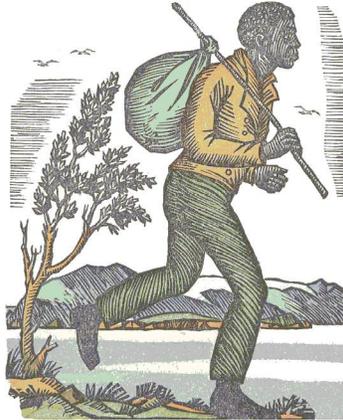




HENRY WILLIAMS¹



Here is a "surd" (that is to say, something for us to stare at and stare at and persistently fail to understand). Although we have seen all sorts of lists of people and places involved in the Underground Railroad, including a whole lot of stuff that is at the very least undocumented and at the very most entirely inventive, nowhere do we see mention of Henry Thoreau, nowhere do we see mention of the Thoreau family's boardinghouse in Concord despite ample documentation of direct involvement in the Underground Railroad. Well, we are caused to wonder – why might that be? In the midst of all this credulity why this peculiar avoidance? A surd.

1. Henry Williams was class secretary for the Harvard Class of 1837 — however, this isn't about *that* Henry Williams. ;-)

1851

January: A waiter called Shadrach (Frederick Jenkins) at a popular Boston coffeehouse, the Cornhill Coffee-house, was kidnapped under the new federal Fugitive Slave Law. His kidnapers, aka "United States Marshals," were holding him in the Boston jailhouse, in order to bring him before an unindicted co-conspirator, aka "Federal Commissioner." Shadrach, of course, as a kidnap victim, would not be permitted to testify on his own behalf or have access to council, or have a trial by jury of his white peers in downtown Boston, although we suppose he should have been more grateful than he in fact was, that his kidnapers merely kept him in chains rather than binding and gagging him, or drugging him. In all probability his lot would have been to be sent south to slavery, because that could happen solely on the word of one white man who would testify to this unindicted co-conspirator that Shadrach was a piece of someone's property, that had escaped. However, as it came down, black Bostonians defied Christ's injunction not to resist evil, and marched into the courthouse, and kidnapped Shadrach right back. Some nonviolence adherents, such as Abby Kelley Foster, would never become reconciled to these direct tactics, preferring to

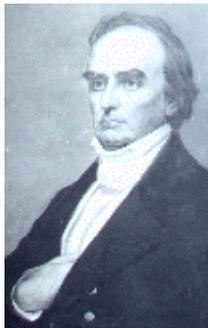
throw my body in the way of the kidnapers and risk my life if need be.

There was a massacre of foreigners, including Americans, at Jaffa, Turkey. The US Mediterranean Squadron would be ordered to make a demonstration along the Turkish (Levant) coast.

US MILITARY INTERVENTIONS

February 15, Saturday: Evelina E. Vannevar Slack wrote concerning family matters from Chelsea, Massachusetts to Charles Wesley Slack in St. Johnsbury, Vermont. Slack's father added a note to this letter.

Frederick Jenkins (or Wilkins or Minkins, depending on what source you accept) known generally as "Shadrach," a Boston waiter who was a fugitive from Georgia, had been detained by slave-catchers. Henry Williams, who had escaped from Virginia and whom Henry Thoreau assisted, was a friend of Jenkins. Richard Henry Dana, Jr. represented Shadrach in court. Chief Justice Shaw ruled for the rights of the slave catchers but a group of Boston's indignant black citizens then swept into the hearing room through one door and out through another, taking him along within the press of their crowd. Daniel Webster of course fulminated that such a rescue from the US criminal system was "strictly speaking, a case of treason."



UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

After Jenkins was thus rescued, Francis Edwin Bigelow, the Concord blacksmith who according to Horace



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Rice Hosmer “had **strong negro features** for a white man,” and his wife Ann Bigelow, concealed him for one night until he could be escorted to the home of Jonathan Drake and Frances Drake in Leominster (for a few days) and then Fitchburg and into Vermont and on up across the Canada border (in this they were assisted by the Brooks family next door, and there is a story that Nathan Brooks helped outfit the fugitive with one of his hats). This offense against property and legitimate ownership, and New England’s guilty complicity in it, caused conservatives in Boston to become concerned about social unrest and determined to use brutality to prevent it. A well-known abolitionist, [Elizur Wright, Jr.](#), would be charged with this crime, and would be defended by lawyer Dana. When Wright saw the blacksmith Bigelow sitting in the jury box, he immediately intuited that his trial was going to go all right — for on Shadrach’s way toward safety he had been put up overnight at the Bigelow home! Dana’s work in these “Rescue Trials” would continue into 1852.



February 15, Saturday: Fatal is the discovery that our friend is fallible –that he has prejudices. He is then only prejudiced in our favor. What is the value of his esteem who does not justly esteem another? Alas! Alas! When my friend begins to deal in confessions –breaks silence –makes a theme of friendship –(which then is always something past) and descends to merely human relations As long as there is a spark of love remaining cherish that alone –only *that* can be kindled into a flame. I thought that friendship –that love was still possible between –I thought that we had not withdrawn very far asunder– But now that my friend rashly thoughtlessly –prophanely speaks *recognizing* the distance between us –that distance seems infinitely increased. Of our friends we do not incline to speak to complain to others –we would not disturb the foundations of confidence that may still be. Why should we not still continue to live with the intensity & rapidity of infants. Is not the world –are not the heavens as unfathomed as ever? Have we exhausted any joy –any sentiment? The author of Festus well exclaims

“Could we but think with the intensity
We love with, we might do great things, I think.”

FESTUS; A POEM

PHILIP JAMES BAILEY

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October: Publication of a *ms* that had been entitled “The Whale,” as *MOBY-DICK; OR, THE WHALE*, dedicated to [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#). In 1833, Dr. James Cowles Prichard had pioneered “the term monomania, meaning madness affecting one train of thought ... adopted in late times instead of melancholia.”



