

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

THE POET OF PARADISE, WILLIAM COWPER



William Cowper was enormously popular in America. Elihu Hubbard Smith, a Connecticut wit, abolitionist, and physician, wrote in his diary for November 1795, "I have thought, for some time, of writing a Poem, somewhat on the plan, or of the kind, of Cowper's TASK. On his principles, it could not be, since many of them are hostile to mine; but in that stile of moral precept-giving, for which he is so remarkable, & in which he is oftentimes so happy & so just." Smith dispatched a collection of *mss* by the Connecticut wits to Cowper. It is strange to contemplate that Cowper may in his last sad days have been perusing pages by Smith & coterie. One wonders what Cowper might have been able to make of Charles Brockden Brown's work, which likely would have been included in such a packet – this sort of reading material would not, one may suspect, have aided him in recovering from his mental difficulties. Given the kind of reception in regard to shaping domesticity "The Task" enjoyed in Britain soon after its publication, American audiences –who weren't as **into** English conceptions of "domesticity" at that point– might not have been as receptive to the poem. Of course, they may have discovered its relevance after they got their Revolution out of their system. Between 1787 and 1800, fully seven editions of THE TASK would appear in the United States, four out of New-York presses, two out of Philadelphia presses, and one out of a Boston press. Five editions of John Gilpin would appear, and two general collections of his poetry. He was particularly popular in the northern and mid-Atlantic states among polite reformed Christians, but his connection with the abolitionists made him something of a problem for the southern plantocracy.



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:


WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

Here are some sources on this poet's American reception:

- Harry Hayden Clark (ed.), TRANSITIONS IN AMERICAN LITERARY HISTORY. Durham NC: Duke UP, 1953
- Frank Luther Mott, GOLDEN MULTITUDES: THE STORY OF BEST SELLERS IN THE UNITED STATES. NY: Macmillan, 1947
- A HISTORY OF AMERICAN MAGAZINES. Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1939
- Annabel Newton, WORDSWORTH IN EARLY AMERICAN CRITICISM. Chicago IL: U of Chicago P, 1928
- Lodwick Hartley, WILLIAM COWPER: THE CONTINUING REVALUATION. Chapel Hill NC: U of North Carolina P, 1960
- Norma Russell, A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WILLIAM COWPER. Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society, 1963
- Davidoff and Hall, FAMILY FORTUNES. Chicago IL: U of Chicago P, 1987

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



WALDEN: My imagination carried me so far that I even had the refusal of several farms, -the refusal was all I wanted,- but I never got my fingers burned by actual possession. The nearest that I came to actual possession was when I bought the Hollowell Place, and had begun to sort my seeds, and collected materials with which to make a wheelbarrow to carry it on or off with; but before the owner gave me a deed of it, his wife -every man has such a wife- changed her mind and wished to keep it, and he offered me ten dollars to release him. Now, to speak the truth, I had but ten cents in the world, and it surpassed my arithmetic to tell, if I was that man who had ten cents, or who had a farm, or ten dollars, or all together. However, I let him keep the ten dollars and the farm too, for I had carried it far enough; or rather, to be generous, I sold him the farm for just what I gave for it, and, as he was not a rich man, made him a present of ten dollars, and still had my ten cents, and seeds, and materials for a wheelbarrow left. I found thus that I had been a rich man without any damage to my poverty. But I retained the landscape, and I have since annually carried off what it yielded without a wheelbarrow. With respect to landscapes,-

“I am monarch of all I *survey*,
My right there is none to dispute.”

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

HOLLOWELL FARM
ALEXANDER SELKIRK
WILLIAM COWPER



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1731

November 15 (Old Style; November 26, New Style): [William Cowper](#) (in one of his poems he would rhyme his family's name with "horse-trooper") was born at Great Berkhamstead in Hertfordshire, the son of the Reverend John Cowper, D.D., rector of that parish, who was a chaplain to King George II, and Anne Donne Cowper, a daughter of Roger Donne, Esq., of Ludham Hall in Norfolk.



D. Heine Fox

W. Blake sculp.

M^{RS} COWPER

Mother of the Poet



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1754

[William Cowper](#) had been articled to a solicitor until in this year, at age 23, he was called to the Bar. He would become so depressed that he would need to abandon this profession.

NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT





THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1763

[William Cowper](#), nominated by his sponsor for a political position for which he felt unsuited, was nevertheless afraid to withdraw lest he damaged his sponsor's reputation. So he fell into a state of melancholy and began to attempt suicide, or, as we would say today, make suicide gestures. He tried [laudanum](#) and it "didn't work,"



he couldn't do it with his penknife, and even the Thames proved insufficiently fatal. He would survive to compose an account of this "dejection of spirits as none but they who have felt the same can have the least conception," which would be published after his eventual demise. This piece would become the first instance, in English at least, of a new genre, the memoir of melancholy, which is now known as autopathography, the literature of mood disorder: a prime current example of the genre would be William Styron's 1990 tour de force, *DARKNESS VISIBLE*.

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

WALDEN: The present was my next experiment of this kind which I purpose to describe more at length; for convenience, putting the experience of two years into one. As I have said, I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up.

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN



GEOFFREY CHAUCER

CHANTICLEER

**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 PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1767

In the process of becoming Evangelical in his religion and recovering from his depression, [William Cowper](#) had taken lodgings with the Reverend Morley Unwin, his wife Mary and his family in Huntingdon. In this year, although the Reverend died in a riding accident, Cowper continued to lodge with Mary and her family.

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1768

[William Cowper](#) and the ladies of the Unwin family with which he had affiliated relocated from Huntingdon to Olney in Buckinghamshire in order to enjoy the evangelical ministry of the Reverend [John Newton](#), the curate there.



CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1779

[William Cowper](#) completed his revision of [Homer](#), and wrote “The Castaway.” The famous OLNEY HYMNS, on which he and the curate [John Newton](#) had been collaborating, appeared in print:



- Almighty King! Whose Wondrous Hand
- My God! Till I Received Thy Stroke
- As Birds Their Infant Brood Protect
- My Song Shall Bless the Lord of All
- By Whom Was David Taught
- My Soul Is Sad and Much Dismayed
- Bestow, Dear Lord, upon Our Youth
- The Newborn Child of Gospel Grace
- The Billows Swell, the Winds Are High
- No Strength of Nature Can Suffice
- O for a Closer Walk with God
- Breathe from the Gentle South, O Lord
- O God, Whose Favorable Eye
- O How I Love Thy Holy Word
- Dear Lord, Accept a Sinful Heart
- O Lord, My Best Desire Fulfill
- Ere God Had Built the Mountains
- Of All the Gifts Thine Hand Bestows
- Far from the World, O Lord, I Flee
- Fierce Passions Discompose the Mind
- The Saints Should Never Be Dismayed
- A Glory Gilds the Sacred Page
- The Savior Hides His Face!
- God Gives His Mercies to Be Spent
- The Savior! What a Noble Flame
- God Moves in a Mysterious Way
- Sin Enslaved Me Many Years
- God of My Life, to Thee I Call
- Sin Has Undone Our Wretched Race
- Grace, Triumphant in the Throne
- Sometimes a Light Surprises
- Gracious Lord, Our Children See
- There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

- Hark, My Soul, It Is the Lord!
- Heal Us, Emmanuel
- This Is the Feast of Heav'nly Wine
- Hear What God the Lord Hath Spoken
- Thy Mansion Is the Christian's Heart
- His Master Taken from His Head
- Holy Lord God! I Love Thy Truth
- 'Tis My Happiness Below
- Honor and Happiness Unite
- To Jesus, the Crown of My Hope
- How Blest Thy Creature Is, O God
- To Keep the Lamp Alive
- I Was a Groveling Creature Once
- To Tell the Savior All My Wants
- I Will Praise Thee Every Day
- To Those Who Know the Lord I Speak
- Israel in Ancient Days
- Too Many, Lord, Abuse Thy Grace
- Jesus, Where'er Thy People Meet
- What Thousands Never Knew the Road!
- Jesus, Whose Blood So Freely Streamed
- What Various Hindrances We Meet
- Lord, My Soul with Pleasure Springs
- When Darkness Long Has Veiled My Mind
- The Lord Proclaims His Grace Abroad
- When Hagar Found the Bottle Spent
- Winter Has a Joy for Me
- The Lord Receives His Highest Praise
- Write to Sardis, Saith the Lord
- Ye Sons of Earth Prepare the Plough
- Lord, Who Hast Suffered All for Me
- The Lord Will Happiness Divine

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1782

Publication in London of [William Cowper](#)'s POEMS, including "Verses supposed to be written by [Alexander Selkirk](#), during his solitary abode in the island of Juan Fernandez":

WALDEN: My imagination carried me so far that I even had the refusal of several farms, -the refusal was all I wanted,- but I never got my fingers burned by actual possession. The nearest that I came to actual possession was when I bought the Hollowell Place, and had begun to sort my seeds, and collected materials with which to make a wheelbarrow to carry it on or off with; but before the owner gave me a deed of it, his wife -every man has such a wife- changed her mind and wished to keep it, and he offered me ten dollars to release him. Now, to speak the truth, I had but ten cents in the world, and it surpassed my arithmetic to tell, if I was that man who had ten cents, or who had a farm, or ten dollars, or all together. However, I let him keep the ten dollars and the farm too, for I had carried it far enough; or rather, to be generous, I sold him the farm for just what I gave for it, and, as he was not a rich man, made him a present of ten dollars, and still had my ten cents, and seeds, and materials for a wheelbarrow left. I found thus that I had been a rich man without any damage to my poverty. But I retained the landscape, and I have since annually carried off what it yielded without a wheelbarrow. With respect to landscapes,-

"I am monarch of all I *survey*,
My right there is none to dispute."

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN



HOLLOWELL FARM
ALEXANDER SELKIRK
WILLIAM COWPER

I am monarch of all I [survey](#);
My right there is none to dispute;
From the centre all round to the sea
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.
O Solitude! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms,
Than reign in this horrible place.

I am out of humanity's reach,
I must finish my journey alone,
Never hear the sweet music of speech;
I start at the sound of my own.
The beasts that roam over the plain
My form with indifference see;
They are so unacquainted with man,
Their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, Friendship, and Love



HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

Divinely bestow'd upon man,
O, had I the wings of a dove
How soon would I taste you again!
My sorrows I then might assuage
In the ways of religion and truth;
Might learn from the wisdom of age,
And be cheer'd by the sallies of youth.

Ye winds that have made me your sport,
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial endearing report
Of a land I shall visit no more:
My friends, do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me?
O tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is a glance of the mind!
Compared with the speed of its flight,
The tempest itself lags behind,
And the swift-wingèd arrows of light.
When I think of my own native land
In a moment I seem to be there;
But alas! recollection at hand
Soon hurries me back to despair.

But the sea-fowl is gone to her nest,
The beast is laid down in his lair;
Even here is a season of rest,
And I to my cabin repair.
There's mercy in every place,
And mercy, encouraging thought!
Gives even affliction a grace
And reconciles man to his lot.

**WHAT I'M WRITING IS TRUE BUT NEVER MIND
YOU CAN ALWAYS LIE TO YOURSELF**

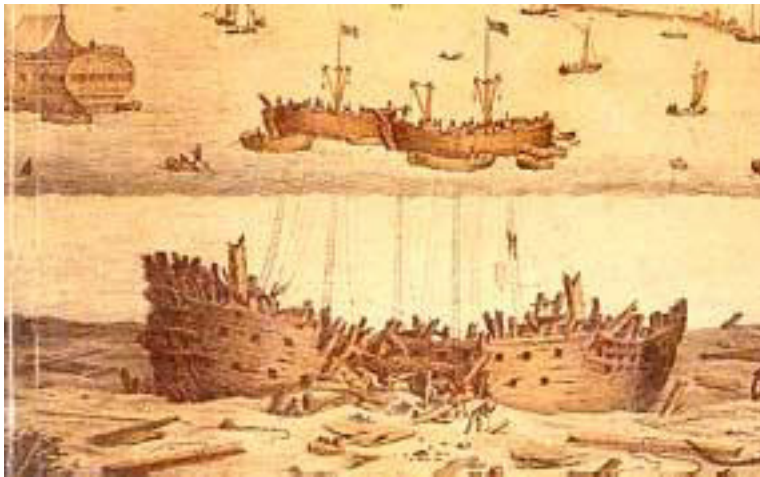
[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

August 29, Thursday: The *HMS Royal George*, a huge line-of-battle ship carrying an enormous spread of canvas and more than a hundred heavy cannon, unexpectedly and suddenly sank with all hands at Spithead (Portsmouth). When this British ship of the line went down while at anchor, its cannon and its sailors took with them to their watery fate also some 300 women whom their skipper had allowed aboard to service their sexual needs.¹ During the following month [William Cowper](#) would write a LAMENT FOR THE *ROYAL GEORGE*, in which the women aboard would not be mentioned. In 1827 there would be a locomotive named the *Royal George*. In 1840 there would be a limited amount of salvage of the wreck, in order to fabricate such souvenir items as wooden butter knives:



1840 Salvage Operations

October: [William Cowper](#)'s anonymous blank verse humor, "The Diverting History of John Gilpin," was created in a single night and would soon be published in the Public Advertiser.

