“NARRATIVE HISTORY” AMOUNTS TO FABULATION, 
THE REAL STUFF BEING MERE CHRONOLOGY
November 3, Monday: William Cullen Bryant was born in Cummington, Massachusetts. He would be able to trace his ancestry back to early Puritan immigrants, for what that’s worth.
William Cullen Bryant began to write verse at the age of 9.

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.
The political conservatism of William Cullen Bryant’s family stimulated the 14-year-old to write a poem “The Embargo” demanding the resignation of President Thomas Jefferson.

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.
At the age of 16, William Cullen Bryant entered the sophomore class of Williams College. Because of financial problems and also in hopes of being able to attend Yale College, he would withdraw.
When during this year a 17-year-old named William Cullen Bryant sent his initial draft of a poem titled “Thanatopsis,” written as a rejection of the orthodox Calvinism of the Reverend Cummington in favor of Deism, to Richard Henry Dana, Sr., that editor feared a hoax and refused to print it. (A subsequent version of the poem would appear in 1817 in the North American Review.)

Spring: A canoe with three men went over the Niagara Falls.

Now, this may seem to be totally unrelated to the above, but with the prior consent of his father Doctor Peter Bryant, and for the definite purpose of entering Yale College, William Cullen Bryant abandoned his Sophomore year at Williams College, returning to the family homestead at Cummington, Massachusetts (wait just a little, before you judge whether this bore any resemblance to going over Niagara in a canoe).

Summer: Fanny Burney noticed an inflammation and a lump in her right breast.

William Cullen Bryant was casually studying medicine, chemistry, and botany at his family homestead in Cummington, Massachusetts in preparation for an attempt to enter Yale College at the beginning of the school term in the fall.

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1. But soon he would abandon this posture in favor of a Unitarian providentialism, as witness his “To a Waterfowl” (1815, revised 1818 and 1821).
2. This was, incidentally, the year of the death of Judge Francis Dana, this editor’s father — although I don’t know that that has anything to do with anything.

William Cullen Bryant was unable to enter Yale College as he had hoped, his hopes dashed due to the financial situation of his family.

December 3, Tuesday: Sarah Bryant cut the cloth for a new coat for her son Cullen Bryant (the name William was not used at home).

Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:

3rd day 3 of 12 M // My H has been for Several days much unwell with a cold, but is well enough today to spent the Afternoon at her fathers.
December 7, Saturday: Sarah Bryant completed the new coat for her son Cullen Bryant. The nation read in the gazettes that in the Indiana back woods, the forces of the Shawnee headman Tecumseh, brother of the prophet Tenskwatawa, had been decisively defeated by a group of white settlers under the command of William Henry Harrison.
INDIAN WAR—official.

Extract of a letter from Governor Harrison to

All Secretaries of War, dated

H. Q. near the Prophet's town, Nov. 8, 1813.

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you, that the news of yesterday terminated an action between the troops under my command, and the whole of the Prophet's force. The precipitate retreat, leaving a number of the warriors dead on the field, and the subsequent attack on their town, (which was partially burned) shows the country's desire for a complete and decisive victory. It has, however, been partly purchased. A number of brave and valuable men have fallen victims in the cause of their country's safety. The behavior of the regular and militia troops was such as would have done honor to Yermont. I received the news of the action (a mile from the town) on the evening of the 4th inst., when a correspondence was immediately opened with the Prophet, and there was every appearance of a successful termination of the expedition, without bloodshed. Indeed, there was an agreement for the suspension of hostilities until a further communication should take place on the next day. Contrary to all expectations, our engagement, which I expected to be on Sunday, was at half past four o'clock in the morning, to suddenly, and the Indians were in the camp before many of the men could get out of their tents. A little confusion for a short time prevailed, but aided by the great exertion of the officers, I was enabled to form the men in order. The companies which were hard pressed were supported, several successful charges made, and about day light the enemy were finally put to flight. Our killed and wounded amounted to 79, and they are new dead. I have not been able to ascertain the number of Indians in the action, but men have been considerable.

The principal chief of the Prophet, who has joined the Prophet, is wounded, and in our possession. I have taken care of him, and I shall send him back to his tribe. At a more leisure time I shall do my duty to transmit a more particular account of the action, and of our previous movements, and am, with the highest respect, your humble servant,

Wm. Henry Harrison.

The letter Win. Reed, Secretary of War.
Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:

7th day 7 of 12 M // The day has passed as usual E W Lawton remains quite low the termination of his disease, doubtful
December 9, Monday: The Englishman Thomas Manning, a private explorer, became the first European in a century to enter Lhasa.

Sarah Bryant entered in her diary that her son Cullen Bryant “went to Worthington to tarry awhile.” He began to read law there and at Bridgewater under the guidance or barrister Samuel Howe. He would nevertheless strike up a correspondence with a former Williams College roommate, John Avery, in New Haven, about his prospects of still being able to enter Yale College.

More reports came in about the fighting on the frontier:

Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:

2nd day 9 of 12 M // I have thought seriously on Several Important subjects — Neighbor Mumford & daughter with father & Mother R spent the Afternoon with us
RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS
William Cullen Bryant’s “To a Waterfowl” (he would revise this in 1818 and in 1821).

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT
William Cullen Bryant was admitted to the bar. He would spend the following decade as yet another lawyer of Plainfield and Great Barrington (an occupation for which he would maintain a lifelong aversion).
September: William Cullen Bryant’s 1811 poem entitled “Thanatopsis,” written at the age of 17, finally appeared in print, in the North American Review, but was not as yet assigned to any school child to memorize.3

McDowell Bryant and the North American Review AL March 1929(The delay had been due entirely to editor Richard Henry Dana, Sr.’s fear that a plagiarism was being foisted upon him, based upon suspicion that no

3. This original poem contained only the present lines 17-66, and these the father Dr. Peter Bryant, something of a published poet himself, had patched it together out of various drafts the son “Cullen” had left behind in his father’s desk, and copied out in his own hand for submission (the editor at the Review would presume that everything in the father’s hand constituted one poem, when in fact they had not, four of the stanzas being in fact inferior and quite another poem). This Greek title “Thanatopsis” is something that was dreamed up by some editor or other at the Review. In 1821 the poet would tack on introductory and concluding lines, for THANATOPSIS AND OTHER POEMS, and until that late date the editor at the Review would remain persuaded that “Thanatopsis” had actually been written by the father rather than by the son.
mere 17-year-old student could possibly have authored such a poem.)
William Cullen Bryant’s essay “Early American Verse.” Also, revision of his 1815 “To a Waterfowl” and his 1811 “Thanatopsis” (he would revise both these poems again in 1821).
By this point William Cullen Bryant had read William Wordsworth’s LYRICAL BALLADS, which had caused a thousand Romantic springs to gush up into his heart, and so he added an introductory group of lines to his audience to go out under the open sky and list to the teachings of the still voice of Nature.4

At the age of 26 Bryant got married with Frances Fairchild.

