

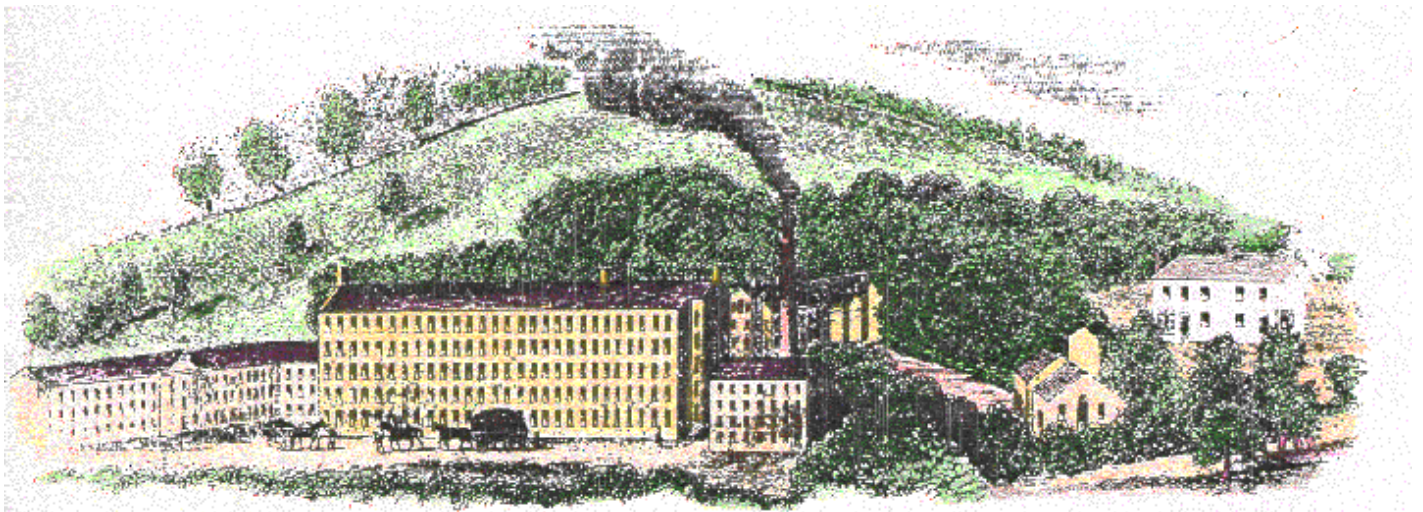
THE REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER



ROBERT COLLYER

1797

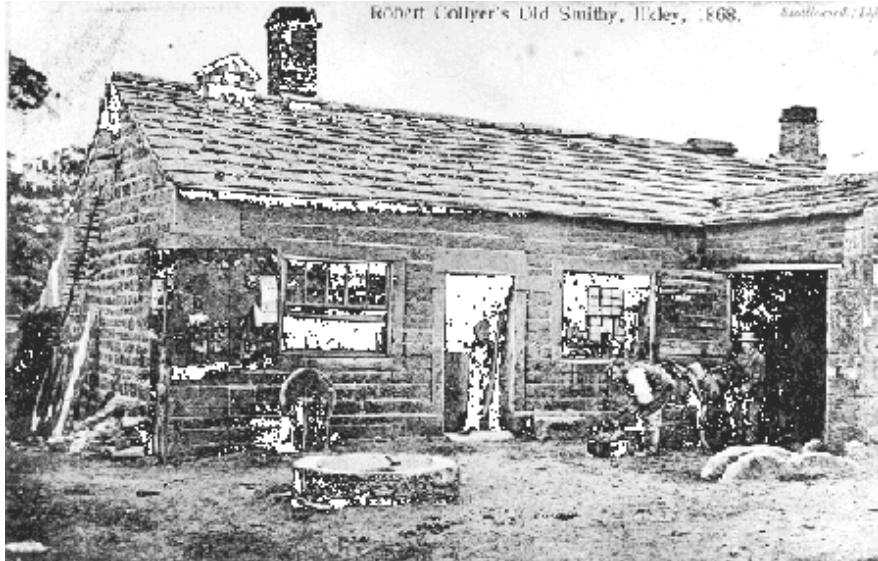
March 27, Monday: Samuel Collyer was born, the son of a sailor. He would grow up as a London orphan. In 1807, at the age of 10, he would be put to labor in Yorkshire in the flax (linen) mill of Messrs. Colbeck and Ellis (West House Mill) in the parish of Fewston, on the north side of the River Washburn across Blubberhouses bridge.



REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

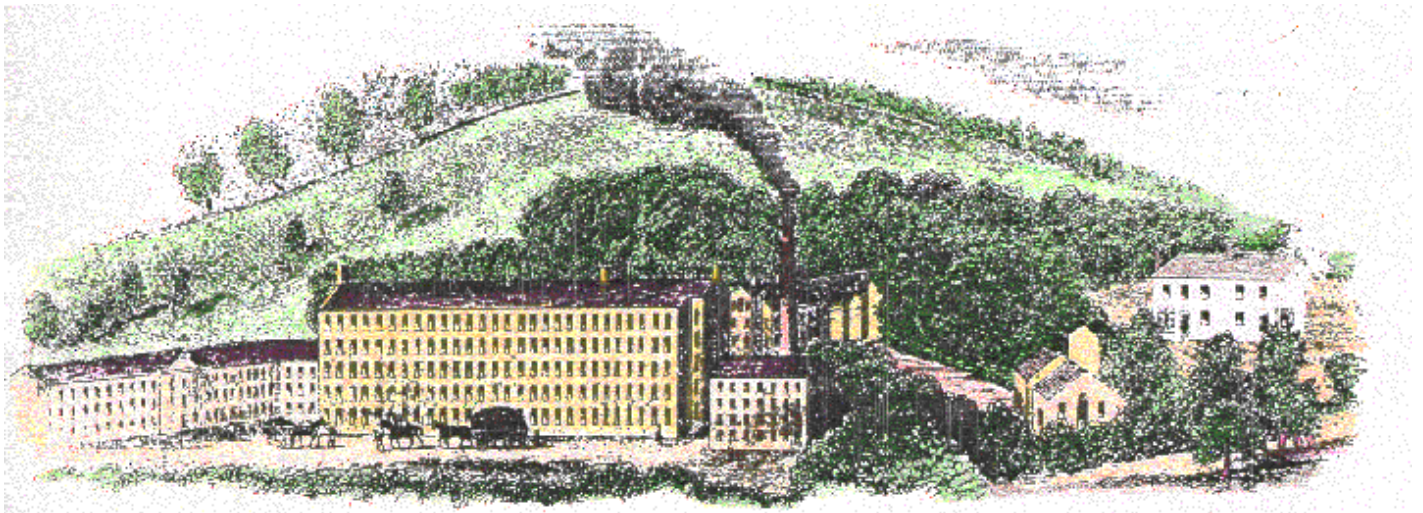
REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

After a few years there, he would be apprenticed to their blacksmith, John Birch.



1798

At about this point Harriet Norman was born, the daughter of a sailor, Thomas Norman. She would grow up in an orphanage in Norwich. In 1807, at the age of 9, she would be put to labor in Yorkshire in the flax (linen) mill of Messrs Colbeck and Ellis (West House Mill) in the parish of Fewston, on the north side of the River Washburn across Blubberhouses bridge.

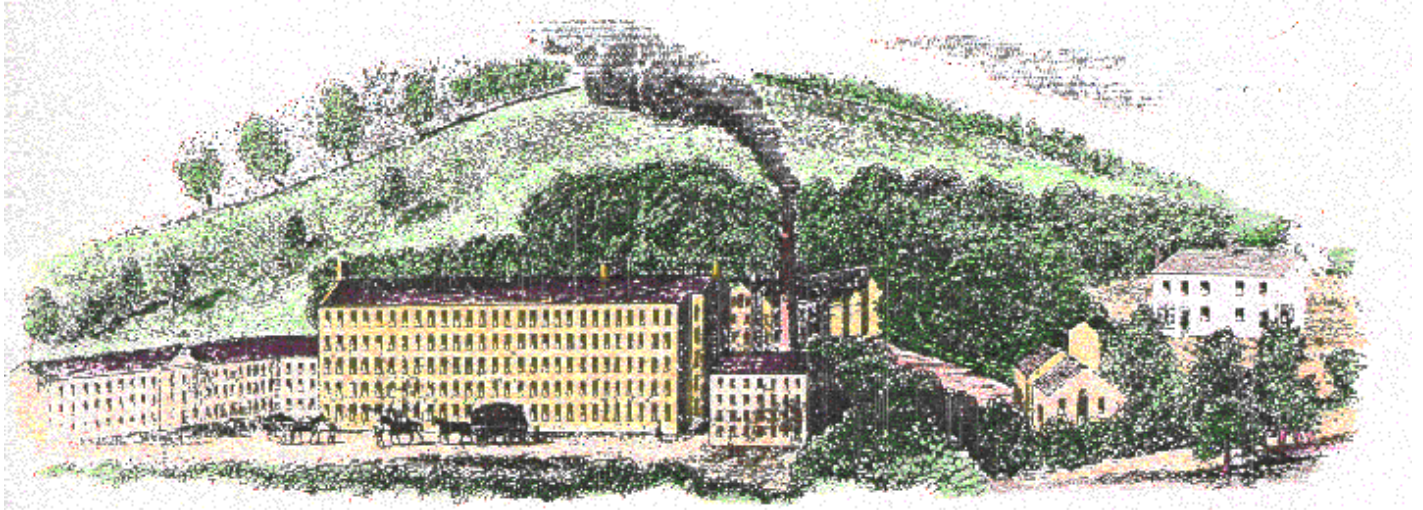


REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

1807

➡ Samuel Collyer, a London orphan who had reached the age of 10, and Harriet Norman, a Norwich orphan who had reached the age of 9, were put to labor in Yorkshire in the flax (linen) mill of Messrs Colbeck and Ellis (West House Mill) in the parish of Fewston, on the north side of the River Washburn across Blubberhouses bridge. After a few years there, Samuel would be apprenticed to the blacksmith at the mill, John Birch.



1823

➡ January: Samuel Collyer, age 25, and Harriet Norman Wells, age 24, were married at Fewston Parish Church. This was Harriet's 2d marriage, Wells, her first husband, having been a close friend of Samuel Collyer (the three had grown up together). Harriet had borne her 1st husband a son, William, but then this husband had died. A few days after their marriage, Samuel and Harriet Collyer got into a dispute with the mill owner about wages and went to Keighley, where Samuel got a job in Hattersley's machine shop.

➡ December 8, Monday: [Robert Collyer](#) was born to Samuel and Harriet Collier, two orphans who had married.

