

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

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SAMUEL LAING



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SNORRI STURLUSON

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



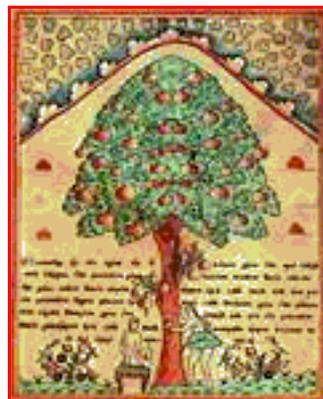
THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

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WALDEN: As for a Shelter, I will not deny that this is now a necessary of life, though there are instances of men having done without it for long periods in colder countries than this. Samuel Laing says that "The Laplander in his skin dress, and in a skin bag which he puts over his head and shoulders, will sleep night after night on the snow —in a degree of cold which would extinguish the life of one exposed to it in any woollen clothing." He had seen them asleep thus. Yet he adds, "They are not hardier than other people." But, probably, man did not live long enough on the earth without discovering the convenience which there is in a house, the domestic comforts, which phrase may have originally signified the satisfactions of the house more than of the family; though these must be extremely partial and occasional in those climates where the house is associated in our thoughts with winter or the rainy season chiefly, and two thirds of the year, except for a parasol, is unnecessary. In our climate, in the summer, it was formerly almost solely a covering at night. In the Indian gazettes a wigwam was the symbol of a day's march, and a row of them cut or painted on the bark of a tree signified that so many times they had camped. Man was not made so large limbed and robust but that he must seek to narrow his world, and wall in a space such as fitted him. He was at first bare and out of doors; but though this was pleasant enough in serene and warm weather, by daylight, the rainy season and the winter, to say nothing of the torrid sun, would perhaps have nipped his race in the bud if he had not made haste to clothe himself with the shelter of a house. Adam and Eve, according to the fable, wore the bower before other clothes. Man wanted a home, a place of warmth, or comfort, first of physical warmth, then the warmth of the affections.

PEOPLE OF
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1225

In about this year the poet and historian Snorri Sturluson was preparing, in Old Norse, his HEIMS KRINGLA chronicle of the kings of Norway. He opened with the Ynglinga saga tracing the descent of the Norwegian kings from the god Odin, presented as a great historical conqueror and master wizard from the Black Sea region who had settled on the Scandinavian peninsula, with a knowledge of runes and magic that made him invincible. He continued with sixteen lives of high kings, covering the period of the development of the Norsemen as roving Vikings through their conversion to Christianity and their eventual settling down in the unification and administration of Norway. He built all this, however, around his chronicle of the 15-year reign of King Olaf II Haraldsson with some additional pages on Harald Fairhair, Haakon the Good, and Olaf Tryggvason, tacking in accounts of the western voyages of Eric the Red and Leif the Lucky and the early settlements in Vineland, and the eastern voyage of Sigurd the Crusader.





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1665

First publication of the poet and historian [Snorri Sturluson](#)'s *EDDA*.



NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT



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1697

Snorri Sturluson's HEIMSKRINGLA, a chronicle of the kings of Norway that he had written in Old Norse about 1225AD, was presented for the first time in Icelandic, with translations into Latin and Swedish.





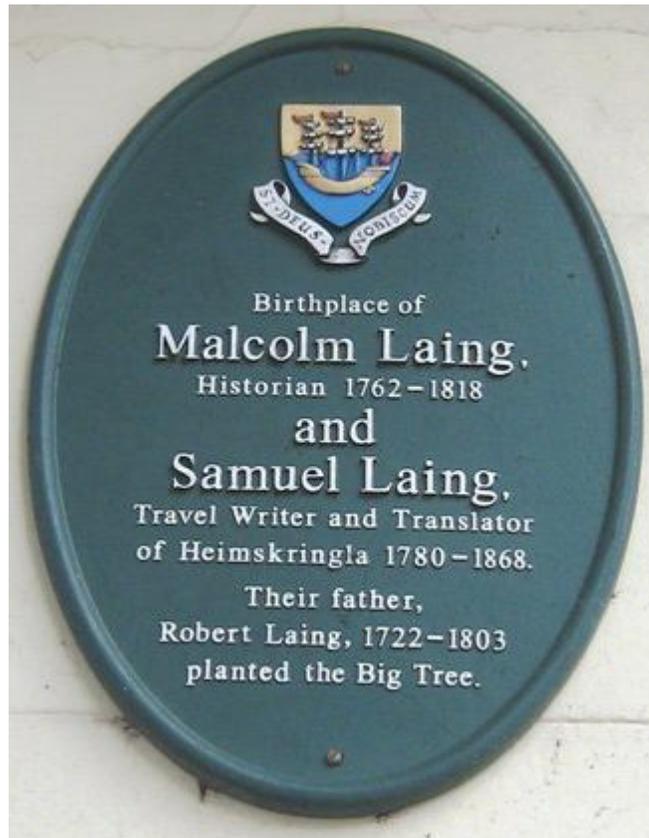
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1780

October 20, Friday: [Samuel Laing](#) was born to Robert Laing and Barbara Blaw Laing in Kirkwall St Ola, Orkney, Scotland.



The Great Hurricane of 1780, also known as Hurricane San Calixto, the Great Hurricane of the Antilles, and the 1780 Disaster, the deadliest Atlantic hurricane on record, faded away southeast of Newfoundland. Barbados had endured winds possibly exceeding 200 miles per hour, and Martinique, Saint Lucia, and Saint Eustatius had each suffered thousands of deaths. Since this was the period of the American Revolution, British and French fleets were contesting for control of the Caribbean, and were heavily impacted. The hurricane had passed near Puerto Rico and over Santo Domingo, the eastern portion of Hispaniola, creating heavy damage near the coastlines, before ultimately turning toward the northeast. This hurricane alone had produced a greater number of human mortalities than would occur during any other entire decade of Atlantic storms.

Former Brigadier-General [Benedict Arnold](#), turned Loyalist, issued a proclamation to his former colleagues:

To the Officers and Soldiers of the Continental Army who have the real Interest of their Country at Heart, and who are determined to be no longer the Tools and Dupes of Congress, or of France.



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HAVING reason to believe that the principles I have avowed, in my address to the public of the 7th instant, animated the greatest part of this continent, I rejoice in the opportunity I have of inviting you to join His Majesty's Arms.

His Excellency Sir Henry Clinton has authorized me to raise a corps of cavalry and infantry, who bring in horses, arms, or accoutrements, are to be paid their value, or have liberty to sell them: To every non-commissioned officer and private a bounty of Three Guineas will be given, and as the Commander in Chief is pleased to allow me to nominate the officers, I shall with infinite satisfaction embrace this opportunity of advancing men whose valour I have witnessed, and whose principles are favourable to an union with Britain, and true American Liberty. The rank they obtain in the King's service will bear a proportion to their former rank, and the number of men they bring with them....

Great as this encouragement must appear to such as have suffered every distress of want of pay, hunger and nakedness, from the neglect, contempt, and corruption of Congress, they are nothing to the motives which I expect will influence the brave and generous minds I hope to have the honour to command.