WM. COWPER ON GILPIN

1. Officials were in that era going to great lengths to avoid a perilous crew condition known euphemistically as "Buggery Island." It was considered of the utmost importance, in the endeavor to make war properly, that a crew be able to make love properly.



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1783

May/August: In early May, Reykjanesshryggur erupted off Iceland.² On June 8th, the Laki (Lakagigar) basalt fissure of Iceland began to erupt. A quarter of the people in Iceland would die. According to Professor John A. Day's *THE BOOK OF CLOUDS* (Silver Lining Books, 2002), [Friend Luke Howard](#)'s fascination with clouds was kindled by this period in which the skies of the Northern Hemisphere were laden with dust and ash from the eruptions of Iwaki crater and Asama Yama on the island of Honshu and Aoga-Shima on the island of Izu in [Japan](#) and of Reykjanesshryggur off the coast and the Laki basalt fissure on the mainland of Iceland, a period termed the "Great Fogg."

[William Cowper](#) would in 1785 in *THE TASK* describe the "dim and sickly eye" of this summer as "portentious, unexampled, unexplained." The smell of sulfur was everywhere. As far as this poetic "unexplained" went, [Benjamin Franklin](#) would in 1785 prepare a paper for the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, suggesting that this might be the result of unusual volcanic activity.

2. According to Thordarson, Thomas & Self, S. "The Laki (Skaftar Fires) and Grimsvotn eruptions in 1783-1785." *Bulletin of Volcanology*, Volume 55, pages 233-263, this was probably one of the events known to volcanologists as the Laki and Grimsvotn eruptions. Soufrière on St. Vincent would blow in 1812, Mayon in the Philippines would blow in 1814, but these would become almost as pop-tarts popping up in a toaster when Tambora in Indonesia would blow in 1816, as it would be by far the most powerful volcanic blast since the Santorini volcano on island of Thera in the Aegean Sea blew its top in 1,628 BCE. All but 26 of the 12,000 Sumbawa islanders would lose their lives. We would have a mild taste of this volcano weather, in our own lives, in the series of cool summers after 1991 when Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines would blow its top — remember?



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1785

A friend, Lady Austen, had during the summer of 1783 playfully suggested that he write about a lighter subject than had been his custom, a sofa, and [William Cowper](#) had completed THE TASK by the autumn of 1784 in order, as he put it, “to recommend rural ease and leisure.” When at this point the piece was published, it amounted to six books and comprised a startling total of 5,185 lines. This enormous poem would be very well received by all levels of British society, including the royal family.³ Beginning in mock-Miltonic mode with a narrative of the evolution of the sofa, Cowper gradually worked in some rural descriptions, some chitchat on the pleasures of gardening, an evocation of the joys of domestic life, and other such topics. Along the way the poet has the opportunity to opine and posture in regard to various of the social, religious, and economic evils of his day. A melancholic, in the early 1770s he had almost nonfunctional. His involvement with the Evangelical revival by way of a friendship with the Reverend John Newton had magnified a Calvinistic stance.



In describing the ice-palace of the Empress Anne of Russia, Cowper made use of the figure of Aristæus as part of describing the fantastic form assumed by a waterfall when captured in ice:

Less worthy of applause though more admired
Because a novelty, the work of man,
Imperial mistress of the fur-clad Russ,
Thy most magnificent and mighty freak,
The wonder of the north. No forest fell
When thou wouldst build, no quarry sent its stores
T’ enrich thy walls; but thou didst hew the floods
And make thy marble of the glassy wave.
In such a palace Aristæus found
Cyrene, when he bore the plaintive tale
Of his lost bees to her maternal ear.

This work completed, Cowper would turn to translating Homer, as in the following description of Olympus:

So saying, Minerva, goddess azure-eyed,
Rose to Olympus, the reputed seat
Eternal of the gods, which never storms
Disturb, rains drench, or snow invades, but calm
The expanse and cloudless shines with purest day.
There the inhabitants divine rejoice
For ever.

3. Thoreau would have his own personal copy.

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

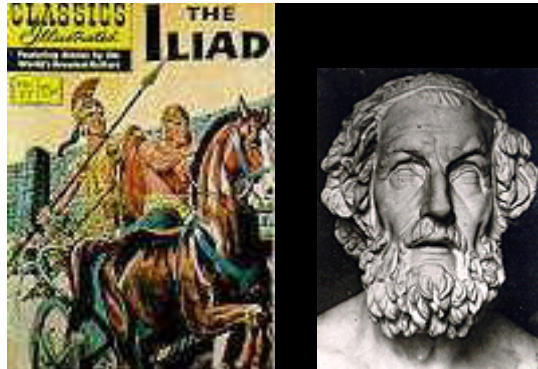
THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

Here is his Jupiter in the first book of the “Iliad”:

He ceased, and under his dark brows the nod
Vouchsafed of confirmation. All around
The sovereign’s everlasting head his curls
Ambrosial shook, and the huge mountain reeled.



And here is his presentation of the prayer of Ajax which was so often being alluded to in the 18th Century:

Father of heaven and earth! deliver thou
Achaia’s host from darkness; clear the skies;
Give day; and, since thy sovereign will is such,
Destruction with it; but, O, give us day.

Consider this notion of “sofas” or “seats” which Cowper was utilizing: his project in THE TASK was to establish a domestic space in the country, a space which heretofore had been associated with the “luxuries” of urbanity. In venturing into the countryside, Cowper dragged along behind him all of his urban indoor mentality. He constructed a kind of frame of reference which today we would need to term suburban, a movement of an economic as well as a literary discursive center from the city center into its surrounding countryside. The domestic sphere he has in mind is epitomized by his sofa, which in Book One gets itself constructed out of “natural” elements. That “suburban” mentality of his is a variety of “abjective” mentality in that it is not so much about organizing some aspects of culture into a domicile as it is about keeping other aspects of culture safely **outside** that organized space. As such, Cowper’s suburb gets constructed in the normal manner in which suburbs get constructed, **against** “cultural evils.” The sofa, once an outdoorsy thing, has all its history and rude constructions banished. THE TASK continues from that point to elaborate on all the things that **won’t** be in Cowper’s home and garden, such as the worldly experiences of self-serving preachers and foreign wars. One way Cowper is able to obtain the distance he needs is through reliance upon a newspaper — these things appear in a newspaper only safely and disregardably, as small linguistic blurbs on which he can close the shutters of his mind.



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1786

After 18 years in Olney in Buckinghamshire, [William Cowper](#) and the widow Mary Unwin relocated to a nearby village, Weston Underwood.

THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1788

Andrew Jackson followed the Cumberland Road to the rude frontier settlement of Nashville, carrying with him his appointment papers as a public prosecutor for this transmountain “western district of [North Carolina](#).”

The curate [John Newton](#)'s THOUGHTS UPON THE [AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE](#).

With our ships, the great object is, to be full. When the ship is there, it is thought desirable she should take as many as possible. The cargo of a vessel of a hundred tons, or little more, is calculated to purchase from two hundred and twenty to two hundred and fifty slaves. Their lodging-rooms below the deck, which are three (for the men, the boys, and the women), besides a place for the sick, are sometimes more than five feet high, and sometimes less; and this height is divided towards the middle, for the slaves lie in two rows, one above the other, on each side of the ship, close to each other, like books upon a shelf. I have known them so close that the shelf would not, easily, contain one more. And I have known a white man sent down, among the men, to lay them in these rows to the greatest advantage, so that as little space as possible might be lost. Let it be observed, that the poor creatures, thus cramped for want of room, are likewise in irons, for the most part both hands and feet, and two together, which makes it difficult for them to turn or move, to attempt either to rise or to lie down, without hurting themselves, or each other. Nor is the motion of the ship, especially her heeling, or stoop on one side, when under sail, to be omitted; for this, as they lie athwart, or cross the ship, adds to the uncomfortableness of their lodging, especially to those who lie on the leeward or leaning side of the vessel.

Dire is the tossing, deep the groans. —

The heat and smell of these rooms, when the weather will not admit of the slaves being brought upon deck, and of having their rooms cleaned every day, would be almost insupportable to a person not accustomed to them. If the slaves and their rooms can be constantly aired, and they are not detained too long on board, perhaps there are not many who die; but the contrary is often their lot. They are kept down, by the weather, to breathe a hot and corrupted air, sometimes for a week: this added to the galling of their irons, and the despondency which seizes their spirits when thus confined, soon becomes fatal. And every morning, perhaps, more instances than one are found, of the living and the dead, like the captives of Mezentius, fastened together.

Epidemical fevers and fluxes, which fill the ship with noisome and noxious effluvia, often break out, and infect the seamen likewise, and thus the oppressors, and the oppressed, fall by the same stroke. I believe, nearly one-half of the slaves on



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

board, have, sometimes, died; and that the loss of a third part, in these circumstances, is not unusual. The ship, in which I was mate, left the coast with two hundred and eighteen slaves on board; and though we were not much affected by epidemical disorders, I find by my journal of that voyage (now before me), that we buried sixty-two on our passage to South Carolina, exclusive of those which died before we left the coast, of which I have no account.

I believe, upon an average between the more healthy, and the more sickly voyages, and including all contingencies, one fourth of the whole purchase may be allotted to the article of mortality: that is, if the English ships purchase sixty thousand slaves annually, upon the whole extent of the coast, the annual loss of lives cannot be much less than fifteen thousand.

[William Cowper](#)'s "The Negro's Complaint" — an attempt, necessarily unsatisfactory, to grasp how life must be seen when experienced from the perspective of the "ultimate other," one's victim and servant:

Forc'd from home and all its pleasures,
Afric's coast I left forlorn;
To increase a stranger's treasures,
O'er the raging billows borne;
Men from England bought and sold me,
Paid my price in paltry gold;
But though theirs they have enroll'd me
Minds are never to be sold.
Still in thought as free as ever,
What are England's rights, I ask,
Me from my delights to sever,
Me to torture, me to task?
Fleecy locks and black complexion
Cannot forfeit nature's claim;
Skins may differ, but affection
Dwells in white and black the same.
Why did all-creating Nature
Make the plant for which we toil?
Sighs must fan it, tears must water,
Sweat of ours must dress the soil.
Think, ye masters iron-hearted,
Lolling at your jovial boards;
Think, how many backs have smarted
For the sweets your cane affords.
Is there, as ye sometimes tell us,
Is there one who reigns on high?
Has he bid you buy and sell us,
Speaking from his throne, the sky?
Ask him, if your knotted scourges,
Fetters, blood-extorting screws,
Are the means that duty urges
Agents of his will to use?
Strewing yonder sea with wrecks,
Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,
Are the voice with which he speaks.
He, foreseeing what vexations
Afric's sons should undergo,
Fix'd their tyrants' habitations
Where his whirlwinds answer — No.
By our blood in Afric wasted,
Ere our necks receiv'd the chain;
By the mis'ries which we tasted,



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

Crossing in your barks the main;
By our suff'rings since ye brought us
To the man-degrading mart;
All sustain'd by patience, taught us
Only by a broken heart:
Deem our nation brutes no longer
Till some reason ye shall find
Worthier of regard and stronger
Than the colour of our kind.
Slaves of gold! whose sordid dealings
Tarnish all your boasted pow'rs,
Prove that you have human feelings,
Ere you proudly question ours.

You've presumably gathered from the above ruminations that the poet [Cowper](#) was generally opposed to human [slavery](#). –But the devil is, as always, in the details.

