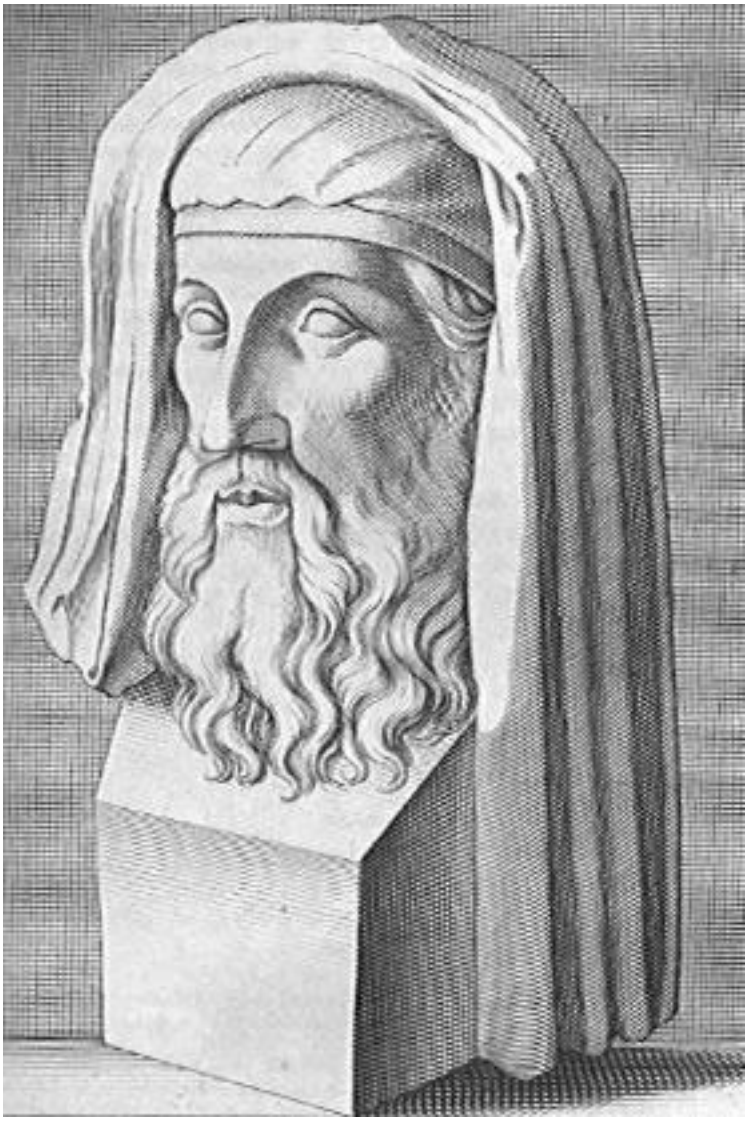
PEOPLE MENTIONED IN A WEEK:

DIOGENES OF SINOPE



A WEEK: Most men have no inclination, no rapids, no cascades, but marshes, and alligators, and miasma instead. We read that when in the expedition of Alexander, Onesicritus was sent forward to meet certain of the Indian sect of Gymnosophists, and he had told them of those new philosophers of the West, Pythagoras, Socrates, and Diogenes, and their doctrines, one of them named Dandamis answered, that "They appeared to him to have been men of genius, but to have lived with too passive a regard for the laws." The philosophers of the West are liable to this rebuke still. "They say that Lieou-hia-hoei, and Chao-lien did not sustain to the end their resolutions, and that they dishonored their character. Their language was in harmony with reason and justice; while their acts were in harmony with the sentiments of men."

PYTHAGORAS
SOCRATES
DIOGENES OF SINOPE

THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK: DIOGENES OF SINOPE

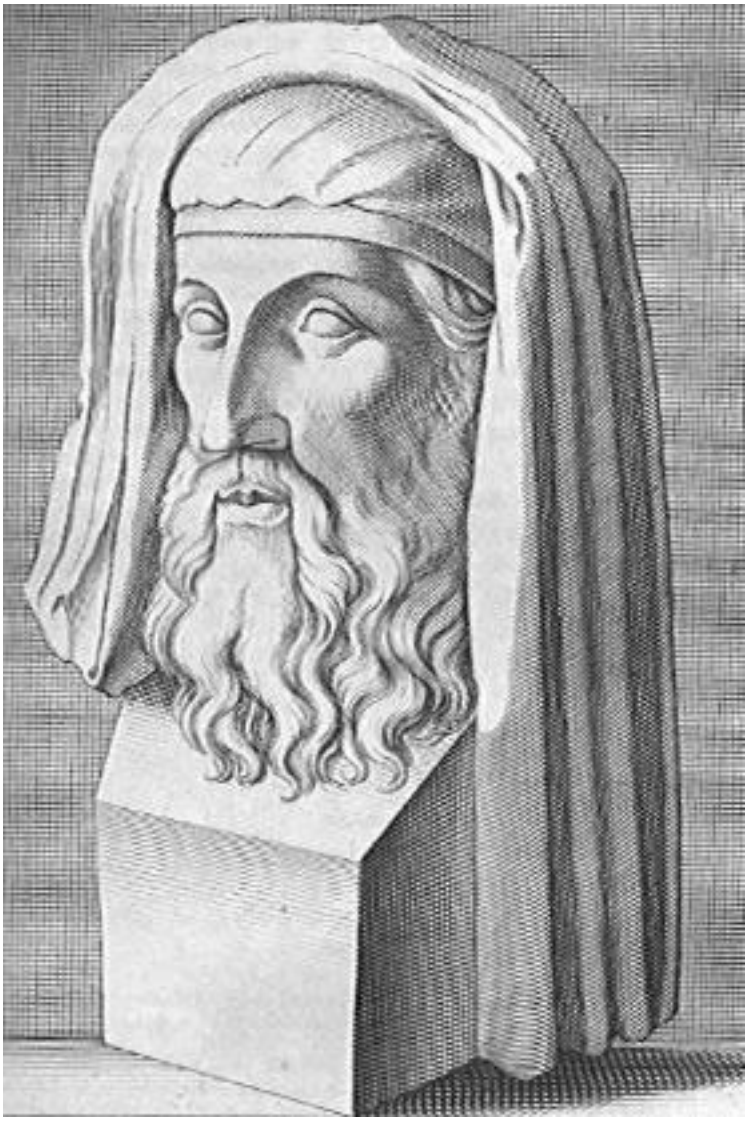
412 BCE

It was likely during this year that Diogenes of Sinope was being born in an Ionian colony on the Black Sea.

THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK: DIOGENES OF SINOPE

350 BCE

Until about the age of 60 Diogenes of Sinope had worked with his father, minting coins for his colony, but then he was exiled for debasing the coinage, and went to Athens with his slave Manes. When Manes fled, Diogenes declined to attempt to track him down, mildly remarking that if Manes could live without him but not he without Manes, a difficulty would seem to arise as to who was really the free man and who the slave.



One can achieve greater control over others by achieving control over their sexual behavior (in the vernacular this wisdom has become known as "to grab them by their gonads") than in any other manner. To be an act of duplicity which has the effect of enforcing authority, this control over the sexuality of others need not be consciously or deliberately malicious. To proscribe another's favored method of sexual release is the short route

to complete mastery. To force a slave, for instance, to submit to one's sexual desires, was to humble and humiliate her or him permanently and totally – pending, of course, getting your throat slashed some dark and stormy night. To criminalize homosexuality today is to render marginal, and vulnerable, and exploitable, an entire grouping of people. To problematize masturbation is to enable oneself to intrude into every private corner of a child's life. Etc. One need not marvel that such strategies of control and manipulation of others have been endlessly pursued. In the 4th Century BCE, Diogenes of Sinope masturbated εν τοι πηανεροι *en tôi phanerôi*, which is to say, in the agora in public, not in order to offend, but as an emphatic way to point out that A.) if desire for food could be eased as readily as desire for sex, by the mere rubbing of one's stomach, then there would be no need for war and for theft, and therefore that B.) since one's sexual impulse could indeed be eased promptly by the mere rubbing of one's genitals, there is **in fact** no reason whatever why we humans need to indulge in our habitual prostitution –and rape –and slavery.