I wish to lead a chosen band of Americans to the attainment of peace, liberty, and safety (that first object in taking the field) and with them to share in the glory of rescuing our native country from the grasping, hand of France, as well as from the ambitious and interested views of a desperate party among ourselves, who, in listening to French overtures, and rejecting those from Great-Britain, have brought the colonies to the very brink of destruction.

Friends, fellow soldiers, and citizens, arouse, and judge for yourselves, - reflect on what you have lost, - consider to what you are reduced, and by your courage repel the ruin that still threatens you.

Your country once was happy, and had the proffered peace been embraced, your last two years of misery had been spent in peace and plenty, and repairing the desolations of a quarrel that would have set the interest of Great-Britain and America in its true light, and cemented their friendship; whereas, you are now the prey of avarice, the scorn of your enemies, and the pity of your friends.

You were promised Liberty by the leaders of your affairs; but is there an individual in the enjoyment of it, saving your oppressors? Who among you dare speak, or write what he thinks, against the tyranny which has robbed you of your property, imprisons your persons, drags you to the field of battle, and is daily deluging your country with your blood?

You are flattered with independency as preferable to a redress of grievances, and for that shadow, instead of real felicity, are sunk into all the wretchedness of poverty by the rapacity of your own rulers. Already are you disqualified to support the pride of character they taught you to aim at, and must inevitably shortly belong to one or other of the great powers their folly



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and wickedness have drawn into conflict. Happy for you that you may still become the fellow-subjects of Great-Britain, if you nobly disdain to be the vassals of France.

What is America now but a land of widows, orphans, and beggars? – and should the parent nation cease her exertions to deliver you, what security remains to you even for the enjoyment of the consolations of that religion for which your fathers braved the ocean, the heathen, and the wilderness? Do you know that the eye which guides this pen lately saw your mean and profligate Congress at mass for the soul of a Roman Catholic in Purgatory, and participating in the rites of a Church, against whose antichristian corruptions your pious ancestors would have witnessed with their blood.

As to you who have been soldiers in the continental army, can you at this day want evidence that the funds of your country are exhausted, or that the managers have applied them to their own private uses? In either case you surely can no longer continue in their service with honour or advantage; yet you have hitherto been their supporters of that cruelty, which, with an equal indifference to your, as well as to the labour and blood of others, is devouring a country, which, from the moment you quit their colours, will be redeemed from their tyranny.

But what need of arguments to such as feel infinitely more misery than tongue can express. I therefore only add my promise of the most affectionate welcome and attention to all who are disposed to join me in the measures necessary to close the scene of our afflictions, which, intolerable as they are, must continue to increase until we have the wisdom (shewn of late by Ireland) in being contented with the liberality of the Country, who still offers her protection, with the immediate restoration of our ancient privileges....

NO-ONE'S LIFE IS EVER NOT DRIVEN PRIMARILY BY HAPPENSTANCE



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1818

November 6, Friday: [Malcolm Laing](#) died on his Orkney estate and his property would be inherited by his brother [Samuel](#).

Malcolm Laing.
Historian 1762–1818

A memorial tablet would be placed on the wall of the north nave of St. Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall, which in the 17th Century had been being used for internments and would come to contain a number of curiosities: **“DEPTH, TRUTH, AND INDEPENDENCE AS AN HISTORIAN WERE,” SAYS LORD COCKBURN, “THE LEAST OF HIS MERITS, FOR HE WAS A FIRM, WARM-HEARTED, HONEST MAN, WHOSE INSTRUCTIVE AND AGREEABLE COMPANIONSHIP WAS ONLY MADE THE MORE INTERESTING BY A HARD, PEREMPTORY, CELTIC MANNER AND ACCENT.”**



In Albany, New York James Hamilton, an Irishman, was [hanged](#) for having, while inebriated on Sunday,



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July 14, 1818, shot down his company commander Benjamin Birdsall of the 6th US Rifle Regiment.

At [Harvard College](#), the Sophomore class met under a tree near Hollis Hall to plot a response to college discipline after their food riot of the previous Sunday supper in University Hall. When authority showed up to disperse this assembly, it was mocked. The number of suspensions would go up from 7 to 12, and in addition, 3 students would be “rusticated.”

**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.**



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1836

 [Samuel Laing](#)'s JOURNAL OF A RESIDENCE IN NORWAY DURING THE YEARS 1834, 1835, AND 1836: MADE WITH A VIEW TO ENQUIRE INTO THE MORAL AND POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THAT COUNTRY, AND THE CONDITION OF ITS INHABITANTS (Printed for Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green & Longman, Paternoster-Row).

A RESIDENCE IN NORWAY

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





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1837

Carl Rafn presented the Vinland sagas in historical context in *ANTIQUITATES AMERICANAE*. Vinland, he demonstrated to his own satisfaction, had been [Newport, Rhode Island](#).

READ EDWARD FIELD TEXT

A 2d edition of [Samuel Laing](#)'s 1836 JOURNAL OF A RESIDENCE IN NORWAY DURING THE YEARS 1834, 1835, & 1836; MADE WITH A VIEW TO ENQUIRE INTO THE MORAL AND POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THAT COUNTRY ... AND THE CONDITION OF ITS INHABITANTS.... (London: Printed for Longman, Orme, Brown, Green and Longmans, but refer to page 192).

VIEW THE PAGE IMAGES



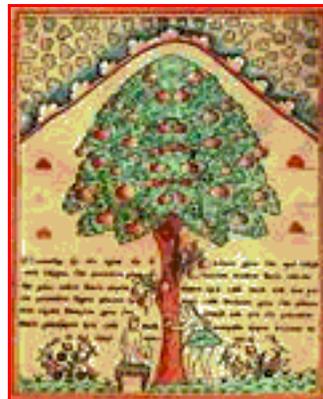
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1839

[Samuel Laing](#)'s A TOUR IN SWEDEN IN 1838, strongly critical of the Swedish-Norwegian union and suggesting that Norway ought to seek its independence. This would cause the Swedish-Norwegian ambassador in London, M. Björnstierna, to respond in 1840 with ON THE MORAL STATE AND POLITICAL UNION OF SWEDEN AND NORWAY.

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT



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1842

[Samuel Laing](#)'s NOTES OF A TRAVELLER described his journeys in Prussia and elsewhere. The preface included a response to M. Björnstierna's 1840 work ON THE MORAL STATE AND POLITICAL UNION OF SWEDEN AND NORWAY.

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



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1844

[Samuel Laing](#) translated into English the poet and historian [Snorri Sturluson](#)'s 1225 chronicle THE *HEIMSKRINGLA*; OR, CHRONICLE OF THE KINGS OF NORWAY from the Old Norse and Icelandic and Swedish and Latin in which it had previously appeared (London: Longman [et al.], three volumes). This was the 1st edition in English of the sagas which detailed the discovery of America by Norsemen, and would become

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Thomas Carlyle's principle source for his EARLY KINGS OF NORWAY.



THE HEIMSKRINGLA
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 THE HEIMSKRINGLA

(Carlyle during this year would change the plan for a book that he would be completing in the following year, on Oliver Cromwell.)