4. While it would be tempting to allege that we have no record that Bryant ever appreciated the teachings of the still voice of Nature enough to actually venture outdoors, that would not be entirely accurate — for we do have a.) a record that once upon a time he took a vacation steamboat cruise on the Great Lakes and also b.) we know that once he walked down a sidewalk in New-York (we happen to know this because for some reason he struck another walker with a whip, whereupon that guy confiscated his whip).
William Cullen Bryant read “The Ages” as the Phi Beta Kappa poem at Harvard College. In this year there was the publication of his Poems, which would establish him as America’s most distinguished poet for the decade. The poet revised again the poem “To a Waterfowl” which he had written in 1815 and revised in 1818, and the poem “Thanatopsis” which he had written in 1811 and revised in 1818, and these were published.
William Cullen Bryant left off the practice of law and relocated to New-York to become co-editor of the New-York Review at $1,000.00 per year. (That’d be like $90,000.00 or $95,000.00 today, a salary on which one could perhaps survive on Manhattan Island.)

[Signature: W.C. Bryant]
William Cullen Bryant became an assistant editor of the New-York Evening Post.
William Cullen Bryant became an editor of the New-York *Evening Post*. While working at the *Evening Post*, Parke Godwin would become associated with Bryant, and eventually he and Bryant’s daughter would marry.

The Andrew Jackson campaign for the Presidency was being advanced by the poets William Leggett and William Cullen Bryant, the poet George Bancroft, the sculptor Horatio Greenough, the authors James Fenimore Cooper and Nathaniel Hawthorne, and in general by every careerist man of genius, each careerist humanitarian, and all the careerist underprivilegeds who were seeking privilege. And why not? There were 1,972 men in debtor’s prison, subsisting upon a daily ration of a quart of soup — and that was in the State of New York alone.5

5. As reported in the *National Gazette* of November 15, 1827. The national estimate, for the population of debtors’ prisons in the USA in the second half of the 1820s, is 75,000 souls. For a debt as low as $3.00 you could find your ass in jail, and you’d stay in the slammer in debt too, maybe for the rest of your life unless you could provide someone with some money with some good reason to buy you out of the place. What, did you suppose that having a society based upon human bondage would have no ramifications?
November 28, Friday: The celebrated American actor Edwin Forrest advertised in the Critic for a role appropriate to his bulky talents. He would pay, he said, $500.00 for “the best tragedy, in five acts, of which the hero, or principal character, shall be an aboriginal of this country.” William Cullen Bryant headed the
committee that evaluated the submissions.

The award went to Concord’s own John Augustus Stone. He wrote a tragedy about the race tragedy we know as “King Phillip’s War,” in which the sachem Metacom of the Wampanoag was of course presented as the heroic primary character, suitable for this American to portray. This **METAMORA**: OR THE LAST OF THE

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6. A total of 14 plays had been submitted. In a series of such prize competitions, some 200 plays would be offered, and eight other such plays would be rewarded. Included among these eight others would be another play by John Augustus Stone, this one titled **THE ANCIENT BRITON**.
"WAMPANOAGS would be enormously popular on tour from city to city over many years."

— Thucydides, HISTORY OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

7. There are towns named Metamora in Michigan, in Ohio, in Illinois, and in Indiana, as marked in pink on this map:

Here Edwin Forrest is posed in the studio of Mathew B. Brady in about 1860 in costume as the "Metamora" of the oft-staged play. Brady used his impressive Imperial format, with a collodion negative of 20 x 17 inches uncropped, exposed while wet.
William Cullen Bryant became editor in chief at the New-York Evening Post, which would soon become his property as well as his responsibility.

THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT

Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:

4th day 20 of 4 M / Meeting at School a good silent opportunity.

In England, the House of Commons’s Reform Bill was defeated and the Parliament was dissolved. The gentry were arming their country houses with cannon against anticipated mobs. In the USA, the Washington Globe announced the resignations of John Eaton and Martin Van Buren. Van Buren’s friends in New-York, unaware that he had something to do with engineering the whole thing, were worrying.

The following is a snippet from Charles Haskell’s REMINISCENCES OF NEW YORK BY AN OCTOGENARIAN: William Cullen Bryant, editor of the Evening Post, and William L. Stone, of the Commercial Advertiser, met in Broadway near Park Place, and a personal rencontre occurred, Bryant striking Stone with a cowhide, whereupon they closed and were parted by the bystanders. Stone prevailed, to the extent of carrying off the whip with which he had been attacked.
Publication of William Cullen Bryant’s new collection of poems, including “To the Fringed Gentian,” which had been written in 1829.

(Henry Thoreau would refer to this poem “To the Fringed Gentian” in his journal entry for October 19, 1852.)

**To the Fringed Gentian**

Thou blossom bright with autumn dew,  
And colored with the heaven’s own blue,  
That openest when the quiet light  
Succeeds the keen and frosty night,

Thou comest not when violets lean  
O’er wandering brooks and springs unseen,  
Or columbines, in purple dressed,  
Nod o’er the ground-bird’s hidden nest.

Thou waitest late and com’st alone,  
When woods are bare and birds are flown,  
And frost and shortening days portend  
The aged year is near his end.

Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye  
Look through its fringes to the sky,  
Blue—blue—as if that sky let fall  
A flower from its cerulean wall.
I would that thus, when I shall see
The hour of death draw near to me,
Hope, blossoming within my heart,
May look to heaven as I depart.
Timothy Flint, in *Indian Wars of the West*, found an exceedingly complicated way to say simultaneously two simple things which are simply incompatible with each other, to wit that *we're no better than they are* and that *we should exterminate them*:

> It is of little importance to inquire, which party was the aggressor.... Either this great continent, in the order of Providence, should have remained in the occupancy of half a million of savages, engaged in everlasting conflicts of their peculiar warfare with each other, or it must have become, as it has, the domain of civilized millions. It is in vain to charge upon the latter race results, which grew out of the law of nature, and the universal march of human events.