Which is worse, enslavement to another human being by virtue of leg irons and handcuffs, or enslavement to Satan through an attachment to sin? For this British poet, in his poem “Charity,” clearly it would be the latter rather than the former which would constitute far the worse condition, and the conclusion to this comparison, Whitey, is as plain as the nose on your face: although it would be horrific for a black African to be enslaved to some cruel and un-Christian master who would lead him into sin and temptation, it might be on the other hand beatific, a true freeing, for that black African to be enslaved instead to some gentle and tolerant white Christian master who would only by example and by teaching be raising up that African into a true appreciation of the glories of our Christ Jesus. In fact if the black man is enslaved to a true Christian, then “one flash of heav'nly day” will “heal his heart and melt his chains away”! See, the thing is, “slaves by truth enlarg'd are doubly freed.” His service to you would be something done out not out of fear and obligation, but out of “gratitude and love,” and it would be “sweet” to him, and he would be “submissive at thy feet” out of this sweet gratitude and sweet love! For you the provident white slavemaster had delivered him “out of hopeless night.” You had bought his body — but only to give his soul light. He had previously been held fast by chains of sin and ignorance, and now you were merely binding him with chains and shackles of iron while your lips might have the opportunity to “shed instruction as the dew” and teach him “what path to shun, and what pursue.” Truly, in service to a benefactor such as you, although nominally enslaved he would be truly freed, and while not torn away from such a master, he would consider himself to be at his “best home”!

Here is a plan of each deck and the allowable “tight packing” aboard the slaver *Brookes* engaging quite properly and legally in the [international slave trade](#) under improved conditions dictated by the parliamentary



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

Act of this year.

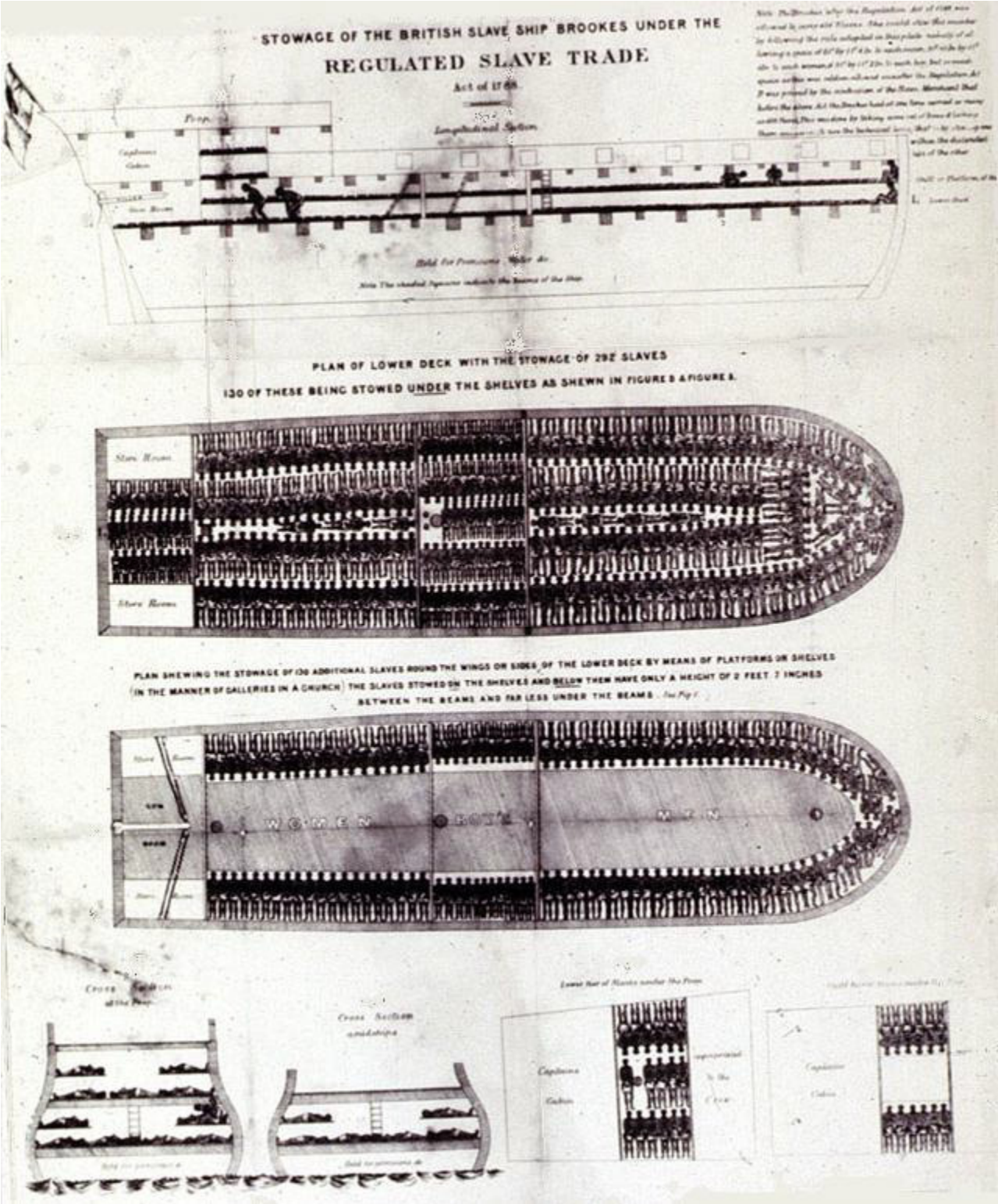
“EMANCIPATION IN THE BRITISH WEST INDIES”: In 1788, the House of Commons voted Parliamentary inquiry. In 1791, a bill to abolish the trade was brought in by Wilberforce, and supported by him, and by Fox, and Burke, and Pitt, with the utmost ability and faithfulness; resisted by the planters, and the whole West Indian interest, and lost. During the next sixteen years, ten times, year after year, the attempt was renewed by Mr. Wilberforce, and ten times defeated by the planters. The king, and all the royal family but one, were against it. These debates are instructive, as they show on what grounds the trade was assailed and defended. Every thing generous, wise, and sprightly is sure to come to the attack. On the other part, are found cold prudence, barefaced selfishness, and silent votes. But the nation was aroused to enthusiasm. Every horrid fact became known.

Under the new limitations, the *Brookes* would be allowed to carry on its cross-Atlantic voyages only up to 454 slaves as depicted on the following screen (in the broadside collection of the Rare Book Room, Library of Congress, Portfolio 282-43, Lot 4422A; LC-US Z 62-44000).⁴

The image “an African in Chains in a Supplicating Posture” bearing the “Am I Not a Man and a Brother?” motto was used on the cover of a London pamphlet addressed to Parliament, and on the cover of a publication

4. There are more images of this sort available at <<http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery>>.

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN



[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

about a voyage to Guinea.



In about this year, according to William Chauncey Fowler's LOCAL LAW IN MASSACHUSETTS AND CONNECTICUT, HISTORICALLY CONSIDERED; AND THE HISTORICAL STATUS OF THE NEGRO, IN CONNECTICUT, ETC. (Albany, 1872, and New Haven, 1875, page 125), "one or two" negro vessels were being fitted out in Connecticut.



The [Underground Railroad](#) and the Manumission and Colonization Society of [North Carolina](#) were both tools of the Guilford County [Quakers](#). At Wells Meeting in Perquimans County, the Quaker yearly meeting was held with representatives from [North Carolina](#), South Carolina, and Georgia, and a minute was made of their progress or lack of progress against their previously agreed goal of cleaning all Quaker hands of slave holding:

As it appears that all Friends have not yet cleansed their hands of slave holding this meeting directs the inferior meetings to put the former advices of our yearly meeting in practice such who continue to hold them as slaves and hand up a report of their service to next yearly meeting to be held at Centre Meeting in Guilford County for further trial with which this meeting concurs.



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

The old committee was discharged and a new committee appointed made up of 24 prestigious [North Carolina Friends](#) — a lifetime commitment for each and every of them:

- Zacharias Dick
- David Vestal
- Jeremiah Reynolds
- Thomas Winslow
- John Talbot
- Obediah Harris
- Jesse Coffin
- Strangeman Stanley
- John Carter
- Joseph Cloud
- John Beals
- Samuel Millikan
- Hezekiah Sanders
- Tristain Barnard
- William Coffin, Jr.
- John Hackett
- John Davis
- Samuel Chambers
- Issac Beeson
- Benjamin Coffin
- John Sanders
- Seth Coffin
- Thomas Thornborough
- William Tomlinson

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: The slave-trade was hardly touched upon in the Congress of the Confederation, except in the ordinance respecting the capture of slaves, and on the occasion of the Quaker petition against the trade, although, during the debate on the Articles of Confederation, the counting of slaves as well as of freemen in the apportionment of taxes was urged as a measure that would check further importation of Negroes. "It is our duty," said Wilson of Pennsylvania, "to lay every discouragement on the importation of slaves; but this amendment [i.e., to count two slaves as one freeman] would give the *jus trium liberorum* to him who would import slaves."⁵ The matter was finally compromised by apportioning requisitions according to the value of land and buildings.

After the Articles went into operation, an ordinance in regard to the recapture of fugitive slaves provided that, if the capture was made on the sea below high-water mark, and the Negro was not claimed, he should be freed. Matthews of South Carolina demanded the yeas and nays on this proposition, with the result that only the vote of his State was recorded against it.⁶

On Tuesday, October 3, 1783, a deputation from the Yearly

5. Elliot, *DEBATES* (1861), I. 72-3. Cf. Article 8 of the ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION.

6. *JOURNALS OF CONGRESS*, 1781, June 25; July 18; Sept. 21, 27; November 8, 13, 30; December 4.



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

Meeting of the Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware Friends asked leave to present a petition. Leave was granted the following day,⁷ but no further minute appears. According to the report of the Friends, the petition was against the slave-trade; and "though the Christian rectitude of the concern was by the Delegates generally acknowledged, yet not being vested with the powers of legislation, they declined promoting any public remedy against the gross national iniquity of trafficking in the persons of fellow-men."⁸

The only legislative activity in regard to the trade during the Confederation was taken by the individual States.⁹ Before 1778 Connecticut, Vermont, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Virginia had by law stopped the further importation of slaves, and importation had practically ceased in all the New England and Middle States, including Maryland. In consequence of the revival of the slave-trade after the War, there was then a lull in State activity until 1786, when North Carolina laid a prohibitive duty, and South Carolina, a year later, began her series of temporary prohibitions. In 1787-1788 the New England States forbade the participation of their citizens in the traffic. It was this wave of legislation against the traffic which did so much to blind the nation as to the strong hold which slavery still had on the country.

7. JOURNALS OF CONGRESS, 1782-3, pages 418-9, 425.

8. ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 1st Congress 2d session, page 1183.

9. Cf. above, Chapters ii., iii., iv.



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1791

[William Cowper](#) published his improvement on Alexander Pope's version of Homer. When the widow Mary Unwin with whom he had been living long-term fell ill, the poet relapsed into another depression, one from which he would never fully recover.

A pamphlet was published in an attempt to get the people of Great Britain to abstain from West Indian [cane sugar](#) and [rum](#), so as to abolish the [international slave trade](#).¹⁰ It quoted the following, attributed as "Cowper's Negro's Complaint":

Why did all-creating Nature
Make the plant for which we toil?
Sighs must fan it, Tears must water,
Sweat of ours must dress the soil.
Think ye Masters, iron-hearted,
Lolling at your jovial Boards,
Think how many Backs have smarted
For the Sweets your Cane affords!

10. "Address to the People of Great Britain on the propriety of abstaining from West India Sugar and [Rum](#)," M. Gurney et. al., 8th edition, No. 128 Holborn-Hill, 1791. Except for the decline in [cane sugar](#) production which was caused by the Haitian Revolution of 1791-1803, the island of Haiti being the world's largest colonial producer, world production of sugar has not suffered more than an occasional hiccup in the course of five centuries.



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1792

While writing his LIFE OF [MILTON](#), [William Hayley](#) made the acquaintance of [William Cowper](#). A warm friendship sprang up that would endure until Cowper's death (it would be largely through the efforts of [Hayley](#) that [Cowper](#) would be granted a pension).



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1795

[William Cowper](#) and the widowed Mary Unwin moved to East Dereham in Norfolk.
She would survive another 18 months.