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1847

Paul Henri Mallet's NORTHERN ANTIQUITIES; OR, AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE MANNERS, CUSTOMS, RELIGION AND LAWS, MARITIME EXPEDITIONS AND DISCOVERIES, LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE OF THE ANCIENT SCANDINAVIANS (DANES, SWEDES, NORWEGIANS AND ICELANDERS.) WITH INCIDENTAL NOTICES RESPECTING OUR SAXON ANCESTORS. TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF M. MALLET, BY BISHOP [THOMAS] PERCY. NEW EDITION, REVISED THROUGHOUT, AND CONSIDERABLY ENLARGED; WITH A TRANSLATION OF THE PROSE EDDA FROM THE ORIGINAL OLD NORSE TEXT; AND NOTES CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY, BY I.A. BLACKWELL, ESQ. TO WHICH IS ADDED, AN ABSTRACT OF THE EYRBYGGJA SAGA, BY SIR WALTER SCOTT. (London: Henry G. Bohn, York Street, Covent Garden).

NORTHERN ANTIQUITIES

This volume would be in [Waldo Emerson](#)'s library, and in 1855 [Henry Thoreau](#) would extract from [Snorri](#)'s EDDA in it, into his Fact Book and his Indian Notebook #9.

"WILD APPLES": According to the Prose Edda, "Iduna keeps in a box the apples which the gods, when they feel old age approaching, have only to taste of to become young again. It is in this manner that they will be kept in renovated youth until Ragnaraök" (or the destruction of the gods).

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.



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1851

[Samuel Laing](#)'s JOURNAL OF A RESIDENCE IN NORWAY DURING THE YEARS 1834, 1835, & 1836; MADE WITH A VIEW TO ENQUIRE INTO THE MORAL AND POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THAT COUNTRY AND THE CONDITION OF ITS INHABITANTS (new London edition, printed for Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, refer to page 192).

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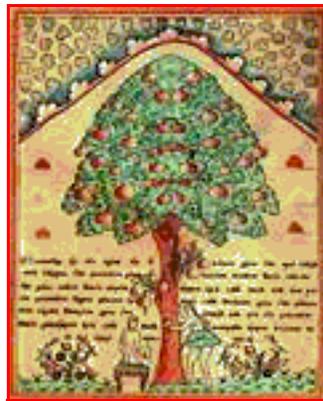
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COUNTRY, AND THE CONDITION OF ITS INHABITANTS.

BY SAMUEL LAING, ESQ.

NEW EDITION.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,
1851.



October 26, Sunday: I awoke this morning to infinite regret. In my dream I had been riding—but the horses bit the horses bit each other and occasioned endless trouble and anxiety & it was my employment to hold their heads apart. Next I sailed over the sea in a small vessel such as the Northmen used—as it were to the Bay of Funday & thence over land I sailed still over the shallows about the sources of rivers toward the deeper *channel* of a stream which emptied into the gulf beyond.

Again I was in my own small pleasure boat—learning to sail on the sea—& I raised my sail before my anchor which I dragged far into the sea— I saw the buttons which had come off the coats of drowned men—and suddenly I saw my dog—when I knew not that I had one—standing in the sea up to his chin to warm his legs which had been wet—which the cool wind numbed. And then I was walking in a meadow—where the dry Season permitted me to walk further than usual—& there I met Mr Alcott—& we fell to quoting & referring to grand & pleasing couplets & single lines which we had read in times past—and I quoted one which in my waking hours I have no

DOG



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knowledge of but in my dream it was familiar enough— I only know that those which I quoted expressed regret—and were like the following though they were not these—viz—

“The short parenthesis of life was sweet”
“The remembrance of youth is a sigh.” &c

It had the word memory in it!! And then again the instant that I awoke methought I was a musical instrument—from which I heard a strain die out—a bugle—or a clarionet—or a flute—my body was the organ and channel of melody as a flute is of the music that is breathed through it. My flesh sounded & vibrated still to the strain—& my nerves were the chords of the lyre. I awoke therefore to an infinite regret—to find myself not the thoroughfare of glorious & world-stirring inspirations—but a scuttle full of dirt—such a thoroughfare only as the street & the kennel—where perchance the wind may sometimes draw forth a strain of music from a straw.

I can partly account for this. Last evening I was reading [Laing](#)'s account of the Northmen—and though I did not write in my journal—I remember feeling a fertile regret—and deriving even an inexpressible satisfaction as it were from my ability to feel regret—which made that evening richer than those which had preceded it.

I heard the last strain or flourish as I woke played on my body as the instrument. Such I knew I had been & might be again—and my regret arose from the consciousness how little like a musical instrument my body was now.

SAMUEL LAING

Winter: [Henry Thoreau](#) studied [Samuel Laing](#)'s CHRONICLE OF THE KINGS OF NORWAY.

THE HEIMSKRINGLA

THE HEIMSKRINGLA

THE HEIMSKRINGLA

THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





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1852

January 15, Thursday: The estate inventory of William Mason Smith at Smithfield Plantation on the Combahee River near Colleton, South Carolina listed the following possessions: Moses, Minty, Mike, Eliza, Nanny, Primus, Nat, Bella, Tommy, O Hagar, Dorset, Hannah, Bess, Libby, Sarah, Affey, John, Hester, Infant, Renty, Susy, Cuffy, Daphne, Blake, Washington, Paul, Cain, Binky, Lavinia, Andrew, Phoebe, Emanuel, Polly, Pinckney, Susannah, Nelly, Harry, Anson, Josiah, Isaac, Rhina, Simon, Vincent, January, Pino, anson, Jeffy, Judy, Lucy, Frank, Philander, Dinah, Julia, Fanny, Betty, Jerry, Ishmael, Kate, Hannah, Robert, Witter, Cate, Billy, O Charles, Cook Renty, Caroline, and Handy.



January 15, Thursday: We have heard a deal about English comfort. But may you not trace these stories home to some wealthy Sardanapalus who was able to pay for obsequious attendance and for every luxury. How far does it describe merely the tact & selfishness of the wealthy class. Ask the great mass of Englishmen & travellers, whose vote alone is conclusive, concerning the comfort they enjoyed in 2nd & third class accommodations in steam boats & rail roads & eating & lodging houses. Lord Somebody or Other may have made himself comfortable, but the very style of his living makes it necessary that the great majority of his countrymen should be uncomfortable.

Are the 2nd class cars – the 2nd class accommodations on board steam boats &c i.e. the only class that can be compared with our own – remarkable for their comfort

I do not know but the poet is he who generates poems. By continece he rises to creation on a higher level – a supernatural level.

When King Olaf the Saint is about to fight with the bonders to recover his lost kingdom his scalds, who stood about him, composed songs about the events which would soon be taking place– Thormod’s song concluded thus,

“One viking cheer! –then, stead of words,
We’ll speak with our death-dealing swords.”

“These songs,” says the chronicler, “were immediately got by heart by the army”. Surely the scald’s office was a significant & an honorable one then.

“This night the king lay with his army around him on the field, – – and lay long awake in prayer to God, and slept but little. Towards morning a slumber fell on him, and when he awoke daylight was shooting up. The king thought it too early to awaken the army, and asked where Thormod the scald was. Thormod was at hand, and asked what was the king’s pleasure. “Sing us a song,” said the king. Thormod raised himself up, and sang so loud that the whole army could hear him. He began to sing the old Biarkamal [composed & sung by Biarke before an old battle]–

*

*

“Then the troops awoke, and when the song was ended the people thanked him for it;
and it pleased many, as it was suitable to the time and occasion,
and they called it the house-carle’s whet.”

