

THE DIAL



And yet – in fact you need only draw a single thread at any point you choose out of the fabric of life and the run will make a pathway across the whole, and down that wider pathway each of the other threads will become successively visible, one by one.

– Heimito von Doderer, *DIE DÄIMONEN*



The Dial had only 220 subscribers. A professor at Yale College wrote in 1843: “Who reads The Dial for any purpose than to laugh at its baby poetry or at the solemn fooleries of its mystic prose?”

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

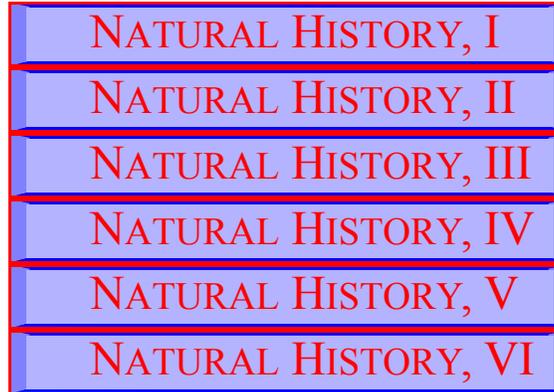


THE DIAL

THE DIAL

293 BCE

According to [Gaius Plinius Secundus](#) or [Pliny the Elder's](#) NATURAL HISTORY, the 1st Roman sundial.



THE DIAL

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

1804

 May 16, Wednesday: [Elizabeth Palmer Peabody](#) was born to the dentist [Nathanael Peabody](#) and the Unitarian [Elizabeth Palmer Peabody](#) in Billerica, Massachusetts.¹

She would attend the 2d (soon to be Unitarian) Church in Salem, Massachusetts.

NEVER READ AHEAD! TO APPRECIATE MAY 16, 1804 AT ALL ONE MUST APPRECIATE IT AS A TODAY (THE FOLLOWING DAY, TOMORROW, IS BUT A PORTION OF THE UNREALIZED FUTURE AND IFFY AT BEST). ELIZABETH WOULD GROW UP TO BECOME SOMEONE THE 19TH CENTURY WOULD TREAT WITH AMUSED TOLERANCE, IN PART BECAUSE SHE WOULD BE AN INTELLIGENT WOMAN, IN PART BECAUSE SHE WOULD BECOME OBESE: HER BOOKSTORE WOULD BE AT 13 WEST STREET IN BOSTON AND SHE WOULD BE THE PUBLISHER OF THE JOURNAL OF THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS, THE DIAL — BUT ALL THAT IS AT THIS POINT IN THE UNKNOWN AND UNKNOWABLE FUTURE!

1. Elder to Mary and Sophia, the other two of “the Peabody sisters.”



THE DIAL

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1828

 [D. Junii Juvenalis](#). *SATIRÆ EXPURGATÆ. ACCEDUNT NOTÆ ANGLICÆ. IN USUM SCHOLÆ BOSTONIENSIS. CURA F.P. LEVERETT* (Bostoniæ, Hilliard, Gray, Little et Wilkins).

DECIMUS IUNIUS IUVENALIS

The 16 satires of [Juvenal](#), in this expurgated Latin, would be required reading during [David Henry Thoreau](#)'s period of formal instruction at the [Concord Academy](#), or at [Harvard College](#).

FREDERIC PERCIVAL LEVERETT

[Now here's something I'd like to check out with you. My question to you will be, am I over-interpreting?]

In studying about this edition offered for use in an all-male school context, I have certain suspicions about a textbook title that boasts of expurgation. I say to myself, these schoolteachers do know about their pubescent lads—they themselves had once upon a time been pubescent lads—and so they were fully aware that this amounts to a dare. They knew that their charges were bound to seek out an unexpurgated edition to specifically look up the lacunae and give to the accurate translation of these lacunae their undivided interest. In other words, rather than constituting any sort of tactic for suppression of information, the tactic they were deploying was a tactic guaranteed to focus attention.