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1800



April 25, Friday: [William Cowper](#) died in East Dereham, Norfolk. His friend and hymn writing partner, the curate [John Newton](#), would conduct the funeral service, and the body would be buried there in East Dereham.



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1803

→ Publication of two volumes that would end up in the library of [Henry Thoreau](#) (bearing the autograph of [John Thoreau](#)), THE LIFE AND POSTHUMOUS WRITINGS OF [WILLIAM COWPER](#), ESQ. WITH AN INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE EARL COWPER. BY [WILLIAM HAYLEY](#), ESQ. (Boston: W. Pelham, Manning & Loring, and E. Lincoln).



WILLIAM COWPER, I

WILLIAM COWPER, II

→ Winter: In England, [Timothy Hackworth](#) created the *Royal George*. Because the *Locomotion* had blown up and killed its driver, the *Royal George* featured an experimental safety device, a spring-loaded automatic steam escape valve to prevent excess pressure from building up in the boiler.¹¹

11. The [HMS Royal George](#), a huge Line-of-Battle Ship carrying an enormous spread of canvas and a round hundred of heavy cannon, had unexpectedly and suddenly sunk with all hands at Spithead (Portsmouth) in 1782. As Herman Melville would point out in *WHITE JACKET*, when this British ship of the line went down while at anchor, its cannon and its sailors took with them to their watery fate also some three hundred of women whom their skipper had allowed aboard to service sexual needs. [William Cowper](#) had written a “Lament for the Royal George.”



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1835



[Robert Southey](#) began to issue an edition of the writings of [William Cowper](#), which would complete its publication in 1837.



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1836

→ September 12, Monday: A visit by [Frédéric François Chopin](#) to [Robert Schumann](#) on this day inspired Schumann to complete his “Etudes symphoniques.” Chopin, Schumann, and Clara Wieck spent most of the day at the piano.

[David Henry Thoreau](#) was back at [Harvard College](#), for his Senior year, enrolling for German, Italian, English, natural philosophy, intellectual philosophy, rhetoric, and criticism. At this point or shortly afterward he changed from “David Henry” to “Henry David.” His current assignment was an essay on the topic “Whether the Cultivation of the Imagination Conduce to the Happiness of the Individual.” He enrolled in a course in intellectual philosophy which would require all three of his remaining college terms for its completion. Among the works which he would be examining would be [John Locke](#)’s AN ESSAY CONCERNING THE HUMAN UNDERSTANDING, Say’s POLITICAL ECONOMY, and Story’s COMMENTARIES ON THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES. This time he was to occupy 23 Hollis Hall.

THOREAU RESIDENCES

HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

[Thoreau](#) supplemented his borrowings from the [Harvard Library](#) by checking out, from the library of the “[Institute of 1770](#),” the 5th of the ten volumes of the 1st Series of the Reverend [Jared Sparks](#)’s THE LIBRARY OF AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY (Boston and London, 1836-1839), the one about the Reverend John Eliot written by the Reverend Convers Francis,¹²



LIBRARY OF AM. BIOG. V

Jared Sparks

the 1st of the five volumes of [Professor Adam Ferguson](#)’s THE HISTORY OF THE PROGRESS AND TERMINATION

12. In 1849 the Reverend Sparks would give over the editing of this series of American biographies in order to become the President of Harvard College — and once in that office he would grant Thoreau a letter by which this former student might continue to check out books from Harvard Library.

THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

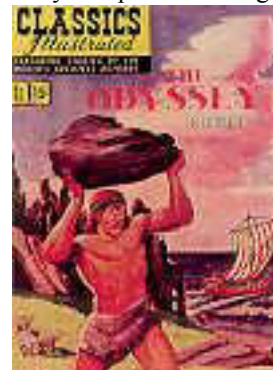
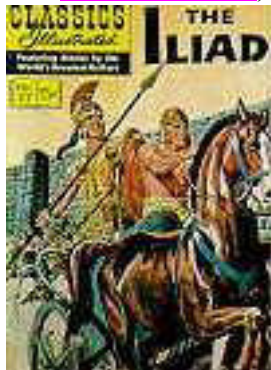
PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC (1773, new edition Edinburgh, 1813),



THE ROMAN REPUBLIC, I

the 1st of the four volumes of THE ILIAD AND ODYSSEY OF HOMER, TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BLANK VERSE BY THE LATE WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ. (Boston: Printed and published by Joseph T. Buckingham, 1814),



[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

and the 1st and 3d of the three volumes of the Reverend Henry Stebbing (1799-1883)'s LIVES OF THE ITALIAN POETS (London, 1832). (Thoreau would renew the Ferguson, Cowper, and 3rd Stebbing volumes.)






THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

 November 10, Thursday: Louis Napoleon was banished to America.

[David Henry Thoreau](#) checked out, from [Harvard Library](#), the 3rd volume of THE WORKS OF THE LATE [WILLIAM COWPER](#), ESQ. OF THE INNER TEMPLE. [EDITED BY JOHN JOHNSON. WITH PORTRAITS.] (a 10-volume series published at London by Baldwin, Cradock, & Joy in 1817).¹³



WILLIAM COWPER, III



Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

5th day 10 of 11 M / This morning when I first rose & all thro' the Morning & in our Meeting I was favoured with remarkable sweetness & clearness of mind & a confirmation was afforded that I was yet in some good degree under the right influence at least that in some recent religious efforts I had not been out of place - Father was engaged in testimony & altho' the current of his communication was very close upon religious professors I did not feel as if it belonged to me, in this instance having so remarkably felt the sweetness of peace to attend my Mind this Morning - yet it may sense as a caution to a faithful discharge of duty. -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

13. Eventually Thoreau would have his own copy of [Cowper's](#) THE TASK.

COWPER'S "THE TASK"

THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

EXCERPTS FROM COWPER'S THE TASK: BOOK I, THE SOFA¹⁴

...
 150 Thou know'st my praise of nature most sincere,
 151 And that my raptures are not conjur'd up
 152 To serve occasions of poetic pomp,
 153 But genuine, and art partner of them all.
 154 How oft upon yon eminence our pace
 155 Has slacken'd to a pause, and we have borne
 156 The ruffling wind, scarce conscious that it blew,
 157 While admiration, feeding at the eye,
 158 And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene.
 159 Thence with what pleasure have we just discern'd
 160 The distant plough slow moving, and beside
 161 His lab'ring team, that swerv'd not from the track,
 162 The sturdy swain diminish'd to a boy!
 163 Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain
 164 Of spacious meads with cattle sprinkled o'er,
 165 Conducts the eye along its sinuous course
 166 Delighted. There, fast rooted in his bank,
 167 Stand, never overlook'd, our fav'rite elms,
 168 That screen the herdsman's solitary hut;
 169 While far beyond, and overthwart the stream
 170 That, as with molten glass, inlays the vale,
 171 The sloping land recedes into the clouds;
 172 Displaying on its varied side the grace
 173 Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tow'r,
 174 Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells
 175 Just undulates upon the list'ning ear,
 176 Groves, heaths and smoking villages remote.
 177 Scenes must be beautiful, which, daily view'd,
 178 Please daily, and whose novelty survives
 179 Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years.
 180 Praise justly due to those that I describe.

...
 678 But though true worth and virtue, in the mild
 679 And genial soil of cultivated life,
 680 Thrive most, and may perhaps thrive only there,
 681 Yet not in cities oft: in proud and gay
 682 And gain-devoted cities. Thither flow,
 683 As to a common and most noisome sewer,
 684 The dregs and feculence of every land.
 685 In cities foul example on most minds
 686 Begets its likeness. Rank abundance breeds
 687 In gross and pamper'd cities sloth and lust,
 688 And wantonness and gluttonous excess.
 689 In cities vice is hidden with most ease,
 690 Or seen with least reproach; and virtue, taught
 691 By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there
 692 Beyond th' achievement of successful flight.
 693 I do confess them nurseries of the arts,
 694 In which they flourish most; where, in the beams
 695 Of warm encouragement, and in the eye
 696 Of public note, they reach their perfect size.
 697 Such London is, by taste and wealth proclaim'd
 698 The fairest capital of all the world,
 699 By riot and incontinence the worst.
 700 There, touch'd by Reynolds, a dull blank becomes
 701 A lucid mirror, in which Nature sees
 702 All her reflected features. Bacon there

14. This poem was one of the books in Thoreau's personal library.



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN



An illustration from "The Task"



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

703 Gives more than female beauty to a stone,
704 And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips.
...
749 God made the country, and man made the town.
750 What wonder then that health and virtue, gifts
751 That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
752 That life holds out to all, should most abound
753 And least be threaten'd in the fields and groves?
754 Possess ye therefore, ye who, borne about
755 In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue
756 But that of idleness, and taste no scenes
757 But such as art contrives, possess ye still
758 Your element; there only ye can shine,
759 There only minds like yours can do no harm.
760 Our groves were planted to console at noon
761 The pensive wand'rer in their shades. At eve
762 The moonbeam, sliding softly in between
763 The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish,
764 Birds warbling all the music. We can spare
765 The splendour of your lamps, they but eclipse
766 Our softer satellite. Your songs confound
767 Our more harmonious notes: the thrush departs
768 Scared, and th' offended nightingale is mute.
769 There is a public mischief in your mirth;
770 It plagues your country. Folly such as yours,
771 Grac'd with a sword, and worthier of a fan,
772 Has made, which enemies could ne'er have done,
773 Our arch of empire, steadfast but for you,
774 A mutilated structure, soon to fall.
...



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

THE TASK: BOOK II, THE TIME-PIECE

206 England, with all thy faults, I love thee still —
207 My country! and, while yet a nook is left
208 Where English minds and manners may be found,
209 Shall be constrain'd to love thee. Though thy clime
210 Be fickle, and thy year most part deform'd
211 With dripping rains, or wither'd by a frost,
212 I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies,
213 And fields without a flow'r, for warmer France
214 With all her vines; nor for Ausonia's groves
215 Of golden fruitage, and her myrtle bow'rs.
216 To shake thy senate, and from heights sublime
217 Of patriot eloquence to flash down fire
218 Upon thy foes, was never meant my task:
219 But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake
220 Thy joys and sorrows, with as true a heart
221 As any thund'rer there. And I can feel
222 Thy follies, too; and with a just disdain
223 Frown at effeminates, whose very looks
224 Reflect dishonour on the land I love.
225 How, in the name of soldiership and sense,
226 Should England prosper, when such things, as smooth
227 And tender as a girl, all essenc'd o'er
228 With odours, and as profligate as sweet;
229 Who sell their laurel for a myrtle wreath,
230 And love when they should fight; when such as these
231 Presume to lay their hand upon the ark
232 Of her magnificent and awful cause?
233 Time was when it was praise and boast enough
234 In ev'ry clime, and travel where we might,
235 That we were born her children. Praise enough
236 To fill th' ambition of a private man,
237 That Chatham's language was his mother tongue,
238 And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own.
239 Farewell those honours, and farewell with them
240 The hope of such hereafter! They have fall'n
241 Each in his field of glory; one in arms,
242 And one in council — Wolfe upon the lap
243 Of smiling victory that moment won,
244 And Chatham heart-sick of his country's shame!
245 They made us many soldiers. Chatham, still
246 Consulting England's happiness at home,
247 Secur'd it by an unforgiving frown
248 If any wrong'd her. Wolfe, where'er he fought,
249 Put so much of his heart into his act,
250 That his example had a magnet's force,
251 And all were swift to follow whom all lov'd.
252 Those suns are set. Oh, rise some other such!
253 Or all that we have left is empty talk
254 Of old achievements, and despair of new.
...
285 There is a pleasure in poetic pains
286 Which only poets know. The shifts and turns,
287 Th' expedients and inventions multifarious
288 To which the mind resorts in chase of terms
289 Thought apt, yet coy, and difficult to win,
290 T' arrest the fleeting images that fill
291 The mirror of the mind, and hold them fast,
292 And force them sit, till he has pencill'd off
293 A faithful likeness of the forms he views;

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

294 Then to dispose his copies with such art
295 That each may find its most propitious light,
296 And shine by situation hardly less
297 Than by the labour and the skill it cost,
298 Are occupations of the poet's mind
299 So pleasing, and that steal away the thought
300 With such address from themes of sad import,
301 That, lost in his own musings, happy man!
302 He feels th' anxieties of life, denied
303 Their wonted entertainment, all retire.
304 Such joys has he that sings. But ah! not such,
305 Or seldom such, the hearers of his song.
306 Fastidious, or else listless, or perhaps
307 Aware of nothing arduous in a task
308 They never undertook, they little note
309 His dangers or escapes, and haply find
310 Their least amusement where he found the most.
311 But is amusement all? Studios of song,
312 And yet ambitious not to sing in vain,
313 I would not trifle merely, though the world
314 Be loudest in their praise who do no more.
315 Yet what can satire, whether grave or gay?
316 It may correct a foible, may chastise
317 The freaks of fashion, regulate the dress,
318 Retrench a sword-blade, or displace a patch;
319 But where are its sublimer trophies found?
320 What vice has it subdu'd? whose heart reclaim'd
321 By rigour, or whom laugh'd into reform?
322 Alas! Leviathan is not so tam'd.
323 Laugh'd at, he laughs again; and, stricken hard,
324 Turns to the stroke his adamantine scales,
325 That fear no discipline of human hands.
326 The pulpit, therefore, (and I name it fill'd
327 With solemn awe, that bids me well beware
328 With what intent I touch that holy thing) —
329 The pulpit (when the satirist has at last,
330 Strutting and vapouring in an empty school,
331 Spent all his force, and made no proselyte) —
332 I say the pulpit (in the sober use
333 Of its legitimate, peculiar pow'rs)
334 Must stand acknowledg'd, while the world shall stand,
335 The most important and effectual guard,
336 Support, and ornament of Virtue's cause.