For the first time this winter I notice snow-fleas this afternoon in Walden wood– Wherever I go they are to be seen – especially in the deepest ruts & foot tracks. Their number is almost infinite. It is a rather warm & moist afternoon–& feels like rain. I suppose that some peculiarity in the weather has called them forth from the bark of the trees.

GEORGE MINOTT

It is good to see Minotts hens pecking & scratching the ground What never failing health they suggest! Even the sick hen is so naturally sick – like a green leaf turning to brown. No wonder men love to have hens about them & hear their creaking note. They are even laying eggs from time to time still – the undespairing race! Minott was telling me today about his going across lots on snow-shoes– Why do they not use them now? He thinks the snows are not so deep.

It is a good school the farmer’s sons go to these afternoons loading & hauling great mill logs bigger than any cannons – a sort of battle in the forest. I think there must be an excitement derived from their labor such as they



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cannot tell. After reading of the life & battles of the northmen in [Snorro Sturleson](#)'s Chronicle – these labors most remind me of that. Some of these logs are for pumps– Most are for boards & timbers & spiles for bridges. I met one old pupil of mine stretched at his length upon a vast balista or battering ram of a log – while one yoke & loaded sled went on alone before & another followed behind. How they renew and wear out the paths through the woods! They think I'm loafing. I think they are drudging for gain. But no doubt our employment is more alike than we suspect – and we are each serving the great Master's ends more than our own– I have my work in the woods where I meet them, though my logs do not go to the same mill. I make a different use of skids These men too who are sledding wood & sawing the logs into lengths in the woods, appear to me employed more after the old northman fashion than the mechanics in their shops or the merchants behind their counters. There are many more men now in the woods than in the summer.

The weather has been moderate for a fortnight. The overlapping snow-drifts by the path sides remind me of some marble tombs & carving I have seen. I see where from time to time the teamster has laid his whip in them.– He stains the spotless purity of the snow with his tobacco juice.

In an account of a chinese funeral it is said the friends who attended “observed no particular order in their march”. That seems a more natural & fitter way – more grief-like. The ranks should be broken.

What must be the state of morals in that country where custom requires the chief mourner to put on the outward signs of extreme grief when he does not feel it – to throw himself on the ground & sob & howl though not a tear is shed – & require the support of others as he walks – what refuge can there be for truth in such a country?

January 17, Saturday, or 22, Thursday: Per Leary, [Henry Thoreau](#) began the process of creative reshaping of [WALDEN: OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#), onto 67 leaves of white and cream paper marked with the GOODWIN*HARTFORD anchor watermark, which following Ronald Earl Clapper we refer to as “Draft D.” For instance [WALDEN](#) 314, added into draft D of 1852:

We should be fortunate & blessed if we were so sane & in season, with our robes always tucked up, that we were able & could afford to live in the present without any definite or recognized object from day to day. If we could without be thus [?] always where God & Nature are, and not live on a tangent to the sphere, for the world is round. As an old poet says “Though man proposeth, God disposeth all.” What have we to boast of. We make ourselves the very sewers, the cloacae of nature. I too revive as does the grass after rain. We are never so floundering, our day is never so fair, but that the sun may come out a little brighter through mists and we yearn to live after a better fashion.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN
WALDEN A → G

This process would continue into September.

[Henry Thoreau](#) reminisced about the two young women who borrowed his dipper while he was living at the pond and then failed to bring it back:



January 17, Saturday, 1852: One day two young women—a sunday–stopped at the door of my hut and asked for some water. I answered that I had no cold water but I would lend them a dipper. They never returned the dipper—and I had a right to suppose that they came to steal. They were a disgrace to their sex and to humanity. ... Pariahs of the moral world– Evil spirits that thirsted not for water but threw the dipper into the



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DANTE

lake.— Such as Dante saw. What the lake to them but liquid fire & brimstone. They will never know peace till they have returned the dipper— In all the worlds this is decreed. ...

A disgrace to their sex and to humanity! —It really sounds as if these two had attempted to flirt with him. However, this is all of the incident that got into the book manuscript:

WALDEN: Many a traveller came out of his way to see me and the inside of my house, and, as an excuse for calling, asked for a glass of water. I told them that I drank at the pond, and pointed thither, offering to lend them a dipper. Far off as I lived, I was not exempted from that annual visitation which occurs, methinks, about the first of April, when every body is on the move; and I had my share of good luck, though there were some curious specimens among my visitors.



January 17, Saturday, 1852: ... Evergreens would be a good title for some of my things.— or Gill-go-over the Ground.— or Winter green—or Checker-berry. or Esnea lichens. &c &c Iter Canadense.... One day an inoffensive simple minded pauper from the almshouse—who with others I often saw used as fencing stuff standing or sitting on a bushel in the fields to keep cattle from straying—visited me. and expressed a wish to live as I did. He told me in the simplest manner—(and therefore quite superior to anything that is called humility—it was too simple & truthful for that) that he was deficient in intellect these were his words—the Lord had made him so—and yet he supposed that the Lord cared for him as much as for another. Said he I have always been so from my childhood I never had much mind. It was the Lord's will I suppose. I am weak in the head?— I was not like other children." I have rarely been so fortunate as to meet a fellow man on such promising ground. It was so solemnly true—all that he said.

The other day the 14th, as I was passing the further Garfield house beyond Holden's with my pantaloons as usual tucked into my boots (there was no path beyond Holden's) I heard some persons in Garfield's shed but did not look round—and when I had got a rod or two beyond—I heard some one call out impudently from the shed—quite loud—something like "Ho'loa—mister—what do you think of the walking?" I turned round directly and saw three men standing in the shed. I was resolved to discomfit them—that they should prove their manhood if they had any—and find something to say though they had nothing before.— that they should make amends to the universe by feeling cheap. They should either say to my face & eye what they had said to my back—or they should feel the meanness of having to change their tone. So I called out looking at one do you wish to speak to me Sir? no answer— So I stepped a little nearer & repeated the question— When one replied yes sir. So I advanced with alacrity up the path they had shovelled. In the meanwhile one ran into the house. I thought I had seen the nearest one— He called me by name faintly & with hesitation & held out his hand half unconsciously which I did not decline—and I inquired gravely if he wished to say anything to me, he could only wave me to the other & mutter my brother. I approached him & repeated the question. He looked as if he was shrinking into a nutshell—a pitiable object he was—he looked away from me while he began to frame some business some surveying that he might wish to have done I saw that he was drunk—that his brother was ashamed of him—and I turned my back on him in the outset of this indirect but drunken apology.

IDA PFEIFFER

When Madame Pfeiffer arrived in Asiatic Russia she felt the necessity—of wearing other than a travelling dress, when she went to meet the authorities—for as she remarks she "was now in a civilized country where — people are judged of by their clothes." This is another barbarous trait.

It seemed that from such a basis as the poor weak headed pauper had laid—such a basis of truth & frankness—our intercourse might go forward to something better than the intercourse of sages.

It was on the 4th of July that I put a few things into a hay-rigging some of which I had made myself, & commenced housekeeping.

There is the worldwide fact that from the mass of men—the appearance of wealth—dress & equipage alone command respects,—they who yield it are the heathen who need to have missionaries sent to them—and they who cannot afford to live & travel but in this **respectable** way are if possible more pitiable still.