"Damn the expurgated books! I say damn 'em! The dirtiest book in all the world is the expurgated book!"

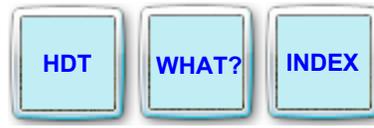
— [Walt Whitman](#)



Consider what we find in the recent book *CLASSICAL BEARINGS* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1989). The author informs us of the great lengths to which he and other of his Sixth Form fellows at the Charterhouse School in Godalming in Surrey had gone, to sniff out the meanings of obscenities and foulnesses omitted from



their texts of [Juvenal](#), for instance *vetulae vesica beatae* in Satire #1, and then Satires #2, #6, #9, Peter Green confesses on his page 242 that this had been “how I first acquired the basic techniques of scholarly research.”



What sort of material historically has been kept from the eyes of such as Henry Thoreau and thus, in all actuality, emphatically brought before his attention? Typically, Satires #7 and #9, the satires that deal heavily with homosexual deeds. Here are lines 27-37 of Satire #6:

Postumus marrying? You used to be sane; no doubt about that.
What Fury, then, with her maddening snakes is hunting you down?
Can you bear to be the slave of a woman, when so much rope is at hand,
when those vertiginous top-floor windows are standing open,
and when the Aemilian bridge nearby offers assistance?
If none of these means of deliverance seems to have any appeal,
don't you think it better to sleep with a little boyfriend?
A boyfriend doesn't argue all night or ask you for presents
as he lies beside you, or complain that you are not giving a hundred
percent and are not producing the requisite panting and puffing.

Lines 27-46 of Satire #9 have the narrator provide sympathetic attention to a male homosexual prostitute as he complains about the downside of butt-fucking one of his repeat clients:

Many have made a profit from this kind of life, but I
have had no return for my efforts. [...]
Men are governed by fate, including those parts hidden
beneath their clothes. For if the stars are not in your favor,
the unheard-of length of your dangling tool will count for nothing,
even though, when you're stripped, Virro stares at you drooling
and sends you a continuous stream of coaxing billets-doux.
[...] And yet, what creature is more grotesque than a miserly pervert?
"I paid you this; I gave you that; and then you got more."
As he tots it up he wriggles his rump. Well, set out the counters;
send for the slaves and the abacus. Put down five thousand in all
as paid to me. And then put down my heavy exertions.
Do you think it's nice and easy to thrust a proper-sized penis
into a person's guts, encountering yesterday's dinner?
The slave who plows the field has a lighter task than the one



who plows its owner.

I can think of only one explanation for this phenomenon. Here we have a privileged intellectual education being offered to the privileged youth, to make of them top-quality young gentlemen who knew very well that they were top-quality young gentlemen, a caste of the entitled few. And, by ostensibly denying salacious material to them, salacious material was being most forcefully forwarded to their attention. Part of the message here is in the material itself—to wit a notice that such things do indeed go on in this world although no proper person would ever speak of that—and part of the message here is the very medium in which this message is being transmitted encoded—the method of transmission actually offers itself as an example, a model, for our conduct. You entitled gentlemen may kiss but you do not tell—you entitled gentlemen are entitled to kiss one another but you do not ever tell. The operative rule is, conduct is one thing and discourse another, another thing entirely. You may follow your bliss whatever your bliss may be—but if this leads you to be a black swan, you are to disguise yourself in white plumage. The serious business of life involves having a wife and a home and children but what you do for fun on Saturday in town is merely what you do for fun. It is not to define you. You are not to allow it to define you. You are to preserve deniability not only for yourself but also for all of us, the caste of well-educated and entitled gentlemen.²

[Remember my question to you is, am I over-interpreting? You need to let me know.]

