A POET ALMOST MENTIONED IN A WEEK:

PHILIP JAMES BAILEY

“NARRATIVE HISTORY” AMOUNTS TO FABULATION,
THE REAL STUFF BEING MERE CHRONOLOGY
There are few books which are fit to be remembered in our wisest hours, but the Iliad is brightest in the serenest days, and embodies still all the sunlight that fell on Asia Minor. No modern joy or ecstasy of ours can lower its height or dim its lustre, but there it lies in the east of literature, as it were the earliest and latest production of the mind. The ruins of Egypt oppress and stifle us with their dust, foulness preserved in cassia and pitch, and swathed in linen; the death of that which never lived. But the rays of Greek poetry struggle down to us, and mingle with the sunbeams of the recent day. The statue of Memnon is cast down, but the shaft of the Iliad still meets the sun in his rising. "Homer is gone; and where is Jove? and where The rival cities seven? His song outlives Time, tower, and god, — all that then was, save Heaven." So too, no doubt, Homer had his Homer, and Orpheus his Orpheus, in the dim antiquity which preceded them. The mythological system of the ancients, and it is still the mythology of the moderns, the poem of mankind, interwoven so wonderfully with their astronomy, and matching in grandeur and harmony the architecture of the heavens themselves, seems to point to a time when a mightier genius inhabited the earth. But, after all, man is the great poet, and not Homer nor Shakespeare; and our language itself, and the common arts of life, are his work. Poetry is so universally true and independent of experience, that it does not need any particular biography to illustrate it, but we refer it sooner or later to some Orpheus or Linus, and after ages to the genius of humanity and the gods themselves.
April 22, Monday: Philip James Bailey was born at Nottingham in England (unfortunately, the house in which he was born being no longer in existence, it cannot shelter the birth of more poets like him).
Philip James Bailey matriculated at Glasgow University (he would not graduate).

**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.**
Philip James Bailey left Glasgow University without a degree, and relocated to London where he would become a student of the law at Lincoln’s Inn. (He would never take up the practice of the law.)

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT
Philip James Bailey left off preparation for a career in the law and relocated to Basford, where he would work on a long poem that would be titled “Festus.”

**Do I have your attention? Good.**
Anonymous publication of Philip James Bailey’s FESTUS; A POEM by W. Pickering of London. The success of this long poem would be immediate, on both sides of the Atlantic. Although this was the edition which would be consulted by Henry Thoreau, here we are presenting electronically instead the American edition of 1845, simply because it is what has been made available by Google Books. (Hopefully, this is virtually identical with the English edition — although I have not verified that this is indeed the case.) Thoreau would copy portions into his Literary Notebook and would refer to it at two points in A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS.
A Week: There are few books which are fit to be remembered in our wisest hours, but the Iliad is brightest in the serenest days, and embodies still all the sunlight that fell on Asia Minor. No modern joy or ecstasy of ours can lower its height or dim its lustre, but there it lies in the east of literature, as it were the earliest and latest production of the mind. The ruins of Egypt oppress and stifle us with their dust, foulness preserved in cassia and pitch, and swathed in linen; the death of that which never lived. But the rays of Greek poetry struggle down to us, and mingle with the sunbeams of the recent day. The statue of Memnon is cast down, but the shaft of the Iliad still meets the sun in his rising. "Homer is gone; and where is Jove? and where The rival cities seven? His song outlives Time, tower, and god, — all that then was, save Heaven." So too, no doubt, Homer had his Homer, and Orpheus his Orpheus, in the dim antiquity which preceded them. The mythological system of the ancients, and it is still the mythology of the moderns, the poem of mankind, interwoven so wonderfully with their astronomy, and matching in grandeur and harmony the architecture of the heavens themselves, seems to point to a time when a mightier genius inhabited the earth. But, after all, man is the great poet, and not Homer nor Shakespeare; and our language itself, and the common arts of life, are his work. Poetry is so universally true and independent of experience, that it does not need any particular biography to illustrate it, but we refer it sooner or later to some Orpheus or Linus, and after ages to the genius of humanity and the gods themselves.
September 27, Monday: It being Monday, the day of the weekly cattle fair in Brighton, supplying the Boston meat markets, William Allen and Nathaniel Hawthorne rode there in a wagon carrying a calf that was to be sold for slaughter. Its mother having already been sent to market, and it having had no breakfast, it kept baa-ing especially whenever it saw cows standing in the pastures alongside the road. Allen intended to purchase four piglets for fattening, driven up to Brighton from New York State. Hawthorne had on his blue stuff coat. He noted that the people of Brighton seemed to be of a bulky make, the sort “who lived on flesh-diet,” and he noticed that they had mottled faces, “as if they adhered to the old fashion of spirit-drinking.” On the way home, one of the piglets bit Allen’s finger to the bone.