....

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

THE TASK: BOOK IV, THE WINTER EVENING

1 Hark! 'tis the twanging horn! O'er yonder bridge,
2 That with its wearisome but needful length
3 Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon
4 Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright,
5 He comes, the herald of a noisy world,
6 With spatter'd boots, strapp'd waist, and frozen locks;
7 News from all nations lumb'ring at his back.
8 True to his charge, the close-pack'd load behind,
9 Yet careless what he brings, his one concern
10 Is to conduct it to the destin'd inn:
11 And, having dropp'd th' expected bag, pass on.
12 He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,
13 Cold and yet cheerful: messenger of grief
14 Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some;
15 To him indiff'rent whether grief or joy.
16 Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,
17 Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet
18 With tears that trickled down the writer's cheeks
19 Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,
20 Or charg'd with am'rous sighs of absent swains,
21 Or nymphs responsive, equally affect
22 His horse and him, unconscious of them all.
23 But oh th' important budget! usher'd in
24 With such heart-shaking music, who can say
25 What are its tidings? have our troops awak'd?
26 Or do they still, as if with opium drugg'd,
27 Snore to the murmurs of th' Atlantic wave?
28 Is India free? and does she wear her plum'd
29 And jewell'd turban with a smile of peace,
30 Or do we grind her still? The grand debate,
31 The popular harangue, the tart reply,
32 The logic, and the wisdom, and the wit,
33 And the loud laugh — I long to know them all;
34 I burn to set th' imprison'd wranglers free,
35 And give them voice and utt'rance once again.
36 Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
37 Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
38 And, while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn
39 Throws up a steamy column, and the cups,
40 That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
41 So let us welcome peaceful ev'ning in.
42 Not such his ev'ning, who with shining face
43 Sweats in the crowded theatre, and, squeez'd
44 And bor'd with elbow-points through both his sides,
45 Out-scolds the ranting actor on the stage:
46 Nor his, who patient stands till his feet throb,
47 And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath
48 Of patriots, bursting with heroic rage,
49 Or placemen, all tranquility and smiles.
50 This folio of four pages, happy work!
51 Which not ev'n critics criticise; that holds
52 Inquisitive attention, while I read,
53 Fast bound in chains of silence, which the fair,
54 Though eloquent themselves, yet fear to break;
55 What is it, but a map of busy life,
56 Its fluctuations, and its vast concerns?
...
120 Oh winter, ruler of th' inverted year,
121 Thy scatter'd hair with sleet like ashes fill'd,

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

122 Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheeks
123 Fring'd with a beard made white with other snows
124 Than those of age, thy forehead wrapp'd in clouds,
125 A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne
126 A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,
127 But urg'd by storms along its slipp'ry way,
128 I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st,
129 And dreaded as thou art! Thou hold'st the sun
130 A pris'ner in the yet undawning east,
131 Short'ning his journey between morn and noon,
132 And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,
133 Down to the rosy west; but kindly still
134 Compensating his loss with added hours
135 Of social converse and instructive ease,
136 And gath'ring, at short notice, in one group
137 The family dispers'd, and fixing thought,
138 Not less dispers'd by day-light and its cares.
139 I crown thee king of intimate delights,
140 Fire-side enjoyments, home-born happiness,
141 And all the comforts that the lowly roof
142 Of undisturb'd retirement, and the hours
143 Of long uninterrupted ev'ning, know.
144 No rattling wheels stop short before these gates;
145 No powder'd pert proficient in the art
146 Of sounding an alarm, assaults these doors
147 Till the street rings; no stationary steeds
148 Cough their own knell, while, heedless of the sound,
149 The silent circle fan themselves, and quake:
150 But here the needle plies its busy task,
151 The pattern grows, the well-depicted flow'r,
152 Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,
153 Unfolds its bosom; buds, and leaves, and sprigs,
154 And curling tendrils, gracefully dispos'd,
155 Follow the nimble finger of the fair;
156 A wreath that cannot fade, or flow'rs that blow
157 With most success when all besides decay.
158 The poet's or historian's page, by one
159 Made vocal for th' amusement of the rest;
160 The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds
161 The touch from many a trembling chord shakes out;
162 And the clear voice symphonious, yet distinct,
163 And in the charming strife triumphant still;
164 Beguile the night, and set a keener edge
165 On female industry: the threaded steel
166 Flies swiftly, and, unfelt, the task proceeds.
167 The volume clos'd, the customary rites
168 Of the last meal commence. A Roman meal;
169 Such as the mistress of the world once found
170 Delicious, when her patriots of high note,
171 Perhaps by moonlight, at their humble doors,
172 And under an old oak's domestic shade,
173 Enjoy'd — spare feast! — a radish and an egg!
174 Discourse ensues, not trivial, yet not dull,
175 Nor such as with a frown forbids the play
176 Of fancy, or proscribes the sound of mirth:
177 Nor do we madly, like an impious world,
178 Who deem religion frenzy, and the God
179 That made them an intruder on their joys,
180 Start at his awful name, or deem his praise
181 A jarring note. Themes of a graver tone,
182 Exciting oft our gratitude and love,
183 While we retrace with mem'ry's pointing wand,
184 That calls the past to our exact review,
185 The dangers we have 'scaped, the broken snare,



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

186 The disappointed foe, deliv'rance found
187 Unlook'd for, life preserv'd and peace restor'd —
188 Fruits of omnipotent eternal love.
189 Oh ev'nings worthy of the gods! exclaim'd
190 The Sabine bard. Oh ev'nings, I reply,
191 More to be priz'd and coveted than yours,
192 As more illumin'd, and with nobler truths.
193 That I, and mine, and those we love, enjoy.
...



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

THE TASK: BOOK V, THE WINTER MORNING WALK

1 'Tis morning; and the sun, with ruddy orb
2 Ascending, fires th' horizon: while the clouds,
3 That crowd away before the driving wind,
4 More ardent as the disk emerges more,
5 Resemble most some city in a blaze,
6 Seen through the leafless wood. His slanting ray
7 Slides ineffectual down the snowy vale,
8 And, tinging all with his own rosy hue,
9 From ev'ry herb and ev'ry spiry blade
10 Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field.
11 Mine, spindling into longitude immense,
12 In spite of gravity, and sage remark
13 That I myself am but a fleeting shade,
14 Provokes me to a smile. With eye askance
15 I view the muscular proportion'd limb
16 Transform'd to a lean shank. The shapeless pair,
17 As they design'd to mock me, at my side
18 Take step for step; and, as I near approach
19 The cottage, walk along the plaster'd wall,
20 Prepost'rous sight! the legs without the man.
21 The verdure of the plain lies buried deep
22 Beneath the dazzling deluge; and the bents,
23 And coarser grass, upspearing o'er the rest,
24 Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine
25 Conspicuous, and, in bright apparel clad
26 And fledg'd with icy feathers, nod superb.
27 The cattle mourn in corners where the fence
28 Screens them, and seem half petrified to sleep
29 In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait
30 Their wonted fodder; not like hung'ring man,
31 Fretful if unsupply'd; but silent, meek,
32 And patient of the slow-pac'd swain's delay.
33 He from the stack carves out th' accustom'd load,
34 Deep-plunging, and again deep-plunging oft,
35 His broad keen knife into the solid mass:
36 Smooth as a wall the upright remnant stands,
37 With such undeviating and even force
38 He severs it away: no needless care,
39 Lest storms should overset the leaning pile
40 Deciduous, or its own unbalanc'd weight.

...
446 'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
447 Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume,
448 And we are weeds without it. All constraint,
449 Except what wisdom lays on evil men,
450 Is evil; hurts the faculties, impedes
451 Their progress in the road of science; blinds
452 The eyesight of discovery, and begets,
453 In those that suffer it, a sordid mind
454 Bestial, a meagre intellect, unfit
455 To be the tenant of man's noble form.
456 Thee therefore, still, blameworthy as thou art,
457 With all thy loss of empire, and though squeez'd
458 By public exigence till annual food
459 Fails for the craving hunger of the state,
460 Thee I account still happy, and the chief
461 Among the nations, seeing thou art free,
462 My native nook of earth! . . .

...



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

538 But there is yet a liberty unsung
539 By poets, and by senators unprais'd,
540 Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the pow'rs
541 Of earth and hell confederate take away;
542 A liberty which persecution, fraud,
543 Oppression, prisons, have no pow'r to bind;
544 Which whoso tastes can be enslav'd no more.
545 'Tis liberty of heart, deriv'd from Heav'n,
546 Bought with his blood who gave it to mankind,
547 And seal'd with the same token. It is held
548 By charter, and that charter sanction'd sure
549 By th' unimpeachable and awful oath
550 And promise of a God. His other gifts
551 All bear the royal stamp that speaks them his,
552 And are august, but this transcends them all.

...



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

THE TASK: BOOK VI, THE WINTER WALK AT NOON

818 Thus heav'nward all things tend. For all were once
819 Perfect, and all must be at length restor'd.
820 So God has greatly purpos'd; who would else
821 In his dishonour'd works himself endure
822 Dishonour, and be wrong'd without redress.
823 Haste then, and wheel away a shatter'd world,
824 Ye slow-revolving seasons! We would see
825 (A sight to which our eyes are strangers yet)
826 A world that does not dread and hate his laws,
827 And suffer for its crime: would learn how fair
828 The creature is that God pronounces good,
829 How pleasant in itself what pleases him.
830 Here ev'ry drop of honey hides a sting;
831 Worms wind themselves into our sweetest flow'rs,
832 And ev'n the joy, that haply some poor heart
833 Derives from heav'n, pure as the fountain is,
834 Is sully'd in the stream; taking a taint
835 From touch of human lips, at best impure.
836 Oh for a world in principle as chaste
837 As this is gross and selfish! over which
838 Custom and prejudice shall bear no sway,
839 That govern all things here, should'ring aside
840 The meek and modest truth, and forcing her
841 To seek a refuge from the tongue of strife
842 In nooks obscure, far from the ways of men;
843 Where violence shall never lift the sword,
844 Nor cunning justify the proud man's wrong,
845 Leaving the poor no remedy but tears;
846 Where he that fills an office shall esteem
847 The occasion it presents of doing good
848 More than the perquisite; where law shall speak
849 Seldom, and never but as wisdom prompts,
850 And equity; not jealous more to guard
851 A worthless form, than to decide aright;
852 Where fashion shall not sanctify abuse,
853 Nor smooth good-breeding (supplemental grace)
854 With lean performance ape the work of love.
...
906 He is the happy man, whose life ev'n now
907 Shows somewhat of that happier life to come:
908 Who, doom'd to an obscure but tranquil state,
909 Is pleas'd with it, and, were he free to choose,
910 Would make his fate his choice; whom peace, the fruit
911 Of virtue, and whom virtue, fruit of faith,
912 Prepare for happiness; bespeak him one
913 Content indeed to sojourn while he must
914 Below the skies, but having there his home.
915 The world o'erlooks him in her busy search
916 Of objects more illustrious in her view;
917 And occupied as earnestly as she,
918 Though more sublimely, he o'erlooks the world.
919 She scorns his pleasures, for she knows them not;
920 He seeks not hers, for he has prov'd them vain.
921 He cannot skim the ground like summer birds
922 Pursuing gilded flies, and such he deems
923 Her honours, her emoluments, her joys.
924 Therefore in contemplation is his bliss,
925 Whose pow'r is such, that whom she lifts from earth
926 She makes familiar with a heav'n unseen,