We may well note that mere misogyny in Satire #6 passed readily through the editor's filter:

“From all the crowds of women, can you not find one who is decent?”
Suppose she is beautiful, graceful, wealthy, fertile, and also
has ancient ancestors dotting her hallway; suppose she is purer
than any Sabine with streaming hair who stopped a war—
a rare bird, as strange to the earth as a black swan;
who could endure a wife who was such a paragon? Better,
better, I say, a common slut than you, Cornelia,
mother of the Gracchi, if you combine with your massive virtues
a disdainful expression, and count your triumphs as part of your dowry.
Take your Hannibal, please; take your Syphax, who lost
that battle in his camp; take all of Carthage; and then, take off!

The young scholar Thoreau was of course able to familiarize himself, unimpeded by any censorship, with Satire #10 and the prime importance of maintaining a *mens sana in corpore sano*.

Still, that you may have something to ask for—some reason to offer
the holy sausages and innards of a little white pig in a chapel--
you ought to pray for a healthy mind in a healthy body.
Ask for a valiant heart which has banished the fear of death,
which looks upon the length of days as one of the least of nature's
gifts; which is able to suffer every kind of hardship,
is proof against anger, craves for nothing, and reckons the trials
and grueling labors of Hercules as more desirable blessings
than the amorous ease and the banquets and cushions of Sardanapallus.
The things that I recommend you can grant to yourself; it is certain
that the tranquil life can only be reached by the path of goodness.
Lady Luck, if the truth were known, you possess no power;

2. This sort of thing would lead us toward Victorianism, which we now incorrectly presume to have been an age of inhibition—simply because their rule was that they never spoke of any of their unspeakable acts. We tend to think of this era as the era of prudery, in which they dressed up the legs of their pianos with prim skirts (but that happens to be an urban legend, and utterly unfounded).



THE DIAL

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it is we who make you a goddess and give you a place in heaven.

The young scholar Thoreau was able to learn from the pages of this book, not only about the above impossibility (or actuality) of black swans,³ but also about the dangerous propensity of a democratic public for its *panem et circenses*:

But what's the reaction
of Remus's mob? It supports the winner, as always, and turns on
whoever is condemned. [...]
Long ago, the people cast off its worries,
when we stopped selling our votes. A body that used to confer
commands, legions, rods, and everything else, has now
narrowed its scope, and is eager and anxious for two things only:
bread and circuses.
"I hear that a lot are going to die."
"No question about it. The kitchen is sure to be hot."
"My friend Bruttidius looked a bit pale when I met him beside Mars' altar.
I've an awful feeling that the mortified Ajax may take revenge
for being exposed to danger. So now, as he lies by the river,
let's all run and kick the man who was Caesar's enemy.
But check that our slaves are watching; then no one can say we didn't,
and drag his terrified master to court with his head in a noose."
Such were the whispers and the common gossip concerning Sejanus.

The young scholar Thoreau was able to learn from the pages of this book, of the reality of the always present political conundrum, *quis custodiet ipsos custodes*, who is going to protect us from the tender mercies of our protectors?

You cannot, however,
always trust [a eunuch]. Although he sets off his eyes with soot,
and dresses in yellow and wears a hair-net, he's still an adulterer.
The more effeminate his voice, and the more he goes in for resting
his hand on his rounded hip, the more you should have him watched.
In bed he will prove most virile; there the ballet is forgotten.
"Thais" puts off her mask to reveal the accomplished Triphallus.
"Who are you fooling? Save the pretence, and let's have a wager.
I bet you're a genuine man; I bet you. Do you admit it?
Or are the maids to be sent to the torturer's stall? I know
the advice my old friends give and their prudent recommendations:

3. Juvenal's *rara avis in terris nigroque simillima cygno* seems to be the literary source, by way of John Stuart Mill, for Nassim Nicholas Taleb's *THE BLACK SWAN*.





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‘Bolt the door and keep her in.’ But who is to guard the guards themselves? They are paid in kind for concealing the shady tricks of the naughty girl. Complicity promises silence. One’s wily wife anticipates this, and begins with them.’⁴

4. This volume would be the source for the article on [Aulus Persius Flaccus](#) that Thoreau would prepare for the July 1840 issue of [THE DIAL](#), that would make its way into the “Thursday” chapter of [A WEEK](#).