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In proportion as I have celestial thoughts, is the necessity for me to be out and behold the western sky before sunset these winter days. That is the symbol of the unclouded mind that knows neither winter nor summer. What is your thought like? That is the hue—that the purity & transparency and distance from earthly taint of my inmost mind—for whatever we see without is a symbol of something within—& that which is farthest off—is the symbol of what is deepest within. The lover of contemplation accordingly will gaze much into the sky.—Fair thoughts & a serene mind make fair days.

The rain bow is the symbol of the triumph which succeeds to a grief that has tried us to our advantage—so that at last we can smile through our-tears— It is the aspect with which we come out of the house of mourning. We have found our relief in tears.

As the skies appear to a man so is his mind. Some see only clouds there some prodigies & portents—some rarely look up at all, their heads like the brutes are directed toward earth. Some behold there serenity—purity beauty ineffable.

The World run to see the panorama when there is a panorama in the sky which few go out to see.

Methinks there might be a chapter—when I speak of hens in the thawy days & spring weather on the chips—called Chickweed. or Plantain.

To sea-going men the very Mts are but boats turned upside down—as the North men in Norway speak of the “keel-ridge of the country” i.e. the ridge of the Mts which divide the waters flowing east & west

Those western vistas through clouds to the sky—show the clearest heavens—clearer & more elysian than if the whole sky is comparatively free from clouds—for then there is wont to be a vapor more generally diffused especially near the horizon—which in cloudy days is absorbed as it were & collected into masses. And the vistas are clearer than the unobstructed cope of heaven.

The endless variety in the forms & texture of the clouds! Some fine some coarse grained. I saw tonight over head—stretching ²/₃ across the sky what looked like the back bone with portions of the ribs of a fossil monster. Every form & creature is thus shadowed forth in vapor in the heavens.

Saw a teamster coming up the Boston road this afternoon sitting on his load which was bags of corn or salt apparently behind 2 horses & beating his hands for warmth. He finally got off & walked behind to make his blood circulate faster— and I saw that he was a large man— But when I came near him I found that he was a monstrous man & dwarfed all whom he stood by—so that I did not know whether he was large or they were small. Yet though he stood so high he stooped considerably more than anybody I think of & he wore a flat glazed cap to conceal his height. & when he got into the village he sat down on his bags again. I heard him remark to a boy that it was a cold day & it was. But I wondered that he should feel the cold so sensibly—for I thought it must take a long time to cool so large a body.

I learned that it was Kimball of Littleton—that probably he was not 20. The family was not **large** Wild who took the census—said so and that his sister said he could’nt do much” health & strength not much. It troubled him that he was so large—for people looked at him. There is at once something monstrous in the bad sense suggested by the sight of such a man. Great size is inhuman. It is as if a man should be born with the earth attached to him. I saw him standing upon a sled talking with the driver while his own team went on ahead. And I supposed from their comparative height that his companion was sitting—but he proved to be standing. Such a man is so much less human—that is what may make him sad.

Those old Northmen were not like so many men in these days whom you can pass your hand through because they have not any back-bone. When Asmund was going to kill Harek of Thiottö with a thin hatchet, King Magnus said “‘Rather take this axe of mine’. It was thick, and made like a club. ‘Thou must know, Asmund,’ added he, ‘that there are hard bones in the old fellow’.” Asmund struck Harek on the head & gave him his death wound, but when he returned to the king’s house, it appeared that “the whole edge of the axe was turned with the blow”.

It appears to me that at a very early age—the mind of man—perhaps at the same time with his body, ceases to be elastic. His intellectual power becomes something defined—& limited. He does not think expansively as he would stretch himself in his growing days— What was flexible sap hardens into heartwood and there is no further change. In the season of youth methinks man is capable of intellectual effort & performance which surpass all rules & bounds— As the youth lays out his whole strength without fear or prudence & does not feel his limits. It is the transition from poetry to prose. The young man can run & leap—he has not learned exactly how far—he knows no limits— The grown man does not exceed his daily labor. He has no strength to waste.

Some men are never where they For the most part, we are not where we are, but in a false position. By Through an infirmity of their our natures, they we suppose a case, and put themselves ourselves into it, and hence they we are in two cases, the actual and the supposed, at the same time, which is to be in a dilemma, and it is doubly difficult to get out. A few healthy & true men In healthy and true moments In sane moments we regard only the



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facts, the case that is.... Any truth is presentable. better than make-believe. (Clapper 862-7; WALDEN, 326-7)

[I]n an imperfect work time is an ingredient, but into a perfect work time does not enter.... [T]ime had been an illusion.... Some men are never where they For the most part, we are not where we are, but in a false position. By Through an infirmity of their our natures, they we suppose a case, and put themselves ourselves into it, and hence they we are in two cases, the actual and the supposed, at the same time, which is to be in a dilemma, and it is doubly difficult to get out. A few healthy & true men In healthy and true moments In sane moments we regard only the facts, the case that is.... Any truth is presentable. better than make-believe. (Clapper 862-7; WALDEN, 326-7)

Wherever I sat, there I might live, and the landscape radiated from me accordingly. (Clapper 256-7; WALDEN, 81)

February 15, Sunday: [Henry Thoreau](#) was written to by Benjamin Marston Watson in Plymouth, asking him to lecture there:

*Plymouth Mass
15 Feby.
dr Sir.
I am very much obliged
to you for your interest in our
meetings here, and for your
promise to come down some
Sunday. I will look for you
or for Mr Channing or for
Mr Foster on the next Sunday,
Feby 22,— Mr Channing
very kindly wrote to me at
Mr Emerson's suggestion say-*

*Page 2
ing that he would come any
time I named. I learn from
Mr Alcott he is now in Providence,
and so I send my message to
him thro' you—I hope that
one of you will be quite sure to
come. Could you write me by
Tuesday afternoon or Wednesday
morning—? If he is at Providence
I would not consult him, but de-
cide at once to come. Mr
Foster I have not written to,
but he has been so valiant in
the good cause, that a good*



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*audience is ready to rec his word.
My regards to him, & say we shall
be very glad to hear him on Sunday
if you or Mr C. cannot come, &
I shall be also glad to have him
name some day when he can come.
Yours very truly
B.M. Watson*

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*our meetings go on finely—Rev. Sam. Johnson, Mr
Alcott, Ed. Quincy so far. People were delighted at
Mr A. and listened with great enthusiasm. Young
Johnson is magnificent, and you may safely go a hundred
miles to hear. I hope nothing will prevent one of
you from coming, & let me know as early in the
wk. as you can. Can't you [] us from your Life
in the woods, which Mr Alcott pronounces just the
thing for us—
I will meet you at the cars.
B.M.W.*

[Thoreau](#) was reading in [Samuel Laing](#)'s CHRONICLE OF THE KINGS OF NORWAY:



February 15, Sunday: Perhaps I am descended from that Northman named "Thorer the Dog-footed." Thorer Hund, "He was the most powerful man in the north." to judge from his name belonged to the same family. Thorer is one of the most if not the most common name in the chronicles of the Northmen.

February 16, Monday: [Henry Thoreau](#) was reading in [Samuel Laing](#)'s CHRONICLE OF THE KINGS OF NORWAY:



February 16, Monday: [Laing](#) says that "The Heimskringla has been hardly used by the learned men of the period in which it was first published. It appeared first in the literary world in 1697, frozen into the Latin of the Swedish antiquary Peringskiöld."