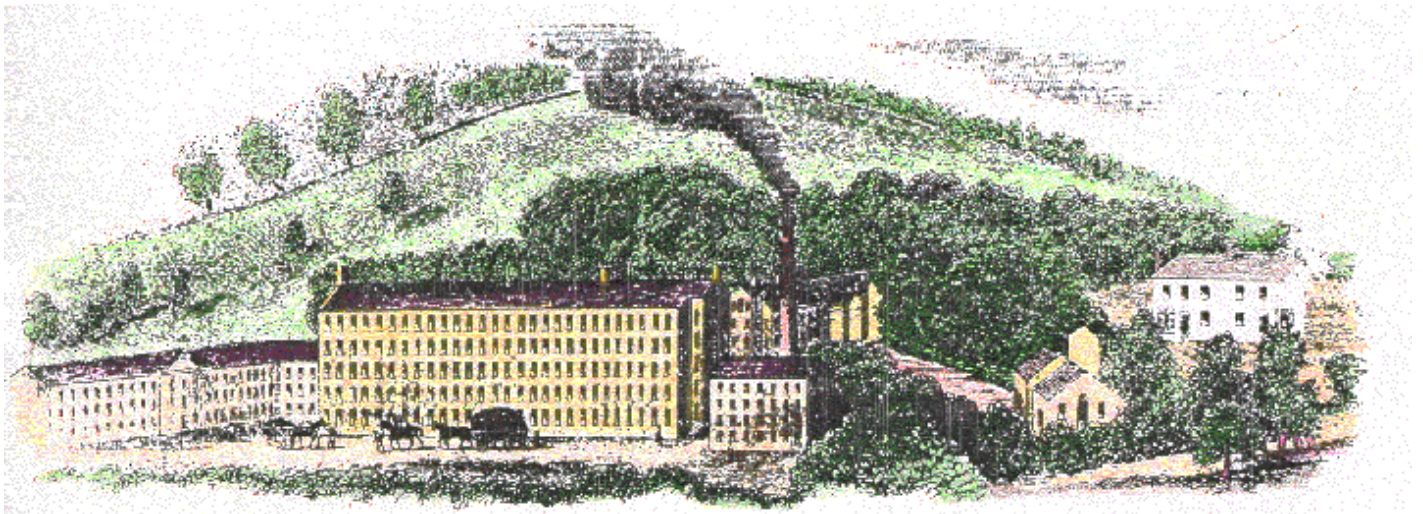
REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

1824



January: In the month following the birth of their son [Robert Collyer](#), Samuel and Harriet Collyer returned to work at the West House Mill of Messrs. Colbeck and Ellis in the parish of Fewston in Yorkshire, where they would occupy a nearby cottage made up of two rooms, open to the rafters, with a platform loft. Initially Robert Collyer would attend the nearby school of Dame Horsman at Scaife House, Blubberhouses, then for a brief period he would attend a “Master” school half a mile away, and finally he would attend the school of schoolmaster Willy Hardy near the church at Fewston. On Sundays he would attend Sunday School at the Salem Chapel, a Congregational church for which William Gill was teacher and deacon. Robert Collyer became friends with Robinson Gill, who would emigrate to the United States.



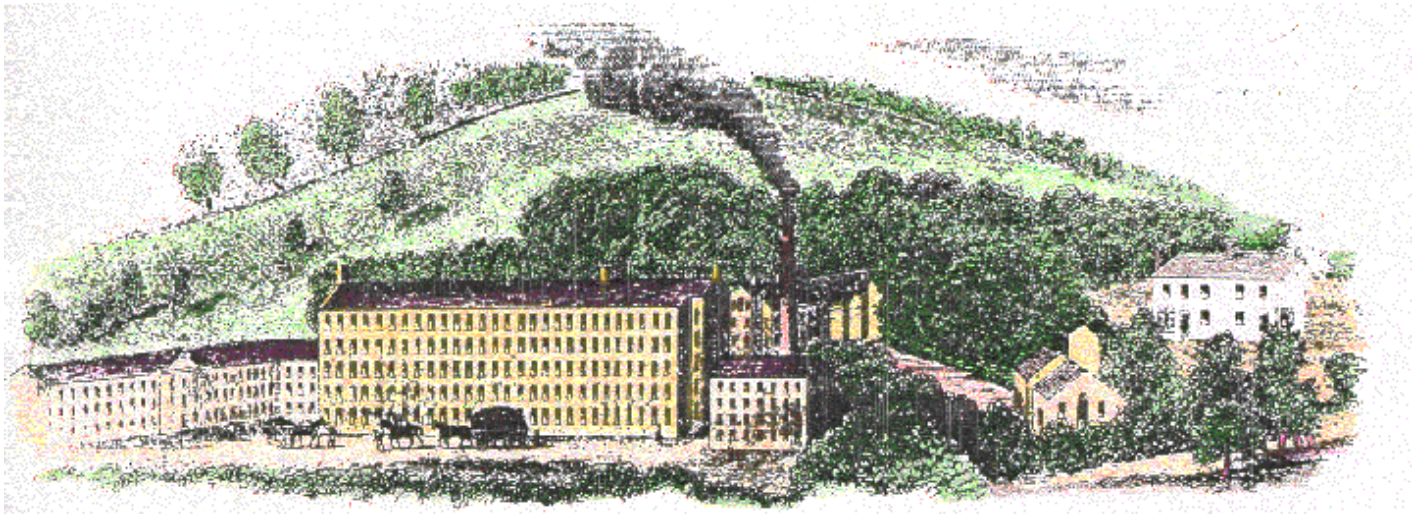
REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

1831



At the age of 7, [Robert Collyer](#) started work as a “doffer” tending spinning frames in the flax (linen) mill of Messrs. Colbeck and Ellis (West House Mill) in the parish of Fewston, on the north side of the River Washburn across Blubberhouses bridge (where his parents labored). His pay was 2 shillings per week for a workday that commenced with the horrid clanging of the factory bell at 5:30AM, a clanging “which was heard throughout the valley” (later in his life he would present this bell as a gift to Cornell University). He resided with other apprentices in the Birch household. His family hoped to get him out of this situation by apprenticing him to a blacksmith.

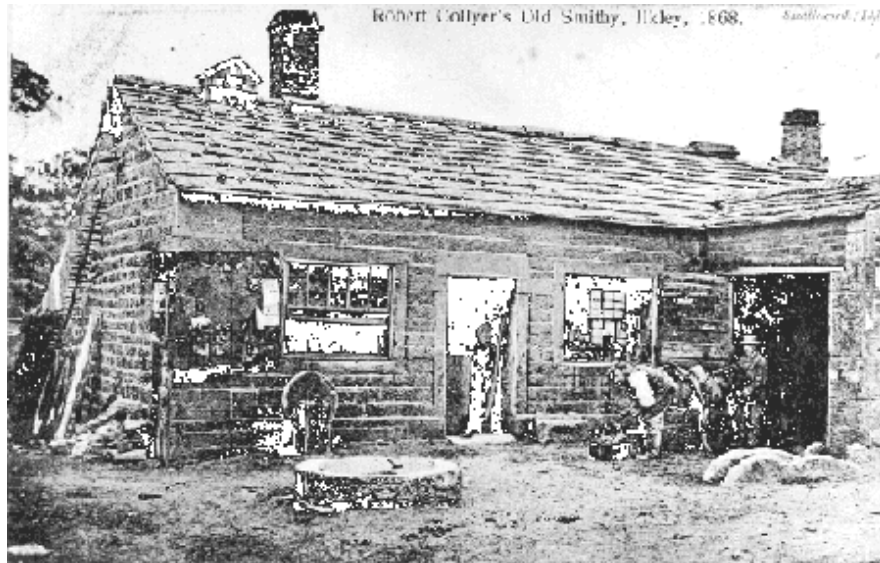


REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

1838

Having reached the age of 15, [Robert Collyer](#) was apprenticed to a blacksmith.



1842

May 29, Sunday: A “little, swarthy, ill-looking rascal ... of the age of twenty-six to thirty, with a shabby hat and of dirty appearance” (we owe this description to [Prince Albert](#)) pointed a pistol at [Queen Victoria](#)’s carriage in St. James’s Park.

[Robert Collyer](#)’s half-brother William Wells died of [tuberculosis](#). (While Robert was in his late teens, he would fall under the influence of an adult whom he considered to be “the best read man in Ilkley,” a woolcomber named John Dobson, who was functioning as a Methodist Local Preacher.)

1844

July: At his anvil in the iron foundry at the age of 47, [Robert Collyer](#)’s father Samuel Collyer dropped dead.

December 8, Sunday: Reaching the age of 21, [Robert Collyer](#) completed his apprenticeship.

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

1847

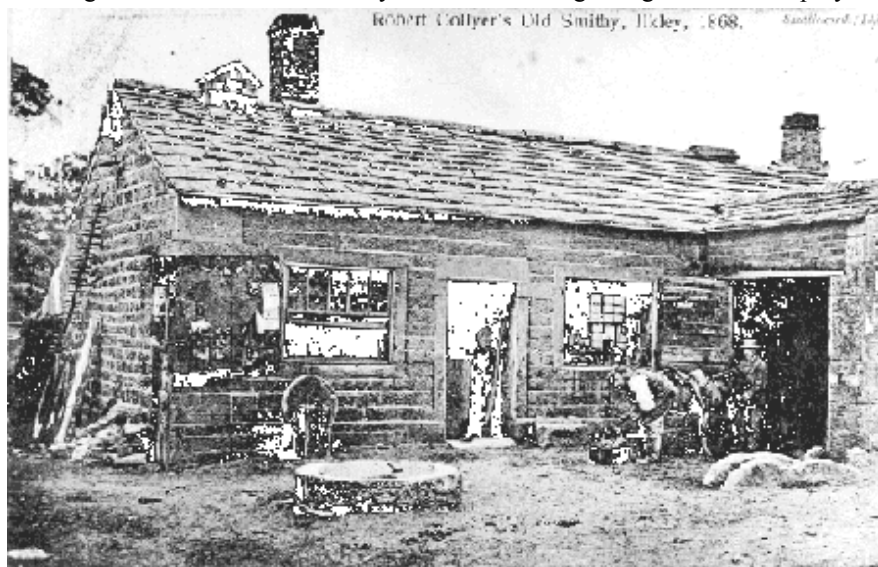
May 25, Tuesday: This was [Waldo Emerson](#)'s 44th birthday.



The foundry manager [Robert Collyer](#) and a straw bonnet maker, Harriet Watson, got married. She would give birth to a son, Samuel.

1849

February 1, Thursday: Harriet Watson Collyer died while giving birth to a 2d child. Her child Jane would die five days later, and the two bodies would be put into the grave that already held [Robert Collyer](#)'s half-brother William Wells, in Ilkley Parish Churchyard. Robert and his young son Samuel would lodge with Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stephenson alongside the Leeds Road smithy. He would be beginning to attend the prayer meetings of the



Wesleyan Methodists, in addition to their Sunday worship. Soon he would be asked to lead some of their services. The first Methodist worship he attempted to lead was held in the kitchen of an farmhouse on the moor. Soon he would be asked to preach in various churches of the local Methodist circuit.