A WEEK: Most men have no inclination, no rapids, no cascades, but marshes, and alligators, and miasma instead. We read that when in the expedition of Alexander, Onesicritus was sent forward to meet certain of the Indian sect of Gymnosophists, and he had told them of those new philosophers of the West, Pythagoras, Socrates, and Diogenes, and their doctrines, one of them named Dandamis answered, that "They appeared to him to have been men of genius, but to have lived with too passive a regard for the laws." The philosophers of the West are liable to this rebuke still. "They say that Lieou-hia-hoei, and Chao-lien did not sustain to the end their resolutions, and that they dishonored their character. Their language was in harmony with reason and justice; while their acts were in harmony with the sentiments of men."

PYTHAGORAS
SOCRATES
DIOGENES OF SINOPE

323 BCE

June 13: Alexander the Great of Macedon died mysteriously at age 32 in Babylon.

559 Cyrus the first king of Persia.
538 The kingdom of Babylon finished; that city being taken by Cyrus, who in 536, issues an edict for the return of the Jews.
534 The first tragedy was acted at Athens, on a waggon, by Thespis.
526 Learning is greatly encouraged at Athens, and a public library first founded.
515 The second Temple at Jerusalem is finished under Darius.
509 Tarquin the seventh and last king of the Romans is expelled, and Rome is governed by two consuls, and other republican magistrates, till the battle of Pharsalia, being a space of 461 years.
504 Sardis taken and burnt by the Athenians, which gave occasion to the Persian invasion of Greece.
486 Æschylus, the Greek poet, first gains the prize of tragedy.
481 Xerxes the Great, king of Persia, begins his expedition against Greece.
458 Ezra is sent from Babylon to Jerusalem, with the captive Jews, and the vessels of gold and silver, &c. being seventy weeks of years, or 490 years before the crucifixion of our Saviour.
454 The Romans send to Athens for Solon's laws.
451 The Decemvirs created at Rome, and the laws of the twelve tables compiled and ratified.
430 The history of the Old Testament finishes about this time.
Malachi the last of the prophets.
400 Socrates the founder of moral philosophy among the Greeks, believes the immortality of the soul, and a state of rewards and punishments, for which, and other sublime doctrines, he is put to death by the Athenians, who soon after repent, and erect to his memory a statue of brass.
331 Alexander the Great, king of Macedon, conquers Darius king of Persia, and other nations of Asia. 323, Dies at Babylon, and his empire is divided by his generals into four kingdoms.
285 Dionysius of Alexandria, began his astronomical æra, on Monday, June 26, being the first who found the exact solar year to consist of 365 days, 5 hours, and 49 minutes.
284 Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, employs seventy-two interpreters to translate the Old Testament into the Greek language, which is called the Septuagint.

On his death becoming known throughout Greece, the Assembly of Athens declared war against his successor Antipon and attempted to free the southern Greek city states from Macedonian rule. The return of some of Alexander's veterans from Asia would enable Antipater to prevail over them. Aristotle was again perceived as anti-Athenian, pro-Macedonian. A charge of "impiety" (disbelief in the established gods) was leveled against him, the same charge that had been used against Socrates in 399 BCE, and he is said to have declared that he would not let the Athenians "sin twice against philosophy." He abandoned Athens to voluntary exile in the city of Chalcis, accompanied by his companion Herpyllis, probably his slave, the woman who was likely the

mother of his son Nicomachus and with whom he had lived after the death of his wife.

During this year Diogenes of Sinope, the cynic who lived in a tub in Athens, also died. Some say he died on the same day as Alexander.

THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK: DIOGENES OF SINOPE

The master of the world was 33 and the master of himself 90. (At one point, asked about the evil of death, he had responded sensibly by asking as a counter-question — in what sense might something be said to be harmful to us, if in its very presence we are necessarily oblivious to it?)

THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK: DIOGENES OF SINOPE

50 BCE

By this point the rise of Alexandria and the growth of Roman power had overshadowed the political and economic importance of the Greek city states. Athens was no longer the philosophical center of the Mediterranean world. The Stoics were still being attracted to their Stoa there, but were coming there from elsewhere. Zeno had come to the Stoa in Athens from Citium on Cyprus, and had been succeeded by Cleanthes from Assos in Asia Minor and Chrysippus from Soli in Asia Minor. The Late Stoa would be entirely Roman, featuring such names as Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius. The rich scholar Panaetius of Rhodes, who had studied under Crates the Stoic at the library of Pergamum, became a student of Diogenes of Sinope in Athens but then passed on to the capital city of the Mediterranean world, Rome, where he and Scipio the Younger were at the center of a circle of philosophical admirers. After the death of Scipio, he had assumed leadership of the Stoic school and had returned to the Stoa in Athens for the final two decades of his life. His most illustrious student had been Posidonius of Apamea, a city in northern Syria, who died during this year on the island of Rhodes near the southwestern tip of Turkey.

165 CE

Lucian, an opponent of the cynics in Rome, wrote: “The city swarms with these vermin, particularly those who profess the tenets of Diogenes, Antisthenes, and Crates.”

THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK: DIOGENES OF SINOPE

1818

Nicolas André Monsiau depicted the fabulous scene in which Alexander the Great offered to Diogenes of Sinope at his tub in Athens the satisfaction of one desire — and the cynic responded "Your shadow is blocking the warming rays of the sun."

THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK: DIOGENES OF SINOPE

HOW CYNICAL WAS HENRY?

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

1845

March: Near the end of this month, having cut a deal with Waldo Emerson for the use of his woodlot property, Henry

THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK: DIOGENES OF SINOPE

Thoreau carried an ax, probably Amos Bronson Alcott's ax, about a mile and a half down the railroad bed,

through the Deep Cut and on up to where the Irish laborers had had their shanties, and began to clear a site at the Walden Pond lake-front access of the woodlot.

