

looks over the fences like a painted Indian sachem. Thoreau coveted its strong purple stalks for a cane, and the robins eat its dark crimson-juiced berries.

"It is commonly believed that the mullein is indigenous to this country, for have we not heard that it is cultivated in European gardens, and christened the American velvet plant. Yet it too seems to have come over with the pilgrims, and is most abundant in the older parts of the country. It abounds throughout Europe and Asia, and had its economic uses with the ancients. The Greeks made lamp-wicks of its dried leaves, and the Romans dipped its dried stalk in tallow for funeral torches. It affects dry uplands in this country, and as it takes two years to mature, it is not a troublesome weed in cultivated crops. The first year it sits low upon the ground in its coarse flannel and makes ready; if the plough comes along now its career is ended; the second season it starts upward its tall stalk, which in late summer is thickly set with small yellow flowers, and in fall is charged with myriads of fine black seeds. 'As full as a dry mullein stalk of seeds' is equivalent to saying, 'as numerous as the sands upon the seashore.'

"Perhaps the most notable thing about the weeds that have come to us from the Old World when compared with our native species, is their persistence, not to say pugnacity. They fight for the soil; they plant colonies here and there and will not be rooted out. Our native weeds