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

1850

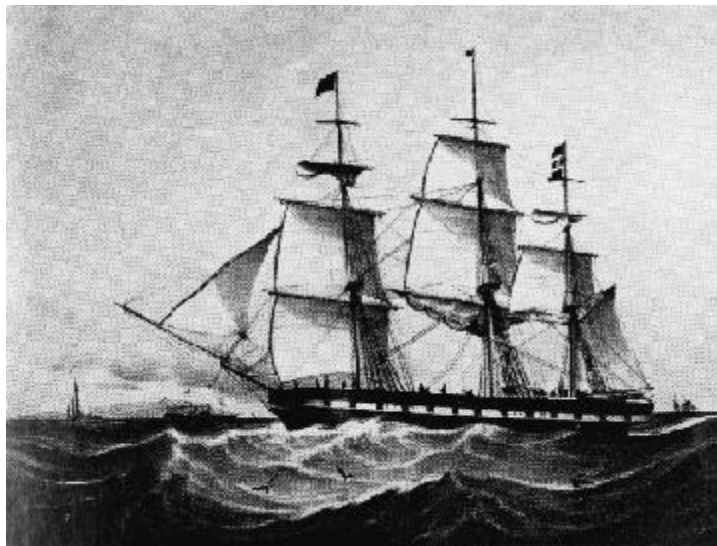
April 9, Tuesday: [Robert Collyer](#), a widower at age 26, remarried with Ann Longbottom, a domestic servant.

April 13, Saturday: An issue of Chambers' Edinburgh Journal:

CHAMBERS' EDINBURGH JOURNAL

ISSUE OF APRIL 13

[Robert Collyer](#) and his bride Ann Longbottom Collyer set sail from Liverpool for New-York aboard the *Roscius* of the Dramatic Line. Robert's son Samuel by his previous marriage was left behind in the care of the child's grandmother, Harriet Norman Wells Collyer, in Leeds.



[Friend Lucretia Mott](#) wrote Sydney H. Gay, the husband of her friend Elizabeth Neall Gay, alluding to the differences between the Garrisonian abolitionists and those who supported the Liberty Party, and mentioning some concerns in regard to the influence of certain English ladies upon Frederick Douglass.

Philada. 4 Mo 13th. 50

My dear Sydney H. Gay

Bless Richard D. Webb & thy dear Self also, that letter from Liverpool, was answered long ago. It probably reached its destination, about the time that Richard sent his to thee. It is true, we delayed too long, for it is not the easiest thing in the world, to give advice on such an important matter. My husband willingly accepted the transfer of the task to himself, as being better acquainted with farming & the choice of land. But "come to the pinch", he too shrunk from saying, "I would come," or, "I wouldn't." When people are making a comfortable living in their own native land, it is a serious thing to "pull up stakes", and go to a strange country – especially for an Englishman, surrounded with the comforts & elegancies of life,



REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

as described by Emerson, Colman, and others, to come here & settle down in our Western Wilds, where such a contrast must be constantly presented. Let the starving millions, & the oppressed operatives come, and every thing here will compare favorably. We did however say all we could to encourage their making the experiment, with the more courage, or hope of their success too, because they contemplated joining Joseph Barker & other emigrants, & forming a neighborhood for themselves, on the Conn. Reserve in Ohio, which indeed is beginning to seem an old country, when compared with the Wisconsin & Iowas & Minnesotas. Our Correspondent – Suliot by name, ventured the hope that R. D. Webb & family might be induced to come with them.¹ We recd. a short letter from Richd. lately, wh. we intend to answer very soon. Sarah Pugh wrote him one of her prettiest, a short time since. Our subjects are so much in common, that it wont do to follow in too quick succession. I may however accept thy kind offer, & send a few lines to be enclosed in thine.

I am glad to be remembered by thy "Lizzie" in any way and the rebuke contained in the article sent, was so well deserved, I ought to feel it "a kindness", for never had a raft of "curious Quakeresses[]" less excuse for thrusting themselves into his clownish presence, "just to get a good look at" him.² He shewed himself at that time wanting in sympathy for the Slave, & since he now comes out a Negro hater, I feel less ashamed of our rudeness, in "boring" him thus.

Thy words of sympathy, dear Sydney, were grateful to us. Edward & Maria appreciated them, as coming from a heart, touched also with sorrow. Altho' human consolation cannot recal the dead, & therefore seems unavailing, yet it is so natural to crave sympathy, in distress "Have pity upon me, Oh ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me."³ "Ye, who e'er lost an Angel, pity me!" and so natural too, to seek to alleviate grief & human suffering by kindly words, as well as deeds, that none need shrink from the heart's yearning in these directions. I confess however, to the feeling, to such a degree – that what I can offer, can be no alleviation, that I seldom attend a funeral, where expression seems to be called for. At such an hour, the inadequacy of words is paramount – & the inspiration to speak receives a check –

For thy great loss, in the removal of so loved a brother, I did indeed feel keenly – & more than once essayed to express it to thee – but failed.⁴ I cannot offer the kind of consolation, which many do, & which thou alludes to – "the ways of Providence", &c. – because so firm a believer in the natural laws, that when such useful & beautiful lives, as thy dear br's. & our precious

1. Apparently a Liverpool resident, Theodore E. Suliot, a teacher and cousin of the Webbs, wished to emigrate to the USA. See Mott to Richard and Hannah Webb, May 28, 1850, Boston Public Library; [Anti-Slavery Bugle](#), October 29, 1853, page 3. Drawing on his tour of Great Britain, [Waldo Emerson](#) lectured in Eastern cities in 1850, including six lectures in Philadelphia in April. After dining with Friend Lucretia on April 5th, Emerson described her as "a blessing & an ornament." See letter to Lidian Emerson, 6 April 1850, LETTERS OF RALPH WALDO EMERSON, ed. Ralph L. Rusk (NY: Columbia UP, 1939), 4:194-95; see also Martha Coffin Wright to Mott, February 6, 1852, Garrison Family Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College. Henry Colman published many works on his European travels, including EUROPEAN LIFE AND MANNERS: IN FAMILIAR LETTERS TO FRIENDS (Boston: Little & Brown, 1849).

2. Possibly a reference to Father Theobald Mathew. The Irish temperance leader arrived in the USA in July 1849 and toured the Northeast throughout the fall. His refusal to condemn slavery provoked Garrison and other abolitionists. See Reverend Father Augustin, FOOTPRINTS OF FATHER THEOBALD MATHEW O. F. M. CAP. (Dublin: M. H. Gill & Son, 1947), pages 494-500; Ruchames and Merrill, LETTERS, Volume 3:640-76.

3. Mott's grandson, Charles Davis, died March 3rd. The quote is from JOB 19:21.

4. The physician and analytical chemist Dr. Martin Gay (born 1803) died on January 12th.



REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

*Charlie's are cut off – I can ascribe it to no other cause, than our ignorance of these laws, or our failure to observe them – This may appear cold unbelief – but commending itself as it does, to my reason it lessens in no wise all veneration for "Him who doeth all things well." equally in the universal operation of his alwise laws as could be by any special act or Providence[.] Yes, you will probably see the old Quakeress again at the Annual Mg.⁵ but if she shd. tell thee she felt "moved to speak at the Tabernacle – the very utterance of it, would withdraw the "motion" – Thanks for the invitatn. to repeat a visit so pleasant to me – If possible it will give me great pleasure – Elizh. must not let [ms. damaged] dear boy keep her at home that week – in fulness of love
yrs. L Mott*

*I took but a scrap of paper, not expecting to say so much – After filling that, it occurs to me, that I have never acknowledged thine kindly sent in reply to my inquiries relative to the Syracuse Convention & the notable English ladies – the Griffeths. Thy explanatn. was altogether satisfactory & in my heart I thanked thee for it. We have our fears for Fredk. [Douglass] through the influence of these women – but hope that his strong good sense will preserve him from estrangement. Thy suggestion relative to employg. S. May Jr. as gen. Agt. – inducg. him to settle in New York, &c – havg. Quarry. Mgs. – & all that reads well, if we could only bring it about.⁶ What Penna. would do toward it, we are not able to say; but judgg. from the past, we cannot hope the abolitionists hereaway wd. "shell out" any more liberally. I did not feel qualified to give an opinion, & that is one reason of my not answering thy letter sooner – We must talk the Cause well over when the Society comes together in New York – James Mott expects to be there next week or the week after. If he could see thee at that time, & talk over affairs of the Slave's interest, he could then report to our Ex. Com. before the Annual Mg. & at least strengthen the interest we all ought to feel, in the American Society's arrangements.
It was fully my intention to go to Syracuse – & Miller M'Kim wd. have gone if I had, but our family were so opposed to the winter-journey – that I had to give it up – But that Convenn. was such a Lib. Party affair, that we did not so much regret our absence from it.⁷ Moreover Miller wd. not then have gone to Boston, and he did & received good there –*

5. The annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society was to be held May 7-9th at the Broadway Tabernacle in New-York. Mott did not attend this meeting, which was disrupted by rioters. New-York Tribune, May 10, 1850, page 2; Ruchames and Merrill, LETTERS, Volume 4, pages 6-15.

6. The Reverend Samuel May Jr. (1810-1999), a Unitarian minister and cousin of Samuel J. May, was then general agent of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, and a strong Garrisonian.

7. Abolitionists meeting in Syracuse on January 15th had discussed the primacy of the American Anti-Slavery Society and heard a speech by Gerrit Smith supporting the Constitution and the Liberty Party. See page 18 of the Liberator for February 1, 1850.

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

again affecy L M



May 11, Saturday: The *Roscius* came to dock in New-York, bringing [Robert Collyer](#) and Ann Longbottom Collyer as emigrants from Yorkshire.

Discovery of a 11th [asteroid](#). (From this point forward, one or more would be being discovered each year.)

ASTRONOMY

An issue of Chambers' Edinburgh Journal:

CHAMBERS' EDINBURGH JOURNAL

ISSUE OF MAY 11

May 13, Monday: [Robert Collyer](#) and Ann Longbottom Collyer, emigrants from Yorkshire, boarded a train from New-York to Philadelphia.

May 14, Monday: In Philadelphia, [Robert Collyer](#) found employment as a blacksmith fashioning claw hammers. Because he had accepted piecework wages and because he was energetic and able, he soon began to make what for him was real money. He would join a local Methodist church and soon begin preaching. He and his wife Ann Longbottom Collyer would be residing near Philadelphia for nine years, during which time she would produce five children two of whom would survive.

[Margaret Fuller](#)'s leavetaking letter from Europe was posted to her mother, and indicates a clear recognition of the perils of sea travel:

Florence, May 14, 1850.

Dear Mother, — I will believe I shall be welcome with my treasures, — my husband and child. For me, I long so much to see you! Should anything hinder our meeting upon earth, think of your daughter, as one who always wished, at least, to do her duty, and who always cherished you, according as her mind opened to discover excellence.

Give dear love, too, to my brothers; and first to my eldest, faithful friend, Eugene; a sister's love to Ellen; love to my kind good aunts, and to my dear cousin E. God bless them!

I hope we shall be able to pass some time together yet, in this world. But if God decrees otherwise, — here and **HEREAFTER**, my



REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

dearest mother,
Your loving child,
MARGARET.

ARTHUR FULLER'S BOOK

1854

[Robert Collyer](#)'s young son Samuel Collyer, whom he had left behind in Leeds, England in the care of his grandmother, at this point was summoned to Philadelphia.

