Title: The Writings of Henry David Thoreau, Volume 5

Author: Emerson Ralph Waldo

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By Henry D. Thoreau

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THOREAU'S THOUGHTS. Selections from the Writings of Henry D. Thoreau. Edited by H. G. O. Blake. With Bibliography.

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THE WRITINGS OF
HENRY DAVID THOREAU

WITH BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTIONS
AND FULL INDEXES

VOLUME V
THE WRITINGS OF
HENRY DAVID THOREAU
WITH INTRODUCTORY AND PERSPECTIVE
ED. PAMELA VANDEWALLE
VOLUME 4
EARLY SPRING IN MASSACHUSETTS

FROM THE JOURNAL OF

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

EDITED BY

H. G. O. BLAKE

The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted, but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth everywhere. — Walden, p. 92.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

HENRY DAVID THOREAU was born in Concord, Massachusetts, July 12, 1817, and died there May 6, 1862. Most of his life was spent in that town, and most of the localities referred to in this volume are to be found there. His Journal, from which the following selections were made, was bequeathed to me by his sister Sophia, who died October 7, 1876, at Bangor, Maine. Before it came into my possession I had been in the habit of borrowing volumes of it from time to time, and thus continuing an intercourse with its author which I had enjoyed, through occasional visits and correspondence, for many years before his death, and which I regard as perhaps the highest privilege of my life.

In reading the Journal for my own satisfaction, I had sometimes been wont to attend each day to what had been written on the same day of the month in some other year; desiring thus to be led to notice, in my walks, the phenomena which Thoreau noticed, so to be brought nearer
to the writer by observing the same sights, sounds, etc., and if possible have my love of nature quickened by him. This habit suggested the arrangement of dates in the following pages, viz., the bringing together of passages under the same day of the month in different years. In this way I hoped to make an interesting picture of the progress of the seasons, of Thoreau's year. It was evidently painted with a most genuine love, and often apparently in the open air, in the very presence of the phenomena described, so that the written page brings the mind of the reader, as writing seldom does, into closest contact with nature, making him see its sights, hear its sounds, and feel its very breath upon his cheek.

Thoreau seems deliberately to have chosen nature rather than man for his companion, though he knew well the higher value of man, as appears from such passages as the following: "The blue sky is a distant reflection of the azure serenity that looks out from under a human brow." "To attain to a true relation to one human creature is enough to make a year memorable." And somewhere he says in substance, "What is the singing of birds or any natural sound compared with the voice of one we love?" Friendship was one of his favorite themes, and no one has written with a finer appreciation of