THE DIAL, JULY 1840



“AULUS PERSIUS FLACCUS”: The life of a wise man is most of all extemporaneous, for he lives out of an eternity that includes all time. He is a child each moment, and reflects wisdom. The far darting thought of the child’s mind tarries not for the development of manhood; it lightens itself, and needs not draw down lightning from the clouds. When we bask in a single ray from the mind of Zoroaster, we see how all subsequent time has been an idler, and has no apology for itself. But the cunning mind travels farther back than Zoroaster each instant, and comes quite down to the present with its revelation. All the thrift and industry of thinking give no man any stock in life; his credit with the inner world is no better, his capital no larger. He must try his fortune again to-day as yesterday. All questions rely on the present for their solution. Time measures nothing but itself. The word that is written may be postponed, but not that on the lip. If this is what the occasion says, let the occasion say it. From a real sympathy, all the world is forward to prompt him who gets up to live without his creed in his pocket.

PEOPLE OF
A WEEK

ZOROASTER

PERSIUS

A WEEK: The life of a wise man is most of all extemporaneous, for he lives out of an eternity which includes all time. The cunning mind travels further back than Zoroaster each instant, and comes quite down to the present with its revelation. The utmost thrift and industry of thinking give no man any stock in life; his credit with the inner world is no better, his capital no larger. He must try his fortune again to-day as yesterday. All questions rely on the present for their solution. Time measures nothing but itself. The word that is written may be postponed, but not that on the lip. If this is what the occasion says, let the occasion say it. All the world is forward to prompt him who gets up to live without his creed in his pocket.

PEOPLE OF
A WEEK

ZOROASTER
PERSIUS



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

1836



A collection was published in New-York, titled THE PHENIX [*sic*]: A COLLECTION OF OLD AND RARE FRAGMENTS, which included a number of entries labeled “Morals of [Confucius](#).” It would appear that [Thoreau](#) extrapolated from this material, from page 83, something which he prepared for [THE DIAL: A MAGAZINE FOR LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION](#) as “A soldier of the kingdom of Ci lost his buckler; and having sought after it a long time in vain, he comforted himself with this reflection: ‘A soldier has lost his buckler, but a soldier in our camp will find it; he will use it.’” Then later, apparently, Thoreau would reprocess this material again, into his “The Village” chapter:

[WALDEN](#): I was never molested by any person but those who represented the state. I had no lock nor bolt but for the desk which held my papers, not even a nail to put over my latch or windows. I never fastened my door night or day, though I was to be absent several days; not even when the next fall I spent a fortnight in the woods of Maine. And yet my house was more respected than if it had been surrounded by a file of soldiers. The tired rambler could rest and warm himself by my fire, the literary amuse himself with the few books on my table, or the curious, by opening my closet door, see what was left of my dinner, and what prospect I had of a supper. Yet, though many people of every class came this way to the pond, I suffered no serious inconvenience from these sources, and I never missed any thing but one small book, a volume of Homer, which perhaps was improperly gilded and this I trust a soldier of our camp has found by this time. I am convinced, that if all men were to live as simply as I then did, thieving and robbery would be unknown. These take place only in communities where some have got more than is sufficient while others have not enough. The Pope’s Homers would soon get properly distributed.-

“Nec bella fuerunt,
Faginus astabat dum scyphus ante dapes.”
“Nor wars did men molest,
When only beechen bowls were in request.”



“You who govern public affairs, what need have you to employ punishments? Love virtue, and the people will be virtuous. The virtues of a superior man are like the wind; the virtues of a common man are like the grass; the grass, when the wind passes over it, bends.”