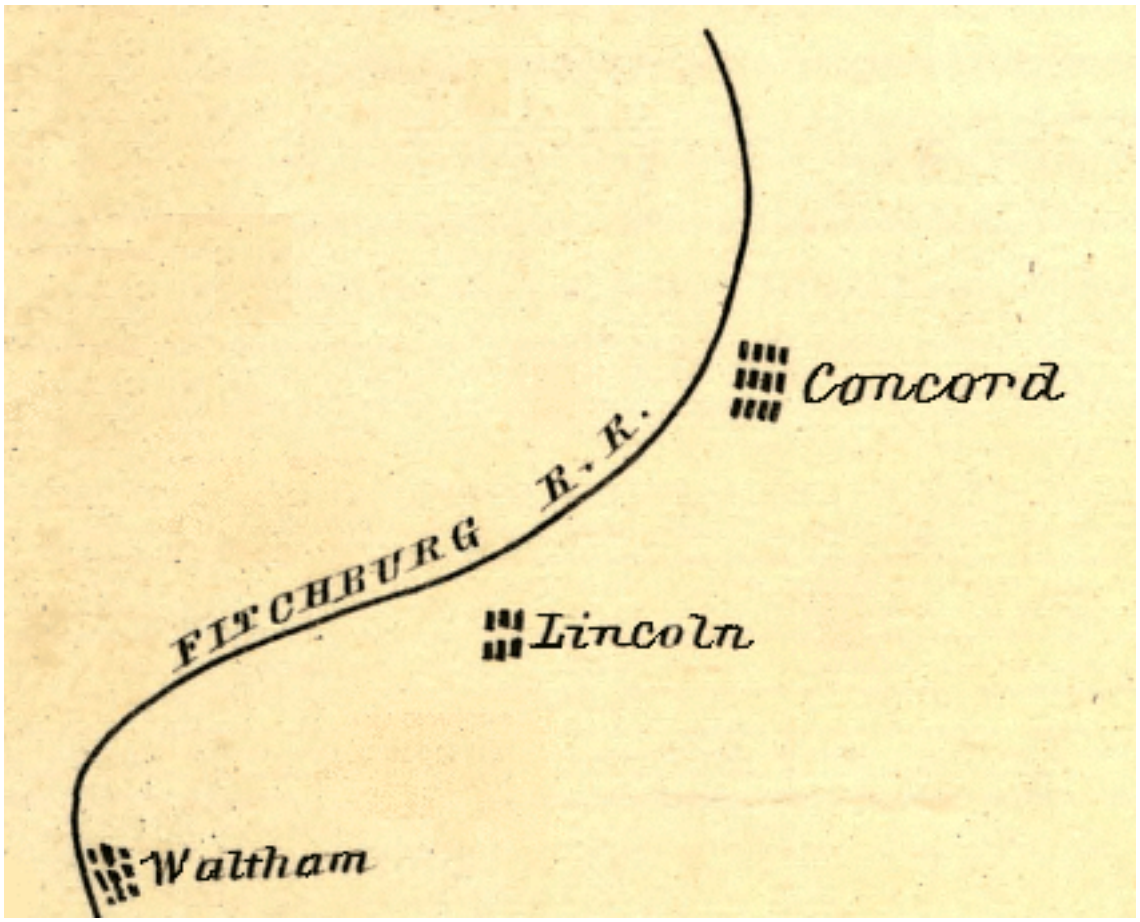
> WALDEN: Near the end of March, 1845, I borrowed an axe and went down to the woods by Walden Pond, nearest to where I intended to build my house, and began to cut down some tall arrowy white pines, still in their youth, for timber. It is difficult to begin without borrowing, but perhaps it is the most generous course thus to permit your fellow-men to have an interest in your enterprise. The owner of the axe, as he released his hold on it, said that it was the apple of his eye; but I returned it sharper than I received it. It was a pleasant hillside where I worked, covered with pine woods, through which I looked out on the pond, and a small open field in the woods where pines and hickories were springing up. The ice in the pond was not yet dissolved, though there were some open spaces, and it was all dark colored and saturated with water. There were some slight flurries of snow during the days that I worked there; but for the most part when I came out on to the railroad, on my way home, its yellow sand heap stretched away gleaming in the hazy atmosphere, and the rails shone in the spring sun, and I heard the lark and pewee and other birds already come to commence another year with us. They were pleasant spring days, in which the winter of man's discontent was thawing as well as the earth, and the life that had lain torpid began to stretch itself.

KING RICHARD III
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

HOUSE FRAMING
THOREAU RESIDENCES

THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK: DIOGENES OF SINOPE

After considering merely sleeping in a railroad toolbox[1] like Diogenes of Sinope in his barrel or a corpse in its "last and narrow house," Thoreau bought the materials of a summer shanty from a railroad construction laborer, as the laborer's family trudged off down the right-of-way toward Boston with their personal effects on their backs. (The Thoreau family had already bought one or two of these shanties from the railroad authorities, as materials for the shed behind their house that they used for the pencil business.)



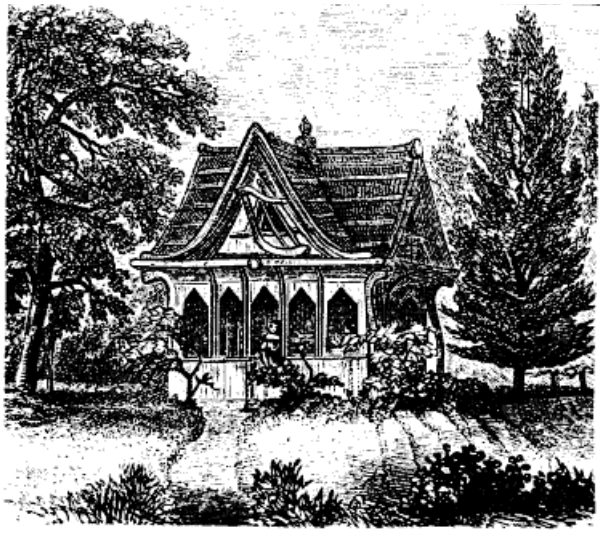
TIMELINE OF WALDEN

At some point, presumably, although he does not speak of this, he portaged Red Rover, second of the three boats the brothers had built, down the Lincoln turnpike and along the cart path and down the steep slope to the Emersons' cove on the pond. In July he would begin spending nights in the rough frame of his own home, which must have been a great relief to his family.[2] Beginning in the middle of that summer he would be living there, mostly, walking up the track to Concord for occasional meals with his family, and walking up the turnpike past the poorhouse farm to eat Lydia's and Lidian's Sunday dinners, for two years, two months, and two days with a few minor gaps (there was some problem in getting the shanty plastered and weather-tight

1. "... a large box by the railroad, six feet long by three wide, in which the workmen ["laborers," in WALDEN] locked up their tools at night…. I should not be in so bad a box as many a man is in now" (a phrase inserted into the manuscript in 1852).
2. If you've not yourself had experience with small town justice, and don't know that when property loss occurs, further property loss is likely, don't bother to challenge this inference.

before the first blasts of winter, so he slept elsewhere for part of the first winter, and then he was of course spending that one night in jail, and making all sorts of canoeing, hiking, huckleberrying and hunting trips),

until September 1847 when Mrs. Lidian Emerson would request that he spend the winter with her, to help manage the house and take care of her children, and build a summerhouse in the Emerson back yard, while "R.W.E." was in England for a lecture tour:



During this period Waldo Emerson would be adding 41 more acres to his holdings on the pond, with the idea that he could hire Thoreau, Amos Bronson Alcott, or somebody to construct for him a tower on the other side

of the pond,

> *looking out to Monadnock & other New Hampshire Mountains … to go with book & pen when good hours come.*

Why did Thoreau go to Walden Pond, beginning regular residency as of July the 4th? In WALDEN he plays cozy with us, speaking only of going there "to transact some private business with the fewest obstacles."

> WALDEN: Finding that my fellow-citizens were not likely to offer me any room in the court house, or any curacy or living any where else, but I must shift for myself, I turned my face more exclusively than ever to the woods, where I was better known. I determined to go into business at once, and not wait to acquire the usual capital, using such slender means as I had already got. My purpose in going to Walden Pond was not to live cheaply nor to live dearly there, but to transact some private business with the fewest obstacles; to be hindered from accomplishing which for want of a little common sense, a little enterprise and business talent, appeared not so sad as foolish.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

I propose very simply that we take him at his word in this regard. I am offering that this private business was private because it had to do with one of the most forbidden of the boundary transgressions, an "amalgamating" liaison with a person of another complexion that was utterly forbidden, unthinkable, in that society — because it was on culturally forbidden conditions of **parity**. Parity with Frederick Douglass. That, of course, is a thesis which will require the most careful documentation and the closest of reasoning:

Who Wrote Douglass's NARRATIVE?

After March 11: … While there remains a fragment on which a man can stand –and dare not tell his name"– referring to the case of Frederick _____, to our disgrace we know not what to call him, unless

THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK: DIOGENES OF SINOPE

Scotland will lend us one of her hero Douglasses out of history or fiction for a season –till we be trustworthy and hospitable enough to hear his proper name.– A fugitive slave, in one more sense than we — who has proved himself a possessor of a *White* intellect, and has won a colorless reputation among us — who we trust will prove himself as superior to temptation from the sympathies of freedom, as he has done to the degradation of slavery. When he communicated his purpose said Mr. Philips the other day to a New Bedford audience of writing his life and telling his name and the name of his master and the place he ran from– This murmur ran round the room, and was timidly whispered by the sons of the Pilgrims "he had better not" –and it was echoed under the shadow of Concord monument– "he had better not." But he is going to England where this revelation will be safe.