Melville’s father-in-law, Chief Justice [Lemuel Shaw](#), had utilized this concept in a legal opinion in 1844, and Melville had deployed it in 1849 in *MARDI AND A VOYAGE THITHER*, and here he deployed it as the defining characteristic of the psychology of the maimed Captain Ahab. This book was considered, however, by [Herman Melville](#)’s boss at the [Literary World](#), Evert Augustus Duyckinck, to be immoral.² Immoral it may not be —



but is it accurate? It states that the skeleton of Bentham hangs for candelabra in the library of one of his executors, and although it is true that Bentham had suggested that the bodies of the dead be used as remembrances of them, and invented the term “auto-icon” for such use, and had suggested that the dead person’s face might be preserved with copal varnish, it is also the case that his own face looked so gruesome after death and autopsy that the embalming surgeon preserved the body merely by placing a waxen image on

2. One wonders whether Bronson Alcott ever read this *MOBY-DICK* book. In Chapter 35 we read that you’ll never get rich if you let yourself get taken in tow by a “sunken-eyed young Platonist.” In Chapter 78 we read of a honey-collector in Ohio who leaned into a honey tree, slipped, and was embalmed, and then [Melville](#) hits us with this punchline: “How many, think ye, have likewise fallen into [Plato](#)’s honey head, and sweetly perished there?”

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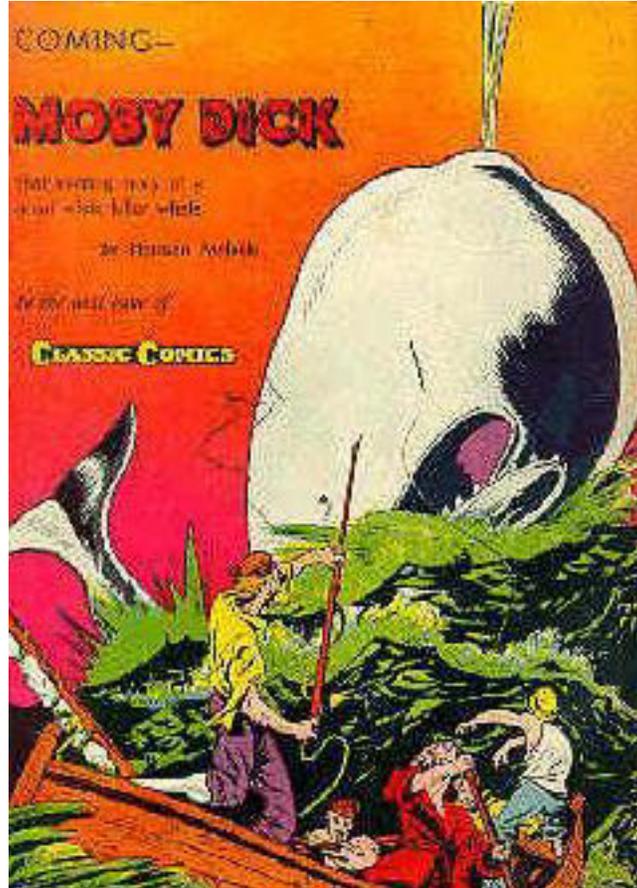
top of his dressed-up skull.



His body bones are not within the dummy underneath that authentic wax-encrusted skull in the closet at Cambridge, but this Melvillian disposition of Bentham's body bones is something of which I have not elsewhere seen confirmation:

But it may be fancied, that from the naked skeleton of the stranded whale, accurate hints may be derived touching his true form. Not at all. For it is one of the more curious things about this Leviathan, that his skeleton gives very little idea of his general shape. Though [Jeremy Bentham's](#) skeleton, which hangs for candelabra in the library of one of his executors, correctly conveys the idea of a burly-browed utilitarian old gentleman, with all Jeremy's other leading personal characteristics; yet nothing of this kind could be inferred from any Leviathan's articulated bones. In fact, as the great Hunter says, the mere skeleton of the whale bears the same relation to the fully invested and padded animal as the insect does to the chrysalis

that so roundly envelopes it.



There was a speed and pulling contest between various designs of locomotives on the Western Railroad between Wilmington MA and Lowell MA. William Mason, a textile manufacturer of Taunton MA, witnessed this contest and determined to enter the business of manufacturing locomotives. Perhaps some of Mr. Mason's locomotives would assist some Americans in obtaining the comparative freedom of Canada, Americans such as this [Henry Williams](#) who was fleeing his father and owner, locomotives such as this one pulling the 5PM train north out of Concord, upon which our Henry had positioned this fleeing Henry.

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

October 1, Wednesday: On this very day on which, in Concord, Massachusetts, [Henry Thoreau](#) was forwarding an American man named [Henry Williams](#) along his way to Canada and freedom, Federal marshals from Rochester, Auburn, Syracuse, and Canandaigua, accompanied by local policemen, were taking into their custody an American in Buffalo and an American in Syracuse, New York who had been alleged to be, similarly, escaped pieces of some white man's property. At about noon the deputies of US Marshal Henry W. Allen entered the cabinet shop of Charles F. Williston in Syracuse and took into their custody a barrel maker who called himself Jerry, also known as William Henry (Jerry McHenry), upon a warrant from US Commissioner Joseph F. Sabine based upon a complaint from a citizen of the state of Missouri named John McReynolds. McReynolds had sworn before officers of the US federal government that this Jerry or William Henry or McHenry belonged to him (and it is a lucky thing that no American man of property had thought to send these factors off after the Lady Moon as one of his misplaced possessions, as it is clear that such factors could be induced to believe anything no matter how preposterous). The barrel-maker was being told that the

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charge against him was theft, until, that is, he was in manacles. Then he was informed that he had been taken under the Fugitive Slave Law. He put up substantial resistance but was subdued. Word spread and every church-bell in the city began to toll, with of course the exception of the one in the Episcopalian steeple.



The Reverend Samuel Joseph May and a group of his parishioners and delegates of the Liberty Party went to the office of the commissioner and, evidently upon a prearranged signal, McHenry, in slave restraints, threw

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himself across Commissioner Sabine's desk, scattering the papers and weapons upon it. The crowd of men in



the room pressed the marshals present against the wall while they hoisted McHenry above their heads and rushed him out of the building. Unfortunately, on their way down the stairs they dropped him and he was badly injured and rendered unconscious. While he was regaining consciousness and being helped into a carriage on Water Street, the deputies recaptured him and took him to the police station. He was so terrified at this point that he could not be calmed. For the remainder of that day rioters roamed the streets of the city and the police station was stoned, and then that night at about 7PM or 8PM a mob estimated by some at 3,000 and by some at 10,000 stormed the building. One man, Peter Hornbeck, a mulatto who was by trade a butcher, was using his meat cleaver on a window casement, while a deputy was being decked by a stone and then beaten by a white man with a club. Marshall Allen, considering that he had already done his part, made an exit from a back

door and James Lear, the factor for the slavemaster McReynolds of Missouri, figuring discretion to be the better part of valor, hid out in an adjoining building. Marshall Fitch, after some blows and perhaps a pistol shot, jumped out a second-floor window, and McHenry was saved.