*John Adolphus Etzler’s* *The Paradise within the Reach of All Men, without Labor, by Powers of Nature and Machinery* had been published in Pittsburgh and was in all the American bookstores, telling the people who wanted to believe this sort of stuff and who were able to buy and read books—which of course was, mainly, white people, since there were no schools for red people and since black people had long been punished for attempting to learn to write and now were even being punished for attempting to learn to read as well—that they could have utopia if they would merely organize to achieve it. So it really didn’t matter in the great scheme of things if some poor populations of people had to be sacrificed, or left behind, in the great march forward into the beautiful future. And August Friedrich Pott, advancing the white Aryan myth of an *Urfolk* which had advanced westward out of Asia to vitalize the West, declared that

> *Ex oriente lux*: the march of culture, in its general lines, has always followed the sun’s course.

Clearly, religious leaders who desired to “pull a Bishop George Berkeley” for the 19th Century, and publicists
like Horace Greeley and authors like Henry Thoreau who believed that they needed to speak of westering,

and popular writers like William Cullen Bryant whose “The Prairies,” written after his first visit to Illinois in 1832, had just hit the bookstores, were going to need to be exceedingly careful so as not being misunderstood by their audiences to be recommending empire, or civilizationism, or ethnic chauvinism, or the myth of Nordic racial superiority.⁸

With missionary zeal, Etzler traveled in Pennsylvania and Ohio off and on for the next seven years (the period referred to in Two Visions of J.A. Etzler) as a kind of itinerant secular
evangelist preaching the possibility of a new kind of Millennium to be brought about through human reason and effort. Not surprisingly, his views on economic and social reform were rejected; and "the more they were rejected ... the more strident and offensive became his rhetorical appeals."

8. A factoid of interest to those of us who find this sort of thing interesting is that neither Bishop Berkeley nor Editor Greeley exercised any such caution, never went on record with a disclaimer about westering, never distanced themselves from authors such as Etzler and Pott and Flint. Only Thoreau did so:

It is perfectly heathenish —a filibustering toward heaven by the great western route. No; they may go their way to their manifest destiny, which I trust is not mine.

And he is remembered fondly for having had the courage and foresight to do so, say I with tongue in cheek.

Etzler is known today almost solely through the review of his book written by Henry David Thoreau, the influential writer and critic. Thoreau was fascinated by Etzler's ideas ...
POEMS
BY
WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

NEW YORK:
Harper & Brothers,
1836
Louis A. Godey’s *Godey’s Lady’s Book* had 25,000 subscribers (at its highest point, in 1860, the circulation would rise to 150,000). Sarah Josepha Hale, as literary editor, was relying on original material, mostly by women, rather than following the American practice of plagiarizing from European authors. Although she had a nasty habit of stiffing unknown authors, paying them sometimes not at all, she did pay her more well-known contributors well. At one time or another, William Cullen Bryant, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow were all contributing to the magazine and being well rewarded for so doing. Edgar Allan Poe would supply several of the best-known of his tales, such as “The Mask of the Red Death,” as well as literary essays such as “Tale Writing — Nathaniel Hawthorne” and a series on the “New York Literati.” Even more than *Graham’s Magazine*, this girlie mag relied upon fashion plates and engravings. Godey was even known to refer to the article text as “the illustration of the plate” (in a later timeframe men would be insisting that they subscribed to *Playboy* only to read the articles, but that is neither here nor there). Godey declared these plates to be “service to the cause of civilization.” Initially one hand-colored plate was being included in every third issue, but soon there was a single hand-colored plate in each issue of the magazine (the origin of the centerfold?). By 1870 civilization had been served most exceedingly well, for a total of a thousand such services to the cause of civilization had at that point appeared in the magazine.
However, in this year, Poe, having moved to Philadelphia, was living on little but bread and molasses and writing “Ligeia” and other stories which appeared in the American Museum of Baltimore. He became co-editor of Burton’s Gentleman’s Magazine.

May: Richard Henry Dana, Jr. submitted his manuscript of Two Years Before the Mast to William Cullen Bryant.
January: George R. Graham merged The Casket and Burton’s Gentleman’s Magazine into Graham’s Magazine. Edgar Allan Poe became the literary editor of the magazine. This was predicated on the promise that the job would involve mostly the writing of book notices and thus wouldn’t require more than a couple of hours a day of his valuable time. For this the poet was to receive $800 a year — which was comparable to a salary of perhaps $60,000 today and thus was nothing to sneeze at for part-time work. The new publication would retain the serial numbering of The Casket but would use the policy of Burton’s. Some of the writers in this 1st year would be James Russell Lowell, Poe, Lydia Howard Huntley Sigourney, and Park Benjamin. The following year the principal contributors would include William Cullen Bryant, James Fenimore Cooper, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. During his editorship the poet would contribute several of his better tales and a few important literary essays. By June, however, he would be writing to a friend that he was disgusted by his situation, and in the following year he would resign, partly because of an argument with fellow editor Charles Petersen and partly because he would be feeling supplanted by Samuel Griswold Goodrich, the gent who would later replace him as literary editor. During this year Poe’s “A Chapter on Autobiography” would include a general denunciation of Emerson as a twaddler:

Mr. Ralph Waldo Emerson belongs to a class of gentlemen with whom we have no patience whatever — the mystic for mysticism’s sake. Quintilian mentions a pedant who taught obscurity, and who once said to a pupil “this is excellent, for I do not understand it myself.” How the good man would have chuckled over Mr. E.! His present role seems to be the out-Carlyling Carlyle. Lycophron Tenebrosus is a fool to him. The best answer to his twaddle is cui bono?.... His love of the obscure does not prevent him, nevertheless, from the composition of occasional poems in which beauty is apparent by flashes.... His [handwritten signature] is bad, sprawling, illegible, and irregular — although sufficiently bold. This latter trait may be, and no doubt is, only a portion of his general affectation.

A young boy named Alex McCaffery was living with the Emersons to help out with household chores.
Publication of a new collection of the poems of William Cullen Bryant.