Correction of the last proof-sheets for the October THE DIAL was left to Henry Thoreau so that Waldo Emerson could go on a jaunt with Nathaniel to the Shakers of Harvard, Massachusetts (this was the issue in which Margaret Fuller’s “Festus” was to appear).
September 27. — A ride to Brighton yesterday morning, it being the day of the weekly Cattle Fair. William Allen and myself went in a wagon, carrying a calf to be sold at the fair. The calf had not had his breakfast, as his mother had preceded him to Brighton, and he kept expressing his hunger and discomfort by loud, sonorous baas, especially when we passed any cattle in the fields or in the road. The cows, grazing within hearing, expressed great interest, and some of them came galloping to the roadside to behold the calf. Little children, also, on their way to school, stopped to laugh and point at poor little Bossie. He was a prettily behaved urchin, and kept thrusting his hairy muzzle between William and myself, apparently wishing to be stroked and patted. It was an ugly thought that his confidence in human nature, and nature in general, was to be so ill-rewarded as by cutting his throat, and selling him in quarters. This, I suppose, has been his fate before now!

It was a beautiful morning, clear as crystal, with an invigorating, but not disagreeable coolness. The general aspect of the country was as green as summer, — greener indeed than mid or latter summer, — and there were occasional intermingleings of the brilliant hues of autumn, which made the scenery more beautiful, both visibly and in sentiment. We saw no absolutely mean nor poor-looking abodes along the road. There were warm and comfortable farm-houses, ancient, with the porch, the sloping roof, the antique peak, the clustered chimney, of old times; and modern cottages, smart and tasteful; and villas, with terraces before them, and dense shade, and wooden urns on pillars, and other such tokens of gentility. Pleasant groves of oak and walnut, also, there were, sometimes stretching along valleys, sometimes ascending a hill and clothing it all round, so as to make it a great clump of verdure. Frequently we passed people with cows, oxen, sheep, or pigs for Brighton Fair. On arriving at Brighton, we found the village thronged with people, horses, and vehicles. Probably there is no place in New England where the character of an agricultural population may be so well studied. Almost all the farmers within a reasonable distance make it a point, I suppose, to attend Brighton Fair pretty frequently, if not on business, yet as amateurs. Then there are all the cattle-people and butchers who supply the Boston market, and dealers from far and near; and every man who has a cow or a yoke of oxen, whether to sell or buy, goes to Brighton on Monday. There were a thousand or two of cattle in the extensive pens belonging to the tavern-keeper, besides many that were standing about. One could hardly stir a step without running upon the horns of one dilemma or another, in the shape of ox, cow, bull, or ram. The yeomen appeared to be more in their element than I have ever seen them anywhere else, except, indeed, at labor; — more so than at mustering and such gatherings of amusement. And yet this was a sort of festal day, as well as a day of business. Most of the people were of a bulky make, with much bone and muscle, and some good store of fat, as if they had lived on flesh-diet; — with mottled faces too, hard and red, like those of persons who adhered to the old fashion of spirit-drinking. Great, round-paunched country squires were there too, sitting under the porch of the tavern, or waddling about, whip in hand, discussing the points of the cattle. There were also gentlemen-farmers, neatly, trimly, and fashionably dressed, in handsome surtouts and trousers, strapped under their boots. Yeomen, too, in their black or blue Sunday suits, cut by country tailors, and awkwardly worn. Others (like myself) had on the blue, stuff frocks which they wear in the fields, the most comfortable garments that ever were invented. Country loafers were among the throng, — men who looked wistfully at the liquors in the bar, and waited for some friend to invite them to drink, — poor, shabby, out-at-elbowed devils. Also, dandies from the city, corseted and buckramed, who had come to see the humors of Brighton Fair. All these, and other varieties of mankind, either thronged the spacious bar-room of the hotel, drinking, smoking, talking, bargaining, or walked about among the cattle-pens, looking with knowing eyes at the horned people. The owners of the cattle stood near at hand, waiting for offers. There was something indescribable in their aspect, that showed them to be the owners, though they mixed among the crowd. The cattle, brought from a hundred separate farms, or rather from a thousand, seemed to agree very well together, not quarrelling in the least. They almost all had a history, no doubt, if they could but have told it. The cows had each given her milk to support families, — had roamed the pastures, and come home to the barn-yard, — had been looked upon as a sort of member of the domestic circle, and was known by a name, as Brindle or Cherry. The oxen, with their necks bent by the heavy yoke, had toiled in the plough-field and in haying-time for many years, and knew their master's stall as well as the master himself knew his own table. Even the young steers and the little calves had something of domestic sacredness about them; for children had watched their growth, and petted them, and played with them. And here they all were, old and young, gathered from their thousand homes to Brighton Fair; whence the great chance was that they would go to the slaughter-house, and thence be transmitted, in sirloins, joints, and such pieces, to the tables of the Boston folk.