Philadelphia became the first major city to issue revolvers to policemen (for the following six decades it would refrain from providing them with any training in the use of such weapons).

A fulltime schoolteacher was hired for the [Eastern State Penitentiary](#).

1855

Attending a lecture by Edward Davis, a son-in-law of [Friends James](#) and [Lucretia Mott](#), and meeting Friend Lucretia herself at Davis's home in Philadelphia, [Robert Collyer](#) soon became persuaded of the antislavery cause.

In this year in Philadelphia, publication of the initial volume of John W. Watson's WATSON'S ANNALS OF PHILADELPHIA AND PENNSYLVANIA A COLLECTION OF MEMOIRS, ANECDOTES, AND INCIDENTS OF THE CITY AND ITS INHABITANTS AND OF THE EARLIEST SETTLEMENTS OF THE INLAND PART OF PENNSYLVANIA FROM THE DAYS OF THE FOUNDERS INTENDED TO PRESERVE THE RECOLLECTIONS OF OLDEN TIME, AND TO EXHIBIT SOCIETY IN ITS CHANGES OF MANNERS AND CUSTOMS, AND THE CITY AND COUNTRY IN THEIR LOCAL CHANGES AND IMPROVEMENTS.

JOHN F. WATSON, I, 1855

JOHN F. WATSON, II, 1857

1856

November: With his new antislavery stance not being in favor within the Methodist religion, [Robert Collyer](#) fell under the influence of a Unitarian, the Reverend William Henry Furness of Philadelphia. Guided by his new awareness of the iniquity of slavery, Collyer joined the newly formed Republican Party and began to campaign for John C. Frémont for President. In this role he would come to the attention of the Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#).

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

1858

June 1, Monday: The Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#), to the great relief of his congregation, married Ellen Dana. (The couple had been mawkishly and shamelessly making eyes at one another for some time.)



After their ceremony under a bower of white roses, the bridal party, which included the Reverend William Henry Furness who had officiated, went off on a steamboat excursion down the Ohio River to explore Mammoth Cave, for which the bride and bridesmaids doffed their wedding dresses in favor of “indescribable bloomers.” And then they went even further. They visited the Conway home in the Old South. But there Mrs. Ellen Dana Conway made the mistake, while she was being introduced to a 4-year-old girl, Evelyn, by the girl’s uncle in a front yard, of embracing and kissing her. Evelyn was black and a slave! Word of this incident spread rapidly through the county.

Per the 1904 AUTOBIOGRAPHY / MEMORIES AND EXPERIENCES OF MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY:

We were married by the Rev. Dr. Furness, who travelled from Philadelphia to unite us.... When I offered him payment he said he would accept nothing for himself, but would give what I



REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

offered to a working-man of ability near Philadelphia who for some time had preached for the Methodists. He had become unorthodox, and would preach in the Unitarian pulpit on the Sunday of Furness's absence. The man was Robert Collyer. His appearance in an unorthodox pulpit on that day caused scandal in the Philadelphia Methodist Conference, which had licensed him as a "local preacher." He gave up his license, and rapidly reached distinction as a Unitarian. When Collyer had become a preacher in Chicago, our friendship was formed in working together to place the Western Unitarian Conference in an anti-slavery attitude. That friendship has continue unbroken. It was always a satisfaction to us that the first honorarium ever given Robert Collyer for a sermon was our marriage fee. The first copy of my "Tracts for To-day" was presented to my betrothed, and in it I find written: "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee." The words were more strictly true than most of our friends could imagine. My wife's father, through an unfortunate endorsement of a friend's notes, had lost nearly everything. I had managed to save nearly \$2,000, which was deposited with the Life and Trust Company in Cincinnati. The failure of that company began the "crisis" of 1857. I got only ten cents on the dollar. I had to ask an advance on my salary in order to buy furniture. But my bride and I regarded the poverty attending our first steps as a sort of joke.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

VOLUME II

Henry Thoreau wrote to H.G.O. Blake:

Concord

*Tuesday 4 Pm June 1st
1858*

Mr Blake—

*It looks as if
it might rain tomorrow;
therefore this is to inform
you, — if you have not
left Worcester on account
of rain, — that if the
weather prevents my starting
to-morrow I intend
to start on Thursday morning
— i.e. if it is not decidedly
rainy — or some thing more
than a shower, and
I trust that I shall
meet you at Troy
as agreed on.
H.D.T.*

Page 2



REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

*[the concluding segment of this note wh. I have & ~~sent propose to~~
~~send~~ put into cut out from this note to-day for E.H. the post office
[Sharenon], Box 194 P.O. New York
City, as an ~~auth~~ autograph.
Oct. 19, 1885. H.G.O. Blake]*

*and
I trust that I shall
meet you at Troy
as agreed on.
H.D.T.*

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

The New York Times reported a controversy in New-York over the manufacture and use of "swill-milk":

NEW-YORK CITY.

SWILL-MILK.

Meeting of the Committee of the Board of Health—Testimony on behalf of the Swill-Milkmen.

The Swill-Milk Committee of the Board of Health met yesterday afternoon at 4 o'clock, in Room No. 8, City Hall, and proceeded to take testimony concerning the swill-milk establishments. Aldermen TUOMEY, TUCKER and READ, and Councilman HASWELL were present. H. L. CLINTON, Esq., appeared as counsel, apparently in behalf of the swill-milk interest, and assisted hesitating witnesses to enunciate intelligible answers to the leading questions which were put to them. The evidence for the defence, it will be observed, was, contrary to legal precedent, first taken

Edwin P. Smith, the Superintendant of the Sixteenth-street stables (Johnson's Sons) was examined—He said there were, previous to May 1, about 800 cows at the stables; that there were about 500 there now; the condition of the stables when the Committee visited them was the same as it was previous to the swill-milk excitement; there had been some diseased cows there, but not many; his family drank the milk of these swill-fed cows and enjoyed good health.

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

James Atchison, of No. 262 West Sixteenth street, sworn—He had charge of the feeding of the cows at the Sixteenth-street stables. He reiterated much of the testimony of the last witness. Inoculating the cows' tails did not effect their systems as far as he knew; the inoculation (the sores caused by it,) lasted two or three weeks; he did not know of any cow which had been driven from the stable because it was diseased, except a cow with a bad udder; the slaughtered cattle which the Committee saw in the slaughter-house opposite the stables, the day of the visit, were brought out of the stables and butchered that same morning; on the first of May there were some 800 cattle in the stables, which were a great deal better cattle than those there now; the object of inoculating the cattle, was to prevent the epidemic, which has prevailed among the cattle; cattle in the country, whose milk is brought to this market, were inoculated like those at Johnson's stables; it was not true that cattle fed on swill lost their cuds; he had been in the stable twenty years, and had not known of their losing their teeth on account of drinking the hot swill; he had used the swill-milk in his own family and drank it himself, for twenty years; the stables were well ventilated; they were forty-five feet wide; there were three doors and three windows to each row of stalls; there were three sick cows among the five hundred there now; cows very rarely lost the use of their limbs from standing in the stable.

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

Oval P. Wells, of No. 129 Ninth-avenue, sworn : He was the physician of the Superintendent (Mr. Smith) of the stables, and had attended his family for two years ; Mr. Smith's children were healthy ; he believed they were fed on milk from the distillery stables.

Lewis Thomas, sworn—He lived at No. 267 West Sixteenth-street ; he had kept 130 cows to Johnson's stables previous to May 1 ; he had since then sold 69 at \$45 a head ; he had 68 cows now ; he had sent two sick cows away to the bone contractor ; they did not milk diseased cows ; after a cow had been sick a few days they could not get milk from her ; he had kept from 2 to 175 cows at a time ; he gave them hay twice a day, with their swill ; none of his cows, as far as he knew, had any ulcers ; their tails were often cut off because they switched around, and made the stalls dirty.

Wm. Gallagher, residing in Sixteenth-street, between Eighth and Ninth avenues, sworn—He was a butcher ; he bought sixty-five cows from the last witness ; he was in the habit of buying cows from Johnson's stables ; the beef of these cows brought a little higher price than any other beef in market ; last Saturday he had obtained nine cents per pound for some of this beef, which was half a cent more than any other beef in the market sold for ; Mr. Reed, a butcher, bought it ; the witness had never seen any ulcerated cows like those described in the papers ; different butchers went to these stables to purchase cows, and gave quite as much as was paid at Bull's Head ; the appearance of the stables was just as good previous to May 1, as on the day when the Committee visited these stables.

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

Robert Law, of No. 250 West Sixteenth-street, sworn—He was employed to repair the Sixteenth-street stables; the stables had been as cleanly during the last six months as they were now; the portion of the stables torn down was removed to make way for tenement houses; the demolition of these buildings had been long contemplated; those buildings were as good as the buildings left standing; he had been through all the stables from morning to night many days, and had never seen an ulcerated cow; he had seen cows there so disabled that they could not stand up; he had never seen them milked when lying down.

John Carroll, a butcher of No. 252 West Sixteenth-street, was sworn—He had bought 28 cows at the Sixteenth-street stables since May 1; he bought them to slaughter; the beef was of good quality; this beef brought higher prices than that of any other cattle, except prime steers; the hoofs of the cows which he had bought turned up, but not more than those of many cattle just from the country which he had seen.

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

Edward Callahan, of No. 265 West Sixteenth-street, sworn—He was employed in Johnson's stables to feed cows; he fed them on hay twice a day and meal generally twice a day; he fed them all alike; he milked the cows; when a cow was sick her milk was milked on the ground; three or four cows were taken away from the stable by the bone man; since the first of May he did not know what ailed them; none had been sent to the country that he knew of; none of the cows in the stable had the prevalent disease that he knew of; some cows had been driven off to the country; a picture of a diseased cow in Frank Leslie's paper was shown the witness; he had never seen a cow like that there represented slaughtered.

Abraham J. Post, of No. 112 Ninth-avenue, sworn—He visited the Sixteenth-street stables on the 5th of April, with a clergyman, who was staying at his house; the stables were as cleanly, he thought, as any cow-stables in the country; the cows all appeared to be in first-rate order except one, which had a sore on the leg, two which were sick, and several which were lean, and which, it was said, had just been received into the stables; he had a prejudice against the milk, and would not use it.

Alderman Tuomey—You had a prejudice against it?

Witness—Yes.

Alderman Tuomey—Well, you would use it now, wouldn't you?

Witness—No.

Alderman Tuomey—Well, that's because you have a prejudice against it, isn't it?

Witness—Yes; I don't use the milk because I don't like to use it; I have a prejudice against it.

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

The Committee here adjourned, at 6 o'clock, to Wednesday at 2 P. M.

Alderman REED expressed the hope that at the next meeting the evidence for the swill-milk establishments would be concluded, after which, he said, the evidence on the other side would be received.

Swill-Milk and Infant Mortality.

To the Editor of the New-York Times :

Now that the public mind is aroused to the horrible evils of the slop-milk trade, in its destructive effects on infant-life, the time appears opportune to present the testimony of physicians on the subject. For however indisputable and conclusive may be the language of facts and experience in reference to the evil, yet from its very nature the demonstration might appear incomplete to some minds, without the testimony of medical men. This testimony has accordingly been given by intelligent and experienced physicians, who, enjoying opportunities, beyond any other class of men, for an accurate knowledge of the facts whereof they affirm, have fearlessly staked their reputation as men of truth and science, on the correctness of their conclusions, and published them to the world.