[Signature]

1842
August 25, Friday-September 3, Sunday: Sometime between these two dates Waldo Emerson made the following comment in his journal, about Nathaniel Hawthorne and the Brook Farm experiment:

_Hawthorne boasts that he lived at Brook Farm during its heroic age: then all were intimate and each knew well the other’s work; priest and cook conversed at night of the day’s work. Now they complain that they are separated and such intimacy cannot be; there are a hundred souls._

During this period Hawthorne was doing a certain amount of chumming around and kibitzing with Emerson at their Concord homes and in the surrounding woodlands:

_The Scarlet Letter:_ Such were some of the people with whom I now found myself connected. I took it in good part, at the hands of Providence, that I was thrown into a position so little akin to my past habits; and set myself seriously to gather from it whatever profit was to be had. After my fellowship of toil and impracticable schemes with the dreamy brethren of Brook Farm; after living for three years within the subtle influence of an intellect like Emerson’s; after those wild, free days on the Assabeth, indulging fantastic speculations, beside our fire of fallen boughs, with Ellery Channing; after talking with Thoreau about pine-trees and Indian relics in his hermitage at Walden; after growing fastidious by sympathy with the classic refinement of Hillard’s culture; after becoming imbued with poetic sentiment at Longfellow’s hearthstone – it was time, at length, that I should exercise other faculties of my nature, and nourish myself with food for which I had hitherto had little appetite. Even the old Inspector was desirable, as a change of diet, to a man who had known Alcott. I looked upon it as an evidence, in some measure, of a system naturally well balanced, and lacking no essential part of a thorough organization, that, with such associates to remember, I could mingle at once with men of altogether different qualities, and never murmur at the change.

Emerson placed an article in the September issue of the Democratic Review on “Mr. Channing’s Poems.” Henry Thoreau would comment on this article in his journal.

August 25, Friday: He who is not touched by the poetry of Channing — Very — Emerson and the best pieces of Bryant may be sure he has not drunk deep of the Pierian spring. Channing’s might very properly as has been suggested be called poetry for the poets — it is so fine a vein that it floats in the common air and is
not perceived. It is a richer and deeper tone than Tennyson’s with its own melody — but the melody of the language will be sought in vain without the melody of the thought for a guide.

We read marlowe as so much poetical pablum — it is food for poets it is water from the Castalian spring. some of the atmosphere of Parnassus raw and crude indeed and at times breezy but pure, / and bracing.

Quarles has a sturdy fibre — a true poet though not polished — an austere and savage Eremite. He did stand cheek by jowl with nature and reality — and sturdily lived a man’s life — fighting the devil and his angels.

Spenser was not an actual poet. He is not sublime — or morally grand and inspired — but led a life of imagination above the vulgar. His are not words for a dying man to hear, but to be sung in a summer bower — sweet, and graceful, and full of hope.

one should not read the whole of Marvell who wishes to enjoy a part. He will be disappointed to find him so frivolous and mean — at times.
Publication of a new collection of William Cullen Bryant’s poems.
POEMS

BY

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.
April 5, Saturday: William Cullen Bryant wrote from New-York to Secretary of the Navy George Bancroft in Washington DC about an application that had been made in behalf of Dr. Charles V. Kraitsir, who was presently in Boston, for a post in some of the departments at Washington where his knowledge of foreign tongues would make his services useful. He characterized Dr. Kraitsir as “a very learned and meritorious man, versed in many languages and a good democrat.” He stated that he had not doubt of his usefulness in such a post, on account of his multifarious acquirements, which would exceed that of almost any other person who would be likely to be his competitor. (The Secretary of the Navy was just at that point preparing to open a new naval academy at Annapolis.)
Waldo Emerson asked Henry Thoreau to add a chimney to the Emerson barn, as part of creating a schoolroom and sleeping chamber for Sophia Foord while she was tutoring the Emerson and Alcott children.

Thoreau surveyed Walden Pond, indicating Bare Peak, Wooded Peak, Sandbar, and the site of his shanty. The area of the pond is listed as 61 acres and 3 rods, its circumference as 1.7 miles, its greatest length as 175½ rods, and its greatest depth as 102 feet. The Concord Free Public Library now has three copies of this. It is the plot which he would have tipped into his bound volume of his lyceum lectures, **WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE**
There’s an interesting little factoid about this survey being tipped into the *Walden* volume. It wasn’t all that usual, in this time period, for books to be illustrated in such a manner! Such an inclusion, in the period, amounted to “multimedia high tech”! –Take a moment and think about that!9

Most of the works published by *Ticknor and Fields* during the 1840s and 1850s were not illustrated in any way, but illustrations did play an important role in some. Two groups of publications from the 1850s are especially notable for their illustrations – juvenile works and literary works by the firm’s most respected authors. The more lavishly illustrated were juvenile works, which might contain as many as twelve relief wood engravings, while many literary works were regularly issued with an expensive intaglio steel-engraved frontispiece portrait. The illustrations in juveniles were usually based on the text and made the work more vivid and appealing to a young audience, whereas the portrait frontispieces in the second group

served to dignify and assert the literary merit of the works they produced.

Other works published by the firm during these decades were also illustrated or decorated in some way. These included textbooks: the two primary school readers by Josiah F. Bumstead each had an inserted woodcut frontispiece; and the first part of Thomas H. Palmer’s The Moral Instructor had small vignettes and type ornaments printed throughout the text. Several scientific and medical works—such as Wendell Phillips’s An Elementary Treatise on Mineralogy and J. Mason Warren’s edition of Walter H. Walshe’s The Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology, and Treatment of Cancer—depended on the illustrations to transmit information. In addition, a number of the firm’s literary works, especially poetry, were pleasantly decorated with small vignettes or type ornaments.

Longfellow’s The Golden Legend had a single small vignette of a cross, designed by Hammatt Billings, on the title page; Oliver W. Holmes’s Poems and Richard H. Stoddard’s Songs of Summer have numerous decorative vignettes and ornamental head- or tailpieces throughout the text.

