afoot; fires were refreshed, bathers went out, and a boat went to look at the set lines for trout. Breakfast was at eight. Then we practised firing at a mark, a few rounds each, the scientists dissected their specimens, and the guides did the "house-work." I made a study as a memorial of the event — the morning hour in the camp: Agassiz and Wyman on one side dissecting a trout, with the assistance of Howe and Holmes; on the other, the firing party, Lowell, Judge Hoar, and the rest of us, except Emerson, who professed to be neither rifleman nor anatomist, but with a pilgrim's staff in hand took a place alone and between the two groups, with an intentional symbolism of his position in the world. Then if venison was wanted, we set the hunt, or those who chose to wander did so, explored the streams and woods around, botanized, hunted specimens, or fished.

Ask you, how went the hours?
All day we swept the lake, searched every cove,

North from Camp Maple, south to Osprey Bay,
Watching when the loud dogs should drive in deer,
Or whipping its rough surface for a trout;
Or, bathers, diving from the rock at noon;
Challenging Echo by our guns and cries;
Or listening to the laughter of the loon.

. . . . . .

Our heroes tried their rifles at a mark,
Six rods, sixteen, twenty, or forty-five;
Sometimes their wits at sally and retort,
With laughter sudden as the crack of rifle;
Or parties scaled the near acclivities,
Competing seekers of a rumored lake,
Whose unauthenticated waves we named
Lake Probability,— our carbuncle,
Long sought, not found.

Two doctors in the camp
Dissected the slain deer, weighed the trout's brain,
Captured the lizard, salamander, shrew,
Crab, mice, snail, dragon-fly, minnow, and moth;
Insatiate skill in water or in air
Waved the scoop-net, and nothing came amiss;
The while, one leaden pot of alcohol
Gave an impartial tomb to all the kinds.
Not less the ambitious botanist sought plants—
Orchis and gentian, fern and long whip-scirpus,
Rosy polygonum, lake-margin's pride,
Hypnum and hydnum, mushroom, sponge, and moss,
Or harebell nodding in the gorge of falls.

A pleasant life it was: there was no prevention of debtor or creditor, no due-bills or trouble of business; all had put affairs by for a certain time, and day by day the Lethean silence lured us deeper into its magic recesses. The outside world was but a dream. No visitor intruded on our presence. We ate a deer every day, and the venison was such as no king ever tasted, and our lake furnished trout in perfection. The larder was always provided; not often was the drive without its deer, and if by chance two were killed in one day, we killed none the next, for we tolerated no waste or wanton killing, and the osprey, the eagle, and the loon had in us friends. The effect of this life alike on the physical and mental constitution was such as only experience can estimate. It was wonderful to see how the healing of the mighty mother cured the ailments we brought with us. It was nothing new to me, but to the newcomers it was like enchantment. Agassiz came suffering from rheumatism and overwork, but four days sufficed to restore him to his normal condition. The dust that the turmoil of civilization throws into the mental mechanism was no longer allowed to wear or weary; life and all its problems came out in a much less complex light, and the conditions of existence seemed simplified. Why should men be anxious for more, when with little we fared so well, or were so easily provided? No complication of this problem was forced on the mind, which was left in this so facile solution of it that it seemed to clear the future of all its difficulties. We seemed to have got back into a not too greatly changed Eden, whose imperious ties to the outer world were hidden for the day in the waters and woods that lay between us and it. We had at last come to the state where what each man was and had made of himself was the real measure of his relation to the world, and the universal mother took us all on the same terms, the worst prodigal reckoned as good as he who had endured guiltlessly his temptation, the worst violator of her laws with the least sinner.

So fast will Nature acclimate her sons,
Though late returning to her pristine ways.
Off soundings, seamen do not suffer cold;
And in the forest, delicate clerks, unbrowned,
Sleep on the fragrant brush, as on down-beds.
Up with the dawn, they fancied the light air
That circled freshly in their forest dress
Made them to boys again. Happier that they
Slipped off their pack of duties, leagues behind,
At the first mounting of the giant stairs.
No placard on these rocks warned to the polls,
No door-bell heralded a visitor,
No courier waits, no letter came or went,
Nothing was ploughed, or reaped, or bought, or sold.
The frost might glitter, it would blight no crop;
The falling rain would spoil no holiday.
We were made freemen of the forest laws,
All dressed, like Nature, fit for her own ends,
Essaying nothing she cannot perform.