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

927 And shows him glories yet to be reveal'd.
...
995 So life glides smoothly and by stealth away,
996 More golden than that age of fabled gold
997 Renown'd in ancient song; not vex'd with care
998 Or stain'd with guilt, beneficent, approv'd
999 Of God and man, and peaceful in its end.
1000 So glide my life away! and so at last
1001 My share of duties decently fulfill'd,
1002 May some disease, not tardy to perform
1003 Its destin'd office, yet with gentle stroke,
1004 Dismiss me weary to a safe retreat,
1005 Beneath a turf that I have often trod.
1006 It shall not grieve me, then, that once, when call'd
1007 To dress a sofa with the flow'rs of verse,
1008 I play'd awhile, obedient to the fair,
1009 With that light task; but soon, to please her more,
1010 Whom flow'rs alone I knew would little please,
1011 Let fall th' unfinished wreath, and rov'd for fruit;
1012 Rov'd far, and gather'd much: some harsh, 'tis true,
1013 Pick'd from the thorns and briars of reproof,
1014 But wholesome, well digested; grateful some
1015 To palates that can taste immortal truth,
1016 Insipid else, and sure to be despis'd.
1017 But all is in his hand whose praise I seek.
1018 In vain the poet sings, and the world hears,
1019 If he regard not, though divine the theme.
1020 'Tis not in artful measures, in the chime
1021 And idle tinkling of a minstrel's lyre,
1022 To charm his ear whose eye is on the heart;
1023 Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,
1024 Whose approbation — prosper ev'n mine.

Notes

- 150-80. [William Cowper](#) describes the scenery most familiar to him — the level valley of the Ouse in the neighbourhood of Olney, where he lived.
178. Cf. Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 365: "Haec placuit semel, haec decies repetita placebit."
700. Reynolds: Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792), celebrated English painter, first president of the Royal Academy.
702. Bacon: John Bacon (1740-1799), sculptor; a personal friend of Cowper.
704. Chatham: William Pitt, the elder, first Earl of Chatham (1708-1778). Among Bacon's best works are two monuments to Chatham, one in London's Guildhall, the other in Westminster Abbey.
755. chariots and sedans: fashionable carriages.
- 773-74. It has been suggested that these closing lines allude to the dismemberment of the Empire by the peace with America in 1782. Cf. II, 225-32; IV, 25-7.
214. Ausonia: poetic name for Italy.
- 216-18. Longinus likens the eloquence of Demosthenes to thunder and lightning.
229. The laurel wreath was the Roman reward for victory; the myrtle wreath was worn at banquets.
231. See II Samuel 6:6-7, and 1 Chronicles 13: 9-10.
237. Chatham: William Pitt, the elder. See I, 704, and note.
238. Wolfe: Major-General James Wolfe, killed at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, 1759. In a letter Cowper wrote: "Nothing could express my rapture when Wolfe made the conquest of Quebec."
244. Chatham died during the disastrous war against the American colonies.
- 290-93. Cf. Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, 297-300.
- 298-304. "Poetry, above all things, is useful to me in this respect, While I am held in pursuit of pretty images, or a pretty way of expressing them, I forget everything that is irksome, and, like a boy that plays truant, determine to avail myself of the present opportunity to be amused, and to put by the disagreeable recollection that I must, after all, go home and be whipped again" (Cowper, *Letter to Newton*, Dec. 21, 1780).
315. what can satire? i.e., of what efficacy or power is satire?
318. patch. Fashionable ladies wore black "patches" on face and forehead.
322. Leviathan: a great sea-monster; see Job 41: 1-10.
336. support and ornament: cf. Horace, *Carminum*, I, i, 2, and *Carminum*, II, xvii, 4.5. he: the postman. 12. Cf. Dryden, *Cymon* and



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

Iphigenia, 85: "And whistled as he went for want of thought." 25-30. The allusion here is to the concluding months of the American war. At the same time the English were engaged in fighting in India. Cf. I, 773-74, and note. 40. that cheer but not inebriate: Cowper borrows from Bishop Berkeley, *Siris* (1747), who describes his favourite "tar-water" as "of a nature so mild and benign, ... as to warm without heating, to cheer but not inebriate." 49. placemen: men with sinecures. 120. Cf. Thomson, *The Seasons*, "Winter," 139-43. "I see the winter approaching without much concern, though a passionate lover of fine weather and the pleasant scenes of summer; but the long evenings have their comforts too, and there is hardly to be found upon the earth, I suppose, so snug a creature as an Englishman by his fireside in the winter. I mean, however, an Englishman that lives in the country, for in London it is not very easy to avoid intrusion" (Cowper, Letter to Joseph Hill, Oct. 20, 1783). 174 ff. Cf. Thomson, "Winter," 541-49. 190. the Sabine bard: Horace, called Sabine from his Sabine farm. The reference is to the *Satires*, II, vi, 65.

22. bents: dry stalks of grass.

1008. the fair: Lady Austen.

1009. her: Mrs. Unwin, his closest companion and friend of many years, and the Mary of the verses *To Mary*.

1024. "What there is of a religious cast in the volume I have thrown towards the end of it, for two reasons: first, that I might not revolt the reader at his entrance, and secondly, that my best impressions might be made last. Were I to write as many volumes as Lope de Vega or Voltaire, not one of them would be without this tincture" (Cowper, Letter to William Unwin, Oct. 10, 1784).



PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1840

In Worcester, Massachusetts, Southworth Allen Howland's STEAMBOAT ACCIDENTS AND RAILWAY DISASTERS IN THE UNITED STATES went to press. ("If it bleeds, it leads.")

On August 29, 1782, the flagship of a British fleet, the Royal George, one of the largest ships of its time, about a generation old (it had been built in 1756), had been anchored off Spithead (Portsmouth) in about 20 meters of water, for repairs to a minor but persistent leak below the waterline on the vessel's starboard side. The crew was shoving all 54 of the starboard cannon over to the port side in order to heel the vessel and raise these leaking planks above the waterline, so they could be replaced. During this procedure the crew heard this loud crack — the ship went under almost instantly, with the loss of between 800 and 1400 lives, including that of Admiral Kempenfelt.¹⁵

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

During the following month, [William Cowper](#) had written a LAMENT FOR THE *ROYAL GEORGE* at the request of Lady Austen, who had asked him to put the words to the tune of the march in *SCIPIO*. Cowper had noted that this obliged him to write in Alexandrines, "which I suppose would suit no ear but a French one":

Toll for the brave
The Brave that are no more,
All sunk beneath the wave,
Fast by their native shore.
Eight hundred of the brave,
Whose courage was well tried,
Had made the vessel heel,
And laid her on her side.

A land breeze shook the shroud,
And she was overset,¹⁶
Down went the Royal George,
With all her crew complete.

15. We don't know exactly how many people drowned because there were just a whole lot of civilians aboard, including a large consignment of some 300 women who were busy tending to the sexual needs of the crewmen. Officials were in that era going to great lengths to avoid a perilous crew condition known euphemistically as "Buggery Island." It was considered of the utmost importance, in the endeavor to make war properly, that a crew be able to make love properly.

16. Cowper suggested that the loss had been due to over-heeling and the breeze because the court-martial finding, that the loss had been the result of the breakage of excessively decayed timbers in the hull, had been suppressed by the Admiralty.



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

By this point enough advances had been made in the technology of helmet diving that salvagers were able to descend 20 meters and recover some of the materials. This would be made into mementos (for instance, some of the watersoaked wood would be rendered into souvenir butter knives), after which the wreck would be removed by the use of explosives as a hazard to shipping:¹⁷



1840 Salvage Operations

17. Refer to Kenneth Hudson's THE BOOK OF SHIPWRECKS (Macmillan, 1979).



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1844

Midsummer: [Henry Thoreau](#) joined up with [Ellery Channing](#) where he was waiting for him in the railroad station in Pittsfield MA at the foot of [Saddleback \(Mount Greylock\)](#), that is) after coming up from New-York, and the two young men went on a midsummer walking tour of the Berkshires and the Catskills. While in the Catskill Mountains, Thoreau would notice an attractive little habitation not unlike [William Cowper](#)'s 18th-Century English "Peasant's Nest" along the River Ouse, that would figure large in his later thoughts and plans:

WALDEN: To my imagination it [the shanty on [Walden Pond](#)] retained throughout the day more or less of this auroral character, reminding me of a certain house on a mountain which I had visited the year before. This was an airy and unplastered cabin, fit to entertain a travelling god, and where a goddess might trail her garments. The winds which passed over my dwelling were such as sweep over the ridges of mountains, bearing the broken strains, or celestial parts only, of terrestrial music. The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted; but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth every where.



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

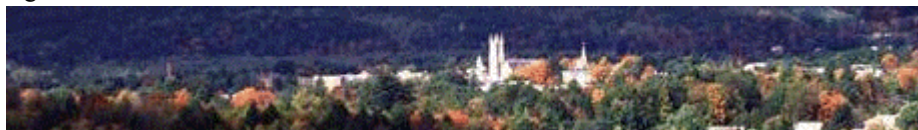
WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN



BERKSHIRE, MASS.

Franklin Benjamin Sanborn would allege in 1905 that much of the material Thoreau would insert into his account of his adventure with his brother [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) on the Concord and the Merrimack rivers into the mountains of southern New Hampshire in 1849 actually had originated during this 1844 hiking tour with Channing into the mountains of western Massachusetts and New York state: “This journey Thoreau in WEEK breaks into two parts, printing the last first, near the beginning of his “Tuesday,” where it runs on for fourteen pages. Then ... he takes up the tale of his tramp from Shelburne Falls on the Deerfield River, up the valley of that stream, and over the Hoosac Mountain, through which the railroad has since bored its way.” This is the famous chronicle in which Thoreau is attracted by a young lady intimately combing out her long black hair while attired merely in her housedress: “Its mistress was a frank and hospitable young woman, who stood before me in a dishabille, busily and unconcernedly combing her long black hair while she talked, giving her head the necessary toss with each sweep of the comb, with lively sparkling eyes, and full of interest in that lower world from which I had come, talking all the while as familiarly as if she had known me for years, and reminding me of a cousin of mine.”



Thoreau supposed he could view [Williams College](#) from at or near the summit of Mount Greylock, or “Saddleback.” Correcting some of the details, the central campus is not visible from the peak itself, the



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

college was never named [Williamstown](#), and the summit of Greylock is at 3491 feet rather than 3600:

A WEEK: I had come over the hills on foot and alone in serene summer days, plucking the raspberries by the wayside, and occasionally buying a loaf of bread at a farmer's house, with a knapsack on my back which held a few traveller's books and a change of clothing, and a staff in my hand. I had that morning looked down from the Hoosack Mountain, where the road crosses it, on the village of North Adams in the valley three miles away under my feet, showing how uneven the earth may sometimes be, and making it seem an accident that it should ever be level and convenient for the feet of man. Putting a little rice and sugar and a tin cup into my knapsack at this village, I began in the afternoon to ascend the mountain, whose summit is three thousand six hundred feet above the level of the sea, and was seven or eight miles distant by the path. My route lay up a long and spacious valley called the Bellows, because the winds rush up or down it with violence in storms, sloping up to the very clouds between the principal range and a lower mountain. There were a few farms scattered along at different elevations, each commanding a fine prospect of the mountains to the north, and a stream ran down the middle of the valley on which near the head there was a mill. It seemed a road for the pilgrim to enter upon who would climb to the gates of heaven. Now I crossed a hay-field, and now over the brook on a slight bridge, still gradually ascending all the while with a sort of awe, and filled with indefinite expectations as to what kind of inhabitants and what kind of nature I should come to at last. It now seemed some advantage that the earth was uneven, for one could not imagine a more noble position for a farm-house than this vale afforded, farther from or nearer to its head, from a glen-like seclusion overlooking the country at a great elevation between these two mountain walls.