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

In relation to the subjoined certificate, it may be proper to remark, that it was given at the personal solicitation of the undersigned in 1837, and published in the New-York papers more than 20 years ago. At that time, by a series of articles which appeared in the public journals, and by numerous lectures in this City and Brooklyn, he first called public attention to the atrocious evils of the slop-milk business ; and the result of his protracted investigations subsequently appeared in a work on the subject, in 1841. Although many signers of the certificate have since passed away, that does not invalidate their testimony, or its pertinency at the present time. Every physician then called upon, promptly gave it the sanction of his name, as doubtless every medical man acquainted with the subject would now do, if opportunity was afforded for this purpose. After presenting testimony of this kind to the good sense and philanthropic feelings of the humane and intelligent, it must be left to them to say whether they will continue to tolerate a system so inimical to their own best interests, and which the guardians of the public health so unsparingly condemn.

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

**CERTIFICATE OF PHYSICIANS ON THE PERNICIOUS PROPERTIES
OF SLOP-MILK.**

The undersigned, Physicians of the City of New-York, being requested to express our opinion in relation to the milk of cows fed chiefly on distillery slop, have no hesitation in stating that they believe such milk to be extremely detrimental to the health, especially of young children, as it not only contains too little nutriment for the purposes of food, but appears to possess unhealthy and injurious properties, owing in part, probably, to the confinement of the Cows and the bad air which they consequently have to breathe, as well as the unnatural and pernicious nature of the slop on which they are fed:

John Stearns, Sen., M. D.	John W. Francis, M. D.
James C. Bliss, M. D.	Thomas D. Boyd, M. D.
John Torrey, M. D.	Charles A. Lee, M. D.
C. Ticknor, M. D.	James Stewart, M. D.
John Neilson, M. D.	Jas. A. Washington, M. D.
J. Vanderberg, M. D.	D. Atkins, M. D.
A. D. Clement, M. D.	Ab'm L. Cox, M. D.
Albert Smith, M. D.	William P. Buell, M. D.
E. R. Belcher, M. D.	John Davis, M. D.
George Leo Wolfe, M. D.	David M. Reese, M. D.
G. Forrester Barstow, MD	A. Sidney Doane, M. D.
Thomas Cook, M. D.	E. Mead, M. D.
Henry G. Dannel, M. D.	Ebenezer Storer, M. D.
J. Van Rensselaer, M. D.	Alvan G. Smith, M. D.

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

Benjamin Drake, M. D.	C. R. Bogert, M. D.
John S. Corger, M. D.	Alonzo S. Ball, M. D.
William Channing, M. D.	M. W. Williams, M. D.
Alex. J. Watson, M. D.	P. Van Arsdale, M. D.
J. L. Milledoler, M. D.	Alexander Clinton, M. D.
J. S. Oatman, M. D.	Richard Pennell, M. D.
James R. Wood, M. D.	Nicholl H. Deering, M. D.
G. S. Janeway, M. D.	A. C. Churchill, M. D.
James L. Phelps, M. D.	Henry E. Bartlett, M. D.
J. Miller, M. D.	William Power, M. D.
A. Gerald Hull, M. D.	Wm. A. Blakeman, M. D.
Wm. A. Walters, M. D.	David Seaman, M. D.
Gilbert A. Smith, M. D.	J. H. Borrow, M. D.
F. A. Cadwell, M. D.	S. R. Kirby, M. D.
N. W. Condit, M. D.	John B. Buk, M. D.

The total number of deaths in this City during the preceding nine years, was 190,395, of which 115,126, or about 66 per cent. were children; and this excessive infant mortality is obviously on the increase. The total deaths in 1856, were 23,042, of which 15,763, or *seventy-three* per cent., were children, showing an increase over the average of the previous nine years of *seven* per cent.



REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

We may not in every instance be able to trace with precision the connection of cause and effect ; but we may not doubt that the sweeping mortality of infants amongst us is, to a great extent, the consequence of our ignorance or recklessness of the laws of life. Being still in pupillage, as it respects physiological science, we are incompetent to trace out with distinctness and specify all the causes that are inimical to existence, or to determine how largely the deteriorated quality of milk, of which children so generally and freely partake, may contribute to this sad result. But as this is one of the most frequent, though least-suspected, of the perversions of the laws of health amongst us, analogy, experience and observation, the testimony of facts, and, as shown, the testimony of our most eminent medical men, fully justify the conclusion that its influences are not exaggerated, and that it should be classed among the most fruitful causes of suffering, disease and death.

Has not the time fully come in which milk that is produced from distillery slop, bloated and diseased beef, scrofulous and measly pork, and all other improper food, should share the fate of putrid fish and other unwholesome aliments, and be thrown into our rivers? Let the Board of Health feel their responsibility in this matter, and report such ordinances as will at once and forever abate the slush-milk nuisance. Let every householder, and especially every parent who would not sport with the health and lives of his children, see to it that the deleterious whisky dregs, strained through the udders of diseased cows, and duly diluted, colored and drugged, is banished from his table. So miserable an apology for a healthy and nutritious article of diet might be tolerated in a barbarous nation where infanticide is permitted, but here it should not be endured. Let each individual feel his share of responsibility in removing so great an evil, and all unitedly endeavor to turn away the severe but merited reproach, which this awful mortality of children so justly casts upon this Christian community.

R. M. HARTLEY.

Are we not reminded of [Thoreau](#)'s humorous remark about evidence of 19th-Century commercial food adulteration, to wit "finding a trout in the milk"? Fast forward if you will, to our latest reports out of mainland China. It would seem that the abuse Chinese nurslings are being forced to endure, being reported in the [New York Times](#) in this year of Beijing Olympic triumphalism and Chinese astronaut spacewalks, is eerily similar to the local abuse the [Times](#) had been recording during Thoreau's lifetime!

FAST FORWARD TO NOW



REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

1859

January: [Robert Collyer](#) asked to resign or was asked to resign from the Methodist Church, among the various points of contention being the total unacceptability of his antislavery posture. Hey, what's the matter with you, don't you know you're a white man? He and his wife, facing a shortage of work, left Philadelphia.

February 22, Tuesday: [Robert Collyer](#) accepted a position as Minister-at-Large at the 1st Unitarian Church of Chicago and he and his wife Ann Longbottom Collyer and their two surviving young children, with his son Samuel by his previous marriage, began their journey to the Midwest.



[Henry Thoreau](#), the author of what one member of his audience remembered as “*that odd book, Walden, or Life in the Woods*,” lectured in H.G.O. Blake’s Worcester parlor on “AUTUMNAL TINTS”:



February 22: Go to Worcester to lecture in a parlor.



REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

1861

May 22, Friday: Franz Liszt dined at the Tuileries with the Emperor [Napoléon III](#) and Empress Eugenie. His playing for the invited guests produced a sensation.

The two visitors from Massachusetts, [Henry Thoreau](#) and Horace Mann, Jr., “Rode down Michigan Avenue” in Chicago. Meanwhile, in Minnesota, the destination of our Massachusetts travelers, a missionary teacher of the Chippewa Indians at Belle Prairie some 50 miles upriver from Fort Snelling, Patrick Henry Taylor—a young man who had lost one eye in a childhood accident but had nevertheless already adventured with his older brother Jonathan for some 500 miles on the Red River and the Mississippi River in a birchbark canoe—volunteered for the Union forces. From a letter Henry Taylor wrote to his parents:

I have heard that it is doubtful about the St. Cloud company being accepted for some time at least, and as more men are wanted to fill up the First Regiment which has already been accepted for three months, but now wanted for three years or during the war, I have given my name to go in that Reg. I am to start for Fort Snelling (near St. Paul) in the course of three hours. It is now 7 o'clock A.M. I am the only one who goes from Belle Prairie. I have taught two weeks on my term at Little Falls, but you know schools come after Law and Government. I shall probably take the oath day after tomorrow. The "Star Spangled Banner, o long may it wave." I should be pleased to see you all before I go, but I cannot. The same God, who has thus protected me will not withhold his guardian care in future. I go feeling that I am right and in a good cause, and if that be the case, I will not fear. Tell all my brothers and sisters to stand firm by the Union and by the glorious liberties which, under God, we enjoy.

And, from the diary which Henry Taylor began at that significant juncture in his life:



May 22, 1861 — Left Belle Prairie, Minn. at 11 a.m. by stage, arriving at Sauk Rapids at 7 p.m., the boys drilling in the opening.

[Thoreau](#), evidently after ditching his travelling companion for awhile, visited the Chicago [Unitarian](#) minister, the Reverend [Robert Collyer](#), evidently at his parsonage next to the church, and then after Thoreau left the Reverend wrote him an enclosure note, sending him some materials which he had requested, and added a

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

suggestion that Thoreau might author a book about the American West.



Mr Thoreau

Dear Sir

You will find herein the things you wanted to know. Mr Whitfield is very well posted about the country and what he Says is reliable. I hope you will have a pleasant time get heartily well and write a book about the great west that will be to us what your other books are. ["a freinds"] I want you to stop in Chicago as you come back if it can be possible, and be my guest a few days. I should be very much pleased to have you take a rest and feel at home with us, and if you do please write in time so that I shall be sure to be at home.

*I am very truly
Robert Collyer
Chicago May 22^d.*

Thirty-one years later, in 1892, this minister would write most perceptively about the person whom he so briefly encountered, in a manuscript he would title CLEAR GRIT: A COLLECTION OF LECTURES, ADDRESSES AND POEMS which eventually, in 1913, would see publication by Boston's Beacon Press.



Here are pages 294-7 as eventually published:

Thirty-one years ago last June a man came to see me in Chicago whom I was very glad and proud to meet. It was Henry Thoreau of Concord, the Diogenes of this new world, the Hermit of Walden Woods. The gentle and loving misanthropist and apostle of individualism so singular and separate that I do not know where to look for his father or his son – the most perfect instance to be found I think of American independence run to seed, or shall we say to a mild variety which is very fair to look on but



REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

can never sow itself for another harvest. The man of a natural mind which was **not** enmity against God, but in a great and wide sense was subject to the law of God and to no other law. The saint of the **bright** ages and the own brother in this to the Saint of the dark ages, who called the wild creatures that run and fly his sisters and brothers, and was more intimate with them than he was with our human kind. The man of whom, so far as pure seeing goes, Jesus would have said "blessed are your eyes, for **they see**," and whose life I want to touch this evening for some lessons that as it seems to me he alone could teach those who would learn.