The Reverend Samuel Ringgold Ward was putting out a newspaper in Syracuse, but after reading in the newspapers of the Christiana riot of that summer, and its consequences, he and Mrs. Ward had already decided that they would take their children and flee to Canada when way opened, rather than remain in jeopardy in the United States of America. At this point, in consequence of his involvement in this “Jerry rescue,” it would become necessary for him to abandon this newspaper occupation forthwith, and for the Ward family to flee immediately to their refuge in Canada.



Residing then at Syracuse, we went home [after reading in the newspapers of the riot at Christiana and its sad consequences], arriving on Wednesday, the first day of October. We found the whole town in commotion and excitement. We soon learned the cause. A poor Mulatto man, named Jerry, at the suit of his own father had been arrested under the Fugitive Law, had been before the Negro-catcher’s court, had escaped, had been pursued and retaken, and was now being conveyed to prison. I went to the prison, and, in company with that true sterling friend of the slave, the Reverend Samuel J. May, was permitted to go in and see the man. He had fetters on his ankles, and manacles on his wrists. I had never before, since my recollection, seen a chained slave. He was a short, thick-set, strongly built man, half white though slave born. His temperament was ardent, and he was most wonderfully excited. Though chained, he could not stand still; and in that narrow room, motioning as well as he could with his chained, manacled hands, and pacing up and down as well as his fetters would allow, fevered and almost frenzied with excitement, he implored us who were looking on, in such strains of fervid eloquence as I never heard before nor since from the lips of man, to break his chains, and give him that liberty which the [Declaration of Independence](#) assumed to be the birthright of every man, and which, according to the law of love, was our duty towards a suffering brother.

I cannot recall the ipsissima verba of his eloquent pleading. As far as I can revive his sentences in my memory, he exclaimed – “Gentlemen, behold me, and these chains! Why am I bound thus, in a free country? Am I not a man like yourselves? Do you not suppose I feel as other men feel? Oh, gentlemen, what have I done to deserve this cruel treatment? I was at my work, like an honest industrious man. I was trying to act the part of a good citizen; but they came upon me, and accused me of crime. I knew I was innocent; but I felt it my duty to go before the court, to declare and to prove my innocence. For that reason I let that



little Marshal, I think you call him, put handcuffs on me. You know, gentlemen, handcuffs don't hurt an innocent man! But after they put the irons on me, they told me they were taking me as a runaway slave! Didn't I tell you I was innocent? They confessed I was. If I had known what they were about, do you think I should have let that little ordinary man put irons on me? No, indeed! I have told you how deceitfully they took me. When I saw a good chance, I thought it was not wrong to break away from them. I watched my opportunity: I dashed out of the door; I ran like a man running for his freedom; but they overtook me, and brought me back, and here I am like a wild beast, chained and caged.

"Gentlemen, is this a free country? Why did my fathers fight the British, if one of their poor sons is to be treated in this way? I beseech you, gentlemen, as you love your own liberty, break these chains of mine; yes, and break the chains that bind my brethren in the South, too. Does not the Bible say, "Break every yoke, and let the oppressed go free"? Don't you believe the Bible? I can't read it as some of you can, but I believe what it says, and I ask you, gentlemen, to do for me what that book commands. Suppose that any one of you were in my position. What would you wish me to do? I beg of you, gentlemen, to do for me what you would wish, were you where I am. Are not all men born free and equal? How is it, then, that I must wear these chains? Give me, O give me, gentlemen, that freedom which you say belongs to all men, and it is all I ask. Will you who are fathers, and brothers, see a man dragged in chains to the slavery of Tennessee, which I know is worse than death itself? In the name of our common nature – in the name of the Declaration of Independence – in the name of that law in the Bible which says, "do as you would be done by" – in the name of God, our common Father – do break these chains, and give me the freedom which is mine because I am a man, and an American."

What a sight! and what sounds! A slave, in a free Northern city chained as no felon would be chained, with the blood of Anglo-Saxons in his veins. Still, a slave; the son of a wealthy planter in Tennessee, and still a slave; arrested by a United States officer and several assistants, who were sworn to support the glorious Federal Constitution, serving under the freest government under the sun, the land of liberty, the refuge for the oppressed of all the world! And for what was he arrested? What was his crime? A love of that liberty which we all declared to be every man's inalienable right! And this slave was quoting the Declaration of Independence in chains! He was not the subject of some Czar, some,

"Turbaned Turk or fiery Russ:"

no, he was an American by birth, and a slave as well; so said the chains upon him: and on his lips were liberty's and religion's great watchwords! I never saw extremes so meet. I never saw how hollow a mockery was our talk about liberty, and our professions of Christianity. I never felt how really we were all subject to the slave power; I never felt before the depth of degradation there is in being a professed freeman of the Northern States. Daniel Webster had, a few months before, predicted the execution of the Fugitive Law in that very town. The people laughed him to scorn. We now felt, however, how much



better he knew the depths to which Northern men can sink than we did. While these thoughts were galloping through our brains, this manacled son of a white man proceeded with his oration in his chains, and we felt dumb and powerless. A great crowd gathered about the door; and after looking on and drinking in as much of the scene as my excitable nature would allow, I turned to go away, and at that moment the crowd demanded a speech of me. I spoke. I ceased; but I I never felt the littleness of my always little speeches, as I did at that moment. Jerry had made the speech of the occasion, and all I could say was but tame and spiritless in comparison with his

“Words that breathed and thoughts that burned.”