I have quoted enough to show how fully Emerson caught, in his first experience, the spirit of the woods: not morbidly, like Shelley, nor with the air of calling all the world to see how solitary he was, which seems to me so much to impair the genuineness of Thoreau's experience in the barn-door backwoods in which he acted the recluse. Thoreau was a modern realist with a morose and uncompanionable Genius always in attendance; his was a pinchbeck royalty with a lunch-basket from his father's farm hardly hidden behind his throne. He saw minutely, as all short-sighted people do; Emerson in his single interview with a true and uncontaminated Nature saw all the relations between her and not merely one individuality, narrow or large, but all humanity. The ancient Greek in him found the algebraic formula of existence, the absolute ideal of man and the law of his relation to nature. He saw "hypnum and hydnum," but put them down as details in a foreground. What filled his canvas was manhood. He measured and specialized nature with reference to a completed and ideal type in which nature was fulfilled, and he bowed to the backwoodsman.

Your rank is all reversed. Let men of cloth
Bow to the stalwart churls in overalls:
They are the doctors of the wilderness,
And we the low-prized laymen.

If the experience was unique, it was sufficient, and other summers had been only repetitions; his epic of the wilderness may be made more picturesque by another telling, but not more complete. When he has told Nature's message he gives by implication something beyond the interpretation of it as rendered in thought, the recognition of what it does with humanity. Taking man in the simple and complete type, to which he does full honor, as he had reverenced nature, beyond this and that there stands always the higher and ultimate nature, the aspiring and suffering humanity. There is no conflict; only when all has been said for the woods and the backwoodsman, he points to another humanity and nature beyond.

And presently the sky is changed; O world!
What pictures and what harmonies are thine!
The clouds are rich and dark, the air serene,
So like the soul of me, what if 't were me?
A melancholy better than all mirth.
Comes the sweet sadness at the retrospect,
Or at the foresight of obscurer years?

. . . . . .

And, that no day of life may lack romance,
The spiritual stars rise nightly, shedding down
A private beam into each several heart.

. . . . . .

Suns haste to set, that so remoter lights
Beckon the wanderer to his vaster home.

In the midst of this hymn to nature, it was one of the supreme achievements of the mechanical mind of man which furnished the text for his loudest pæan. Some of the members of the company, in their wanderings outside our realm, had met a traveler with the news of the laying of the first transatlantic cable, and came back to camp with the great news.

One held a printed journal, waving high,
Caught from a late-arriving traveler,
Big with great news, and shouted the report
For which the world had waited, now firm fact,
Of the wire-cable laid beneath the sea,
And landed on our coast, and pulsating
With ductile fire. Loud, exulting cries
From boat to boat, and to the echoes round,
Greet the glad miracle.

Emerson is, we say, cold. Perhaps in the day when Swinburne's bacchanals heat the public ear he may be so. There is no passion now generally recognized except the personal; but in that serener sphere where Plato breathed, the nature of Emerson is too much at home to be yet widely understood in its passion. How Greek is this passionate outburst at the new revolt of the human mind against its limitations, this clapping of hands at the Promethean unloosing! And Promethean passion was his: it quickened his blood with every human footstep upward, it kindled the light of his calm eyes anew with every indignity offered humanity; not only the slavery of the black and the barbarian made his anger burn, but the slavery of civilization and self-imposed wrong made his soul heavy.

And people have the idea of comparing him with the burly brute Carlyle! As well Apollo with a jotun! "Deficient in form and polish"? Well, the ages had not yet furnished the material to cut this diamond to its faceted formality; there is neither the form of Sophocles nor the fluency of Plato, but it was further from Homer to Plato than from Chaucer to Emerson. Then see the Greek again in his instinctive impersonation of the forces of nature—"Chronos and Tellus who were before Jove":

A spasm throbbing through the pedestals
Of Alp and Andes, isle and continent,
Urging astonished Chaos with a thrill
To be a brain, or serve the brain of man.
The lightning has run masterless too long;
He must to school and learn his verb and noun,
And teach his nimbleness to earn his wage,
Spelling with guided tongue man's messages
Shot through the weltering pit of the salt sea.