William Allen had come to buy four little pigs to take the places of four who have now grown large at our farm, and are to be fatted and killed within a few weeks. There were several hundreds, in pens appropriated to their use, grunting discordantly, and apparently in no very good humor with their companions or the world at large. Most or many of these pigs had been imported from the State of New York. The drovers set out with a large number, and peddle them along the road till they arrive at Brighton with the remainder. William selected four, and bought them at five cents per pound. These poor little porkers were forthwith seized by the tails, their legs tied, and then thrown into our wagon, where they kept up a continual grunt and squeal till we got home. Two of
them were yellowish, or light gold-color, the other two were black and white, speckled; and all four of very piggish aspect and deportment. One of them snapped at William's finger most spitefully, and bit it to the bone. All the scene of the Fair was very characteristic and peculiar, — cheerful and lively, too, in the bright, warm sun. I must see it again; for it ought to be studied.
The father of Philip James Bailey became the owner of the Mercury of Nottingham, England (and would edit this gazette until 1852).
Philip James Bailey’s *The Angel World, and Other Poems* was published in Boston by Ticknor, Reed and Fields. Thoreau would copy portions of this into his first Commonplace Book.
February 15, Saturday: Evelina E. Vannevar Slack wrote concerning family matters from Chelsea, Massachusetts to Charles Wesley Slack in St. Johnsbury, Vermont. Slack’s father added a note to this letter.

Frederick Jenkins (or Wilkins or Minkins, depending on what source you accept) known generally as “Shadrach,” a Boston waiter who was a fugitive from Georgia, had been detained by slave-catchers. Henry Williams, who had escaped from Virginia and whom Henry Thoreau assisted, was a friend of Jenkins. Richard Henry Dana, Jr. represented Shadrach in court. Chief Justice Shaw ruled for the rights of the slave catchers but a group of Boston’s indignant black citizens then swept into the hearing room through one door and out through another, taking him along within the press of their crowd. Daniel Webster of course fulminated that such a rescue from the US criminal system was “strictly speaking, a case of treason.”

After Jenkins was thus rescued, Francis Edwin Bigelow, the Concord blacksmith who according to Horace Rice Hosmer “had strong negro features for a white man,” and his wife Ann Bigelow, concealed him for one night until he could be escorted to the home of Frances Drake and Frances Drake in Leominster (for a few days) and then Fitchburg and into Vermont and on up across the Canada border (in this they were assisted by the Brooks family next door, and there is a story that Nathan Brooks helped outfit the fugitive with one of his hats). This offense against property and legitimate ownership, and New England’s guilty complicity in it, caused conservatives in Boston to become concerned about social unrest and determined to use brutality to prevent it. A well-known abolitionist, Elizur Wright, Jr., would be charged with this crime, and would be defended by lawyer Dana. When Wright saw the blacksmith Bigelow sitting in the jury box, he immediately intuited that his trial was going to go all right — for on Shadrach’s way toward safety he had been put up overnight at the Bigelow home! Dana’s work in these “Rescue Trials” would continue into 1852.

February 15, Saturday: Fatal is the discovery that our friend is fallible — that he has prejudices. He is then only prejudiced in our favor. What is the value of his esteem who does not justly esteem another? Alas! Alas! When my friend begins to deal in confessions — breaks silence — makes a theme of friendship — (which then is always something past) and descends to merely human relations. As long as there is a spark of love remaining cherish that alone — only that can be kindled into a flame.

I thought that friendship — that love was still possible between — I thought that we had not withdrawn very far asunder. But now that my friend rashly thoughtlessly — prophanely speaks recognizing the distance between us — that distance seems infinitely increased.

Of our friends we do not incline to speak to complain to others — we would not disturb the foundations of confidence that may still be.

Why should we not still continue to live with the intensity & rapidity of infants. Is not the world — are not the heavens as unfathomed as ever? Have we exhausted any joy — any sentiment?
The author of Festus well exclaims

“Could we but think with the intensity
We love with, we might do great things, I think.”
Philip James Bailey's *The Mystic*.
THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK:

Philip James Bailey

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN A WEEK

1858

Philip James Bailey’s The Age.
Philip James Bailey’s *The Universal Hymn*.
A “Jubilee Edition” was prepared of Philip James Bailey’s often-republished long FESTUS; A POEM. One of the most notable admirers of this work had been Alfred, Lord Tennyson, a man to know a good long poem when he saw one. Unfortunately, the subsequent books of poetry by this author, THE ANGEL WORLD, THE MYSTIC, THE AGE, and THE UNIVERSAL HYMN, had all been bookstore failures, and the author had recycled such lengthy excerpts from them into this new version of his FESTUS that it had come to extend to an indigestible more than 40,000 lines — I would ask for proof before being willing to accept that anyone other than the author and the prepublication proofreaders have ever plowed from one end through the other of the whole thing.
September 6, Saturday: Philip James Bailey died.

Protocol between the United States of America and Brazil submitting to arbitration the claim of George C. Benner and others against the Republic of the United States of Brazil due to its soldiers firing upon the vessel “James A. Simpson” and her long boat, and for the damage caused by the vessel’s detention at the port of Rio de Janeiro.

“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FABULATION, HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY
“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: May 20, 2014
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.