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

Thoreau has recently been accused of a plagiarism. He must have been carrying along in his knapsack, according to Lauren Stevens (a tour guide who has coauthored a history of Mount Greylock), not only sugar, rice, and a change of clothes, but also the Reverend [Timothy Dwight](#)'s TRAVELS IN NEW ENGLAND AND NEW YORK –to plagiarize from– for Dwight had described a view from Mount Greylock and had described Williamstown, and Thoreau wrote that he could view Williamstown from the peak although that is simply not possible. Stevens, reading between the lines, sees in this sufficient evidence to allege, in his history which has been reviewed in the Boston [Globe](#) in 1998 by B.J. Roche, that he has caught Thoreau red-handed.

Upon reaching the summit Thoreau read some stock price quotations in a castoff newspaper and lay down to sleep next to the outside wall of the only building, an [observatory](#), on the summit:

A WEEK: This observatory was a building of considerable size, erected by the students of Williamstown College, whose buildings might be seen by daylight gleaming far down in the valley. It would be no small advantage if every college were thus located at the base of a mountain, as good at least as one well-endowed professorship. It were as well to be educated in the shadow of a mountain as in more classical shades. Some will remember, no doubt, not only that they went to the college, but that they went to the mountain. Every visit to its summit would, as it were, generalize the particular information gained below, and subject it to more catholic tests.





THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

After hiking in Massachusetts mountains, Thoreau and Channing boarded an excursion boat on the Hudson River and went on into the Catskill Mountains of New York state.

According to [Channing](#), the sentence I have emphasized here from [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) pertains not to the shanty on the pond but to his boat ride on the Hudson River with [Thoreau](#) of this summer:

[WALDEN](#): I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one. It is remarkable how easily and insensibly we fall into a particular route, and make a beaten track for ourselves. I had not lived there a week before my feet wore a path from my door to the pond-side; and though it is five or six years since I trod it, it is still quite distinct. It is true, I fear that others may have fallen into it, and so helped to keep it open. The surface of the earth is soft and impressible by the feet of men; and so with the paths which the mind travels. How worn and dusty, then, must be the highways of the world, how deep the ruts of tradition and conformity! I did not wish to take a cabin passage, but rather to go before the mast and on the deck of the world, for there I could best see the moonlight amid the mountains. I do not wish to go below now.

Because the moon was bright, they spent the night in the bow of the excursion boat.

Thoreau would be back in Concord by August 1st.



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1846

September 23, Wednesday: Frederick Douglass made his one and only reference, of which I am aware, to the work of the poet [William Cowper](#). For all editions of George Bourne's *A PICTURE OF SLAVERY IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: BEING A PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION OF VOLUNTARYISM AND REPUBLICANISM*, published in 1834 and in 1835, a poem by Cowper had been positioned on the title page. At one point in his address before the general assembly of the Reverend Mr. Cairns's Free Church in Paisley, Scotland, Douglass made explicit reference to that secondary source of the poetry of Cowper and then closely paraphrased lines from that poem: "Is there not some chosen curse, some hidden thunder in the stars of heaven ready to blast him who gains his fortune by the blood of slaves?"





THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1850

[Henry Thoreau](#) owned an 1850 New York edition (Leavitt & Allen) of [William Cowper](#)'s POEMS OF WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.; WITH A NEW MEMOIR. COMPILED FROM JOHNSON, SOUTHEY AND OTHER SOURCES. From this volume he extracted the poem "Verses Supposed To Be Written by Alexander Selkirk, during his solitary abode on the Island of Juan Fernandez, 1782" for inclusion at the start of Chapter 2 of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) (which, actually, was some of the very 1st materials he prepared for this 2d book, done while he was still living at Walden Pond and writing about his and his brother's river trip toward the White Mountains of New Hampshire). Here, in electronic copy, is as close as I can presently get to Thoreau's personal copy: the 1846 Philadelphia edition (Uriah Hunt & Son, 44 North Fourth Street), which actually contains the same poems and the same introductory material, as found in Thoreau's personal somewhat later American edition.

WILLIAM COWPER

I am monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute.



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1854

August 12, Saturday: In his journal, [Henry Thoreau](#) noted the first watermelon of the season. He went by boat to Conantum (Gleason J6). He walked the Fitchburg Railroad tracks to Bare or Pine Hill in Lincoln (Gleason J9).

Bronson Alcott completed a re-reading of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#), and also of [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#).

[TIMELINE OF WALDEN](#)

The Concord librarian, [Albert Stacy](#), purchased a copy of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) for the town library at a cost of \$0.⁷⁵, and the Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) purchased two copies for \$2.⁰⁰. A favorable review under the heading "Editorial Correspondence" presumably by the Reverend John Sullivan Dwight appeared in [Dwight's Journal of Music, A Paper of Art and Literature](#) (5:149-50):

... Thoreau is one of those men who has put such a determined trust in the simple dictates of common sense, as to earn the vulgar title of "transcendentalist" from his sophisticated neighbors. ... Of course, they find him strange, fantastical, a humorist, a theorist, a dreamer. It may be or it may not.... Walden's literary style is admirably clear and terse and elegant; the pictures wonderfully graphic; for the writer is a poet and a scholar as well as a tough wrestler with the first economical problems of nature, and a winner of good cheer and of free glorious leisure out of what men call the "hard realities" of life. Walden Pond, a half mile in diameter, in Concord town, becomes henceforth as classical as any lake of Windermere. And we doubt not men are beginning to look to transcendentalists for the soberest reports of good hard common-sense, as well as for the models of the clearest writing.

Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) under the heading "New Publications" in the Boston [Commonwealth](#), 2:4.



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

We mean, before long, to say how delightful a book this is [no subsequent notice located]; but it is now Saturday, the very day when people buy books, and we can only say that it is just the pleasantest and most readable, the most thought-provoking book of the present season. It is a better work than the author['s] previous one, "A [W]eek on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers," though we reckon that as a book which will live in American literature a good while. "Walden" is a record of two years' sojourning in a house built by the author with his own hands, near Walden Pond. He was a squatter upon the land, and his sovereignty was over all he surveyed. Most lively accounts he gives of his life there, mingled with pages of philosophical (sensible or other) reflections upon all sorts of topics. No more attractive book has been printed for a long time. It ought, to be sure, considering the author's theories of food and raiment, to be printed upon birch-bark, but it is, on the contrary, issued in Ticknor & Fields' best style.

Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) under the heading "New Publications" in the Boston Olive Branch, 3:3-4.

This is indeed a quaint book, as any person, who is in the least familiar with the character of the author, might expect. It gives a full account of his experience during his sojourn on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Mass. Having imbibed the idea that the daily life of his neighbors, with its cares, its trials and its conformity to fashion and custom was little better than a penance, he made himself a home in that secluded spot. He built a house, which cost him about thirty dollars; furnished it scantily and began to keep "bachelor's hall." There in his solitary abode he read the great book of Nature; watched the stars, the birds and the waters, and mused and philosophized after his own fashion. Besides, he had a small piece of land near this cottage, which he cultivated, and which yielded him a small harvest. His expenditures for food and clothing were very trifling, and it will no doubt, astonish many to know that so moderate a sum supported a person two years. He gives the details of his life and we presume they will entertain the reader as they have us.



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

“SLAVERY IN MASSACHUSETTS” appeared in The National Anti-Slavery Standard.



Review of WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS under the heading “New Publications” on the second page of the New Bedford, Massachusetts Mercury, column 3:

This is a remarkable history of remarkable experiences. Mr. Thoreau is an eccentric genius, and affects the philosopher, despising all the ordinary aims and petty ambitions of the world, looking in a half cynical, half amused mood upon men and things, and meanwhile retiring into a semi barbarous state builds with his own hands a hut on Walden Pond in Connecticut [sic], where for twenty-six months he lives like a hermit on the labor of his hands, looking to nature, 'kindest mother still,' for the supply of his physical wants, and as a perpetual fountain of delight to his eye and soul. This volume is in some measure a record of his external and internal being during his retirement, and is perfectly unique in experience and expression. A simple, pure heart, high cultivation and a luxuriant fancy, give to Mr. Thoreau a vigorous intellectual life, and impart a freshness and charm to his style which leads one on quite enchanted. For its fine descriptions of nature, it will bear more than one reading, while its stern and true lessons on the value of existence, its manly simplicity, its sage reflections, will drop many a good seed for content and true living, to spring up and flourish and beautify new homes, albeit in civilized life, for we do not think any will be so enamored of Mr. Thoreau's experience, as to seek it in his way.

Review of WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS on the second page of the Roxbury Norfolk County Journal.



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

column 6:

Mr. Thoreau is an eccentric genius as well as an original thinker and good writer. His eccentricity led him to build a hut upon the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, in which he lived alone for two years, laboring in his garden patch to raise food for the support of life, and all that he might experience the pleasures of solitude and a perfectly independent life. But Mr. Thoreau is a man of education, of intellect, of taste, — though he did not show much of the latter in his odd sort of life, according to the general estimation of the world, — and he did not live alone in the woods like a savage. He mused and studied — mused somewhat on the works of nature, somewhat more on mankind, and not in the most loving and gentle spirit, and he studied his own erratic mind. The latter occupation might have been more profitable, perhaps, had he observed it from a different point of view. The book which he now gives to the world after coming out from his self imposed exile, is a sort of history of his hermitage, an account of his solitary mode of living, a description of the external things which occupied his attention, colored throughout with a sort of philosophy which is little else than the peculiarities of Mr. Thoreau's mind. The narrative and descriptions are certainly very interesting and attractive, full of life and nature, and the book is in this respect quite a charming one. In other respects it may find fewer admirers, but altogether, from its origin and character, it may be set down as a remarkable book, which will command the attention of the tasteful reader and of the thoughtful student. It is hardly necessary to say that it is published in the neat style which characterizes all the volumes issued by these publishers.

In [New Bedford](#), [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) completed a reading of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) and began



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

to cultivate the author:



Finished this morning reading Walden, or Life in the Woods, by H. D. Thoreau. I have been highly interested in this book, the most truly original one I ever read, unless the life of John Buncler, an old book written by an eccentric English Gentleman. The experience of Thoreau and his reflections are like those of every true lover of Nature. His views of the artificial customs of civilized life are very correct. Mankind labor and suffer to supply themselves with the unnecessaries of life, - leisure for enjoyment is rarely obtained. I long for mankind to be emancipated from this thralldom which has spread its nets and snares over so large a portion of the human family. A love for a more simple life increases with me, and I hope that the time will ere long come when I may realize the peace to be derived therefrom. Simplicity in all things, house, living, dress, address, &c. &c. My fortune, though not large, is ample, and were my style of living less expensive I might have considerable for charitable purposes. One of my greatest luxuries has been in books, - good books I value beyond most all else in the world of earthly treasure, after my family, - handsome editions of my favorite authors. Such I want in the best of paper, type, and binding and English, for my reading is confined pretty much to my native language. England, Scotland, or rather Great Britain and America, have furnished nearly all the authors I am acquainted with. Genuine English literature is my line of reading.

On this day or the following one, [Thoreau](#) was written to by [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) in [New Bedford](#).

Mailed a letter to Henry D. Thoreau expressive of my satisfaction in reading his book, "Walden, or Life in the Woods." His volume has been a source of great comfort to me in reading and will I think continue to be so, giving me cheerful views of life and feeling of confidence that misfortune cannot so far as property is concerned deprive me or mine of the necessities of life, and even that we may be better in every respect for the changes.

[Friend Daniel](#) included on this day the interesting information that [William Cowper](#)'s "The Task" was his "greatest favorite." (I think it no exaggeration to say that you could count on the fingers of one foot the people for whom Cowper's "The Task" would their "greatest favorite," or even readable — Thoreau is one of the few



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

people I have heard of, who had their own personal copy of this poem.)



Brooklawn, near New Bedford

Mass. Aug. 12th. 1854—

Dear Sir,

I have just finished reading “Walden” and hasten to thank you for the great degree of satisfaction it has afforded me. Having always been a lover of Nature, in man, as well as in the material universe, I hail with pleasure every original production in literature which bears the stamp of a genuine and earnest love for the true philosophy of human life.— Such I assure you I esteem your book to be. To many, and to most, it will appear to be the wild musings of an eccentric and strange mind, though all must recognize your affectionate regard for the gentle denizens of the woods and pond as well as the great love you have shewn for what are familiarly called the beauties of Nature. But to me the book appears to evince a mind most thoroughly self possessed, highly cultivated with a strong vein of common sense. The whole book is a prose poem (pardon the solecism) and at the same time as simple as a running brook.