Snorro Sturleson says "from Thor's name comes Thorer, also Thorarinn

Again "Earl Rognvald was King Harald's dearest friend, and the king had the greatest regard for him. He was married to Hilda, a daughter of Rolf Naefia, and their sons were Rolf and Thorer. * * Rolf became a great viking, and was of so stout a growth that no horse could carry him, and wheresoever he went he must go on foot; and therefore he was called Gange-Rolf" [[Laing](#) says in a note what Sturleson also tells in the text Gange-Rolf, Rolf Ganger, Rolf the Walker, was the conqueror of Normandy] "Gange Rolfe's son was William, father to Richard, and grandfather to another Richard, who was the father of Richard Longspear, and grandfather of William the Bastard, from whom all the following English kings are descended."

King Harald "set Earl Rognvald's son Thorer over Möre, and gave him his daughter Alof in marriage. Thorer, called the Silent, got the same territory his father Rognvald had possessed." His brother Einar going into battle to take vengeance on his father's murderers – sang a kind of reproach against his brothers Rollang



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& Rolf for their slowness and concludes

“And silent Thorer sits and dreams
At home, beside the mead-bowl’s streams”.

Of himself it is related that he cut a spread eagle on the back of his enemy Halfdan. So it seems that from one branch of the family were descended the kings of England, and from the other myself. Down Turnpike It is interesting to meet an ox with handsomely spreading horns. There is a great variety of sizes and forms though one horn commonly matches the other. I am willing to turn out for those that spread their branches wide. Large and spreading horns methinks indicate a certain vegetable force & naturalization in the wearer – it softens & eases off the distinction between the animal & vegetable– The unhorned animals and the trees– I should say that the horned animals approached nearer to the vegetable– The deer that run in the woods as the moose for instance carry perfect trees on their heads– The French call them *bois*. No wonder there are fables of centaurs & the like. No wonder there is a story of a hunter who when his bullets failed fired cherry stones into the heads of his game & so trees sprouted out of them–& the hunter refreshed himself with the cherries. It is a perfect piece of Mythology. which belongs to these days. Oxen which are de-animalized to some extent approach nearer to the vegetable perchance than bulls & cows–& hence their bulky bodies & large & spreading horns. Nothing more natural than that the deer should appear with a tree growing out of his head. Thus is the animal allied to the vegetable kingdom & passes into it by insensible degrees.

These appendages are indispensable to the beauty of the animal as appears from the great calf look of a cow without horns or a “bunter”

Man’s relation to oxen is the same that it was in primitive ages– It is equally primitive. He has got no nearer to them. If his ox breaks through the ice he know no better how to get him out than if it had never happened.

The helpless unwieldiness of the ox is remarkable– I was told yesterday that when a man had got his ox out of Bateman’s pond, the latter gave a spring and coming down his hind legs slipped & spread apart on the ice, & he was split up so that he had to be killed.

This afternoon there is a clear bright air –which though cold & windy I love to inhale– I see mother o’pearl tints and I am not sure but this will be such a sunset as we had a month ago. The sky is a much fairer & undimmed blue than usual.

The surface of the snow which fell last night is coarse like bran with shining flakes– I see the steam-like snow dust curling up & careering along over the fields – as I walk the bleak Walden road, it blows up over the highest drifts in the west – lit by the westering sun like the spray on a beach – before the N W wind. This drifting snow dust has formed long flattish drifts a few feet wide by some rods with a rounded swelling surface where it has lodged the intermediate spaces a rod or two wide being swept clean & left uneven & naked – over these rollers it sweeps on to fill the road.

By the artificial system we learn the names of plants – by the natural their relations to one another – but still it remains to learn their relation to man– The poet does more for us in this department.

Linnaeus says *elementa* are simple, *naturalia* composed by divine art. (and these two embrace all things on earth) Physics treats of the properties of *elementa*, Natural science of *naturalia*.

February 18, Wednesday: [Caleb G. Forshey](#) reported in the [Boston Medical Surgical Journal](#) that “When death results from a cause, which can readily be removed, after death re-animation may be effected, and the machinery of life set in motion, by artificially inflating of the lungs.”

Dr. Bradley P. Dean has noticed that on this day, a couple of months after Harvard Library had acquired a secondhand 1st edition copy of [Luke Howard](#)’s ESSAY ON THE MODIFICATIONS OF CLOUDS, [Thoreau](#) wrote suggestively that “One discovery in Meteorology, one significant observation is a good deal. I am grateful to the man who introduces order among the clouds.” Would that be an indication that he had just been reading this meteorological essay?



February 18, Wednesday: When Eystein the Bad ravaged the land of Drontheim “He then offered the people either his slave Thorer Faxe, or his dog, whose name was Sauer, to be their king. They preferred the dog, as they thought they would sooner get rid of him. Now the dog was, by witchcraft, gifted with 3 men’s wisdom; and when he barked, he spoke one word and barked two. A collar and chain of gold and silver were made for



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him, and his courtiers carried him in their hands when the weather or ways were foul. A throne was erected for him, and he sat upon a high place, as kings are used to sit. -- It is told that the occasion of his death was that the wolves one day broke into his fold, and his courtiers stirred him up to defend his cattle; but when he ran down from his mound, and attacked the wolves, they tore him to pieces." Now I think if he had spoken two words & barked only one -- he would have been wiser still -- and never fallen into the clutches of the wolves.

By some traits in the saga concerning King Hakon the Good -- I am reminded of the concessions which some politicians & religionists, who are all things to all men -- make. Hakon was unpopular on account of his attempts to spread Christianity -- and to conciliate his subjects he drank out of the horn which had been blessed in Odin's name at a festival of sacrifice, but as he drank he made the sign of the cross over it. & one of his earls told the people that he was making the sign of Thor's hammer over it. "On this" it is said "there was quietness for the evening. The next day, when the people sat down to table, the bonders pressed the king strongly to eat of horse-flesh; [this was an evidence of paganism] and as he would on no account do so, they wanted him to drink of the soup; and as he would not do this, they insisted he should at least taste the gravy; and on his refusal they were going to lay hands on him. Earl Sigurd came & made peace among them, by asking the king to hold his mouth over the handle of the kettle, upon which the fat smoke of the boiled horse-flesh had settled itself; and the king first laid a linen cloth over the handle, and then gaped over it, and returned to the throne; but neither party was satisfied with this" On another day the Earl "brought it so far that the king took some bits of horse-liver, and emptied all the goblets the bonders filled for him"; This Hakon had a daughter **Thora**.

Thorer Klakke was one "who had been long on viking expeditions".

Thorer Hiort "was quicker on foot than any man."

I have a common place book for facts and another for poetry -- but I find it difficult always to preserve the vague distinction which I had in my mind -- for the most interesting & beautiful facts are so much the more poetry and that is their success. They are **translated** from earth to heaven -- I see that if my facts were sufficiently vital & significant -- perhaps transmuted more into the substance of the human mind -- I should need but one book of poetry to contain them all.

Pm to Fair Haven Hill: One discovery in Meteorology, one significant observation is a good deal. I am grateful to the man who introduces order among the clouds. Yet I look up into the heavens so fancy free, I am almost glad not to know any law for the winds.