1849

May 2, Wednesday: At the business meeting of the Town and Country Club, Waldo Emerson declared as in favor of a general gender bar to membership but as opposed to a general color bar. He suggested that they leave the door open, at least a crack, just in case some man of color **might** someday distinguish himself as "clubable":[3]

> *He was one of those who thought it desirable to have the Club consist entirely of men. "With regard to color," he continued, "I am of the opinion that there should be no exclusion. Certainly, if any distinction be made, let it be in the colored man's favor. if there be a black who is superior for his acquirements in letters or science, or for his clubable qualities, let him be elected.* [But] *it seems to me so essential a change –though I am still in the night a little– to make the Club a saloon for ladies, that I really hope the proposed amendment will not pass.*

The new club immediately achieved over 100 members despite Amos Bronson Alcott's failure to secure the admission of females. Such a question couldn't have arisen for Henry Thoreau, for he wasn't a member. The story that is told is that he was unable to cope with the haze of cigar smoke — but we may wonder how complete, or how completely self-exculpatory, such a proffered explanation is. This event occurred as the courts were deciding that Boston's policy of racial segregation of its schools was quite within the discretion of the public officials and not inherently discriminatory. At some point during this summer James Russell Lowell would be unable to persuade Emerson to allow Frederick Douglass to join their "T & C" or "Saturday" Club

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3. An indignant letter-writer to the New York Times pointed out, in the September 21, 2008 Sunday issue, that the frequently retailed account of Emerson's having "blackballed" Frederick Douglass goes too far. Although Douglass did submit an application for membership, and Emerson did object to his membership, and the application was rejected, Emerson also commented at the time that **of course** no-one was ever to be blackballed simply for the unfortunate circumstance of being born black, since that sort of blackballing would be unfair to such a victim of birth circumstances, and such invidious racial discrimination would speak poorly of any white man who exhibited it. Since the matter did not come to a vote there could not be said to have been a blackball (the letter-writer seems not to grasp that the blackball functions by preventing such a vote). Therefore –the author of this indignant letter indignantly concluded– Emerson **cannot accurately** be said to have "blackballed" Douglass's application for membership! (A similar situation was described in an OP-ED opinion piece in that same edition of the newspaper. Nicholas D. Kristof described the attitude of certain Democratic voters he had interviewed in rural Oregon, who would not even **dream** of voting against Barack Hossein Obama for President on the basis of the color of his skin — no, they were going to vote against him because they have **heard rumors** that he might possibly, conceivably, perhaps, maybe have at one early moment been a Moslem rather that what he now claims to be, a Christian. They will vote against him not because of his race but because of a suspicion as to his religion. As good non-racist Christians they would rather vote for John McCain, who although he is a Republican, has honestly stayed as far away from church as is humanly possible: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/21/opinion/21kristof.html)

— a club which they had claimed to have founded to enable

> better acquaintance between men of science, literary, and philanthropic pursuits

The plain fact of the matter is that, although it is true that "One of the barriers that Emerson … wanted most to transcend was that which separated life from the merely literary," etc., it is also true that another of the barriers, one that Emerson most assuredly did not want to see transcended, was the barrier between the worthy and the unworthy –and Emerson as a white man of the right sort was, inherently, not only tall and benevolent but high, and blacks were, effectually all of them regardless of altitude, inherently, low, and associating with them made him feel uncomfortable– and so in protest, the biographer McFeely alleges, Lowell resigned from this club.[4] At this first meeting, over and above the indicated busyness with business, Emerson delivered his "Books."

THE ALCOTT FAMILY

An anonymous article about the recent Thoreau lecture appeared in the Worcester Palladium:

Lake Philosophy

> The "Walden Pond" philosopher, (Mr. Thoreau, of Concord,) delivered his second lecture at Brinley Hall Friday evening. It was a continuation of his history of two years of "life in the woods;" a mingled web of sage conclusions and puerility—wit and egotistical effusions—bright scintillations and narrow criticisms and low comparisons. He has a natural poetic temperament, with a more than ordinary sensibility to the myriad of nature's manifestations. But there is apparent a constant struggle for eccentricity. It is only when the lecturer seems to forget himself, that the listener forgets that there is in the neighborhood of "Walden Pond" another philosopher [Emerson] whose light Thoreau reflects; the same service which the moon

4. We might be tempted to categorize this as the only indecent thing Emerson ever did and the only decent thing Lowell ever did — but this de facto exclusion of Frederick Douglass was never brought to a formal vote and so James Russell Lowell never needed to make good on his empty threat. Here is the story as it has been told more carefully and fully in Duberman's JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL:

> James Russell Lowell, who had hoped Frederick Douglass' presence would help rid "many worthy persons of a very unworthy prejudice," had intended to pay his entrance fee. But opposition developed to Douglass' admittance, and Lowell was astonished at the quarter from which it came. For it was Waldo Emerson, at least so Lowell believed, who would have blackballed Douglass had the matter been put to a vote, which it was not (Thomas Wentworth Higginson claimed that Emerson "always confessed to a mild instinctive colorphobia"). Angered at this failure to take in a man "cast in so large a mould," Lowell declared that he, for one, was "an unfit companion for people too good to associate" with Douglass.

performs for the sun. Yet the lecturer says many things that not only amuse the hour, but will not be easily forgotten. He is truly one of nature's oddities; and would make a very respectable Diogenes, if the world were going to live its life over again, and that distinguished citizen of antiquity should not care to appear again upon the stage.

1851

October 7, Tuesday: Mrs. Louise Amelia Knapp Smith Clappe wrote from her and her ailing husband Dr. Fayette Clappe's log cabin in the gold camp at Indian Bar, California, to her sister back home in Massachusetts.

A "DAME SHIRLEY" LETTER


Oct. 7. This morning the fog over the river & the brooks & meadows running into it has risen to the height of 40 or 50 feet. {*One-half page blank*} October 7th 51. 1 PM to river by boat to Corner Bridge A very still warm bright clear afternoon. Our boat so small and low that we are close to the water. The muskrats all the way are now building their houses – about $^{2}/_{3}$ done. They are of an oval form (looking down on them) sloping upward from the smaller end by which the rat ascends – and composed of mouthfuls of Pontederia leaf stems (now dead) the capillaceous roots or leaves of the water marygold & other capillaceous leaved water plants. – flag-root – a plant which looks like a cock's tail or a peacocks feather in form – clam shells &c – sometimes rising from amidst the dead pontederia stems or the Button bushes – or the willows. The mouthfuls are disposed in layers successively smaller – forming a somewhat conical mound. Seen at this stage they show some art and a good deal of labor. We pulled one to pieces to examine the inside. There was a small cavity, which might hold 2 or 3 full grown muskrats just above the level of the water, quite wet and of course dark and narrow communicating immediately with a gallery under water. There were a few pieces of the white root of some water plant – perhaps a pontederia – or a lily root in it. There they dwell in close contiguity to the water itself – always in a wet apartment – in a wet coat never changed with immeasurable water in the cellar, through which is the only exit. They have reduced life to a lower scale than Diogenes. Certainly they do not fear cold – ague – or consumption. Think of bringing up a family in such a place – worse than a broad street cellar– But probably these are not their breeding places. The muskrat and the fresh water muscle are very native to our river– The Indian their human compere has departed. There is a settler whom our low lands and our bogs do not hurt.

DIOGENES OF SINOPE

One of the fishermen speared one last night. How long has the muskrat dined on muscles? The river Mud itself will have the ague as soon as he. What occasion has he for a dentist? Their unfinished rapidly rising nests look now like truncated cones They seem to be all building at once in different parts of the river and to have advanced equally far.

The weeds being dead & the weather cooler the water is more transparent. Now is the time to observe such weeds as have not been destroyed. The fishes are plainly seen. Saw a pickerel which had swallowd a smaller fish – with the tail projecting from his mouth. There is a dirty looking weed quite submerged with short densely crowded finely divided leaves, in dense masses atop like the tops of spruce trees, more slender below. The shores for a great width are occupied by the dead leaves and stems of the Pontederia which give the river a very wild look. There is a strong-scented green plant which looks like a fresh water sponge or coral – clumsy limbed like a dead tree. or a cactus.[5] A long narrow grass like a freshwater eel grass.