The substance of what I said is as follows: – “Fellow citizens! we are here in most extraordinary circumstances. We are witnessing such a sight as, I pray, we may never look upon again. A man in chains, in Syracuse! Not a felon, yet in chains! On trial, is this man, not for life, but for liberty. He is arrested and held under a law made by “Us the People” – pursuant, we pretend, to a clause in the constitution. That constitution was made “to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.” Here is a man one of “ourselves”; and the colour he bears shows that he belongs not altogether to my race, but that he is one of the “posterity” of those who framed and adopted our Federal constitution. So far are we from “securing” to him the “blessings of liberty,” that we have arrested him, confined him, and chained him, on purpose to inflict upon him the curses of slavery.

“They say he is a slave. What a term to apply to an American! How does this sound beneath the pole of liberty and the flag of freedom? What a contradiction to our “Declaration of Independence”! But suppose he be a slave: is New York the State to recognize and treat him as such? Is Syracuse the city of the Empire State in which the deeds which make this a day unfortunately memorable, should be perpetuated? If he be not a slave, then, he is the most outraged man we ever saw.

“What did our fathers gain by the seven years’ struggle with Great Britain, if, in what are called Free States, we have our fellow citizens, our useful mechanics and skilful artisans, chained and enslaved? How do foreign nations regard us, when knowing that it is not yet three short months since we were celebrating the Declaration of Independence, and to-day we are giving the most palpable denial to every word therein declared? “But I am told that this is a legal transaction. That it is wrong and unwise to speak against a judicial proceeding, not yet completed: I admit it all. I make no pretensions to speak wisely. I have heard a speech from Jerry. I feel for him, as for a brother; and under that feeling, I may not speak quite so soberly as I ought. “Oppression maketh a wise man mad.” I feel oppressed in a twofold sense. Yonder is my brother, in chains. Those chains press upon my limbs. I feel his sufferings, and participate his anguish. I feel, and we may all feel, oppressed in another sense. Here are certainly five-and-twenty hundred of us, wild with excitement in behalf of our chained brother, before our eyes, and we are utterly powerless to help him! We hear his strong,



thrilling appeals, until our hearts sicken and our heads ache; but there is none among us that has the legal power to lift a hand in his defence, or for his deliverance. Of what advantage is it that we are free? What value is there in our freedom, while our hands are thus tied?

"Fellow citizens, whatever may be the result of these proceedings – whether our brother leaves the court, a declared freeman or a chained slave – upon us, the voters of New York State, to a very great extent, rests the responsibility of this Fugitive Slave Law. It is for us to say whether this enactment shall continue to stain our statute books, or be swept away into merited oblivion. It is for us to say whether the men who made it, and those who execute it before our faces, shall receive our votes, or shall by those votes be indignantly rebuked. Tell me, ye sturdy working men of Onondago, shall your votes be consecrated to the latter, or prostituted to the former? Do you swear fealty to freedom this day? Do you promise, so help you God! so to vote, as that your sanction never more shall be given to laws which empower persons to hunt, chain, and cage, MEN, in our midst? (cries of "yes, yes.") Thank you, fellow citizens, in the name of our brother in prison! thank you for your bold, manly promise! May we all abide by it, until deeds of darkness like the one we now lament shall no longer mar our institutions and blacken our history."

But the crowd felt rightly. They saw Gerrit Smith and me go off arm in arm to hold a consultation, and, two and two, they followed us. Glorious mob! unlike that of 1834, they felt for the poor slave, and they wished his freedom. Accordingly, at nine o'clock that evening, while the court was in session trying Jerry for more than his life, for his liberty, the mob without threw stones into the window, one of which came so near to the judge that, in undignified haste, he suddenly rose and adjourned the courts. In an hour from that time, the mob, through certain stalwart fellows whom the Government have never had the pleasure of catching, broke open the door and the side of the building where Jerry was, put out the lights, took him out in triumph, and bore him away where the slave-catchers never after saw him. The Marshal of the United States, who had him in custody, was so frightened that he fled in female attire: brave man! According to the Fugitive Law, he had to pay Jerry's master one thousand dollars; for so the law expressly ordains.

An assistant Marshal, who was aiding this one, fired a pistol when entrée was first made. He injured no one, but a stout stick struck his arm and broke it. Escaping out of a window soon after, he broke the same arm again, poor man! These two were not like a Marshal in Troy, in the same State, who, rather than capture a slave, resigned his office.

The papers in the interest of the Government, in publishing an account of this affair, connected my name with it in a most prominent manner. The Marshal with broken arm was especially commended to my tender regard. The Government, under the advice of Daniel Webster (whose Christianity, I find, is highly lauded in this country; it was always a res non in his own), ordered all the parties, directly or indirectly engaged in the rescuing of Jerry, to be put on trial for treason! For it was the doctrine



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of Mr. Webster and Mr. Fillmore, that opposition to the Slave Law was "treason, and drew after it all the consequences of treason." I knew enough to understand that one of the "consequences drawn after treason" is a hempen rope. I had already become hopeless of doing more in my native country; I had already determined to go to Canada. Now, however, matters became urgent. I could die; but was it duty? I could not remain in that country without repeating my connection with or participating in such an affair as I was then guilty of. If I did my duty by my fellow men, in that country, I must go to prison, perhaps; certainly, if the Government had their way, to the gallows. If I did not, I must go to perdition. Betwixt the two, my election was made. But then, what must become of my family, both as to their bread in my then circumstances, and as to their liberty in such a country? Recollecting that I had already my wife's consent (without which I could not take any important step of the sort) to go to Canada, I concluded that I must go immediately. I went; and a month or two after, my family followed: since which time we have each and severally been, con amore, the most loyal and grateful of British subjects.

Jerry lived at Kingston, Canada, until the latter part of 1853, when he died, a free man, by virtue of living in British soil. The courts would not entertain the charge of treason against those accused in this case, from its manifest absurdity. They did hold, however, that they had broken the Fugitive Law, and must be tried for that. Luckily, but one person who was accused was ever convicted. He died before the court, in its mercilessness, could wreak its full vengeance upon him. He was innocent; I know.