I find the partridges [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus*] among the fallen pine tops on Fair Haven these afternoons an hour before sundown ready to commence budding in the neighboring orchard.

The mosses on the rocks look green when the snow has melted -- This must be one of the spring signs -- when spring comes

It is impossible for the same person to see things from the poet's point of view and that of the man of science. The poet's second love may be science -- not his first -- when use has worn off the bloom. I realize that men may be born to a condition of mind at which others arrive in middle age by the decay of their poetic faculties.

I have my doubts about Brad's hypothesis. What's wrong with it is that he hadn't thought to look it up in the encyclopedias current at the time at which Thoreau was writing. At this point all of Howard's cloud terminology was already totally available as encyclopedia information! If Thoreau had needed a source for this cloud terminology, he could at any time simply look up the article "Clouds" in Volume 8 of Abraham Rees's THE CYCLOPÆDIA; OR, UNIVERSAL DICTIONARY OF ARTS, SCIENCES, AND LITERATURE, a widely available source. At that point, for 45 years nobody had needed to have recourse to any specially printed and catalogued scientific monograph!

February 20, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) was reading in [Samuel Laing](#)'s CHRONICLE OF THE KINGS OF NORWAY:



February 20, Friday: Erling had a son Thorer. It is said of the former that "both winter & summer it was the custom in his house to drink at the mid-day meal according to a measure, but at the night meal there was no measure in drinking."

Kings are not they who go abroad to conquer kingdoms but who stay at home & mind their business -- proving first their ability to govern their families & themselves. "King Sigurd Syr was standing in his corn-field when the messengers came to him, -- He had many people on his farm. Some were then shearing corn, some bound it together, some drove it to the building, some unloaded it & put it in stack or barn; but the king and two men



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with him, went sometimes into the field, sometimes to the place where the corn was put into the barn". -- he "attended carefully to his cattle & husbandry, and managed his housekeeping himself. He was nowise given to pomp and was rather taciturn. But he was a man of the best understanding in Norway," -- After hearing the messengers he replied-- "The news ye bring me is weighty, and ye bring it forward in great heat. Already before now Aasta has been taken up much with people who were not so near to her; and I see she is still of the same disposition. She takes this up with great warmth; but can she lead her son out of the business with the same splendor she is leading him into it?"

Fate will go all lengths to aid her protegés When the Swedish king and Olaf king of Norway threw lots for the possession of a farm-- "The Swedish king threw two sixes, and said King Olaf need scarcely throw. He replied, while shaking the dice in his hand, 'Although there be two sixes on the dice, it would be easy sire, for God Almighty, to let them turn up in my favor.' Then he threw, and had sixes also. Now the Swedish king threw again, and had again two sixes. Olaf king of Norway then threw, and had six upon one dice, and the other split in two, so as to make seven eyes in all upon it; and the farm was adjudged to the king of Norway."

There was a Thorer Sel who "was a man of low birth, but had swung himself up in the world as an active man". There was a Northman named "Rane Thin-nose."

There is a long story about Thorer Hund's expedition to Biarmeland.

"Ludr --the lure--" says [Laing](#) in note, "is a long tube or roll of birch-bark used as a horn by the herdboys in the mts of Norway."

There was a "Thorer the Low"

There was a giant of a man named Gauka-Thorer and his brother who joined King Olaf's army. The king inquired if they were Christians.

"Gauka-Thorer replies, that he is neither christian nor heathen. I and my comrades have no faith but on ourselves, our strength, and the luck of victory; and with this faith we slip through sufficiently well."

"The king replies. 'A great pity it is that such brave slaughtering fellows do not believe in Christ their Creator'."

"Thorer replies, 'Is there any Christian man, king, in thy following, who stands so high in the air as we two brothers?'"

In King Olaf's last battle he "hewed at Thorer Hund, and struck him across the shoulders; but the sword would not cut, and it was as if dust flew from his reindeer-skin coat." There are some verses about it.

But Thorer having had a hand in the death of the king left the country. "He went all the way to Jerusalem, and many people say he never came back."

Poeta nascitur non fit, but under what conditions is the poet born?-- Perchance there is such a thing as a perpetual propagation or reproduction of the human without any recreation -- as all botanists assert respecting plants and as Meyer in particular concerning lichens who says that the "pulverulent matter of Lichens is that which is subject to this kind of indefinite propagation, while the sporules lying in the shields are the only part that will really multiply the species."

Every gardiner practices budding & grafting but only Van Mons and his equals cultivate seedlings & produce new & valuable varieties. The genius is a seedling -- often precocious or made to bear fruit early -- as Van Mons treated his pears-- The common man is the [Baldwin](#) -- propagated by mere offshoots or repetitions of the parent stock. At least if all men are to be regarded as seedlings the greater part are exceedingly like the parent stock.

The slope from the last generation to this seems steeper than any part of history. I hear with surprise this afternoon that the ox wagon was rarely seen 50 years ago -- they used the ox-cart here almost exclusively then -- even to team wood to Boston.

The law requires wood to be four feet long from the middle of the carf to the mid. of the carf yet the honest deacon & farmer directs his hired men to cut his wood "4 feet a little scant." He does it as naturally as he breathes.

We love to see nature clad whether in earth or a human body. Nobody likes to set his his house under that part

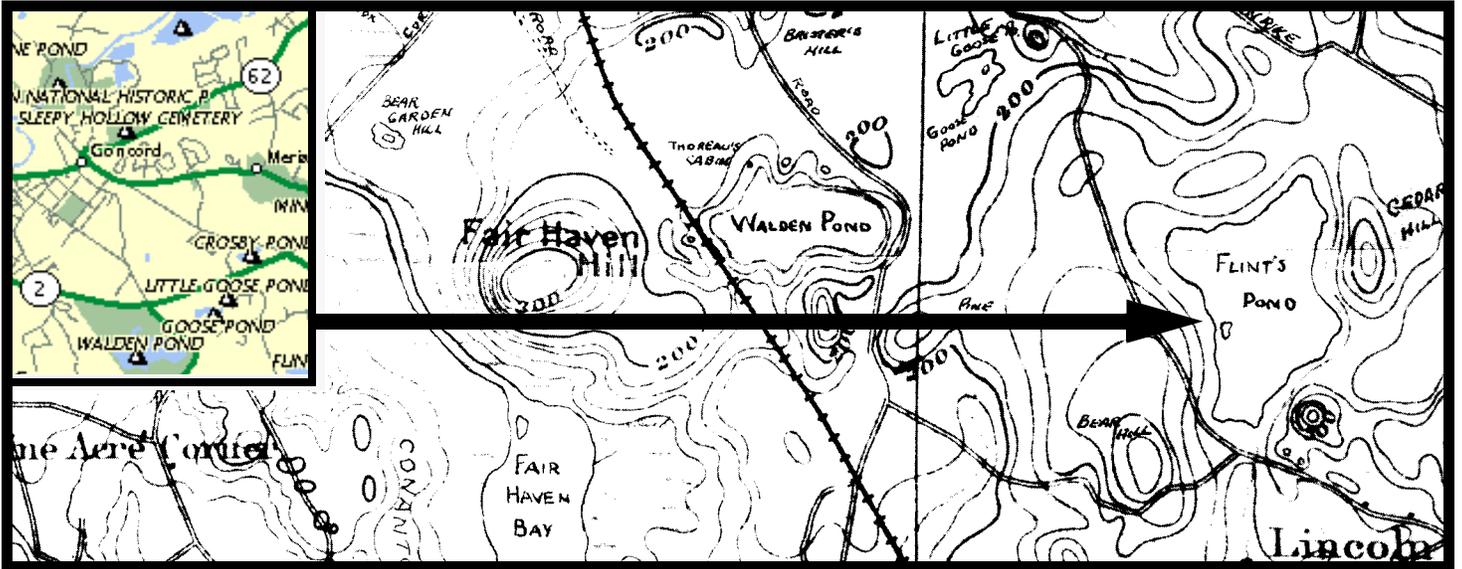
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of the hill where the sod is broken & the sand is flowing.