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

ALEXANDER POPE

ALBIUS TIBULLUS

ALEK THERIEN

LYGDAMUS

CONFUCIUS

MENCIUS

HOMER



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT

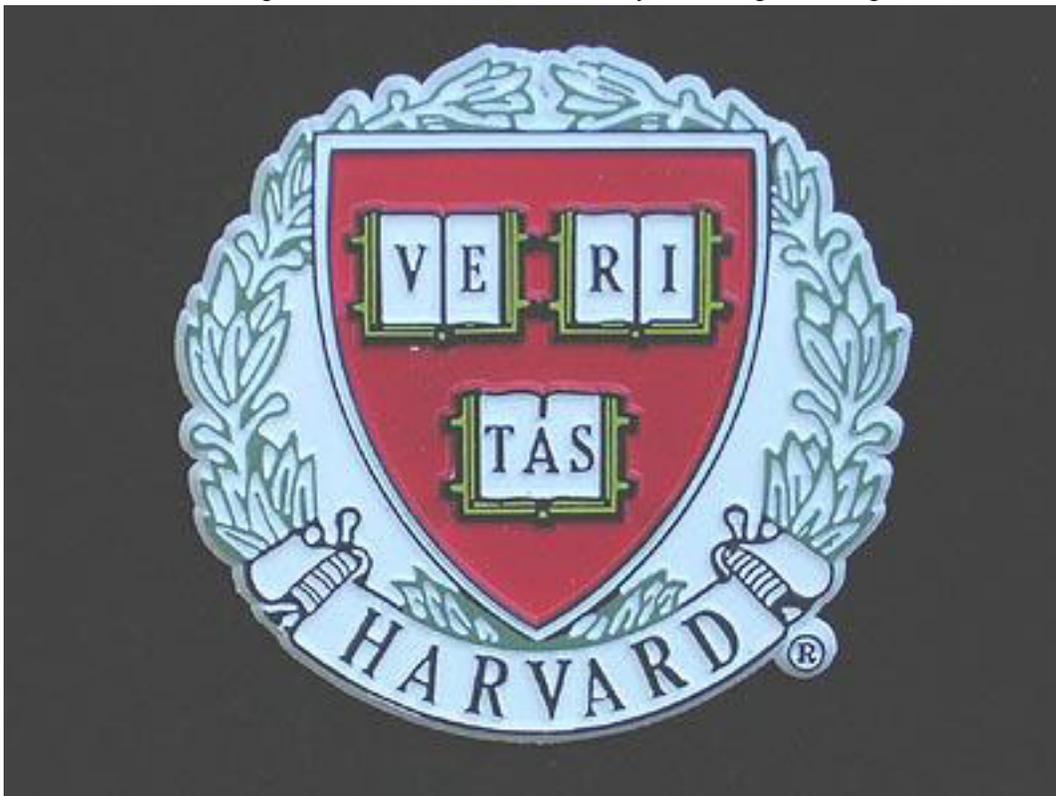




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 September 8, Thursday: Some 1,100 to 1,300 alums attended [Harvard College](#)'s Bicentennial, and heard a professional choir offer the very original of "Fair Harvard." Although the very oldest living alumnus, 96-year-old Judge Paine Wingate (Class of 1759, of New Hampshire) was, unfortunately, unable to be present, 86-year-old Samuel Emery (Class of 1774, of Philadelphia) was able to march in the parade. Word arrived that President Josiah Quincy, Sr. had, while researching for a "History of Harvard University" in the College Archives, located in filed-and-forgotten records of an Overseers meeting on January 6, 1644 the first rough sketch for the shield with the Latin motto "VE RI TAS" ("Verity" or "Truth") and three open books, which was to become the College's arms. This is how it looks today, as a refrigerator magnet:



During this Bicentennial, a white banner atop a large tent in the Yard for the 1st time publicly displayed this design, which in 1843 would become the basis of the seal officially adopted by the Harvard Corporation, and then in 1847 would be dropped in favor of another seal, and then in 1885 would be readopted.