When the accused were summoned to Auburn, twenty-six miles from Syracuse, to attend trial, the Railway Company provided carriages for the accused and their wives, gratis. Returning from Auburn, several of those ladies were in the large carriage into which the Government prosecutor entered. They unanimously requested his departure. They afterwards made up a purse of thirty pieces of silver, of the smallest coin of the country, and presented to him – wages of iniquity and treachery. The chains (which I helped to file off) of Jerry were packed in a neat mahogany box, and sent to President Fillmore. The Hon. W. Seward voluntarily became bail for the accused. He has been Governor of his native State. He is now one of its senators. This, however, is his highest honour. So he esteems it.

In conclusion I beg to say, that the passage of the Nebraska Bill, and the outrages following it under sanction of the Government in Kansas, but confirms the opinion I formed four years ago, as to the impossibility – by any means now extant, and they are as wise as human ingenuity can invent – of reforming that country. The Government is too much at the mercy of 62,000 slaveholders; the people are too well content to let things remain as they are – the Churches, generally, cling with too great tenacity to their time-honoured pollutions to admit of any prospect of reformation at present, while the gloomiest future seems to overhang the country. The only hopeful spot in the American horizon is the growing, advancing attitude of the black people. From the whites, as a whole, I see no hopes. In the



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blacks I see some precious vigorous germs springing from seeds formerly sown, watered by many cries and tears, nourished by many prayers – the seed-sowing of Richard Allen and John Gloucester, Thomas Sipkins, Peter Williams, George Hogarth, Samuel Todd and William Hamilton, James Forten and Theodore Sedgewick Wright, among the departed; of Jehiel C. Beeman, Samuel E. Cornish, James William Charles Pennington, Christopher Rush, William Whipper, Timothy Eato, M.M. Clarke, Stephen Smith, and others, among the older living; the latter of whom have been permitted to outlive the darkness of a past and see the light enjoyed by the present generation. God grant that right may prevail, and that all things shall further his glory!

...

I made my entrée into Canada, as a resident and a fugitive, in October, 1851, at Montreal. I had been to Queenstown, Windsor, and Kingston, as well as [Niagara Falls](#), at various times within eleven years, as a mere visitor, then little dreaming of the necessity of my going as a settler. After spending a very few days at Montreal, I ascended the St. Lawrence, to Kingston; thence by Lake Ontario to Toronto, my present residence. It is impossible to convey to an English reader anything like a just idea of the St. Lawrence River scenery in October. This is my third autumn in Europe; but never, in the British Isles, did I witness such splendour of landscape as that river presents, in autumn. The river is large and majestic – near Montreal, where the placid Ottawa empties itself, it is most magnificent. The Ottawa, as smooth as a polished mirror, opening its ample mouth to the width of a lake, gently glides into the St. Lawrence; the latter with a quiet dignity receiving the tribute of the former, as an empress would graciously accept the homage of a courtier, rolling downward towards the gulf, as if created on purpose to convey to the ocean the tributes and the trusts committed to it, and as if amply powerful to bear both the honour and the burden. But going upwards, while the St. Lawrence is large and noble enough, it frequently is compressed into a comparatively small size, and falls over cascades. The steamers, however, are accommodated with canals, which admit of the continuance of navigation with but little interruption. At times, the St. Lawrence takes the form of a wide bay, studded with tiny islets, and the latter most densely covered with foliage – which, in early autumn, after the first few touches of the hoar frost, assume the most gorgeously brilliant hues. The intensest crimson, the deepest brown, the most glowing lemon colour, with occasional intermixtures of the unchanging foliage of the evergreens, and some intermediate colours, give these islets and these bays the appearance of immense vases filled with bouquets of unspeakable beauty and of most imposing grandeur. Those who have seen the representation of the brightness and charms of North American autumnal foliage, in Mr. Friend's panorama, may feel assured that it is not in the least exaggerated or overdrawn. I doubt if a more delightful autumnal voyage can be made in North America, than that from Montreal to Kingston; nor do I think that any season presents so many and so varied attractions to the lover of the picturesque in nature, even



there, as does early autumn.

The banks of the St. Lawrence are cultivated to a considerable extent; and that cultivation both bespeaks the industry and enterprise of the yeoman, and the profit of living on the great watery highway to the ocean, and near to large and populous growing towns. Beautiful fields of early-sown wheat show themselves at intervals all along our way; neat, and in some cases elegant, farm houses, in the midst of orchards or ornamental trees, and nice rustic gardens, lent not a little to the beauty and interest of the scenery: and before I knew it, I was preferring the right hand – the British – side of the St. Lawrence, and concluding that on that side things were most inviting, and trying to reason myself into the belief of this with a sort of patriotic feeling to which all my life before I had been a stranger, and concerning which I had been a sceptic. Why had I interest in the British side of the noble St. Lawrence? What gave me a fellow feeling with those inhabitants? Simply the fact, that that country had become to me, in a sense in which no country ever was before, my own, and those people my fellow citizens.

After a most delightful passage of two days, I arrived at Toronto. I then renewed acquaintance, formerly made, with Thomas F. Cary, Esq., one of the sincerest, most generous, practical friends I ever had the honour to call by that endearing name. The Rev. J. Roaf, whom I had formerly met in New York, took me by the hand, as he is ever ready to do in the case of the outcast. Through the kindness of this gentleman I was introduced to the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada, of which the Rev. Dr. Willis was and is President. Thus Mr. Roaf laid me under a twofold obligation, which I never can cancel, and never forget – that for his personal kindness, and that for affording me the honour and pleasure of the acquaintance, ripened into friendship (if the Doctor will allow me to say so), of the Rev. Michael Willis, D.D.

By the advice of these gentlemen and their colleagues in the Anti-Slavery Committee, I began to lecture in Canada, and finally became the agent of the Canadian Anti-Slavery Society. While in this service, it was my duty to travel all over the country, giving facts touching American slavery, seeking to awaken an interest against slavery in Canada, asking aid and kindness towards such fugitives as needed help, forming auxiliary societies, seeking to show the influence correct sentiment in Canada might have upon the adjoining States, and doing all that could be done, by advice, encouragement, and any other means, to promote the development, the progress, all the best moral and material interests, of the coloured people. What I saw, and how I saw it, while thus engaged, shall be the theme of this part of this volume.