The illustrations and decorations in the publications of Ticknor and Fields were reproduced by three methods. The most common used blocks produced in relief. Small vignettes and ornaments produced by this method were printed with the text, as occasionally were full-page illustrations, but more commonly relief wood engravings were printed on separate leaves and inserted during binding. The portrait frontispieces in the firm’s literary works were produced by a second method, using intaglio metal plates. Intaglio printing is done on a rolling press, separately from the text, and these frontispieces were always printed on inserted leaves. Illustrations reproduced by a third method, lithography, appeared only rarely in works published by Ticknor and Fields before 1860. In the 1840s lithography was used for the technical illustrations in a few medical and scientific works published by the firm, and in the 1850s only the engraved map in Henry D. Thoreau’s Walden and the illuminated paper wrapper used on some copies of William H.C. Hosmer’s The Months—a commission work—were lithographed. Again, lithographic illustrations were printed separately from the text on a special press and inserted during binding.
WALDEN POND
A reduced Plan
(1846)
Scale 1/220, or 40 rods to an inch

Area 61 acres, 103 rods.
Circumference 17.1 miles.
Greatest Length 1734 rods.
Greatest Depth 10.2 feet.

Profile of a Section by the Line A B

Section C D

Bare Puk
That is worth repeating. In the 1850s only the engraved map in WALDEN and the illuminated paper wrapper used on some copies of one other book were lithographed! Such lithography was at that point the very high-tech cutting edge of publication technology. It was, in that period, everything that multimedia amounted to. We might miss such a fact nowadays, if it were not forcefully brought to our attention, but what a novel thing that survey map of Walden Pond tipped into the volume actually was!
View Henry Thoreau’s personal working drafts of his surveys courtesy of AT&T and the Concord Free Public Library:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/Thoreau_Surveys.htm

(The official copy of this survey of course had become the property of the person or persons who had hired this Concord town surveyor to do their surveying work during the 19th Century. Such materials have yet to be recovered.)
WALDEN: One afternoon I amused myself by watching a barred owl (Strix nebulosa) sitting on one of the lower dead limbs of a white-pine, close to the trunk, in broad daylight, I standing within a rod of him. He could hear me when I moved and cronched the snow with my feet, but could not plainly see me. When I made most noise he would stretch out his neck, and erect his neck feathers, and open his eyes wide; but their lids soon fell again, and he began to nod. I too felt a slumberous influence after watching him half an hour, as he sat thus with his eyes half open, like a cat, winged brother of the cat. There was only a narrow slit left between their lids, by which he preserved a peninsular relation to me; thus, with half-shut eyes, looking out from the land of dreams, and endeavoring to realize me, vague object or mote that interrupted his visions. At length, on some louder noise or my nearer approach, he would grow uneasy and sluggishly turn about on his perch, as if impatient at having his dreams disturbed; and when he launched himself off and flapped through the pines, spreading his wings to unexpected breadth, I could not hear the slightest sound from them. Thus, guided amid the pine boughs rather by a delicate sense of their neighborhood than by sight, feeling his twilight way as it were with his sensitive pinions, he found a new perch, where he might in peace await the dawning of his day.
Publication of a new collection of William Cullen Bryant’s poems, illustrated.
(Here is an illustration of the poet, weary of trying to find another rhyme for “moon” and “June.”)
June: Phineas Taylor Barnum came to observe the Fox Sisters and quickly arranged for them to exhibit their Spiritualism stuff at his Barnum Museum in New-York at an admission charge of $2. As a 16-year-old and a 10-year-old, Maggie and Kate began a life of public display as Leah took them from city to city where they were questioned, examined, believed, and scorned by some of the most prominent citizens of the nation. Harriet Beecher Stowe, the Reverend Theodore Parker, and Bayard Taylor attended sittings during this period (that’ll be $6 please). At one particular sitting George Bancroft, James Fenimore Cooper, William Cullen Bryant, the Reverend George Ripley, and Nathaniel Parker Willis were in attendance (that’ll be $10 please).
The Fox Sisters held further seances at Auburn, New York. They began holding others in New-York, which were attended by James Fenimore Cooper, William Cullen Bryant, Horace Greeley, and others. Greeley was taken in by the fraud and defended the sisters.

William Cullen Bryant’s LETTERS OF A TRAVELLER; OR, NOTES OF THINGS SEEN IN EUROPE AND AMERICA (New York: G.P. Putnam).

(Henry Thoreau would in about 1853 make notes on this in his Indian Notebook #8 and in his Fact Book.)
August 5, Tuesday: The British Parliament passed the Australia Constitution Act (Victoria was separated from New South Wales; South Australia and Tasmania were granted representative government).

In Massachusetts, Herman Melville met Nathaniel Hawthorne during a climb of Monument Mountain in the Berkshire Hills, that had been sponsored by a group of luminaries and publishers (luminaries such as Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, publishers such as Melville’s boss Evert Augustus Duyckinck).

While they were appreciating their champagne at the summit, Cornelius Mathews recited for them William Cullen Bryant’s doggerel poem about a jilted native maiden who had thrown herself from a precipice, “The Story of the Indian Girl,” a poem tainted irremediably by primitivism which enjoyed considerably greater reputation then than, fortunately, now.

…There was scooped,
Upon the mountain’s southern slope, a grave;
And there they laid her, in the very garb
With which the maiden decked herself for death,
With the same withering wild-flowers in her hair.
And o’er the mound that covered her, the tribe
Built up simple monument, a cone
Of small loose stones. Thenceforward all who passed,
Hunter, and dame, and virgin, laid a stone
In silence on the pile. It stands there yet….
(In a few days, Herman would be seeking out Nathaniel at the Red Shanty which now stands on the grounds of Tanglewood, and they would again be enjoying champagne.)
Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes published his POETICAL WORKS.
In this year, also, William Cullen Bryant’s POEMS were published.
Also, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s Poems (in two volumes), Golden Legend, and Prose Works.

October 19, Tuesday: Henry Thoreau surveyed for John Raynolds some land between the homes of Abel Brooks and Deacon David Wheeler on Sudbury Road that Raynolds had bought from Cyrus Stow.