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Some of the alums had an interestingly historic discussion:

(following screen)

In September 1836,  on the day of the second centennial anniversary of [Harvard College](#), [Mr. Emerson](#), [George Ripley](#), and myself [[Frederic Henry Hedge](#)], with one other [who was this fourth person: would it have been an unnamed woman, an unnamed wife, specifically [Sophia Ripley](#)??], chanced to confer together on the state of current opinion in theology and philosophy, which we agreed in thinking was very unsatisfactory. Could anything be done in the way of protest and introduction of deeper and broader views? What we strongly felt was dissatisfaction with the reigning sensuous philosophy, dating from [John Locke](#), on which our Christian theology was based. The writings of [Samuel Taylor Coleridge](#), recently edited by Marsh [Henry Nelson Coleridge had only at this point initiated publication of THE LITERARY REMAINS OF SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE], and some of [Thomas Carlyle](#)'s earlier essays, especially the "Characteristics" and "SIGNS OF THE TIMES," had created a ferment in the minds of some of the young clergy of that day. There was a promise in the air of a new era of intellectual life. We four concluded to call a few like-minded seekers together in the following week.  Some dozen of us met in Boston, in the house, I believe, of Mr. Ripley. Among them I recall the name of [Orestes Augustus Brownson](#) (not yet turned Romanist), [Cyrus Augustus Bartol](#), [Theodore Parker](#), and [Charles Stearns Wheeler](#) and [Robert Bartlett](#), tutors in Harvard College. There was some discussion, but no conclusion reached, on the question whether it were best to start a new journal as the organ of our views, or to work through those already existing. The next meeting, in the same month, was held by invitation of Emerson, at his house in Concord. A large number assembled; besides some of those who met at Boston, I remember Mr. Alcott, [[Bronson Alcott](#)] [John Sullivan Dwight](#), [Ephraim Peabody](#), Dr. [Convers Francis](#), Mrs. Sarah Alden Bradford Ripley, Miss [Elizabeth Palmer Peabody](#), [Margaret Fuller](#), [Caleb Stetson](#), [James Freeman Clarke](#). These were the earliest of a series of meetings held from time to time, as occasion prompted, for seven or eight years. Jones Very was one of those who occasionally attended; [H.D. Thoreau](#) another. There was no club, properly speaking; no organization, no presiding officer, no vote ever taken. How the name "[Transcendental](#)," given to these gatherings and the set of persons who took part in them, originated, I cannot say. It certainly was never assumed by the persons so called. I suppose I was the only one who had any first-hand acquaintance with German transcendental philosophy, at the start. [THE DIAL](#) was the product of the movement, and in some sort its organ.

CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE



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At the wrap-up of the day, guest speaker Josiah Quincy, Jr. (Class of 1821) made a motion “that this assembly of the Alumni be adjourned to meet at this place on the 8th of September, 1936” — and the motion was unanimously adopted.

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

*5th day 8th of 9 M / Our meeting was small but very quietly solid
– I missed father Rodman at my right hand being confined at home
with a lame back –
Thro’ the day my mind has been much at [Providence](#) where I have
concluded to go tomorrow (if the Steam Boat get in in season)
to attend the funeral of my ancient & much beloved friend [Moses
Brown](#)*

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

1839

[Margaret Fuller](#)'s translation of ECKERMANN'S CONVERSATIONS WITH [GOETHE](#) appeared in the bookstores. Fuller saw, at the Allston Gallery in Boston, the statue of [Orpheus](#) by Thomas Crawford.⁵



ECKERMANN AND GOETHE

5. She would refer to this in the July 1843 issue of [THE DIAL](#) and connect it with [Bronson Alcott](#)'s "Orphic Sayings" as "lessons in reverence."

Orpheus was a lawgiver by theocratic commission. He understood nature, and made all her forms move to his music. He told her secrets in the form of hymns, nature as seen in the mind of God. Then it is the prediction, that to learn and to do, all men must be lovers, and Orpheus was, in a high sense, a lover. His soul went forth towards all beings, yet could remain sternly faithful to a chosen type of excellence. Seeking what he loved, he feared not death nor hell, neither could any presence daunt his faith in the power of the celestial harmony that filled his soul.