At first sight, one would scarcely allow that anti-slavery labours were needed in a free British colony: most persons think so. The remark was frequently made to me, when proposing a meeting, or when speaking of the subject. But it is to be remembered, that Canada lies immediately next the States of Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Michigan, to go no further westward. These States produce some of the boldest pro-slavery politicians, some of the guiltiest



of slavery's abettors, some of the most heretical of slavery's pulpit parasites; and it is sorrowful to add, some of the most successful in their several pro-slavery pursuits, that ever disgraced a free country, or desecrated free institutions, or belied our holy religion and its Author. Their history is not only contemporaneous with the history of Northern pro-slaveryism, but part and parcel of it. It is easy to see that a large population, infected with a sympathy for the slaveholder, upon our very border, must either have a serious effect upon us, in corrupting us, or we must exert a good influence upon them, provided we be, as we should be, thoroughly and incorruptibly and actively anti-slavery. Unfortunately, the former is the fact, and not the latter.

Besides, there is a vast amount of intercourse with the adjoining States, and a great deal of traffic, and Canadians travel extensively in the States, as do the people of the States in Canada. Thus the spread of slaveholding predilections is both favoured and facilitated; and, what is more, there is abundant evidence that some Americans industriously use these opportunities for the purpose of giving currency to their own notions. Moreover, in various parts of Canada Yankees have settled, and for miles around them the poison of their pro-slavery influence is felt. Some of them do not scruple to make known their desire to see Canada a part of the Union, and thus brought under the control of the slave power, and made a park for slaveholders to hunt human deer in. In the time of the Rebellion these things were said without concealment; and I have known cases where Yankees, living in Canada for fifteen years, have shown themselves hostile to our Sovereign and our free institutions until they-wanted office, and then, all at once, they took the oath of allegiance!

It is not to be forgotten, on the other hand, that in the States bordering upon us are some of the most thorough out-spoken abolitionists in the American Union. Having had the honour of being one of their humblest coadjutors, I could bear testimony to their zeal and trueness; and I felt, in living so near them, I was not entirely separated from them, though in another country, so far as political relations were concerned. I knew very well, and so did the society, that co-operation and sympathy with these benevolent men and women was an object well worthy of our labours. Our fugitives passed through their hands. They conducted the [underground railway](#). The goods were consigned to us. When they reached us they ceased to be goods, and became men instanter. For that purpose they sent them; for that purpose we received them. On that account they rejoiced in the true practical freedom of our country; on that account we deemed it a mercy to be permitted to live in such a country. They wrought and rejoiced on one side of the line; we did the same on the other side of the line. We were yokefellows, why should we not recognize each other as such? We did; we do yet. They attend our annual anti-slavery gatherings, we attend theirs.

But I may as well come to some more unwelcome facts, showing the need of anti-slavery labour in Canada. I class them under two heads - 1st, Pro-slavery feeling; and, 2nd, Negro-hate.

1. I do not now speak of Yankee settlers, visitors, or



travellers: enough has been said of them. I now speak of British-born subjects, who in Canada exhibit these two sentiments in a manner that no Yankee can excel. There are men and women in our midst who justify slavery, out and out. Some of these were heretofore planters in the West Indies. The victims of their former power being translated by the law of 1834 into freemen, they never can forgive Lord Grey, Lord Derby, nor the British Cabinet and the British people, for the demanding, advocacy, and passing, of that law. Their property, their power, their wealth in human beings, are all gone, or nearly so. They are almost all of them friends of slavery, or enemies of the Negro, or both. Others were slaveholders aforetime in the United States. Circumstances of one sort and another have induced them to change their residences, and they now abide in our midst, participating in our freedom, and seeming to enjoy it; but they cannot forget the "leeks and the onions" of that Egypt in which they once luxuriated as small-sized, very small, Pharaohs. They are not wont to say a great deal about it, for that is not exactly the latitude for the popularity of such sentiments; but they say enough to show who and what they are. And, "tell it not in Gath!" some of both these classes of Canadian slaveocrats are coloured men!

Another class were poor in former days, and, going out to seek their fortunes, alighted upon Southern plantations, where they found lucrative employment, in slave-driving; or they have contracted marriage alliances with the daughters of slaveholders, and thus become sons-in-law and brothers-in-law to slaveholders and to slavery. Such self-seeking, pelf-seeking, devotees of the institution, are always the most clamorous in its behalf. These obey this rule with all their might. Others still – like many, too many, Englishmen – without direct or indirect, present or past, interest in slavery, have travelled in the South; and, belonging to that extremely clever class of persons who possess the extraordinary facility of going through a country with both eyes wide open, and seeing nothing but just what they wish to see, return ignorant of any evils in slavery. "Fat, sleek, well contented slaves," were the only ones they saw. There were none but the kindest masters in any part of the country through which they travelled. They cannot distinctly remember to have heard of a slave auction, of the separation of a slave family, of a case of severe flogging, of a chained coffle gang, of murder, incest, fornication or adultery, during all the tour: in fact, they cannot believe that such things do occur! Slavery, in their eyes – sightless eyes, in chosen circumstances – is a very innocent, happy affair. True, they never wore the yoke, they never even tasted any of those sweets which they are sure were from necessity in slavery; but they know (that is, they know nothing) and are prepared to testify (albeit their testimony is good for nothing) that slavery is only bad, if bad at all, either in the exaggerated view of the abolitionists, or as the result of the exasperations of the amiable slaveholders by the intermeddling of the abolitionists. Yes, our sacred soil is polluted by the unholy tread of pro-slavery men. Fortunately, but few of them, so far as I know, are ministers of the gospel. Two bishops, one a Roman



Catholic and the other an Episcopalian, have the name of it. I doubt if they are falsely charged; but still I cannot say, certainly. Some, I know, are very chary of doing anything against slavery. I know of one, an Englishman, in Hamilton (the Yankeeist town in Canada), who is especially cautious; and another, a Scotchman, "canny" to the last degree, lest he should be suspected of anti-slaveryism. And fame says – no, it was a doctor of divinity who told me – that there is at least one now in Toronto, who was once in Hamilton, who favours the pro-slavery side of the case. But the very difficulty I have in recollecting these few, after having travelled all over the colony, shows that, with us, anti-slavery is the rule, pro-slavery the exception, in our clergy-men, while in the States the converse is true. That is something. But I shall not leave this truth, so gloriously creditable to the ministry of my adopted country, to be merely inferred from the foregoing. I shall by and by have the great pleasure of asserting it in direct terms, as I do now by implication.