When he saw *Gentiana crinita* he made reference to a poem “To the Fringed Gentian” by William Cullen Bryant:

Oct. 19. I see the dandelion blossoms in the path. The buds of the skunk-cabbage already show themselves in the meadow, the pointed involucres (?). At 5 P.M. I found the fringed gentian now somewhat stale and touched by frost, being in the meadow toward Peter’s. (*Gentiana crinita* in September, Bigelow and Gray.) Probably on high, moist ground it is fresher. It may have been in bloom a month. It has been cut off by the mower, and apparently has put out in consequence a mass of short branches full of flowers. This may make it later. I doubt if I can find one naturally grown. At this hour the blossoms are tightly rolled and twisted, and I see that the bees have gnawed round holes in their sides to come at the nectar. They have found them, though I had not. “Full many a flower is born to blush unseen” by man. An hour ago I doubted if fringed gentians were in Concord now, but, having found these, they as it were surrender, and I hear of them at the bottom of N. Barrett’s orchard toward the river, and by Tuttle’s (?). They are now, at 8 P.M., opening a little in a pitcher. It is too remarkable a flower not to be sought out and admired each year, however rare. It is one of the errands of the walker, as well as of the bees, for it yields him a more celestial nectar still. It is a very singular and agreeable surprise come upon this conspicuous and handsome and withal blue flower at this season, when flowers have passed out of our minds and memories; the latest of all to begin to bloom, unless it be the witch-hazel, when, excepting the latter, flowers are reduced to that small Spartan cohort, hardy, but for the most part unobserved, which linger till the snow buries them, and those interesting reappearing flowers which, though fair and fresh and tender, hardly delude us with the prospect of a new spring,
and which we pass by indifferent, as if they only bloomed to die. Vide Bryant’s verses on the Fringed Gentian.

There are a few bulrushes, lances of the pigmies or the cranes, still green in the brooks. I brought home one big as my finger and almost six feet high. Most are now yellowed and dry. It is remarkable how tightly the gentians roll and twist up at night, as if that were their constant state. Probably those bees were working late that found it necessary to perforate the flower.

To the Fringed Gentian

Thou blossom bright with autumn dew,
And colored with the heaven’s own blue,
That openest when the quiet light
Succeeds the keen and frosty night,

Thou comest not when violets lean
O’er wandering brooks and springs unseen,
Or columbines, in purple dressed,
Nod o’er the ground-bird’s hidden nest.

Thou waitest late and com’st alone,
When woods are bare and birds are flown,
And frost and shortening days portend
The aged year is near his end.

Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye
Look through its fringes to the sky,
Blue—blue—as if that sky let fall
A flower from its cerulean wall.

I would that thus, when I shall see
The hour of death draw near to me,
Hope, blossoming within my heart,
May look to heaven as I depart.
Publication of a new collection of William Cullen Bryant’s poems.
John Wells Foster had become deeply involved in the politics of Massachusetts and was associating with Henry Wilson in the organization of that state’s “American Party,” soon to be absorbed into the nascent Republican Party. At this point William Cullen Bryant also became active in this organization.

Running for the federal Congress in the Springfield District, Foster was defeated by a few votes.
June 30, Sunday evening: An unanticipated comet of enormous size suddenly appeared on the horizon, over the United States and Europe. Calculations indicate that on this night the earth probably was passing directly through the gas and dust of this comet’s tail. On this night, actually, the celestial observer E.J. Lowe jotted into his meteor log that the sky had been of a yellowish tinge before sunset, with the sun seeming somehow dimmed and the general levels of illumination less than usual. Also, John Russell Hind reported a certain peculiar phosphorescence in the appearance of the sky, something which may or may not have been entirely attributable to the aurora of the Northern Lights. From the observatory of Athens we have this report from the astronomer Schmidt:

The twilight behind Mt. Parnassus had not yet faded away when I was informed, and I can truthfully say no other surprise could have made so deep an impression. The night before had been absolutely clear and I had not seen a trace of a comet. Now the sky was filled by this majestic figure, spreading the tail from horizon to beyond Polaris, and even across Lyra. It was, to use the language of the past, a comet of truly fearful appearance. At 9 o’clock the head of the comet, looking as large as the moon, was next to Mt. Parnassus. The head and the very wide lower part of the tail appeared like a distant fire, and the tail seemed like windblown smoke illuminated by the fire. After the head had disappeared below the horizon and it had grown dark, one could see that the tail extended to the Milky Way in the constellation Aquila. At 11PM I went to the observatory to watch [for] the reappearance of the head in the northeast.... At midnight and for some time after the tail stood nearly vertically above the northern horizon, its most brilliant portion and the nucleus hidden, the tail reached 30 degrees of arc beyond the zenith [indicating that the total length of this comet’s tail above and below the zenith would measure more than 120 degrees]. At 4:27AM the head of the comet became visible again, following reappearance of the brightest parts of the tail which produced weak but noticeable shadows. Neither the Great Comet of March 1843 nor Donati’s comet of October 1858 had been so bright.... I watched the rising of the comet’s head with the naked eye; it was an incredible phenomenon that cannot be compared to anything else. The great mass of light hung like a dull smoky fire over the dark outline of the mountains. As it grew lighter the tail disappeared, I could only see about 4 degrees of arc of the tail at 5:30AM. But at 6:08AM when Capella was the only still visible star the nucleus was still clearly luminous.
The 4th great new comet of the 19th Century, I Thatcher, had been first detected from Australia. Of course, since the only way to notify Europe of the detection of this comet was by ship and so, by the time this news arrived in the Northern hemisphere, it had already come been sighted also by Europeans and Americans. This comet appeared inordinately large because it was passing close by our planet and as of this date was brushing across us its complicated tail of changing construction.\(^{10}\) This comet, together with the double comet I Liais of 1860, would contribute to our Andromedid meteor showers,\(^{11}\)

As of this date or slightly later, from New Bedford, Henry Thoreau’s “Friend Ricketson,” Friend Daniel Ricketson, was writing to inform him that he had been “converted” to a strong belief in the truth of Christianity.

*The Shanty, 30\(^{th}\) June 1861*

10. Venus, at its closest point to the Earth, is about 23,000,000 miles away, and this comet was passing within 11,000,000 miles. By way of strong comparison, the comet Lexell had in July 1770 passed within 1,401,200 miles. Of course, nothing happened of any great moment in either case, as the tail of a comet is quite insubstantial even by way of contrast with a meteor shower, but this would give rise to stories (sponsored it would appear by adherents of the “God’s This Weird Dude” school of theology) connecting the event to the bloodshed of our Civil War.
Friend Thoreau,
I have been desirous of hearing from you for a long time, and par-
ticularly in regard to your health, which from your letter of 22d
March I was sorry to hear was not as good as usual; but as you
speak of your complaint as that of "a severe cold," I hope by this
time you have bid farewell to it and are once more tramping about
the woods and fields of old Concord and boating on your favorite
stream. We had our full share of the snowstorm of which you gave
so glowing an account inclusive of your domestic water sentinel (a
short way of saying pump!) with its "ghost" of snow. I have kept my
usual record of the return of the birds, and am happy to inform you
that the Quail has several times of late saluted me with his sweet
whistle or call for "Bob White" as the country boys hereabouts
translate him. We have had a peculiar singing pewee with an addi-
tional stave to his little song very peculiar & rather comical in its
way.