I have always loved ponds of pure translucent water, and some of my happiest and most memorable days have been passed on and around the beautiful Middleboro’ Ponds, particularly the largest, Assawampset—here king Philip frequently came, and a beautiful round hill near by, is still known as “King Philip’s look-out.” I have often felt an inclination when tired of the noise and strife of society, to retire to the shores of this noble old pond, or rather lake, for it is some 5 or 6 miles in length and 2 broad. But I have a wife and four children, & besides have got a little too far along, being in my fortysecond year, to undertake a new mode of life. I strive however, and have

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

striven during the whole of my life, to live as free from the restraint of mere forms & ceremonies as I possibly can. I love a quiet, peaceful rural retirement; but it was not my fate to realize this until a little past thirty years of age—since then I have been a sort of rustic, genteel perhaps, rustic. Not so very genteel you might reply, if you saw the place where I am writing. It is a rough board Shanty 12 x 14 three miles from New Bedford in a quiet & secluded spot—here for the present I eat & sleep, read, write, receive visitors &c. My house is now undergoing repairs &c and my family are in town.

A short time since a whip-poor-will serenaded me, and later at night I hear the cuckoos near my windows. It has long been my delight to observe the feathered tribes, and earlier in life I was quite an ornithologist. The coming of the first Blue bird in early Spring is to me still a delightful circumstance. But more particularly soothing to me is the insect hum so multitudinous at this season.— Now as I write the crickets & other little companions are sweetly & soothingly singing around my dwelling, & occasionally in my room. I am quite at home with partridges, Quails, rabbits skunks & woodchucks. But Winter is my best time, then I am a great trampler through the woods. O how I love the woods. I have walked thousands of miles in the woods hereabouts. I recognize many of my own experiences in your “Walden”. Still I am not altogether given up to these matters—they are my pastimes. I have a farm to attend to, fruit trees & a garden & a little business occasionally in town to look after, but much leisure nevertheless. In fact I am the only man of leisure I know of, every body here as well as elsewhere is upon the stir. I love quiet, this you know friend Thoreau don't necessarily imply that the body should be still all the time. I am often quietest, ar 'nt you, when walking among the still haunts of Nature or hoeing perhaps beans as I have oftentimes done as well as corn & potatoes &c &c.

Poetry has been to me a great consolation amid the jarring elements of this life. The English poets some of them at least, and one Latin, our good old Virgil, have been like household gods to me.—

Cowper's Task, my greatest favorite now lies before me in which I had been reading & alternately looking at the western sky just after sunset before I commenced this letter. Cowper was a true lover of the country. How often have I felt the force of these lines upon the country in my own experience

*“I never framed a wish, or formed a plan,
That flattered me with hopes of earthly bliss
But there I laid the scene.”*



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

All through my boyhood, the country haunted my thoughts. Though blessed with a good home, books & teachers, the latter however with one exception were not blessings, I would have exchanged all for the life of a rustic. I envied as I then thought the freedom of the farmer boy. But I have long thought that the life of the farmer, that is most farmers, possessed but little of the poetry of labour. How we accumulate cares around us. The very repairs I am now making upon my house will to some considerable extent increase my cares. A rough board shanty, rye & indian bread, water from the spring, or as in your case, from the pond, and other things in keeping, do not burden the body & mind. It is fine houses, fine furniture, sumptuous fare, fine clothes, and many in number, horses & carriages, servants & &c &c, these are the harpies, that so disturb our real happiness.

My next move in life I hope will be into a much more simple mode of living. I should like to live in a small house, with my family, uncarpeted white washed walls, simple old fashioned furniture & plain wholesome old fashioned fare. Though I have always been inclined to be a vegetarian in diet & once lived in capital health two years on the Graham system.

Well this will do for myself. Now for you friend Thoreau. Why return to "the world" again? a life such as you spent at Walden was too true & beautiful to be abandoned for any slight reason.

The ponds I allude to are much more secluded than Walden, and really delightful places. Should you ever incline again to try your "philosophy of living" I would introduce you into haunts, that your very soul would leap to behold. Well, I thought I would just write you a few lines to thank you for the pleasure I have received from the reading of your "Walden", but I have found myself running on till now. I feel that you are a kindred spirit and so fear not. I was pleased to find a kind word or two in your book for the poor down trodden slave. Wilberforce, Clarkson and John Woolman & Anthony Benezet were household words in my father's house.— I early became acquainted with the subject of slavery for my parents were Quakers, & Quakers were then all Abolitionists. My love of Nature, absolute, undefiled nature makes me an abolitionist. How could I listen to the woodland songs—or gaze upon the outstretched landscape, or look at the great clouds & the starry heavens and be aught but a friend of the poor and oppressed coloured race of our land. But why do I write—it is in vain to portray these things—they can only be felt and lived, and to you of all others I would refrain from being prolix.



HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

I have outlived, or nearly so, all ambition for notoriety. I wish only to be a simple, good man & so live that when I come to surrender up my spirit to the Great Father, I may depart in peace.

I wrote the above last evening. It is now Sunday afternoon, and alone in my Shanty I sit down to my desk to add a little more. A great white cloud which I have been watching for the past half hour is now majestically moving off to the north east before the fine s. w. breeze which sets in here nearly every summer afternoon from the ocean. We have here the best climate in New England—shelter ed on the north & east by dense pine woods from the cold winds which so cut up the healths of eastern folk, or rather are supposed to—but I think if the habits of our people were right the north easters would do but little harm. I never heard that the Indians were troubled by them—but they were nature’s philosophers and lived in the woods. I love to go by my instincts, inspiration rather. O how much we lose by civilization! In the eyes of the world you & I are demi savages— But I rather think we could stand our hand at the dinner table or in the drawing room with most of folks. I would risk you any where, and as for myself I have about done with the follies of “society.” I never was trump’d yet.

I have lived out all the experiences of idle youth—some gentle, & some savage experiences but my heart was not made of the stuff for a sportsman or angler—early in life I ranged the woods, fields & shores with my gun, or rod, but I found that all I sought could be obtained much better without the death dealing implements. So now my rustic staff is all the companion I usually take, unless my old dog joins me—taking new track as he often does, and bounding upon me in some distant thicket. My favorite books are—Cowper’s task, Thomson’s Seasons Milton, Shakespeare, &c &c—Goldsmith Gray’s Elegy—Beattie’s Minstrel (parts) Howitt, Gil. White, (Selbourne) Bewick (wood engraver) moderns—Wordsworth Ch. Lamb—De Quincy, Macauly, Kit. North, &c &c

These and others are more my companions than men. I like talented women & swear lustily by Mary Wolstoncroft, Md^e— Roland, Joan d’arc & somewhat by dear Margaret Fuller.

The smaller fry, I let go by—

Again permit me to thank you for the pleasure & strength I have found in reading “Walden.”



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

Dear Mr Walden good bye for the present.

Yours most respectfully

Daniel Ricketson

Henry D. Thoreau Esq



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1857

April 10, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) noticed among the decorations in [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#)'s shanty a wall-motto from [Horace](#)'s ODES. We note that although he jotted down several such conceits, this stands out as the only one for which it was unnecessary to also register the name of an author.



April 10: D.R.'s Shanty is about half a dozen rods S.W. of his house (which may be one hundred rods from the road), nearly between his house and barn, is 12 x 14 feet, with 7 feet posts, with common pent roof. In building it he directed the carpenter to use western boards and timbers, though some eastern studs (spruce?) were inserted. He had already occupied a smaller shanty at "Woodlee," about a mile S. The roof is shingled, and the sides made of matched boards, and painted a light clay color, with chocolate (?) colored blinds. Within, it is not plastered, and is open to the roof, showing the timbers and rafters, and rough boards and cross-timbers overhead, as if ready for plastering. The door is at the east end, with a small window on each side of it, a similar window on each side of the building, and one at the west end, the latter looking down the garden walk. In front of the last window is a small box stove with a funnel rising to a level with the plate, and there inserted in a small brick chimney which rests on planks. On the south side of the room, against the stove, is a rude settle with a coarse cushion and pillow; on the opposite side a large low desk with some bookshelves above it; on the same side by the window, a small table covered with books; and in the N.E. corner, behind the door, an old-fashioned secretary, its pigeonholes stuffed with papers. On the opposite side as you enter is a place for fuel, which the boy leaves each morning, a place to hang greatcoats. there were two small pieces of carpet on the floor, and R. or one of his guests swept out the Shanty each morning. There was a small kitchen clock hanging in the S.W. corner, and a map of Bristol County behind the settle. The west and N.W. side is well-nigh covered with slips of paper on which are written some sentences or paragraphs from R.'s favorite books. I noticed among the most characteristic Didbin's "Tom Tackle," a translation of Anacreon's *Cicada*, lines celebrating tobacco, Milton's "How charming is divine philosophy," &c., "*Inveni requiem; Spes et Fortuna valete: Nil mihi vobiscum est: laudite nunc alios.*" (Is it Petrarch?) this is also over the door, "*Mors pallida aequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas regumque turres.*" Some lines of his own in memory of A.J. Downing, "Not to be in a hurry," over the desk, and many other quotations, celebrating retirement, country life, simplicity, humanity, sincerity, &c., &c., from Cowper and other English poets, and similar extracts from newspapers. There were also two or three advertisements of cattle-show exhibitions, and the warning not to kill birds contrary to laws, he being one of the subscribers notified to enforce the act, an advertisement of a steamboat on Lake Winnepiseogee, &c., cards of his business friends. The size of different brains, from "Hall's Journal of Health," and "Take the world Easy." A sheet of blotting paper tacked up, and of Chinese characters from a tea-chest. Also a few small pictures and pencil sketches, the latter commonly caricatures of his visitors or friends, as "The Trojan" ([Channing](#)) and Van Beest; I take the most notice of these particulars because his peculiarities are so commonly unaffected. He has long been accustomed to put these scraps on his walls, and has a basket full somewhere saved from the old Shanty, though there were some quotations which had no right there. I found all his peculiarities faithfully expressed, his humanity, his fear of death, love of retirement, simplicity, &c. The more characteristic books were Bradley's Husbandry, Drake's Indians, Barber's Hist. Coll., Zimmermann on Solitude, Bigelow's Plants of Boston, &c., Farmer's Register of the first Settlers of New England, Marshall's Gardening, Vick's Gardener, John Woolman, The Modern Horse Doctor, Downing's Fruits, &c., The Farmer's Library, Walden, Dymond's Essays, Jobb Scott's Journal, Morton's Memorial, Bailey's Dictionary, Downing's Landscape Gardening, etc., The Task, Nuttall's Ornithology, Morse's Gazetteer, The Domestic Practice of Hydropathy, John Bunclce, Dwight's Travels, Virgil, Young's Night Thoughts, History of Plymouth, and other Shanty books.

There was an old gun, hardly safe to fire, said to be loaded with an inextractable charge, and also an old sword over the door; also a tin sign, "D. Ricketson's office" (he having set up for a lawyer once), and a small crumpled horn; there I counted more than 20 rustic canes scattered about, a dozen or 15 pipes of various patterns (mostly the common), two spy-glasses, an open paper of tobacco, an Indian's jaw (dug up), a stuffed Bluejay, and Pine Grosbeak, and a rude Indian stone hatchet, &c., &c. There was a box with fifteen or twenty knives, mostly very large old-fashioned jack-knives, kept for curiosity, occasionally giving one to a boy or friend. A large book full of pencil sketches, "to be inspected by whomsomever," containing mostly sketches of his friends, &c.,

ANACREON

HORACE

COWPER

BARBER

BIGELOW

A.J. DOWNING

A.J. DOWNING

DWIGHT

PIPE



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

QUAKERS

acquaintances, and himself, of wayfaring men whom he had met, Quakers, &c., &c., and now and then a verse under fence rail, or an old-fashioned house sketched on a peculiar pea-green paper. A pail of water stands behind the door, with a peculiar tin cup for drinking, made in France.

JONATHAN DYMOND

FRIEND DANIEL RICKETSON

“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING: HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

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 ©2014. 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: January 2, 2015



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

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, 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.



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

WILLIAM COWPER

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

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.