PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

PIERRE ABÉLARD, OR ABAILARD,

AKA PETRUS ABAELARDUS OR ABEILARDUS
Yet another altercation: at Calavryta the Byzantines under Alexius Comnenus defeated the Byzantines under Nicephorus Bryennius, restoring the hegemony of the Pax Romana.

In this year in which construction was beginning on Winchester Cathedral across the channel in England, Peter Abélard was born the son of a knight at Le Pallet, near Nantes in Brittany south of the Loire River. He would throw off both inheritance and the prospect of a military career in favor of philosophy, particularly logic. He would attack both his masters, Roscelin and Guillaume, who representing the two accredited philosophical orientations of that time. Roscelin of Compiègne held to the Nominalist attitude, according to which universals were derivative rather than primary, amounting to mere words; Guillaume de Champeaux held to a form of Platonic Realism according to which these universals had a real and independent and primary existence. What is said about this birth is that Abélard would elaborate a new philosophy of language according to which words might have significance despite failing to produce information in regard to the nature of reality.

**HISTORY’S NOT MADE OF WOULD. WHEN SOMEONE REVEALS THAT THIS INFANT “WOULD” ELABORATE A NEW PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE ACCORDING TO WHICH WORDS MIGHT HAVE SIGNIFICANCE DESPITE FAILING TO PRODUCE INFORMATION IN REGARD TO THE NATURE OF REALITY, S/HE DISCLOSES THAT WHAT IS BEING CRAFTED IS NOT REALITY BUT PREDESTINARIANISM. THE RULE OF REALITY IS THAT THE FUTURE HASN’T EVER HAPPENED, YET. THIS IS MERELY AN INFANT.**
In this year or the next, while the Hospitallers were being founded, Peter Abélard was studying theology under the leading biblical scholar of the day, Anselm of Laon, but, experiencing growing contempt at such vacuousness, would soon return to Paris.

“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING: HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY
Peter Abélard had seduced Héloïse, one of his private students, the niece of a clergyman of the Cathedral of Paris. They named their boy, born at about this point, “Astrolabe,” and entered upon a secret marriage which eventually of course was detected. Although Héloïse would withdraw to the convent of Argenteuil outside Paris, her uncle, Canon Fulbert, would hire some thugs and have Abélard castrated. When no longer able to embrace anything else, he would embrace the monastic life at the royal abbey of Saint-Denis near Paris.

After spending 3 years in Syria, Hugues de Payens, castellan of Martigny in Burgundy, appointed himself protector of pilgrims on the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem. (What this meant was that he and 7 other northern French knights swore themselves to poverty, chastity, and obedience, and then patrolled the road killing robbers. Many Christians sent to the Holy Land to do penance for murder, robbery, and rape resumed their old habits in Outremer. Muslims also saw nothing wrong with robbing or enslaving the occasional Christian merchant. So there were plenty of robbers for them to kill.) In appreciation for these efforts, King Baldwin II of Jerusalem invited the Poor Knights to occupy the mosque at al-Aqsa as their barracks. As this mosque was believed to be part of the original Temple of Solomon, by 1123 these men would be known as “Knights
Templar.” While Templars were not supposed to kiss women (not even their mommies) and were not supposed to hunt with hawks, they had no rule against drinking wine with every meal or against eating meat 3 times a week. They studied the Old Testament, especially Joshua and Maccabees, while training themselves for war. The key to Templar military success lay in their monastic discipline: they did everything military in unison “by the numbers.” Unlike other Frankish knights, Templars were not allowed to attack or retreat, or adjust their equipment, or anything else, except upon the command of their leader.

The Council of Toulouse planned an attack on Saragossa.

In Constantinople, the 1st Cathar heretic was burned.

“HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE” BEING A VIEW FROM A PARTICULAR
POINT IN TIME (JUST AS THE PERSPECTIVE IN A PAINTING IS A VIEW FROM A PARTICULAR POINT IN SPACE), TO “LOOK AT THE COURSE OF HISTORY MORE GENERALLY” WOULD BE TO SACRIFICE PERSPECTIVE ALTOGETHER. THIS IS FANTASY-LAND, YOU’RE FOOLING YOURSELF. THERE CANNOT BE ANY SUCH THINGIE, AS SUCH A PERSPECTIVE.
At Saint-Denis Peter Abélard’s reading of the Bible and of church authorities led him to create a compilation of seeming inconsistencies in the teachings of the Church. He entitled this *Sic et Non* (Yes and No) and supplied a preface in which, as a logician and keen student of language, he articulated some procedures by which such apparent contradictions might be reconciled.¹

England’s King Henry I improved the Foss Dyke.

¹ He also produced the 1st version of a book entitled *Theologia* which was promptly condemned as heretical and burned by a council at Soissons. He had balls, and was held for awhile under house arrest in the abbey of Saint-Médard. He escaped and found asylum in the territory of Count Theobald of Champagne.
Peter Abélard accepted election as abbot of the remote Breton monastery of Saint-Gildas-de-Rhuys. There an attempt would be made to off him.