I am glad to hear of the success of Friend Alcott, as Superintendent
of your village schools—Concord may well be proud to have such a
Captain—Please remember me affectionately to him & his family &
thank him for me for a copy of his School Report which I duly rec'd
and read with attention, noting Miss A’s happy travesty of the old
Scotch border song. I was sorry to find you "aberat" and hope that
some less cause than illness prevented you. Concord cant spare any
of her ballast.

My dear friend, Since I saw you, & considerably since I wrote you
last have I met with some fresh and very unexpected experiences,
which have resulted in a change of my religious views. Long, long
have I striven to become a good man, rather, to obtain that peace of
mind which I conclude to be the evidence of a soul in a state of ac-
ceptance with its Creator, but in vain have been my efforts and my
researches in the wisdom of the schools of ancient and modern phi-
losophy, the (I fear) delusive and bewitching scepticism of so many
noble minds. I am now quite inclined to believe in what are termed
the dogmas of Christianity – at least in a part of them & have ceased
to rebel against the rest. From my repeated failures in the path of
virtue & godliness I am at last convinced of the necessity of regen-
eration i.e. a new heart – and what may surprise you still more, I am

display created by comet's close encounter with Earth. Spotted in the Southern Hemisphere on May 13th at 4th magnitude. Moved
north very slowly across Eridanus. On June 8th, of 2nd magnitude. At mid month, 1st magnitude. Tail already 40 degrees long.
Thereafter, motion increased dramatically. On June 24th, when near Rigel, zero magnitude. In conjunction with the Sun on June
29th. Earth passed through the comet's tail! In the Northern Hemisphere, appeared suddenly in Auriga at dawn - immense, brilliant
object. Descriptions suggest the head was at least -1 or -2 magnitude. Tail seen to stretch from Auriga to Ophiuchus - 120 degrees!
Comet became circumpolar on July 1st. The next night the head was zero magnitude, tail 97 degrees long. On July 8th, when near
the Big Dipper, 1st magnitude with a tail up to 60 degrees long. Thereafter rapidly declined. Of 2nd to 3rd magnitude at mid month,
4th at the end. Lost to the unaided eye in mid August."
led to believe in the existence of an Evil Spirit, the great adversary of the Soul, whose malign influence has so often destroyed my fondest hopes of peace. I seize upon the truth of the Gospel as recorded in the Old and New Testaments as a shipwrecked sailor to the hand stretched forth to rescue him from the whelming waves. The spiritual wants of man herein recorded and corroborated by his inward light seem to be so aptly fitted that nothing less than a Divine master could have given them to us. What is human life without the faith and hope thus inspired within the soul! – the faith of so many of the great and good, the saints and Martyrs of the Church of Christ. Oh! dear T. we need it all. "I am not mad most noble Festus" but am willing to be accounted a fool for the sake of the great Head of the Church. I know that you are too good and too pure a man to smile at my new born Zeal or rather newly awakened for I once before long ago was similarly led. Do not think that I am about to forsake my kind Concord friends, the purest, wisest and best of philosophers, dear noble souls – no – My heart yearns for your spiritual recognition of the revealed word, wherein ye may see that "ye must be born again". What ever takes from our faith and hopes in the future life, robs us of the only possessions that render our earthly existence endurable. Let us devoutly pray to God for light, for light & strength. We must feel contrite – be ready to smite our breast and cry “God be merciful to me a sinner”. O! there must be a listening ear to the fervent petition of the troubled soul—Our Heavenly Father will hear us — He will answer too our prayers. I humbly trust that He has mine. As I said before I have no rebellion in my heart now— I gladly accept whatever provision God has made for our future happiness, & endeavor to repose with faith upon the arm of Divine Wisdom—Welcome Christ the Saviour of our souls if God so wills, Mystery though it be – purest of the pure, simplest & wisest of all teachers, who died for his faithfulness – the great exemplar & guide of man through the thorny road of earthly life, whose life blood sealed the great testimony of truth he wrought out for us – typical of regeneration He died for us all— How grateful we should feel towards him, the great Head of the Church.

Monday Mrg. July 1. Thus far I wrote last evening & now take my pen to draw my letter to a close. We are just commencing mowing & the scythes are already busy in the hands of my hired men – the most graceful of the farmer’s graceful labor – all of which is the living poetry of rural life.

Do let me hear from you soon? And remember me kindly to Channing for whom I shall ever feel an affectionate interest, and to dear father Alcott, and to that complex gentleman, scholar, philosopher & Christian, Radulphus Primus! My wife has had a long illness, but
is now recovering. My valued Uncle, James Thornton died 27 April
last in his 64th year, of which please inform Channing, who knew
him. With kind regards to your mother & sister, I remain truly & af-
fectionately
Your friend,
Danl Ricketson
“Te teneam monius deficiente manu.”

What he meant by that he would feel sufficiently confident to confide to his journal in his extreme old age,
in May 1885 just after he had read of and had evidently been perplexed by the supernaturalist beliefs that had
passed for religion in the mind of Victor Hugo:

I believe in the gentle doctrines of the early Friends
— particularly that of “the indwelling light,” as the
first great teacher and guide, it being ... the true
interpreter of the Sacred Volume whose pages bear
record of this divine manifestation to mankind from the
earliest ages.... At the hour of death I hope for grace
from on high, to resign myself with childlike
confidence into the hands of our Heavenly Father, the
great and good Creator, whose protecting care over me
in my past youth, manhood, and old age, I have so often
witnessed.... As a birthright member of the Society of
Friends, I would express my continued faith in its
Christian doctrines, so simple and true, so human and
charitable when rightly observed, feeling that in the
future they will be seen to be the truest
interpretation of the Christian truth. So, asking
God’s blessing upon those who may be called upon to
suffer for its principles I would close.