The swamp white oak on the meadow which was blown down in the spring is still alive as if it had been supported by the sap in its trunk. The dirt still adheres to its roots which are of the color of an elephants skin.

I suppose it is the *Nuphar Kalmiana* which I find in blossom in deep water though its long stem 4 feet or more round & gradually tapering toward the root – with no leaves apparent make me doubt a little. Apparently 5 sepals – grenish & yellow without, yellow within 8 small petals – many stamens – stigma 8 rayed.–

Saw the *Ardea minor* [**American Bittern** ***Botaurus lentiginosus***] walking along the shore like a hen with long green legs – its pencilled throat is so like the reeds & shore amid which it holds its head erect to watch the passer that it is difficult to discern it. You can get very near it for it is unwilling to fly – preferring to hide amid the weeds. The lower parts of the willows & the button-bushes are black with the capillaceous leaves & stems of the water marygold &c.

The saw edge of the rushes (common *Juncus militaris* I think it is) 2 to 4 ft high in dense fields along the shore in various stages of decay look like a level rainbow skirting the waters edge–& reflected in the water.– Though

a single one or a few near at hand do not exhibit very marked or distinct colors. But a distance from a shore which is lined with them –the colors are very distinct– & produce a pleasing effect– 1st next the water a few inches of pink – then a faint narrow line or halo of yellowish – then a broad & lively green – the proper color of the rush – then a suny yellow – passing into the brown of the dead & seered tops– The different shades of different parts of the plant from the surface of the water to its tip – when you look at the edge of a large & dense field of them – produce 5 distinct horizontal & parrallel bars of different colors like a level rain bow – making a pleasing border to the river in a bright day like this. And occasionally the sun light from the rippled surface produced by our boat – reflected on them enhances the effect– The colors pass into each other so gradually and indefinitely as if it were the reflection of the sun falling on a mist.

The rounded hills beyond the clam shells look velvety smooth as we are floating down the stream – covered with the now red blackberry vines. The oaks look light against the sky, rising story above story. I see small whitish & pinkish polygonums along the waterside.

There is a great difference between this season and a month ago – as between one period of your life & another. A little frost is at the bottom of it.

It is a remarkable difference between night & day on the river – that there is no fog by day.

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5. In regard to freshwater sponge and bryozoans: Although sponges are animals, they don't move around all that much and thus are frequently mistaken for aquatic plants or algae. Sponges are multicellular animals consisting of masses of cells embedded in a gelatinous matrix. The matrix is bound together by minute, spine-like structures of calcium or silica called spicules and spongy organic fibers called spongin. Although most of the more than 5,000 known sponges are found in marine environments, 150 species live in freshwater. Freshwater sponges are pitted with pores and often are yellow, brown or greenish. Sponges filter large volumes of water through their pores, capturing tiny particles for food. Freshwater sponges vary in size from a few millimeters to more than a meter across. All species have a free-swimming, microscopic larval stage, but are attached (sessile) as adults. They are widely distributed in well-oxygenated ponds and streams where they grow on plant stems, pieces of wood, and other submersed objects. They will overwinter in a dormant state (called gemmules), but are most commonly seen in summer or fall. They may be lobed, composed of finger-like projections, or quite irregularly shaped and are robust enough to be picked up without falling apart, unlike many kinds of algae. Bryozoans are tiny colonial animals that are fairly common in lakes and streams with suitable habitat. Different species form colonies that range in appearance from delicate wispy moss-like growths to basketball-size gelatinous masses. Each colony is made of many individual creatures called "zooids." Zooids are microscopic cylindrical creatures with a mouth, digestive tract, muscles, and nerve centers. The zooids are covered by a protective matrix which may be delicate, hard, or gelatinous depending on the species. They feed by filtering tiny algae and protozoa through a crown of tentacles (lophophore). Bryozoan colonies grow by budding from the adult zooids. New colonies will establish from a free-swimming, microscopic larval stage or by growth of dormant spore-like "statoblasts." Most Bryozoans live in salt water, and of the 20 or so freshwater species found in North America, most are found in warm-water regions attached to plants, logs, rocks and other firm substrates. The forms most likely encountered in the northwest are translucent, brownish-gray, jelly-like masses that look like they have little black dots embedded in them.

THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK: DIOGENES OF SINOPE

1854

October: Review of Henry Thoreau's WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS, in "Review of New Books," Peterson's Magazine 26: 254.

> The author of this volume would be called by some a modern Diogenes; but all will admit that he is a close, though somewhat eccentric observer of Nature. Disgusted with the ordinary conventional life, he retired to the shores of Walden Pond in Massachusetts, where building himself a log hut, he lived a sort of half hermit life for two years. The present book is a narrative of his experience during that period. The style is graceful, the reflections often profound, the thought always robust and healthy. On the excessive luxury of the homes the author makes war a la outrance, as a man who has lived on fifty dollars a year, we think, has a right. The book is so out of the beaten track that it cannot fail to set people to thinking; while no one, who once picks it up, will lay it down till he has finished it. The author, in his love of Nature, reminds us of old Isaa[k] Walton, as in other particulars he often recalls Sir Thomas Browne. Naturalists will learn many curious facts from the volume, while the poetical admirer of Nature will linger over its pages with delight. The publishers have issued it in their usual neat style.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE

"Literary Notices," in Godey's Magazine and Lady's Book, Issue #49, page 370:

> This ought to be a very profound and excellent book, a character which we think it will pretty fairly sustain among quiet and thoughtful readers. When he wrote it, the author says he lived a mile from any neighbor, in a house which he had built with his own hands, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Massachusetts, and earned his living by the labor of his hands only. He lived there for the space of two years and two months, and, since his return to society, has prepared this volume of practical philosophy for the benefit of the world at large. It records his manner of life in his seclusion, and obstacles he met with, and the interesting reflections to which they gave birth in a mind disposed to make the most of every object brought under its observation.

An anonymous review "A Yankee Diogenes" by Charles Frederick Briggs, on pages 443-48 of this month's issue of Putnam's Monthly Magazine of American Literature, Science and Art.

READ THE FULL TEXT

An anonymous review probably by the Reverend Andrew Preston Peabody, D.D. on page 536 of this month's issue of his North American Review:

> The economical details and calculations in this book are more curious than useful; for the author's life in the woods was on too narrow a scale to find imitators. But in describing his hermitage and his forest life, he says so many pithy and brilliant things, and offers so many piquant, and, we may add, so many just, comments on society as it is, that his book is well worth the reading, both for its actual contents and its suggestive capacity.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

1865

October: James Russell Lowell published an article in the North American Review entitled "Thoreau's Letters," which Henry S. Salt would characterize aptly as "a masterpiece of hostile innuendo and ingenious misrepresentation":[6]

INGENIOUSLY HOSTILE

> What contemporary, if he was in the fighting period of his life, since Nature sets limits about her conscription for spiritual fields, as the state does in physical warfare,) will ever forget what was somewhat vaguely called the "Transcendental Movement" of thirty years ago? Apparently set astirring by Carlyle's essays on the "Signs of the Times," and on "History," the final and more immediate impulse seemed to be given by "Sartor Resartus." At least the republication in Boston of that wonderful Abraham à Sancta Clara sermon on Lear's text of the miserable forked radish gave the signal for a sudden mental and moral mutiny. *Ecce nunc tempus acceptabile!* was shouted on all hands with every variety of emphasis, and by voices of every conceivable pitch, representing the three sexes of men, women, and lady Mary Wortley Montagues. The nameless eagle of the tree Ygdrasil was about to sit at last, and wild-eyed enthusiasts rushed from all sides, each eager to thrust under the mystic bird that chalk egg from which the new and fairer Creation was to be hatched in due time. *Redeunt Saturnia regna*, — so far was certain, though in what shape, or by what methods, was still a matter of debate. Every possible form of intellectual and physical dyspepsia brought forth its gospel. Bran had its