As I remember Henry Thoreau then, he was something over forty years of age but would have easily passed for thirty-five, and he was rather slender, but of a fine, delicate mold, and with a presence which touched you with the sense of perfect purity as newly opened roses do. It is a clear rose-tinted face he turns to me through the mist of all these years, and delicate to look on as the face of a girl; also he has great gray eyes, the seer's eyes full of quiet sunshine. But it is a strong face, too, and the nose is especially notable, being as [Moncure] Conway said to me once of Emerson's nose, a sort of interrogation mark to the universe. His voice was low, but still sweet in the tones and inflections, though the organs were all in revolt just then and wasting away and he was making for the great tablelands beyond us Westwards, to see if he could not find there a new lease of life. His words also were as distinct and true to the ear as those of a great singer, and he had Tennyson's splendid gift in this, that he never went back on his tracks to pick up the fallen loops of a sentence as commonplace talkers do. He would hesitate for an instant now and then, waiting for the right word, or would pause with a pathetic patience to master the trouble in his chest, but when he was through the sentence was perfect and entire, lacking nothing, and the word was so purely one with the man that when I read his books now and then I do not hear my own voice within my reading but the voice I heard that day....

We are not sure it would be best to meet some men who have touched us by their genius, but it seems to me now that to see Thoreau as I did that day in Chicago and hear him talk was the one thing needful to me, because he was so simply and entirely the man I had thought of when I read what he had written. There was no lapse, no missing link; the books and the man were one, and I found it was true of him also that "the word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

1862

The North Side Unitarian Church in Chicago asked [Robert Collyer](#) to be their Minister in Charge. (During the Civil War he would be following the troops.)



REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

September 30, Saturday: The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) wrote from Chicago to Charles Wesley Slack in regard to his upcoming lecture.

1863

May 5, Tuesday: The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) wrote from Chicago to Charles Wesley Slack, laying plans for a future lecture.⁸

The second boat to take Dakotas into exile was the *Northerner*, towing three barges. There was no doctor and no interpreter aboard. While on the river, no drinking water was made available, and the Dakotas had to scoop up filthy river water to drink. At low-water spots they all had to disembark and walk, once for most of a day, entirely without food. Eventually, because of water levels in the rivers and other problems, part of the exodus was by cattle cars on the railroad, at sixty Dakotas per car. The 1,300 survivors, including the former members of the “Hazelwood Republic of Christian Indians,” were taken down the Mississippi River to St. Louis and up the Missouri River to Crow Creek to Fort Thompson SD “where they were told to make homes.” It appears that the Union soldiers who were guarding them on this trip, poorly officered recent recruits, were quite free to rape and murder. Their death rate averaged 8% per year after they had exited Minnesota, mostly from pulmonary [consumption](#). The prisoner diet consisted of musty hardtack and briny salt pork, issued uncooked. The bodies of the prisoners were receiving no medical attention although their souls were receiving constant missionary ministrations. Crow Creek was a barren area and nothing had been provided for their safety or for their sustenance. Their numbers quickly fell from 1300 to 1000. Gabriel Renville, who was what one white observer described as

“a fine specimen of the ‘Noble red man’”

wrote in the Dakota language of this period that



Amid all this sickness and these great tribulations, it seemed doubtful at night whether a person would be alive in the morning. We had no land, no homes, no means of support, and the outlook was most dreary and discouraging. How can we get lands and have homes again, were the questions which troubled many thinking minds, and were hard questions to answer.

The Dakotas would be held at Crow Creek for three years before being moved to another temporary site on the Niobrara River in Nebraska until 1881. Most Skymans and Eastmans are now in Canada, but some are still living in this vicinity and I have heard one of them term their ancestor a blanket Indian.⁹ You can read the sad story in the Granite Falls [Tribune](#) of November 8, 1910: “Indian Tells of Outbreak.”¹⁰

May 11, Monday: Making plans for a future lecture, the Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) wrote from Chicago to Charles Wesley Slack.

May 13, Wednesday: Making plans for future lectures, the Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) wrote again from Chicago to Charles Wesley Slack.

8. Stimpert, James. A GUIDE TO THE CORRESPONDENCE IN THE CHARLES WESLEY SLACK MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION: 1848-1885. Kent State University, Library, Special Collections



REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

June 15, Monday: The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) wrote again from Chicago to Charles Wesley Slack, this time a letter containing various musings on his lectures and on the emancipation movement in general.

June 26, Friday: The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) wrote again to Charles Wesley Slack, this time a letter containing various musings on freedom of the press in Chicago.

October 26, Monday: By this date the Union invasion into southwestern Louisiana had halted, in the Sunset area, and General Banks had abandoned his agenda to invade [Texas](#) by land, opting instead to attempt a landing at the Mexican border, near Brownsville.

The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) wrote from Chicago to Charles Wesley Slack, describing his current thoughts about leaving his church in Chicago and taking up the direction of Slack's church in downtown [Boston](#), the 28th Congregational Society that was holding its Sunday meetings at the Boston Music Hall.

UNITARIANISM

November 2: [Boston](#) opened its grander, newer music hall.

November 5, Thursday: Charles Eliot Norton (1827-1908) wrote to Charles Wesley Slack to make arrangements for a sermon engagement.¹¹

Charles Wesley Slack wrote to Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) in Chicago in an attempt to respond to his reservations about becoming the pastor of the 28th Congregational Society that held its Sunday meetings at the music hall in downtown [Boston](#).

UNITARIANISM

December 8, Tuesday: The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) wrote to Charles Wesley Slack while making plans for his impending relocation from Chicago to [Boston](#) to become pastor of the 28th Congregational Society that held its Sunday meetings at the Boston Music Hall.

UNITARIANISM

December 27, Sunday: Mark Dexter wrote to Charles Wesley Slack in an attempt to persuade him that the Unity Church in Chicago needed the ministerial attentions of the Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) more than did his 28th Congregational Society that was holding its Sunday meetings in the Boston Music Hall in downtown [Boston](#).

UNITARIANISM

9. Here is a typically unsympathetic and cursory white account of difficulties between "blanket Indians" and "farmer Indians":

"The result, in brief, of this civilization scheme was this: After the chase was over the 'blanket Indians' would pitch their tents about the homes of the 'farmer Indians' and proceed to eat them out of house and home, and when the ruin was complete, the 'farmer' with his wife and children, driven by necessity, would again seek temporary subsistence in the chase. During their absence the 'blanket Indians' would commit whatever destruction of fences or tenements their desires or necessities would suggest. In this way the annual process continued, so that when the 'farmer Indian' returned to his desolate home in the spring to prepare again for a crop, he looked forward to no different results for the coming winter. It will thus be seen that the civilization scheme was an utter failure."

(Note that the above reveals that the derogation 'blanket Indian' has reversed its denotation in the intervening centuries.)

10. Sorry, but due to the utter lack of attention paid by local historians to non-white history, I have been forced to supplement what little reliable information exists with gleanings from a mass of anecdotal unattributed inconsistent storytelling such as is found in Hughes, Thomas: INDIAN CHIEFS OF SOUTHERN MINNESOTA, CONTAINING SKETCHES OF THE PROMINENT CHIEFTAINS OF THE DAKOTA AND WINNEBAGO TRIBES FROM 1825 TO 1865. Minneapolis MN: Ross & Haines, 2d edition 1969.

The material deserves much better treatment than has been given to it, or that I can give it.

11. Stimpert, James. A GUIDE TO THE CORRESPONDENCE IN THE CHARLES WESLEY SLACK MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION: 1848-1885. Kent State University, Library, Special Collections



REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

1864

January 5, Tuesday: The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) wrote to Charles Wesley Slack describing the fear he felt at the thought of leaving his Unity Church in Chicago in order to become a [Unitarian](#) leader in [Boston](#).¹²

March 17, Thursday: The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) wrote to Charles Wesley Slack about expenses, expressing reservations about leaving his Unity Church in Chicago in order to become a Unitarian leader in downtown Boston.

April 6, Wednesday: The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) wrote to Charles Wesley Slack about plans for him to visit Chicago.

October 11, Tuesday: The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) wrote to Charles Wesley Slack to commend him for accepting the editorship of the Commonwealth.

1865

The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) visited England and Europe, for a period of three months.

1867

May 14, Tuesday: The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) wrote to Boston to inquire why it was that Charles Wesley Slack hadn't visited him while in Chicago.

1871

April: The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) again visited England, the land of his birth.

12. Stimpert, James. A GUIDE TO THE CORRESPONDENCE IN THE CHARLES WESLEY SLACK MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION: 1848-1885. Kent State University, Library, Special Collections

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

October 8-10: The Great Chicago fire left 300 Chicagoans dead and 90,000 homeless. One of the buildings destroyed in the four-square-mile area of the burnover was the Palmer House Hotel, which when it had opened the previous year, had promoted itself as the 1st fireproof building in the city. Property losses were estimated at \$200,000,000. Consult James Goodsell's HISTORY OF THE GREAT CHICAGO FIRE:

GREAT CHICAGO FIRE

The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) had returned to Chicago after his visit to England and to his duties at the North Side [Unitarian](#) Church. On this day Unity Church, and its parsonage, were consumed.



1878

With the Unity [Unitarian](#) Church rebuilt after the Great Chicago Fire, the Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) again visited England, the land of his early struggles.

1879

June: The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) of Chicago accepted the pastorate of the [Unitarian](#) Church of the Messiah in New-York.

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

1883

The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) again visited England, the land of his early labors.

January 28, Sunday: The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) delivered a sermon on [Henry Thoreau](#) at the Unitarian Church of the Messiah in New-York (this sermon would be written up by the reverend as part of his autobiography in 1892 and would finally appear in CLEAR GRIT: A COLLECTION OF LECTURES, ADDRESSES AND POEMS, when it would belatedly be published in 1913 by the Beacon Press in Boston).



THIRTY-ONE YEARS AGO last June a man came to see me in Chicago whom I was very glad and proud to meet. It was Henry Thoreau of Concord, the Diogenes of this new world, the Hermit of Walden Woods. The gentle and loving misanthropist and apostle of individualism so singular and separate that I do not know where to look for his father or his son – the most perfect instance to be found I think of American independence run to seed, or shall we say to a mild variety which is very fair to look on but can never sow itself for another harvest. The man of a natural mind which was not enmity against God, but in a great and wide sense was subject to the law of God and to no other law. The saint of the bright ages and the own brother in this to the Saint of the dark ages, who called the wild creatures that run and fly his sisters and brothers, and was more intimate with them than he was with our human kind. The man of whom, so far as pure seeing goes, Jesus would have said "blessed are your eyes, for they see," and whose life I want to touch this evening for some lessons that as it seems to me he alone could teach those who would learn.

As I remember Henry Thoreau then, he was something over forty years of age but would have easily passed for thirty-five, and he was rather slender, but of a fine, delicate mold, and with a presence which touched you with the sense of perfect purity as newly opened roses do. It is a clear rose-tinted face he turns to me through the mist of all these years, and delicate to look on as the face of a girl; also he has great gray eyes, the seer's eyes full of quiet sunshine. But it is a strong face, too, and the nose is especially notable, being as Conway [the Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#)] said to me once of Emerson's [[Waldo Emerson](#)] nose, a sort of interrogation mark to the universe. His voice was low, but still sweet in the tones and inflections,



REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

though the organs were all in revolt just then and wasting away and he was making for the great tablelands beyond us Westwards, to see if he could not find there a new lease of life. His words also were as distinct and true to the ear as those of a great singer, and he had Tennyson's splendid gift in this, that he never went back on his tracks to pick up the fallen loops of a sentence as commonplace talkers do. He would hesitate for an instant now and then, waiting for the right word, or would pause with a pathetic patience to master the trouble in his chest, but when he was through the sentence was perfect and entire, lacking nothing, and the word was so purely one with the man that when I read his books now and then I do not hear my own voice within my reading but the voice I heard that day.