Thoreau jotted down that he and Horace Mann, Jr. had reached the “Mackinaw House” on Mackinac Island.
By 1838 this island, which had started out as the Michilimackinac “Green Turtle” burying ground, had already
become firmly established as a summer health resort, catering in particular to those suffering from seasonal
allergies such as hay fever. In fact some sufferers had to be turned away in earlier years for lack of
accommodations. By 1861 there had been a building boom —although the Grand Hotel and the Michigan State
Park were still a number of years in the future— and Thoreau and Mann were able to choose among several
hotels and boarding houses. It was unseasonably cold and Thoreau was so ill at this point that he spent most
of his time sitting by the fire with Mann bringing botanical collections in to him. Be it noted that Margaret Fuller and William Cullen Bryant had been on Mackinac Island and young Mann had himself been there before as a boy of 13 with his father.

We may recollect a letter written by Horace Mann, Sr. on Mackinac Island in 1857: “I never breathed such air before, and this must be some that was clear out of Eden, and did not get cursed. I slept every night under sheet, blanket, and coverlet, and no day is too warm for smart walking and vigorous bowling. The children are crazy
Therefore, it is clear, Thoreau did not return to Concord via the Great Lakes by accident, nor stop off at Mackinaic Island by happenstance.

Michilimackinac “Green Turtle” Island on Lake Michigan
Publication of new collection of William Cullen Bryant's poems.
A careful engraving of the noted authors of the day was prepared, to vend to the general public for $10 a pop. Ten dollars would be roughly the value then of two weeks labor for a working man. We notice of course the necessary presence in Washington Irving’s famous Knickerbocker library at “Sunnyside” of Waldo Emerson, transcendently hopeful of all good things, and indifferently content with his Carlylean reputation as the most original thinker in America, and the necessary absence of Henry Thoreau:

“They have assembled for a morning’s conversation in the little Knickerbocker library at Sunnyside, a place dear to the recollection of all who have visited that classic spot. Irving sits in an easy, unaffected attitude, in his big arm chair, at once the honored host and genial companion of the distinguished party which surrounds him. William H. Prescott, evidently the last speaker in the group, bends towards him his handsome intellectual face, in an earnest and inquiring manner, and behind him stands Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, thoughtfully attentive for the momentarily expected response form the presiding spirit of the occasion. At the left hand of Irving sits James Fenimore Cooper, complacently conscious of his own brilliant fame, yet cordially recognizant of the still higher eminence of his great contemporary. The front line of this portion of the group
includes, also, the strong decisive profile of George Bancroft, in the attentive attitude of an expectant listener. William Cullen Bryant stands near the window, pensively meditating on
those melancholy days that annually cast their shade of sadness over nature’s varying face, and opposite him is seen Nathaniel Hawthorne, already wandering in imagination through those mysterious chambers in the House with the Seven Gables, through whose dusty windows was destined to stream the clear sunshine of his prolific fancy. Frederick Goddard Tuckerman is charging his memory with the characteristic points of the celebrities before him, and Nathaniel Parker Willis is treasuring a “jotting-down” and a piquant item for his “Seeings and Hearings.” Worthy of mention. In short, each particular star of this brilliant galaxy, shines with its own peculiar light and magnitude, and appropriately fills its allotted place in this most charming and suggestive picture. Mr. Darley, to whose ever skilful pencil the country is indebted for both its design and execution, has but given us another evidence that whatever he undertakes to do he will do well. To secure accuracy, Mr. Darley availed himself of the services of the eminent photographer Brady. The picture has been reproduced in oil by Mr. Schuessele, with great fidelity to the original, making a beautiful and effective painting four feet by six, preserving in a remarkable degree the strength of handling and perfection of resemblance, which characterize the original drawing. It will be recollected that this fine drawing was made by Mr. Darley with the view of its being presented to the public in the form of an engraving.”
Thomas Hicks painted his “Authors of the United States” as a name-dropping set piece to show off various of the portraits of prominent personages he had painted at his studio in New-York. We have no idea as to the present whereabouts of the original of this, but an engraving of it was made by A.H. Ritchie. We note that the statues on the upper balcony are of course of founding literary giants Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, William Shakespeare, and Dante Alighieri. Henry Thoreau is of course as always not noticeably absent, since he would
not emerge into his present renown until well into the 20th Century.

31=Margaret Fuller, marchesa d'Ossoli 32=Reverend William Ellery Channing 33=Harriet Beecher Stowe
34=Mrs. Kirkland 35=Friend John Greenleaf Whittier 36=James Russell Lowell 37=Boker 38=Bayard Taylor
39=Saxe 40=Stoddard 41=Mrs. Amelia Welby 42=Gallagher 43=Cozzens 44=Halleck.
June 12, Wednesday: Flooded with years, William Cullen Bryant died in New-York after having been for 50 years the editor of the Evening Post. Parke Godwin would follow as editor.
Parke Godwin’s biography of William Cullen Bryant. During this year and the following one, he would put out an edition of Bryant’s works in four volumes.
Michael P. Nelson, in his survey piece “An Amalgamation of Wilderness Preservation Arguments” for the volume THE GREAT NEW WILDERNESS DEBATE (Athens GA: The U of Georgia P, 1998, page 168), placed Henry Thoreau in a basket with the likes of William Cullen Bryant as one of those folks who perennially fail to grasp that slogans such as “two legs bad, four legs good” amount to oversimplified thinking:

Transcendentalists, such as Emerson, Thoreau, and William Cullen Bryant, went so far as to claim that one could only genuinely understand moral and aesthetic truths in what they took to be a wilderness setting. For these thinkers civilization only fragments and taints one’s genuine moral and aesthetic understanding.

Michael P. Nelson cites no textual reference from which he derives this sort of idea about Thoreau. One might even therefore suggest Michael P. Nelson to be here guilty of oversimplified thinking.13

13. Incidentally, was William Cullen Bryant a Transcendentalist? I can’t seem to find other comments in the literature, about him and Transcendentalism — other than that on April 20, 1831 on the street in New-York near Broadway and Park Place, he attempted unsuccessfully to use a whip to induce a competing editor, William L. Stone of the Commercial Advertiser, to “transcend personal limitations.” I hear tell that he joined the Unitarian church, but that’s not exactly the same thing as Transcendentalist is it?
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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: June 8, 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.