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of the *Liliaceæ* — the pretty clintonia, now a little out of season, or even the Indian cucumber-root — would come fairly within the spirit of the text; while, if worst came to worst, there would certainly be no scarcity of grass, itself nothing but a kind of degenerate lily, if some recent theories may be trusted.

I followed the highway for a mile or two, and then took a wood-road (a "cart-path" I should call it, if I dared to speak in my own tongue, wherein I was born) running into the forest on the left. This brought me before long to a "pair of bars," over which I clambered into a grassy field, the first of the two ancient clearings I had come out to see. The scanty acres must have been wrested from the encompassing forest at no small cost of patience and hard labor. And after all, the farm proved not to pay for its tillage. A waste of energy, as things now looked; but who is to judge of such matters? It is not given to every man to see the work of his hands established. A good many of us, I suspect, might be thankful to know that anything we have ever done would be found worthy of mention fifty years from now, though the mention were only by way of pointing a moral.

The old barn was long ago blown down, and as I mounted the fence a woodchuck went scampering out of sight among the timbers. The place was not entirely uninhabited, as it seemed, in spite of appearances; and as I turned toward the house, the door of which stood uninvitingly open, there sat a second woodchuck in the doorway, facing me, intent and motionless, full of wonderment, no doubt, at the unspeakable impertinence of such an intrusion. I was glad to see *him*, at any rate, and made haste to tell him so; greeting him in the rather unceremonious language wherewith the now famous titmouse is said to have addressed our foremost American gentleman and philosopher: —

"Good day, good sir!
Fine afternoon, old passenger!
Happy to meet you in these places."

But the churlish fellow had no notion of doing the honors, and by the time I had advanced two or three paces he whisked about, and vanished inside the door. "Well done!" I thought. "Great is evolution. Woodchucks used to be cave-dwellers, but they are getting to live above ground, like the rest of us. So does history repeat itself. Who knows how soon they may be putting up cottages on their own account?" Perhaps I gave the creature more credit than really belonged to him. I followed him into the house, but he was nowhere to be seen, and it is not unlikely that he lived in a cave, after all. Nearly half the flooring had rotted away, and there was nothing to hinder his getting into the cellar. He may have taken the old farmhouse as a convenient portico for his burrow, a sort of storm-porch, as it were. In his eyes this may be the final end and aim, the teleological purpose, of all such board-and-shingle edifices. Mr. Ruskin seems to hold that a house falls short of its highest usefulness until it has become a ruin; and who knows but woodchucks may be of the same opinion?

This particular house was in two parts, one of them considerably more ancient than the other. This older portion it was, of which the floor had so badly (or so well) fallen into decay; while the ceiling, as if in a spirit of emulation, had settled till it described almost a semicircle of convexity. To look at it, one felt as if the law of gravity were actually being imposed upon.

It must have marked an epoch in the history of the household, this doubling of its quarters. Things were looking well with the man. His crops were good, his family increasing; his wife had begun to find the house uncomfortably small; they could afford to enlarge it. Hence this addition, this "new