This is the picture I treasure of Henry Thoreau as I saw him in my own house the year before he died. There is a splendid engraving after Landseer over the sofa where he sits talking, that vanished in the great fire. The children are playing about the house, the house mother is busy, the June sunshine floods the place and it is afternoon; and then, as Bunyan says, he went on his way and I saw him no more. But I went to Concord not very long after to see his grave and to wander through Walden Woods and sit by the pond, to talk with Mr. Emerson about him to my heart's great content, and to eat ripe pears the host had hidden away in the nooks and corners of his study. He selected the best for his visitors, I remember, with the hospitality of an Arab, and took the second best for himself pear after pear without flinching, and how many pears we ate that day it would be hard to say. That was a day also to be marked with a white stone. Concord and the woods and the talk with the one man in all the world who had known Thoreau best gave permanence to the photograph I had taken of him in the year before and helped to bring out the lights and shadows. We are not sure it would be best to meet some men who have touched us by their genius, but it seems to me now that to see Thoreau as I did that day in Chicago and hear him talk was the one thing needful to me, because he was so simply and entirely the man I had thought of when I read what he had written. There was no lapse, no missing link; the books and the man were one, and I found it was true of him also that "the word was made flesh and dwelt among us." So I have lingered over this memory because it has always led me to think as much of the man as of the books he has written, rare and unique as these are to my own mind. It was said of one who was of a somewhat similar make, "he will be a wild man," and so I love to think of Thoreau as another Ishmael, wild but wholesome from his youth upward, and nourishing in his nature the very dissidence of dissent. That fitful visit to my home on a summer afternoon stands to me for a very fair type of his nature and inmost quality. He would stay with no man for a longer term than he stayed with me of his own free will, any more than the wild birds will stay away from their own hiding places. They imprisoned him once about some small matter of a poll tax, but then he said, "I saw if there was a stone wall between me and my townsmen there was a greater wall and stronger to break through before they could be as free as I was even in their house of durance," and so it was not of the bondage but the freedom he thought. When Emerson, as I take it, went to see him, as he sat in durance, his saying to him, "Why are you here?" was only



REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

met by the answer, "Why are you not here?" He would not even say, "I would that thou wert altogether such as I am except for these bands," because sitting there he could say with the fine old poet:

"Stone walls do not a prison make
Or iron bars a cage."

"I see young men, my townsmen," he said once, "whose misfortune it is to have inherited farms, but it had been better for them to have been born in the open pasture and nursed there, that they might see with clearer eyes the larger field they might dwell in. Who made them the serfs of the soil? Why should they begin digging their graves as soon as they are born? How many an immortal soul have I met wellnigh crushed under its load of earth! The better part of the man is ploughed into the soil for compost. It is a fool's life such men live, as they will find when they get to the end of it, if not before."

And I have thought it would be both pleasant and wholesome to teach this bit of native genius, especially this declaration of independence compacted together and bound up in one man, not for its own sake alone but for our sakes also who are the servants if not the slaves of the habits and usages we find all about us, and are often in no sense free men even in those minor things which serve no man's manhood.

It is often said by those who come here to look at us from other lands of kin to our own that, in despite of the freedom we have bought with a great price, we are not so free in many ways as they are in the old lands, and that within the grand lines we have laid down and maintain in the nation's life we are free only on paper. I think there is more truth in this than we like to allow. We find nonconformity and dissent a difficult thing to compass. We fear social ostracism; we have invented a word of a terrible, cruel power to brand those withal who take their own way in dress, speech, manners of opinions; we call them cranks and fear the word in our secret heart like the burning of fire. Well, the word had not taken this evil meaning in Thoreau's time, but if he were living now and we were only able to see the mere surface of his manhood as they saw it in Concord forty years ago, we should call him "a crank." Yet we see now that this was a manhood brimming over with one grand purpose, —to be a whole man as he understood manhood,— that and no more. In a little Quaker meeting house I saw once they told me an old friend used to gather every First Day and he was the whole meeting, sat in the silence with his hands clasped and his head bowed, and when the meeting was out shook hands in the spirit with himself and went home, and Thoreau was just such a man. The meeting to which he went all his life never numbered more than the one member. If another had come in he would have felt crowded and gone out to find more room. It is said that when Alexander went to see Diogenes, you know, and said, "Is there any favor I can grant you?" the answer was, "Yes, do not stand between me and the sun." It was the only favor Thoreau ever thought of asking for which he was not ready to render a full equivalent. He said to the whole world about him, "do not stand between me and the sun. Let me live my own life. Let me think my own thoughts. Let me say the word that is in my own heart. Let me be Henry Thoreau."



REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

"Nothing is so much to be feared as fear," he said, "and I am not sure but that Atheism may be popular by comparison with God himself." Such a saying must have been wrung out of him, as he observed how cheap and worthless our conformity may be, while to say frankly you do not believe in God when that is your great and rare trouble with yourself makes you a byword, a hissing and an outcast, even among those who may share your trouble but do not possess one grain of your sincerity.

It is the more wonderful again that he should grow to be such a man when we take note of his training. He came up in the parish of Dr. Ripley, who was priest and king in Concord through Thoreau's childhood and youth, and would tolerate no freedom of thought or action outside his own proper supremacy. A man whose throne was his character and who rested and ruled on it arbitrary and imperious, as one says who knew him well, "a whole grand man." He was sixty-three years minister of that church and had such staying power that, whereas when he came to be their minister a young farmer voted against his settlement on the ground that he was such a weakling, he would either die or need a colleague in a couple of years, when he had been fifty years minister and told the church he wanted a colleague now, as he was getting old, the self-same farmer voted against that on the ground that the Doctor was still as young and strong as ever to all seeming and could do his work better than any other man for many a year to come. A man, who, as old people in Concord used to believe most devoutly, could storm heaven and make the high powers attend to him when the old lion was roused. For did not everybody remember that Sunday when he rose in his place, clasped his hands and cried, "O God, open they heavens and send down the rain. The land is parched with this long drought; send down the rain. The corn is withering in the leaf; send down the rain. The cattle on the hills and in the meadows are perishing; send down the rain. The springs are drying up in the wells; send down the rain and thine shall be the glory for ever and ever, Amen." So ran the prayer and when they were going home they saw the clouds gathering over Concord and the rain came pouring down in torrents, -but only on Concord,- so Judge Hoar told me, who was a lad then and remembers the wonder. And so what do you think of a man like that? He was sixty-three years minister of that church, and monarch, and the people answered to his will.

But I love to believe that he met his match in this boy. I think of him in the old meeting house watching the old man with those fine gray eyes and by no means content to let doctrine and dogma pass without a challenge when he once began to think for himself and draw his own conclusions. So when we hear of him for the first time to any clear purpose, he is not one in the two thousand human beings who lived in the town and were very much of one mind, - that being also grand old Dr. Ripley's mind who held the keys for Concord. He was a free thinker and a free agent, with no solder of the stereotype about him, but of a clean and separate type, and bound to live his own life in his own way, no matter what the world about him might say or do. He said once, "the youth gets the materials together to build his temple or his palace on the earth, but the middle aged man finally concludes to build a woodshed with them." He does not seem to have been a man of that make, but kept close to his purpose of a palace or a temple right down to the day when he came to our



REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

home on his way West.

Paul says proudly, "I was born free." Well, he was free also and would not be entangled again in the yoke of bondage. The man who knew him best says he never had a vice in his life. He did not like the taste of wine and never caught the liking. When they said to Charles Lamb, "How did you learn to smoke, sir?" he answered, "I toiled after it as men toil after virtue," and Thoreau remembered smoking lily stems when he was a boy, but the lily stems and the boyhood belonged together and the smoke of this torment did not ascend into his manhood. When you asked him at the table what dish he preferred, he would say the nearest, not for singularity but for simplicity. He did not like dinner parties, because he said people got into each other's way so that you could not meet your man there to any purpose, and then he said, "They take pride in making their dinner cost so much, while I take pride in making mine cost little."

And as a New England Yankee, farm bred, he did one astounding thing in his youth. His father made black lead pencils and the youth took hold to learn the art. But being of the New England breed, which can never let well enough alone, he went to work presently to improve on the old man's methods and ended in making pencils equal to the best that were made in London. The artists and others in Boston endorsed his work gladly; no such pencils had been made in this country before, and this to the young man meant both fame and a fair fortune. He came home with his certificate, laid aside his tools, and never made another pencil. I think he foresaw that, if he kept on, the day might come when his life would pass into pencils and then Thoreau Maker would be all that was left of the man. It might have been so, or it might not, — we cannot tell. A man like Stevenson outgrows his locomotive. He can never be caught and imprisoned in that but walks free, a whole man, and Thoreau might have walked free of the pencils and the fortune, but he would not run the risk; he wanted the life, not the fortune. Other men could make the pencils now that he had found the way, and so he would make no more.

And so one purpose in this paper is to turn the attention of the younger men and women who hear me to Thoreau's books, and especially to his WALDEN OR LIFE IN THE WOODS. It is the story of his life as a hermit. It touches you as if Crusoe had found his way into New England in our century and feeling overcrowded, even in Concord, had said, "I will live alone again as I did before the savage came crouching to my feet."

"The world is too much with us — late and soon,
Getting and spending we lay waste our powers.
Little we see in Nature that is ours,
We give our hearts away — sordid boon."

But Thoreau was stirred by a finer motive, and I think sometimes that the germ of his new adventure is to be found in the protests he had made long before against the great old Doctor's dogmas touching the smirching and befouling of this world of ours by the Fall of Man. It was not a fallen world to Thoreau, but a world forever rising. And so he felt, I suppose, that Eden might still be hidden away in Walden Woods, and that if he went there he might find it. Well, he did find it, for the wild things came about him in the old companionable way, while no more exquisite



REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

picture was ever made than this Thoreau makes in WALDEN of the wonders he saw in the two years he was a hermit, of his good company where no man or woman came near him, and of his faith in the wild things that were all about him and their faith in him. He found out there, as he tells us, that sugar is not so sweet to the palate as sounds to the healthy ear, and his love indeed for the sounds that may touch us through the silence is like another sense. He puts hemlock boughs on his fire and notes how the rich salt crackling of their leaves is like mustard to the ear, and thinks dead trees love the fire. He watches the blue bird flitting through the trees and says he seems to carry the sky on his back. Then there comes a flash of scarlet and he says it is as if that bird would set the woods afire. He watches Walden pond and notices it is alive to the most delicate sheen on its surface. He neighbors also with the beeches and says no tree has so fair a bole or so handsome an instep as the beech. The ferns came up about his hermitage and he says, "Nature made ferns for pure leaves to show what she could do in that line;" and learned to love pond lilies above all other blossoms. His eye came to be so true that when he fell once in Tuckerman's ravine and sprained his foot the first thing he saw as he gathered himself up was an herb he had never suspected of growing there, the best thing in the world for sprains. A gentleman once said to him, "I have been looking a long time for an Indian arrowhead round here but cannot find one." Thoreau stirred the sand with his foot and said, "here is one, take it." And another man wanted a certain fish but could not catch one to save him. Thoreau put his hand down gently as they glided along in the canoe and lifted one out in his palm. Mr. Emerson says he could find his way through the woods on a dark night better by his feet than by his eyes, and could pace the ground more perfectly than another man could measure it by rod and chain. Now this to my mind was by no means the noblest life a man can live, because it has been well said by a great woman that

"On solitary souls the universe
Looks down inhospitable,
And the human heart
Finds nowhere shelter but in human kind."