Referring to the statue's posture, of shading its eyes with its hand, she wrote a poem which concluded with the following couplet:

If he already sees what he must do,
Well may he shade his eyes from the far-shining view.



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

December: [Waldo Emerson](#) to his journal, in a passage which may explain not only the title of the Transcendentalist periodical [THE DIAL](#), but also something about the nature of the [Transcendentalist](#) movement as a whole:

I say how the world looks to me without reference to Blair's Rhetoric or Johnson's Lives. And I call my thoughts The Present Age, because I use no will in the matter, but honestly record such impressions as things make. So transform I myself into a Dial, and my shadow will tell where the sun is.

The brave man's step corresponded to the movement of the heavenly bodies. The brave man's universal tunefulness compelled discord into concord everywhere. This would become, in [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#), the hero's heart beating "in unison with the pulse of Nature," as he "steps to the measure of the universe."

[A WEEK](#): The sadness is ours. The Indian poet Calidas says in the Sacontala: "Perhaps the sadness of men on seeing beautiful forms and hearing sweet music arises from some faint remembrance of past joys, and the traces of connections in a former state of existence." As polishing expresses the vein in marble, and grain in wood, so music brings out what of heroic lurks anywhere. The hero is the sole patron of music. That harmony which exists naturally between the hero's moods and the universe the soldier would fain imitate with drum and trumpet. When we are in health all sounds fife and drum for us; we hear the notes of music in the air, or catch its echoes dying away when we awake in the dawn. Marching is when the pulse of the hero beats in unison with the pulse of Nature, and he steps to the measure of the universe; then there is true courage and invincible strength.



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In [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#), this would become the injunction that one should step to the music which one hears, “however measured or far away.”

[WALDEN](#): Why should we be in such desperate haste to succeed, and in such desperate enterprises? If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away. It is not important that he should mature as soon as an apple-tree or an oak. Shall he turn his spring into summer? If the condition of things which we were made for is not yet, what were any reality which we can substitute? We will not be shipwrecked on a vain reality. Shall we with pains erect a heaven of blue glass over ourselves, though when it is done we shall be sure to gaze still at the true ethereal heaven far above, as if the former were not?

DIFFERENT DRUMMER
THE INNER LIGHT

(Some may consider that I am here deviating from my identification of the distant, different drummer as the ruffed grouse *Bonasa umbellus*, but I am not. You will note that those who provide a militaristic interpretation of this most famous citation from [WALDEN](#) commonly reduce “step” to “march,” as if they were insisting that



[Henry Thoreau](#) remain with his young-mannish military preoccupation and resisting the implications of “step” as in “dance step.” The advantage I see to the “drumming of the ruffed grouse in the woods” interpretation is

that it resists this simplification of the metaphor to a merely military signification.)



December: Bravery deals not so much in resolute action, as in healthy and assured rest. Its palmy state is a staying at home, and compelling alliance in all directions.

The brave man never heareth the din of war; he is trustful and unsuspecting, so observant of the least trait of good or beautiful that, if you turn toward him the dark side of anything, he will still see only the bright.

One moment of serene and confident life is more glorious than a whole campaign of daring. We should be ready for all issues, not daring to die but daring to live. To the brave even danger is an ally.

In their unconscious daily life all are braver than they know. Man slumbers and wakes in his twilight with the confidence of noonday; he is not palsified nor struck dumb by the inexplicable riddle of the universe. A mere surveyor's report or clause in a preëmption bill contains matter of quite extraneous interest, of a subdued but confident tone, evincing such a steadiness in the writer as would have done wonders at Bunker's Hill or Marathon. Where there is the collected eye, there will not fail the effective hand;

χεῖρ δ' ὄρα τὸ δράσιμον.

One tap of the drum sets the political and moral harmonies all ajar. His ethics may well bear comparison with the priest's.... When Bravery first grew afraid and went to war, it took music along with it.... The brave warrior must have harmony if not melody at any sacrifice.... All sounds, and more than all silence, do fife and drum for us....