6. See the response to this article by the Reverend Thomas Wentworth Higginson in 1903: Emerson's comment would be that James Russell Lowell had simply never forgiven Henry Thoreau "for having wounded his self-consciousness."

prophets, and the presartorial simplicity of Adam its martyrs, tailored impromptu from the tar-pot by incensed neighbors, and sent forth to illustrate the "feathered Mercury," as defined by Webster and Worcester. Plainness of speech was carried to a pitch that would have taken away the breath of George Fox; and even swearing had its evangelists, who answered a simple inquiry after their health with an elaborate ingenuity of imprecation that might have been honorably mentioned by Marlborough in general orders. Everybody had a mission (with a capital M) to attend to everybody-else's business. No brain but had its private maggot, which must have found pitiably short commons sometimes. Not a few impecunious zealots abjured the use of money (unless earned by other people), professing to live on the internal revenues of the spirit. Some had an assurance of instant millennium so soon as hooks and eyes should be substituted for buttons. Communities were established where everything was to be common but common sense. Men renounced their old gods, and hesitated only whether to bestow their furloughed allegiance on Thor or Budh. Conventions were held for every hitherto inconceivable purpose. The belated gift of tongues, as among the Fifth Monarchy men, spread like a contagion, rendering its victims incomprehensible to all Christian men; whether equally so to the most distant possible heathen or not, was unexperimented, though many would have subscribed liberally that a fair trial might be made. It was the pentecost of Shinar. The day of utterances reproduced the day of rebuses and anagrams, and there was nothing so simple that uncial letters and the style of Diphilus the Labyrinth could not make into a riddle. Many foreign revolutionists out of work added to the general misunderstanding their contribution of broken English in every most ingenious form of fracture. All stood ready at a moment's notice to reform everything but themselves. The general motto was:

> "And we'll *talk* with them, too,
> And take upon's the mystery of things
> As if we were God's spies."

Nature is always kind enough to give even her clouds a humorous lining. We have barely hinted at the comic side of the affair, for the material was endless. This was the whistle and trailing fuse of the shell, but there was a very solid and serious kernel, full of the most deadly explosiveness. Thoughtful men divined it, but the generality suspected nothing. The word "transcendental" then was the maid of all work for those who could not think, as "pre-Raphaelite" has been more recently for people of the same limited housekeeping. The truth is, that there was a much nearer metaphysical relation and a much more distant æsthetic and literary relation between Carlyle and the Apostles of the Newness, as they were called in New England, than has commonly been supposed. Both represented the reaction and revolt against *Philisterei*, a renewal of the old battle begun in modern times by Erasmus and Reuchlin, and continued by Lessing, Goethe, and, in a far narrower sense, by Heine in Germany, and of which Fielding, Sterne, and Wordsworth in different ways have been the leaders in England. It was simply a struggle for fresh air, in which, if the windows could not be opened, there was danger that panes would be broken, though painted with images of saints and martyrs. Light colored by

these reverend effigies was none the more respirable for being picturesque. There is only one thing better than tradition, and that is the original and eternal life out of which all tradition takes its rise. It was this life which the reformers demanded, with more or less dearness of consciousness and expression, life in politics, life in literature, life in religion. Of what use to import a gospel from Judæa, if we leave behind the soul that made it possible, the God who keeps it forever real and present? Surely Abana and Pharpar *are* better than Jordan, if a living faith be mixed with those waters and none with these.

Scotch Presbyterianism as a motive of spiritual progress was dead; New England Puritanism was in like manner dead; in other words, Protestantism had made its fortune and no longer protested; bur till Carlyle spoke out in the Old World and Emerson in the New, no one had dared to proclaim, *Le roi est mort: vive le roi!* The meaning of which proclamation was essentially this: the vital spirit has long since departed out of this form once so kingly, and the great seal has been in commission long enough; but meanwhile the soul of man, from which all power emanates and to which it reverts, still survives in undiminished royalty; God still survives, little as you gentlemen of the Commission seem to be aware of it, — nay, may possibly outlive the whole of you, incredible as it may appear. The truth is, that both Scotch Presbyterianism and New England Puritanism made their new avatar in Carlyle and Emerson, the heralds of their formal decease, and the tendency of the one toward Authority and of the other toward Independency might have been prophesied by whoever had studied history. The necessity was nor so much in the men as in the principles they represented and the traditions which overruled them. The Puritanism of the past found its unwilling poet in Hawthorne, the rarest creative imagination of the century, the rarest in some ideal respects since Shakespeare; but the Puritanism that cannot die, the Puritanism that made New England what it is, and is destined to make America what it should be, found its voice in Emerson. Though holding himself aloof from all active partnership in movements of reform, he has been the sleeping partner who has supplied a great part of their capital.

The artistic range of Emerson is narrow, as every well-read critic must feel at once; and so is that of Æschylus, so is that of Dante, so is that of Montaigne, so is that of Schiller, so is that of nearly every one except Shakespeare; but there is a gauge of height no less than of breadth, of individuality as well as of comprehensiveness, and, above all, there is the standard of genetic power, the test of the masculine as distinguished from the receptive minds. There are staminate plants in literature, that make no fine show of fruit, but without whose pollen, the quintessence of fructifying gold, the garden had been barren. Emerson's mind is emphatically one of these, and there is no man to whom our æsthetic culture owes so much. The Puritan revolt had made us ecclesiastically, and the Revolution politically independent, but we were still socially and intellectually moored to English thought, till Emerson cut the cable and gave us a chance at the dangers and the glories of blue water. No man young enough to have felt it can forget, or cease to be grateful for, the mental and moral *nudge* which he received from the writings of his high-minded and brave-

spirited countryman. That we agree with him, or that he always agrees with himself, is aside from the question; but that he arouses in us something that we are the better for having awakened, whether that something be of opposition or assent, that he speaks always to what is highest and least selfish in us, few Americans of the generation younger than his own would be disposed to deny. His oration before the Phi Beta Kappa society at Cambridge, some thirty years ago, was an event without any formal parallel in our literary annals, a scene to be always treasured in the memory for its picturesqueness and its inspiration. What crowded and breathless aisles, what windows clustering with eager heads, what enthusiasm of approval, what grim silence of foregone dissent! It was our Yankee version of a lecture by Abelard, our Harvard parallel to the last public appearances of Fichte.

We said that the "Transcendental Movement" was the protestant spirit of Puritanism seeking a new outlet and an escape from forms and creeds which compressed rather than expressed it. In its motives, its preaching, and its results, it differed radically from the doctrine of Carlyle. The Scotchman, with all his genius, and his humor gigantesque as that of Rabelais, has grown shriller and shriller with years, degenerating sometimes into a common scold, and emptying very unsavory vials of wrath on the head of the sturdy British Socrates of worldly common sense. The teaching of Emerson tended much more exclusively to self-culture and the independent development of the individual man. It seemed to many almost Pythagorean in its voluntary seclusion from commonwealth affairs. Both Carlyle and Emerson were disciples of Goethe, but Emerson in a far truer sense; and while the one, from his bias toward the eccentric, has degenerated more and more into mannerism, the other has clarified steadily toward perfection of style, — exquisite fineness of material, unobtrusive lowness of tone and simplicity of fashion, the most high-bred garb of expression. Whatever may be said of his thought, nothing can be finer than the delicious limpidness of his phrase. If it was ever questionable whether democracy could develop a gentleman, the problem has been affirmatively solved at last. Carlyle, in his cynicism and his admiration of force as such, has become at last positively inhuman; Emerson, reverencing strength, seeking the highest outcome of the individual, has found that society and politics are also main elements in the attainment of the desired end, and has drawn steadily manward and worldward. The two men represent respectively those grand personifications in the drama of Æschylus, Βία and Κράτος .