But it must have been the noblest life to which a man so sincere and true as Thoreau was could attain to at that time, and this must always determine our verdict on any man. Talking with a rare woman about him one day she said, "It is fortunate, I think, that we should only have one Henry Thoreau," but I ventured to answer, "Is it not also fortunate that we should have just this one?" She could not see it; she was the mother of four children asleep upstairs as we were talking, and she could imagine no Eden or man or manhood worth the name with the helpmeet left out and the bairns, and that may be true.

Still here in Walden Woods was the man in such an Eden as he could compass all to himself and ready to affirm against all comers that there may be a life in which it is good for the man to be alone. So the most of us may not be ready to agree with him, but we may well be content that he should agree with himself so entirely and with that unfallen world he took for two years into his heart and life. "I went into the woods," he says, "because I wanted to front only the essential facts of life and



REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

to see if I could learn what such a life had to teach me." So that which might be a bane to some of us was no doubt a blessing to an American hermit. On the far frontier a man will drop into the settlements now and then and offer his wild meats and skins for the home-made bread and whatever fruits of civility he may find to his mind, and the people are always glad to see him if he is a clean and wholesome man, and make exchange with him and have him tell them of his life in the mountains. So Thoreau comes to us out of the wilderness with his treasures and we may well give him the good welcome he has won among wise readers of good books. When Parker Pillsbury went to see him as he lay a-dying and said, "Thoreau, you are so near the line now; tell me whether you cannot see something of the other side, some glimpse or gleam of the waiting world beyond," the old sweet smile came over his face and he said cheerily, "One world at a time, Parker;" and this was the watchword, as it seems to me, of his whole life. He only saw one world at a time, but he saw that exceeding well. He only took one text for all his sermons and it was:

"To thine own self be true;
And it shall follow as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

But he made all his sermons good to that text and true to the end of the years.

So I say again and finally that we need such men as Thoreau in every generation, full to the brim and running over with the dissidence of dissent. Men who will take no man's say-so and cut their life by no man's pattern. Men who will neither lead nor be led, but will just live their life in their own way and then report to us what they have found we cannot find, who are content to work in the harness or to train in the regiment.

It is a grand thing even to hear of a young man forty to fifty years ago who could deliberately turn his back on that tremendous thing we call a fortune for the nobler fortune which lay, as he believed, in a life of the simplest tastes and desires. We could have no such city as this, to be sure, if we were all to take that turn, but there is not the least danger of our taking that turn, while the example is simply priceless if it only leads us to see that to make a fortune or strike for one is not the alpha and omega of our human life. When a friend of mine counseled a poor woman to go and live in the country that she might win bread for her children she said, "I would rather lean against a lamp post in New York than have a home in the country." Thoreau shows us how the exchange may be made and the profit and pleasure may be on the side of the simpler and sweeter life. We blot out the line which lies forever deep and sure between our needs and our desires. Thoreau scores the line afresh, deep and strong, and shows us how many ills may be cured, as the good doctor told the alderman of London to cure his gout: "Live on sixpence a day, and earn it."

Young men are tangled up in a network of conventional usages. A man with no brains, perhaps, to speak of, walks down Broadway with a hat he brought from Paris on the last steamer. You all rush to get a hat like that; or it is a coat and you must have the coat; and so it is with a hundred things that cost money, and what is worth more than money, independence. You must conform, you say. "Not so," says Thoreau, "I do not live to suit

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

my fellows but myself. I will dress as I like and do as I like. I will be no man's serf. It does not become me to run with the crowd, and they may say we will have none of you, but they are too late in saying that; they do not ostracize me; I ostracize them." Thousands of young men in this city stay poor because they will not draw the line between the need and the desire, and a clear percentage wreck their lives past all recovery through this weakness. Thoreau stands for the instance that would set every young man if he should follow it, well on his feet and keep him safe and sound. He said once, "How can we expect a harvest of thought if we have no seed time of character?" He was a true and fine thinker because he was a true and stanch man. "What do I care who refuses to hear me?" Bushnell said once, "when I have God for my audience?" So said Thoreau, but he seems to have been content with nature, and now and then a man. His religion, like his life, was absolutely independent of all our churches and standards of doctrine and ceremonials, and I love to find such a man though I could not be of his school. I should need a church all the same, if I were not a minister, and my Bible and the help that comes to me through the man, Christ Jesus. Still I reverence such independence as Thoreau's with my whole heart, because it was as native to the man as my dependence is, and he used it so well. The great pines on the Michigan peninsula that stand so close together stand greatly through each other's sheltering; they are not cabled to the earth like that I saw on Lone Tree Hill in Kansas once, that had stood the wreck of centuries. So we need to have wider spaces between man and man that we may send out and downward great roots and stand fast in our own simple manhood, and Thoreau nobly helps to teach us that secret.



1885

The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#)'s and Horsfall Turner's ILKLEY ANCIENT AND MODERN.



REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

1886

The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) again visited England, the land of his initial struggles.

1892

August: The building used to house a new museum in Ilkley in Yorkshire had been the Wesleyan church in which the Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) had met his 1st wife Harriet Watson Collyer and in which he had begun to preach as a Methodist. Since Collyer had credentials as a local historian, being the co-author, with Horsfall Turner, of ILKLEY ANCIENT AND MODERN, published in 1885, he was asked to officiate. The opening of the Museum provided the Reverend with an opportunity to return one of Ilkley's Roman "fragments," a burial urn that had come into his hands some years before while such items were being dug up there in profusion and dispersed far and wide.

1893

At the age of 70, the Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) wanted to retire from being the pastor of the [Unitarian](#) Church of the Messiah in New-York, but his congregation was pleading with him to continue.

1896

The congregation of the [Unitarian](#) Church of the Messiah in New-York city appointed another minister to replace or supplement the aged Reverend [Robert Collyer](#). He would carry on, however, as Pastor Emeritus, and would offer frequent sermons.

1899

The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) again visited England, home of his early tribulations. These repeat visits must have been enormously helpful to him, in helping him deal with the scars all that childhood trauma!

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

1907

The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) again visited England, the land of his birth, this time in order to receive an honorary degree of Litt.D. at Leeds University and to officiate at the opening of a library in Ilkley.

October 2, Wednesday: The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) officiated at the opening of the Ilkley Library, adjacent to the Town Hall and King's Hall. The structure was still uncompleted.



1912

November 1, Friday: The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) suffered a stroke and became paralyzed.

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

November 30, Saturday: The Reverend [Robert Collyer](#) died at his home in New York City. He had almost reached 89 years of age. His obituary would soon appear on the front page, center, of the [New York Times](#).

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1912.

GES GROW
 Minister
 George.
 release Telegraph
 lines.
 patches from
 and show an
 after-destruction
 suffragettes.
 been fired in
 nds of letters
 damaged by
 s of various
 f the militant
 re life hardly
 used to give
 Rev. Forbes
 or, for Chan-
 the Aberdeen
 accusing him
 self, assaulted
 a dog whip.
 dilymanly re-
 was mistaken.
 militant sur-
 sed her shoes
 her contempt
 ocks. Fanny
 ck—who were
 session of ex-
 there Chancel-
 speak—were
 ale.
 ce the Magis-

REV. ROBERT COLLYER
DEAD AT AGE OF 84
 Began Life as Blacksmith in
 England and Was Converted
 to Methodism in 1848.
 CAME HERE AS A PREACHER
 Later He Became a Unitarian, Served
 in Civil War, and Worked as Black-
 smith to Build Up His Church.

The Rev. Dr. Robert Collyer, pastor emeritus of the Unitarian Church of the Messiah, died shortly before midnight last night at his home, 201 West Fifty-fifth Street. Dr. Collyer was stricken with paralysis on Nov. 1, and for the past month his vitality, notwithstanding his age, kept him alive. The paralysis affected his entire right side and his power of speech.
 At the bedside when he passed away, were his son, Robert Staples Collyer and Mrs. Robert Staples Collyer, and his physician, Dr. Robert H. Wylie.
 Dr. Collyer last appeared at the Church of the Messiah the Sunday before he was stricken. Some hope was expressed last Friday that he might recover, as

TO-I
SUNDAY
 CONED
 I. Pictorial
 Page.
 1. "A Plot" by E.
 2. Many Agitation
 Spectacles as
 3. China Trading
 Studying the U
 China, etc.
 4. Where War and
 5. Among the Seas
 6. Some Form of
 "The Black Field"
 7. Men in the Pub
 II. News
 III. and IV. Cab
 Sporting
 V. Magazine
 Page.
 1. Synthetic Chemis
 Ostrich.
 2. Seeking to Retain
 Trenches.
 3. German Miss Pa
 period. Peck
 4. Worldwide Awaken
 in Africa.
 5. Gorman's Fairy T
 Years Old T
 6. A War Correspond
 SANDHOLM.
 7. New Pier Plans
 Diamond Ship.
 8. New English Copy
 and AUTOBO
 Floor: Hospital
 Ginn.
 9. Napoleon's Bold
 all Europe.
 10. The Springing Ma
 Custom Hou
 11. What the Red C
 for HUMANS.
 12. Curious Epocore

A memorial bust would be inscribed "A man of cheerful yesterdays and confident tomorrows" (this bronze is now at the 2d [Unitarian](#) Church in Chicago).





REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER



COPYRIGHT NOTICE: In addition to the property of others, such as extensive quotations and reproductions of images, this "read-only" computer file contains a great deal of special work product of Austin Meredith, copyright ©2013. Access to these interim materials will eventually be offered for a fee in order to recoup some of the costs of preparation. My hypercontext button invention which, instead of creating a hypertext leap through hyperspace –resulting in navigation problems– allows for an utter alteration of the context within which one is experiencing a specific content already being viewed, is claimed as proprietary to Austin Meredith – and therefore freely available for use by all. Limited permission to copy such files, or any material from such files, must be obtained in advance in writing from the "Stack of the Artist of Kouroo" Project, 833 Berkeley St., Durham NC 27705. Please contact the project at <Kouroo@kouroo.info>.

"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: April 11, 2013

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

ARRGH AUTOMATED RESearch REPORT

GENERATION HOTLINE



This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, upon someone's request we have pulled it out of the hat of a pirate that has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (depicted above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of data modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture. This is data mining. To respond to such a request for information, we merely push a button.



REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER

Commonly, the first output of the program has obvious deficiencies and so we need to go back into the data modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and do a recompile of the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process which 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 your requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>.
Arrgh.