**The task of the historian is to create hindsight while intercepting any illusion of foresight. Nothing a human can see can ever be seen as if through the eye of God.**
Early in this decade Héloïse was at this point the head of a new foundation of nuns called the Paraclete, of which Peter Abélard had become the abbot. Together they issued a collection of their own love letters and religious correspondence.2

“NARRATIVE HISTORY” AMOUNTS TO FABULATION, THE REAL STUFF BEING MERE CHRONOLOGY

2. The letters have been offered in English by C.K. Scott Moncrieff (1925, reprinted 1964) and by J.T. Muckle (1947).
From this year into 1144 CE, under the direction of Abbot Suger in Paris, the 1st Gothic church, St. Denis Abbey, would be being constructed.

At this point, or shortly afterward, reaching about the age of 54, Peter Abélard offered the reader *HISTORIA CALAMITATUM* (*HISTORY OF MY TROUBLES*).³

In about this year in which London was yet again on fire (literally), Peter Abélard began to offer classes at Mont-Sainte-Geneviève outside Paris, and produced further drafts of his burned *Theologia*, and books titled *Ethica* or *Scito te ipsum* (*Know Thyself*), *Dialogue between a Philosopher, a Jew, and a Christian*, and *Expositio in Epistolam ad Romanos* (a commentary on Paul’s epistle to the Romans).

WALDEN: We boast that we belong to the nineteenth century and are making the most rapid strides of any nation. But consider how little this village does for its own culture. I do not wish to flatter my townsmen, nor to be flattered by them, for that will not advance either of us. We need to be provoked, - goaded like oxen, as we are, into a trot. We have a comparatively decent system of common schools, schools for infants only; but excepting the half-starved Lyceum in the winter, and latterly the puny beginning of a library suggested by the state, no school for ourselves. We spend more on almost any article of bodily aliment or ailment than on our mental aliment. It is time that we had uncommon schools, that we did not leave off our education when we begin to be men and women. It is time that villages were universities, and their elder inhabitants the fellows of universities, with leisure - if they are indeed so well off-to pursue liberal studies the rest of their lives. Shall the world be confined to one Paris or one Oxford forever? Cannot students be boarded here and get a liberal education under the skies of Concord? Can we not hire some Abélard to lecture to us? Alas! what with foddering the cattle and tending the store, we are kept from school too long, and our education is sadly neglected. In this country, the village should in some respects take the place of the nobleman of Europe. It should be the patron of the fine arts. It is rich enough. It wants only the magnanimity and refinement. It can spend money enough on such things as farmers and traders value, but it is thought Utopian to propose spending money for things which more intelligent men know to be of far more worth. This town has spent seventeen thousand dollars on a town-house, thank fortune or politics, but probably it will not spend so much on living wit, the true meat to put into that shell, in a hundred years. The one hundred and twenty-five dollars annually subscribed for a Lyceum in the winter is better spent than any other equal sum raised in the town. If we live in the nineteenth century, why should we not enjoy the advantages which the nineteenth century offers? Why should our life be in any respect provincial? If we will read newspapers, why not skip the gossip of Boston and take the best newspaper in the world at once? -not be sucking the pap of "neutral family" papers, or browsing "Olive-Branches" here in New England. Let the reports of all the learned societies come to us, and we will see if they know any thing. Why should we leave it to Harper & Brothers and Redding & Co. to select our reading? As the nobleman of cultivated taste surrounds himself with whatever conduces to his culture, -genius -learning -wit -books -paintings -statuary -music -philosophical instruments, and the like; so let the village do, -not stop short at a pedagogue, a parson, a sexton, a parish library, and three selectmen, because our pilgrim forefathers got through a cold winter once on a bleak rock with these. To act collectively is according to the spirit of our institutions; and I am confident that, as our circumstances are more flourishing, our means are greater than the nobleman’s. New England can hire all the wise men in the world to come and teach her, and board them round the while, and not be provincial at all. That is the uncommon school we want. Instead of noblemen, let us have noble villages of men. If it is necessary, omit one bridge over the river, go round a little there, and throw one arch at least over the darker gulf of ignorance which surrounds us.
Upon being condemned by the Council of Sens, a condemnation which would be promptly confirmed by Pope Innocent II, Peter Abélard withdrew to the monastery of Cluny in Burgundy.

LIFE IS LIVED FORWARD BUT UNDERSTOOD BACKWARD?
— NO, THAT’S GIVING TOO MUCH TO THE HISTORIAN’S STORIES.
LIFE ISN’T TO BE UNDERSTOOD EITHER FORWARD OR BACKWARD.
April 21: Peter Abélard died at the Priory of Saint-Marcel, near Chalon-sur-Saône, Burgundy. The corpse would be sent to the Paraclete, though now it lies beside the corpse of Héloïse at the cemetery Père-Lachaise in Paris.

NO-ONE’S LIFE IS EVER NOT DRIVEN PRIMARILY BY HAPPENSTANCE
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“It’s all now you see. Yesterday won’t be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago.”

- Remark by character “Garin Stevens” in William Faulkner’s INTRUDER IN THE DUST

Prepared: November 9, 2015
This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, someone has requested that we pull it out of the hat of a pirate who has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (as above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture (this is data mining). To respond to such a request for information we merely push a button.
Commonly, the first output of the algorithm has obvious deficiencies and we need to go back into the modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and recompile the chronology — but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary "writerly" process you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
Place requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>. Arrgh.