Among the pistullate plants kindled to fruitage by the Emersonian pollen, Thoreau is thus far the most remarkable; and it is something eminently fitting that his posthumous works should be offered us by Emerson, for they are strawberries from his own garden. A singular mixture of varieties, indeed, there is; — alpine, some of them, with the flavor of rare mountain air; others wood, tasting of sunny roadside banks or shy openings in the forest; and not a few seedlings swollen hugely by culture, but lacking the fine natural aroma of the more modest kinds. Strange books there are of his, and interesting in many ways, — instructive chiefly as showing how considerable a crop may be raised on a comparatively narrow close of mind, and how

much a man may make of his life if he will assiduously follow it, though perhaps never truly finding it at last.

We have just been renewing our recollection of Mr. Thoreau's writings, and have read through his six volumes in the order of their production. We shall try to give an adequate report of their impression upon us both as critic and as mere reader. He seems to us to have been a man with so high a conceit of himself that he accepted without questioning, and insisted on our accepting, his defects and weaknesses of character as virtues and powers peculiar to himself. Was he indolent, he finds none of the activities which attract or employ the rest of mankind worthy of him. Was he wanting in the qualities that make success, it is success that is contemptible, and not himself that lacks persistency and purpose. Was he poor, money was an unmixed evil. Did his life seem a selfish one, he condemns doing good as one of the weakest of superstitions. To be of use was with him the most killing bait of the wily tempter Uselessness. He had no faculty of generalization from outside of himself, or at least no experience which would supply the material of such, and he makes his own whim the law, his own range the horizon of the universe. He condemns a world, the hollowness of whose satisfactions he has never had the means of testing, and we recognize Apemantus behind the mask of Timon. He had little active imagination; of the receptive he had much. His appreciation is of the highest quality; his critical power, from want of continuity of mind, very limited and inadequate. He somewhere cites a simile from Ossian, as an example of the superiority of the old poetry to the new, though, even were the historic evidence less convincing, the sentimental melancholy of those poems should be conclusive of their modernness. He had no artistic power such as controls a great work to the serene balance of completeness, but exquisite mechanical skill in the shaping of sentences and paragraphs, or (more rarely) short bits of verse for the expression of a detached thought, sentiment, or image. His works give one the feeling of a sky full of stars, — something impressive and exhilarating certainly, something high overhead and freckles thickly with spots of isolated brightness; but whether these have any mutual relation with each other, or have any concern with our mundane matters, is for the most part matter of conjecture, — astrology as yet, and not astronomy.

It is curious, considering what Thoreau afterward became, that he was not by nature an observer. He only saw the things he looked for, and was less poet than naturalist. Till he built his Walden shanty, he did not know that the hickory grew in Concord. Till he went to Maine, he had never seen phosphorescent wood, a phenomenon early familiar to most country boys. At forty he speaks of the seeding of the pine as a new discovery, though one should have thought that its gold-dust of blowing pollen might have earlier drawn his eye. Neither his attention nor his genius was of the spontaneous kind. He discovered nothing. He thought everything a discovery of his own, from moonlight to the planting of acorns and nuts by squirrels. This is a defect in his character, but one of his chief charms as a writer. Everything grows fresh under his hand. He delved in his mind and nature; he planted them with all manner of native and foreign seeds, and reaped assiduously. He was not merely solitary, he

would be isolated, and succeeded at last in almost persuading himself that he was autochthonous. He valued everything in proportion as he fancied it to be exclusively his own. He complains in "Walden," that there is no one in Concord with whom he could talk of Oriental literature, though the man was living within two miles of his hut who had introduced him to it. This intellectual selfishness becomes sometimes almost painful in reading him. He lacked that generosity of "communication" which Johnson admired in Burke. De Quincey tells us that Wordsworth was impatient when any one else spoke of mountains, as if he had a peculiar property in them. And we can readily understand why it should be so: no one is satisfied with another's appreciation of his mistress. But Thoreau seems to have prized a lofty way of thinking (often we should be inclined to call it a remote one) not so much because it was good in itself as because he wished few to share it with him. It seems now and then as if he did not seek to lure others up "above our lower region of turmoil," but to leave his own name cut on the mountain peak as the first climber. This itch of originality infects his thought and style. To be misty is not to be mystic. He turns commonplaces end for end, and fancies it makes something new of them. As we walk down Park Street, our eye is caught by Dr. Windship's dumb-bells, one of which bears an inscription testifying that it is the heaviest ever put up at arm's length by any athlete; and in reading Mr. Thoreau's books we cannot help feeling as if he sometimes invited our attention to a particular sophism as the biggest yet maintained by any single writer. He seeks, at all risks, for perversity of thought, and revives the age of *concetti* while he fancies himself going back to a pre-classical nature. "A day," he says, "passed in the society of those Greek sages, such as described in the Banquet of Xenophon, would not be comparable with the dry wit of decayed cranberry-vines and the fresh Attic salt of the moss-beds." It is not so much the True that he loves as the Out-of-the-Way. As the Brazen Age shows itself in other men by exaggeration of phrase, so in him by extravagance of statement. He wishes always to trump your suit and to *ruff* when you least expect it. Do you love Nature because she is beautiful? He will find a better argument in her ugliness. Are you tired of the artificial man? He instantly dresses you up an ideal in a Penobscot Indian, and attributes to this creature of his otherwise-mindedness as peculiarities things that are common to all woodsmen, white or red, and this simply because he has not studied the pale-faced variety.

This notion of an absolute originality, as if one could have a patent-right in it, is an absurdity. A man cannot escape in thought, any more than he can in language, from the past and the present. As no one ever invents a word, and yet language somehow grows by general contribution and necessity, so it is with thought. Mr. Thoreau seems to us to insist in public on going back to flint and steel, when there is a match-box in his pocket which he knows very well how to use at a pinch. Originality consists in power of digesting and assimilating thought, so that they become part of our life and substance. Montaigne, for example, is one of the most original of authors, though he helped himself to ideas in every direction. But they turn to blood and coloring in his style, and give a freshness of complexion that is forever charming. In Thoreau much seems yet to be foreign and

unassimilated, showing itself in symptoms of indigestion. A preacher up of Nature, we now and then detect under the surly and stoic garb something of the sophist and the sentimentalizer. We are far from implying that this was conscious on his part. But it is much easier for a man to impose on himself when he measures only with himself. A greater familiarity with ordinary men would have done Thoreau good, by showing him how many fine qualities are common to the race. The radical vice of his theory of life was, that he confounded physical with spiritual remoteness from men. One is far enough withdrawn from his fellows if he keep himself clear of their weaknesses. He is not so truly withdrawn as exiled, if he refuse to share in their strength. It is a morbid self-consciousness that pronounces the world of men empty and worthless before trying it, the instinctive evasion of one who is sensible of some innate weakness, and retorts the accusation of it before any has made it but himself. To a healthy mind, the world is a constant challenge of opportunity. Mr. Thoreau had not a healthy mind, or he would not have been so fond of prescribing. His whole life was a search for the doctor. The old mystics had a wiser sense of what the world was worth. They ordained a severe apprenticeship to law and even ceremonial, in order to the gaining of freedom and mastery over these. Seven years of service for Rachel were to be rewarded at last with Leah. Seven other years of faithfulness with her were to win them at last the true bride of their souls. Active Life was with them the only path to the Contemplative.