But our paradise was no Eden. The world that played bo-peep with us across the mountains came for us when the play-spell was over; this summer dream, unique in the record of poesy, melted like a cloud-castle into its original elements, and Emerson was one of the first to turn back to the sterner use of time.

The holidays were fruitful, but must end;
One August evening had a cooler breath;
Into each mind intruding duties crept;
Under the cinders burned the fires of home;
Nay, letters found us in our paradise:
So in the gladness of the new event
We struck our camp and left the happy hills.

The lake became for a time a place of pilgrimage. To visit the Philosophers' Camp was one of the items of an Adirondack trip. Out of the meeting grew the Adirondack Club.

We planned
That we should build, hard by, a spacious lodge,
And how we should come hither with our sons
Hereafter.

And the permanent meeting-place was fixed at Ampersand Pond, to which in time the tradition of the Philosophers' Camp was attached. The club expired when the war broke out.

Twenty-five years elapsed before I returned to Follansbee Water. The *genius loci*, dryad or hamadryad, had there been one, would have found it as hard to recognize me as I found it hard to find Camp Maple. I had the same guide, Steve Martin, a gray-headed man, the worse for a life of hardship, which, I find, does not always harden; but we found with great difficulty the landing and the choked-up spring. A half-reforested clearing spread round the spot where our "ten scholars" used to lie, and a tangled thicket of raspberry-bushes, lady's-willow, birch saplings, and tall grass made walking almost impossible. We found a huge rock that had been a landmark, but this and the spring alone were to be distinguished. The careless tourists had cut all the hard wood away, and let the fires in, and the whole forest round had been burned, and was succeeded by thickets of undergrowth. The great maples and the tall white pines had gone from the entire vicinity, and a vulgar new forest was on its way; the trees that used to line the lake-shore had fallen into the lake, their roots being burned away; and not the slightest feature remained of the grove where wit and wisdom held tournament a generation before. All was ashes and ruin. I

> felt like one who treads alone
> Some banquet-hall deserted.

Nor was the lake less changed in outward appearance. Every fit camping-ground on the shore had been occupied in succession, and the camp-fires allowed to spread into the forest until the whole shore had been denuded of its fringe of hoary trees. The "procession of the pines" had gone by forever; only here and there a dead trunk was standing, among them that up which Lowell's guide climbed to the osprey's nest to get an egg for Agassiz. Speculating manufacturers had built a dam across the Raquette and flooded all the bottom-land, killing the trees over a large tract; wretched dolts had put pickerel into the Raquette waters, and the trout had become exterminated in every stream to which the ravenous fish had access.

It was well that the charm once broken, the desecration begun, it should be complete. The memories sacred to the few survivors can never be quickened by this ruin, and to the rest of the world it does not matter. Emerson has embalmed it; that is enough. In some Eastern countries it is the custom to break the bowl from which an honored guest has drunk; nature has done this service to Follansbee Water.

W. J. Stillman.

A SISTER OF SAINTS.

HER name was Gilberte Pascal. She was a woman who did nothing remarkable two centuries ago.

She was born in 1620 at Clermont, in Auvergne, where her father was a man of high position. When she was seven years old her mother died, leaving in her care a baby brother and a smaller baby sister, whose names the world was to hear one day — Blaise and Jacqueline Pascal. A few years later the family moved to Paris — the brilliant Paris of Richelieu's time. Gilberte is represented as a beautiful and accomplished as well as a capable girl. When she was twenty another move was made to Rouen, where shortly afterward she married Florin Perier, and went back to Clermont to live. He seems to have been a worthy man, and "worthy" means uninteresting, whatever the dictionaries say.

Gilberte and her husband, like the other members of the family, adopted the austere Jansenist idea of life, but not, like Blaise and Jacqueline, to the extent of absolute renouncement of the world: they abjured the trimmings of it — society, and ribbons for the children, and such things. Later, in 1661, we find Gilberte again living in Paris, where she died in 1687, having outlived her husband and two sons, as well as the gifted brother and sister, the story of whose lives she wrote. That is all, and it is not very interesting.

Gilberte does not belong in history, but, having a distinguished brother and sister who do, she tags in after, because she is one of the family. Being there, she serves as a convenient example of a wide phase of human experience, or, more exactly, one phase of her life illustrates a wide phase of human experience — the back-action of lives of definite aim and attainment on lives — more especially women's lives — which stand near them.