2. Canadian Negro-haters are the very worst of their class. I know of none so contemptible. I say this in justice to the Americans from whom I have suffered, in the States, and to whom I have very freely alluded; and in justice, too, to such Yankees as are now resident in Canada. And I beg to say, that I write no more freely than I have spoken, to the very faces of those I am now describing.

This feeling abounds most among the native Canadians, who, as a rule, are the lowest, the least educated, of all the white population. Like the same class in England, and like the ancestors of the Americans, they have not the training of gentlemen, are not accustomed to genteel society, and, as a consequence, know but little, next to nothing, of what are liberal enlightened views and genteel behaviour. Having no social standing such as gentlemen feel the necessity of maintaining, they suffer nothing from doing an ungentlemanly deed; and having neither a high aim nor a high standard of social behaviour, they seem to be, and in fact are, quite content to remain as they are. It is obvious, too, that such a class will maintain a poor petty jealousy towards those coming into the country who give any signs of prospering, especially if they are, from colour or what not, objects of dislike. In saying this feeling abounds most among native Canadians of the lower order, I do not mean that it is confined to them; nor do I mean to say that it is universal, without exception, even among this class – others exhibit it, and some of that class are among the freest from it. Still, its chief seat is in their bosoms. A few facts will make my meaning more clear.

In many cases, a black person travelling, whatever may be his style and however respectable his appearance, will be denied a seat at table d'hôte at a country inn, or on a steamer; and in a case or two coming under my own observation, such have been denied any sort of entertainment whatever. A gentleman of my acquaintance,³ driving a good pair of horses, and travelling at leisure, with his ladylike wife, was one night, in the winter of 1851-52, denied admittance at some dozen public taverns. His

3. Mr. Peter O'Banyon.



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lady, being of lighter complexion than himself, on one or two occasions was admitted, and was comfortably seated by the fire, and politely treated – until her darker-skinned husband came in, and then, there was no room for either. It was a bitterly cold night; and being treated –maltreated– after this manner until nearly midnight, they were at length obliged to accept of a room in which they could sit up all night.

In December, 1851, a black man arrived at Hamilton. He proposed going into an omnibus, to ride up from the wharf at which he landed, to Week's Hotel. The servants on the omnibus declared it was full. This being false, and it being pointed out to them, they declared the empty seats were engaged to persons whom they were to take up on the way. After the black had been refused a passage in the omnibus, numbers of whites were freely admitted – in fact, solicited to enter it. The Negro had no means of getting up with his luggage until a kind-hearted Irishman took him in his waggon. Upon reaching Week's Hotel, he applied for lodging, but was distinctly refused a bed, solely on the ground of his colour. Such were Mr. Week's express orders.⁴

Some six months after that, I heard of the destruction of a large amount of Week's property by fire, without shedding a single tear! Two cases like these I have not known in the States for twenty years. While these Canadian tavern-keepers have been apeing the bad character of their Yankee neighbours, they have not participated in some better influences on this subject, which the repeated droppings of the anti-slavery streamlet have caused to take place on the Yankee rock of Negro-hate. In that respect Canadian is beneath and behind Yankee feeling.

The instances which have come before me of such occurrences at taverns would be too numerous to mention. I will give two steamboat cases, of many. A gentleman of colour,⁵ who graduated at King's College (now the university) at Toronto, was going to Kingston. He took a first class ticket, and was accordingly entitled to first class fare. When the dinner bell rang, he presented himself at the table. He was forbidden to sit down. He paid no attention to the prohibition, and was about sitting down, when the captain approached him menacingly, and was about to draw the chair from under him; when the black drew another chair, knocked the captain down, and then sat down and eat his dinner in peace. On their arrival at Kingston the captain complained of him for assault; and he of the captain, for interference with his rights. The Court fined the black gentleman five pounds and the captain twenty. And here is the grand difference betwixt Yankee and Canadian Negro-hate – the former is sanctioned by the laws and the courts, the latter is not. In either of the tavern cases to which reference has been made, the parties could have had legal redress. In my own case, I went to a law office, and looked up the law upon the subject, and found it as plain as daylight; but I did not prosecute.

The other steamboat case was that of a coloured woman, with her sister and three children, coming to Canada from New York State, in 1851. The brutal captain, a Scotchman, by the name of Ker, refused them a seat anywhere else save on the deck, and refused even to take money from them for a cabin passage. His lying plea

4. The black person is the Writer.

5. Peter Galego, Esq.



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was, that it would be offensive to the passengers. Every one of them distinctly denied it, and, what is more, another coloured lady, with her husband, had and enjoyed a cabin passage! Tell me not that I speak too strongly about this case. The woman is my wife, the children ours! God forgive Captain Ker! I was stating this case one night in a lecture, and afterwards learned that among my hearers were several of the relatives of this same recreant Scotchman. Glad was I that the case was told so near home.

From this date forward the Reverend Samuel Joseph May would sponsor annual “Jerry Celebrations” in an attempt to make this blow for freedom of as great significance to Americans as the Boston Tea Party (vindication of “eternal principles of Right” being considered, according to the Reverend’s idiosyncratic and perhaps even un-User sense of values, “more valuable than tea”).

The 1st Hawaiian stamps were issued.



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October 1, Wednesday: 5 P m Just put a fugitive slave who has taken the name of Henry Williams into the cars for Canada. He escaped from Stafford County Virginia to Boston last October, has been in Shadracks place at the Cornhill Coffee-house—had been corresponding through an agent with his master who is his father about buying—himself—his master asking \$600 but he having been able to raise only \$500.—heard that there were writs out for two Williamses fugitives—and was informed by his fellow servants & employer that Augerhole Burns & others of the police had called for him when he was out. Accordingly fled to Concord last night on foot—bringing a letter to our family from Mr Lovejoy of Cambridge—& another which Garrison had formerly given him on another occasion.

He lodged with us & waited in the house till funds were collected with which to forward him. Intended to despatch him at noon through to Burlington—but when I went to buy his ticket saw one at the Depot who looked & behaved so much like a Boston policeman, that I did not venture that time.