Pm to Flint's Pond: The last 2 or 3 days have been **among** the coldest in the winter though not so cold as a few weeks ago. I notice in the low ground covered with bushes near Flint's Pond – many little rabbit paths in the snow – where they have travelled in each others tracks or many times back & forth – 6 inches wide. This too is probably their summer habit.

The rock by the pond is remarkable for its umbilicaria? I saw a mole? run along under the bank by the edge of the pond – but it was only by watching long & sharply that I glimpsed him now & then. – he ran so close to the ground & under rather than over anything – as roots & beds of leaves & twigs. – and yet without making any noise. No wonder that we so rarely see these animals though their tracks are so common – I have been astonished to observe before after holding them in my hand how quickly they will bury themselves – & glide along just beneath the surface whatever it may be composed of – grass or leaves or twigs – or earth – or snow. So some men are sly and subterranean in their ways & skulk – though often they raise a mound of earth or snow above their backs which betrays rather than conceals them. For privacy they prefer to travel in a gallery like the mole though it sometimes happens that it is arched above the ground when they think themselves deep in the sod. The mole goes behind & beneath, rather than before & above.

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September 16, Thursday: On this day in Boston, [Lewis Hayden](#) took into his home a William and Mary Brown and children who were escaping from slavery. He paid passage fees to Canada for two other such persons.



September 16: 8 A.M. –To Fair Haven Pond.

Since the rains and the sun, great fungi, six inches in diameter, stand in the woods, warped upward on their edges, showing their gills, so as to hold half a gill of water.

The two-leaved convallaria berries are now decidedly red. The sweet-fern has a russet look. The jay screams; the goldfinch twitters; the barberries are red. I heard a warbling vireo in the village, which I have not heard for long, and the common *che-wink* note in the woods. Some birds, like some flowers, begin to sing again in the fall. The corn is topped.

The rippled blue surface of Fair Haven from the Cliffs, with its smooth white border where weeds preserve the surface smooth, a placid silver-plated rim. The pond is like the sky with a border of whitish clouds in the horizon. Yesterday it rained all day.

What makes this such a day for hawks? ■ There are eight or ten in sight from the Cliffs, large and small, one or more with a white rump. I detected the transit of the first by his shadow on the rock, and I look toward the sun for him. Though he is made light beneath to conceal him, his shadow betrays him. A hawk must get out of the wood, must get above it, where he can sail. It is narrow dodging for him amid the boughs. He cannot be a hawk there, but only perch gloomily. Now I see a large one – perchance an eagle, I say to myself! – down in the valley, circling and circling, higher and wider. This way he comes. How beautiful does he repose on the air, in the moment when he is directly over you, and you see the form and texture of his wings! How light he must make himself, how much earthy heaviness expel, before he can thus soar and sail! He carries no useless clogs there with him. They are out by families; while one is circling this way, another circles that. Kites without strings. Where is the boy that flies them? Are not the hawks most observed at this season?

Before this, probably no leaves have been affected by frost. The puffballs (?), five to eight fingered, now. Tobacco-pipe still, and the water parsnip. Discovered an excellent lively wild red grape. Why not propagate from it and call it the *Musketaquid*? Gathered some sound blueberries still. Mitchella berries ripe. Dogbane still. What I have called the *Cornus circinata* is that of Emerson, if you call the fruit white tinged with blue (in Laurel Glen), but its cyme is not flat, as Gray says. Its berries to-day. I suspect that my *C. stolonifera* is the *sericea*. Maple-leaved viburnum berries, dark-bluish.

The Norwegians, the Normen [*sic*], were such inveterate mariners that they called the summit of the mountain chain which separates Norway from Sweden the Keel Ridge of the country, as if it were a vessel turned up.



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

SAMUEL LAING

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

November 4, Thursday: [Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour](#) became the prime minister of Piedmont-Sardinia (which would soon expand and, with [Giuseppe Garibaldi](#) handing over southern Italy and Sicily to King Victor Emmanuel II in Naples in 1861, would become [Italy](#)).

Samuel Langhorne Clemens, Mark Twain confided to his Hannibal journal the sentiment “What a world of trouble those who never marry escape! There are many happy matches, it is true, and sometimes “my dear,” and “my love” come from the heart; but what sensible bachelor, rejoicing in his freedom and years of discretion, will run the tremendous risk?”

In Vermont the Reverend Alpheus Bigelow confided to his diary that “Election returns already received by telegraph in Burlington render it almost certain that the State of New York has gone Democratic by a large majority, and that the Pierce-King electoral ticket prevails nearly without exception.”



Nov. 4. Autumnal dandelion and yarrow.

Must be out-of-doors enough to get experience of wholesome reality, as a ballast to thought and sentiment. Health requires this relaxation, this aimless life. This life in the present. Let a man have thought what he will of Nature in the house, she will still be novel outdoors. I keep out of doors for the sake of the mineral, vegetable, and animal in me.

How precious a fine clay early ill the spring!—less so in the fall; less still in the summer and winter. Chimaphila sheds its pollen now. Saw witch-hazels out of bloom, some still fresh.

The winds of autumn draw a few strains from the telegraph, after all. At this post it is only a musical hum, but at the next it attains to clearness and reminds me of the isles of Greece. I put my ear to the post. Every fibre responded with the increasing inflatus, but when it rose into a more melodious and tenser tone it seemed to retire and concentrate itself in the pith of the wood.

There was also Thorer of Steige, in Magnus Barefoot's reign, who was “old and heavy.” He gained some victories, but when it went against him could not run. He told his foe, “I am well in hands, but ill on my feet.” He “was a man exceedingly stout, both high of stature and thick.” So that, when he was hung, his neck gave way and his body fell to the ground. The poet sings: —

“How the king's thralls hung on the gallows
Old Thorer and his traitor-fellows.”

My thought is a part of the meaning of the world, and hence I use a part of the world as a symbol to express my thought.¹



1. Clearly, [Henry Thoreau](#) had been continuing to study in [Samuel Laing](#)'s CHRONICLE OF THE KINGS OF NORWAY. He was placing the bulk of his notes in his Indian Notebooks #5 and #7, in his Fact Book, and in his 2d Commonplace Book.

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THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

SAMUEL LAING

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1868

April 23, Saturday [Samuel Laing](#) died in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Samuel Laing,
Travel Writer and Translator
of Heimskringla 1780 - 1868.

“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING: HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

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PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

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"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

- Remark by character "Garin Stevens"
in William Faulkner's INTRUDER IN THE DUST



Prepared: March 13, 2015



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

SAMUEL LAING

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.



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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.



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