Thoreau had no humor, and this implies that he was a sorry logician. Himself an artist in rhetoric, he confounds thought with style when he undertakes to speak of the latter. He was forever talking of getting away from the world, but he must be always near enough to it, nay, to the Concord comer of it, to feel the impre88ion he makes there. He verifies the shrewd remark of Sainte-Beuve, "On touche oncore à son temps et très-fort, même quand on le repousse.» This egotism of his is a Stylites pillar after all, a seclusion which keeps him in the public eye. The dignity of man is an excellent thing, but therefore to hold one's self too sacred and precious is the reverse of excellent. There is something delightfully absurd in six volumes addressed to a world of such "vulgar fellows" as Thoreau affirmed his fellow-men to be. We once had a glimpse of a genuine solitary who spent his winter one hundred and fifty miles beyond all human communication, and there dwelt with his rifle as his only confidant. Compared with this, the shanty on Walden Pond has something the air, it must be confessed, of the Hermitage of La Chevrette. We do not believe that the way to a true cosmopolitanism carries one into the woods or the society of musquashes. Perhaps the narrowest provincialism is that of Self; that of Kleinwinkel is nothing to it. The natural man, like the singing birds, comes out of the forest as inevitably as the natural bear and the wildcat stick there. To seek to be natural implies a consciousness that forbids all naturalness forever. It is as easy — and no easier — to be natural in a *salon* as in a swamp, if one do not aim at it, for what we call unnaturalness always has its spring in a man's thinking too much about himself. "It is impossible," said Turgot, "for a vulgar man to be simple."

THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK: DIOGENES OF SINOPE

We look upon a great deal of the modern sentimentalism about Nature as a mark of disease. It is one more symptom of the general liver complaint. In a man of wholesome constitution the wilderness is well enough for a mood or a vacation, but not for a habit of life. Those who have most loudly advertised their passion for seclusion and their intimacy with nature, from Petrarch down, have been mostly sentimentalists, unreal men, misanthropes on the spindle side, solacing an uneasy suspicion of themselves by professing contempt for their kind. They make demands on the world in advance proportioned to their inward measure of their own merit, and are angry that the world pays only by the visible measure of performance. It is true of Rousseau, the modern founder of the sect, true of St. Pierre, his intellectual child, and of Chateaubriand, his grandchild, the inventor of what we may call the primitive forest cure, and who first was touched by the solemn falling of a tree from natural decay in the windless silence of the woods. It is a very shallow view that affirms trees and rocks to be healthy, and cannot see that men in communities are just as true to the laws of their organization and destiny; that can tolerate the puffin and the fox, but not the fool and the knave; that would shun politics because of its demagogues, and snuff up the stench of the obscene fungus. The divine life of Nature is more wonderful, more various, more sublime in man than in any other of her works, and the wisdom that is gained by commerce with men, as Montaigne and Shakespeare gained it, or with one's own soul among men, as Dante, is the most delightful, as it is the most precious, of all. In outward nature it is still man that interests us, and we care far less for the things seen than the way in which poetic eyes like Wordsworth's; or Thoreau's see them, and the reflections they cast there. To hear the to-do that is often made over the simple fact that a man sees the image of himself in the outward world, one is reminded of a savage when he for the first time catches a glimpse of himself in a looking-glass. "Venerable child of Nature," we are tempted to say, "to whose science in the invention of the tobacco-pipe, to whose art in the tattooing of thine undegenerate hide not yet enslaved by tailors, we are slowly striving to climb back, the miracle thou beholdest is sold in my unhappy country for a shilling!" If matters go on as they have done, and everybody must needs blab of all the favors that have been done him by roadside and river-brink and woodland walk, as if to kiss and tell were no longer treachery, it will be a positive refreshment to meet a man who is as superbly indifferent to Nature as she is to him. By and by we shall have John Smith, of No. ——12, ——12th Street, advertising that he is not the J.S. who saw a cow-lily on Thursday last, as he never saw one in his life, would not see one if he could, and is prepared to prove an alibi on the day in question.

Solitary communion with Nature does not seem to have been sanitary or sweetening in its influence on Thoreau's character. On the contrary, his letters show him more cynical as he grew older. While he studied with respectful attention the minks and woodchucks, his neighbors, he looked with utter contempt on the august drama of destiny of which his country was the scene, and on which the curtain had already risen. He was converting us back to a state of nature "so eloquently," as Voltaire said of

Rousseau, "that he almost persuaded us to go on all fours," while the wiser fates were making it possible for us to walk erect for the first time. Had he conversed more with his fellows, his sympathies would have widened with the assurance that his peculiar genius had more appreciation, and his writings a larger circle of readers, or at last a warmer one, than he dreamed of. We have the highest testimony[7] to the natural sweetness, sincerity, and nobleness of his temper, and in his books an equally irrefragable one to the rare quality of his mind. He was not a strong thinker, but a sensitive feeler. Yet his mind strikes us as cold and wintry in its purity. A light snow has fallen everywhere where he seems to come on the track of the shier sensations that would elsewhere leave no trace. We think greater compression would have done more for his fame. A feeling of sameness comes over us as we read so much. Trifles are recorded with an overminute punctuality and conscientiousness of detail. We cannot help thinking sometimes of the man who

> "watches, starves, freezes, and sweats
> To learn but catechisms and alphabets,
> Of unconcerning things, matters of fact,"

and sometimes of the saying of the Persian poet, that "when the owl would boast, he boasts of catching mice at the edge of a hole." We could readily part with some of his affectations. It was well enough for Pythagoras to say, once for all, "When I was Euphorbus at the siege of Troy"; not so well for Thoreau to travesty it into "When I was a shepherd on the plains of Assyria." A naive thing said over again is anything but naive. But with every exception, there is no writing comparable with Thoreau's in kind, that is comparable with it in degree where it is best; where it disengages itself, that is, from the tangled roots and dead leaves of a second-hand Orientalism, and runs limpid and smooth and broadening as it runs, a mirror for whatever is grand and lovely in both worlds.

George Sand says neatly, that "Art is not a study of positive reality," (*actuality* were the fitter word,) "but a seeking after ideal truth." It would be doing very inadequate justice to Thoreau if we left it to be inferred that this ideal element did not exist in him, and that too in larger proportion, if less obtrusive, than his nature-worship. He took nature as the mountain-path to an ideal world. If the path wind a good deal, if he record too faithfully every trip over a root, if he botanize somewhat wearisomely, he gives us now and then superb outlooks from some jutting crag, and brings us out at last into an illimitable ether, where the breathing is not difficult for those who have any true touch of the climbing spirit. His shanty-life was a mere impossibility, so far as his own conception of it goes, as an entire independency of mankind. The tub of Diogenes had a sounder bottom. Thoreau's experiment actually presupposed all that complicated civilization which it theoretically abjured. He squatted on another man's land; he borrows an axe; his boards, his nails, his bricks, his mortar, his books, his lamp, his fish-hooks, his plough, his hoe, all turn state's evidence against him as an accomplice in the sin of that artificial civilization which rendered it possible that such a person as Henry D. Thoreau should exist at all. *Magnis*

7. Mr. Emerson, in the Biographical Sketch prefixed to the "Excursions."

tamen excidit ausis. His aim was a noble and a useful one, in the direction of "plain living and high thinking." It was a practical sermon on Emerson's text that "things are in the saddle and ride mankind," an attempt to solve Carlyle's problem of "lessening your denominator." His whole life was a rebuke of the waste and aimlessness of our American luxury, which is an abject enslavement to tawdry upholstery. He had "fine translunary things" in him. His better style as a writer is in keeping with the simplicity and purity of his life. We have said that his range was narrow, but to be a master is to be a master. He had caught his English at its living source, among the poets and prose-writers of its best days; his literature was extensive and recondite; his quotations are always nuggets of the purest ore; there are sentences of his as perfect as anything in the language, his thoughts as clearly crystallized; his metaphors and images are always fresh from the soil; he had watched Nature like a detective who is to go upon the stand; as we read him, it seems as if all-out-of-doors had kept a diary and become its own Montaigne; we look at the landscape as in a Claude Lorraine glass; compared with his, all other books of similar aim, even White's Selborne, seem dry as a country clergyman's meteorological journal in an old almanac. He belongs with Donne and Browne and Novalis; if not with the originally creative men, with the scarcely smaller class who are peculiar, and whose leaves shed their invisible thought-seed like ferns.

"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

THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK: DIOGENES OF SINOPE

Prepared: December 15, 2013

THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK: **DIOGENES OF SINOPE**

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.

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.