An intelligent and very well behaved man—a mullatto.

There is art to be used not only in selecting wood for a withe but in using it. Birch withes are twisted, I suppose in order that the fibres may be less abruptly bent—or is it only by accident that they are twisted?

The slave said he could guide himself by many other stars than the north star whose rising & setting he knew—They steered for the north star even when it had got round and appeared to them to be in the south. They frequently followed the telegraph when there was no railroad. The slaves bring many superstitions from Africa. The fugitives sometimes superstitiously carry a turf in their hats thinking that their success depends on it.

These days when the trees have put on their autumnal tints are the gala days of the year—when the very foliage of trees is colored like a blossom— It is a proper time for a yearly festival—an agricultural show.

Candlelight To Conantum— The moon not quite half full.⁶ The twilight is much shorter now than a month ago, probably as the atmosphere is clearer and there is less to reflect the light. The air is cool & the ground also feels cold under my feet as if the grass were wet with dew which is not yet the case. I go through Wheelers cornfield in the twilight, where the stalks are bleached almost white—and his tops are still stacked along the edge of the field. The moon is not far up above the southwestern horizon. Looking west at this hour the earth is an unvaried undistinguishable black in contrast with the twilight sky. It is as if you were walking in night up to your chin. There is no wind stirring. An oak tree in Hubbard’s pasture stands absolutely motionless and dark against the sky. The crickets sound farther off or fainter at this season as if they had gone deeper into the sod to avoid the cold. There are no crickets heard on the alders on the causeway. The moon looks colder in the water. There is a great change between this and my last moon light walk— I experience a comfortable warmth when I approach the south side of a dry wood—which keeps off the cooler air and also retains some of the warmth of day. The voices of travellers in the road are heard afar over the fields. even to Conantum house. The moon is too far west to be seen reflected in the river at Tupelo cliff—but the stars are reflected— The river is a dark mirror with bright points feebly fluctuating— I smell the bruised horsemint which I cannot see while I sit on the brown rocks by the shore. I see the glow-worm under the damp cliff— No whippoorwills [*Whip-poor-will Caprimulgus vociferus*] are heard tonight—and scarcely a note of any other bird. At 8 o’clock the fogs have begun which with the shining on them look like cobwebs or thin white veils spread over the earth— They are the dreams or visions of the meadow.

The second growth of the white-pine is probably softer & more beautiful than the primitive forest ever afforded.

The primitive forest is more grand with its bare mossy stems and ragged branches, but exhibits no such masses

6. The almanac shows October 1st to be the night of the half-full moon.

of green needles trembling in the light.
The elms are generally of a dirty or brownish yellow now

Joshua Glover, a slave, took the [Underground Railroad](#) north from Missouri to Racine, Wisconsin, where he was able to get work in a sawmill.⁷



The reference added into the manuscript for [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) at this point in time by [Henry Thoreau](#), to “one real runaway slave,” may have been a veiled reference to the project with Frederick Douglass, who was yet to purchase his freedom papers, made necessarily surreptitious by the extremely sensitive nature of these two men’s “amalgamation.”

[WALDEN](#): Men of almost every degree of wit called on me in the migrating season. Some who had more wits than they knew what to do with; runaway slaves with plantation manners, who listened from time to time, like the fox in the fable, as if they heard the hounds a-baying on their track, and looked at me beseechingly, as much as to say,-

“O Christian, will you send me back?”

One real runaway slave, among the rest, whom I helped to forward toward the northstar. Men of one idea, like a hen with one chicken, and that a duckling; men of a thousand ideas, and unkempt heads, like those hens which are made to take charge of a hundred chickens, all in pursuit of one bug, a score of them lost in every morning’s dew, -and become frizzled and mangy in consequence; men of ideas instead of legs, a sort of intellectual centipede that made you crawl all over. One man proposed a book in which visitors should write their names, as at the White Mountains; but, alas! I have too good a memory to make that necessary.

PEOPLE OF WALDEN

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

7. Joshua Glover we may take here as a type case of a “real” runaway slave, in explaining why Thoreau inserted that word. Bear in mind that there were a whole lot of people shucking and jiving at that time. If you met a person of color who was representing that he or she needed help because he or she was escaping from slavery, one of the first determinations you would need to make would be, to confirm that this person was not just another of the local free people who were going out every day and soliciting gifts by pretense, in order to avoid having to work for a living. (Can you remember when you passed the lady in the nurse’s white uniform and cap, at the entrance to the supermarket or in the airport lobby, with her basket, soliciting aid for the poor, and had to try to figure whether she was affiliated or not with some official charity? -Well, guess what, that’s not a moral dilemma unique to the 21st Century!)



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What would a “real” runaway slave be in opposition to? Would there have been something real about, for instance, [Henry Williams](#), whom [Thoreau](#) mentioned on October 5, 1851 as “an intelligent and very well-behaved man, a mulatto,” in that he was needing to escape from his Massachusetts circumstances, or would there have been something “unreal” about him, in that his peculiar circumstances were not the most usual ones for a fugitive black American? There seems to be no particular reason other than desperation to presume that Williams was the person spoken of in this passage, which deals with events of the 1845-1846 period during which Thoreau was in residence at the shanty on the pond rather than with later events in the Thoreau boardinghouse in town. Philip Van Doren Stern equated this “one real runaway slave” with the person sighted at the Thoreau boardinghouse in late July 1853 by the Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#), but this is clearly spurious as an identification since the passage in question had already been put by Thoreau into its final form six months to a year before that particular fugitive had passed along the Underground Railway, as of WALDEN manuscript version D of 1852. Professor Walter Roy Harding did not bother to speculate as to who in particular this “one real runaway slave” Thoreau mentioned in WALDEN might have been, since (this is my impression from my private chats with the man, and my considered opinion) people of color lacked any named individuality but instead were, as far as he was concerned, all one pot category “interesting item for white people to chat about among themselves.”⁸



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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: May 30, 2013

8. Yes, I do fully recognize that this is an **exceedingly** harsh thing to say about a white scholar’s attitudes.

ARRGH AUTOMATED RESEARCH REPORT

GENERATION HOTLINE



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



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Commonly, the first output of the program has obvious deficiencies and so we need to go back into the data modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and do a recompile of the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process which you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

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