To the sensitive soul, The universe has its own fixed measure, which is its measure also, and as a regular pulse is inseparable from a healthy body, so is its healthiness dependent on the regularity of its rhythm. In all sounds the soul recognizes its own rhythm, and seeks to express its sympathy by a correspondent movement of the limbs. When the body marches to the measure of the soul, then is true courage and invincible strength.

The coward would reduce this thrilling sphere music to a universal wail — this melodious chant to a nasal cant. He thinks to conciliate all hostile influences by compelling his neighborhood into a partial concord with himself, but his music is no better than a jingle which is akin to a jar — jars regularly recurring....

But the brave man, without drum or trumpet, compels concord every where every where by the universality and tunefulness of his soul.

“Take a metallic plate” says Coleridge, “and strew sand on it; sound a harmonic chord over the sand, and the grains will whirl about in circles, and other geometrical figures, all, as it were, depending on some point relatively at rest. Sound a discord, and every grain will whisk about without any order at all, in no figures, and





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with no points of rest.” The brave man is such a point of relative rest, over which the soul sounds ever a harmonic chord.



December: It was a conceit of [Plutarch](#), accounting for the preferences given to signs observed on the left hand, that men may have thought “things terrestrial and mortal directly over against heavenly and divine things, and do conjecture that the things which to us are on the left hand, the gods send down from their right hand.” If we are not blind, we shall see how a right hand is stretched over all, as well the unlucky as lucky, and that the ordering soul is only right-handed, distributing with one palm all our fates.

Men have made war from a deeper instinct than peace. War is but the compelling of peace. When the world is declared under martial law, every Esau retakes his birthright, and what there is in him does not fail to appear. He wipes off all old scores and commences a new account. The world is interested to know how any soul will demean itself in so novel a position. But when war too, like commerce and husbandry, gets to be a routine, and men go about it as indented apprentices, the hero degenerates into a marine, and the standing army into a standing jest.



December: Music is either a sedative or a tonic to the soul. I read that “Plato thinks the gods never gave men music, the science of melody and harmony, for mere delectation or to tickle the ear; but that the discordant parts of the circulations and beautiful fabric of the soul, and that of it that roves about the body, and many times, for want of tune and air, breaks forth into many extravagances and excesses, might be sweetly recalled and artfully wound up to their former consent and agreement.”

By dint of wind and stringed instruments the coward endeavors to put the best face on the matter, –whistles to keep his courage up.

There are some brave traits related by [Plutarch](#); *e. g.*: “Homer acquaints us how Ajax, being to engage in a single combat with Hector, bade the Grecians pray to the gods for him; and while they were at their devotions, he was putting on his armor.”

On another occasion, a storm arises, “which as soon as the pilot sees, he falls to his prayers, and invokes his

tutelar dæmons, but neglects not in the meantime to hold to the rudder and let down the main yard.”⁶



6. [Waldo Emerson](#) had in his library the 1822 edition in 8 volumes of [PLUTARCH](#)'S LIVES. TR. FROM THE ORIGINAL GREEK, WITH NOTES CRITICAL AND A LIFE OF PLUTARCH BY JOHN LANGHORNE AND WILLIAM LANGHORNE, NEW ED., WITH CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS... (New York: Samuel Campbell). [Henry Thoreau](#) himself had but a one-volume abridgment, perhaps the following one:

PLUTARCH'S LIVES

Thoreau also had available to him in Emerson's library the 5-volume 1718 edition of [PLUTARCH](#)'S MORALS: TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK BY SEVERAL HANDS, THE FIFTH EDITION CORRECTED AND AMENDED (London: Printed for William Taylor, at the *Ship* in *Paternoster-Row*).

PLUTARCH'S MORALS, I

PLUTARCH'S MORALS, II

PLUTARCH'S MORALS, III

PLUTARCH'S MORALS, IV

PLUTARCH'S MORALS, V



1840

James Pierrepont Greaves wrote to [Bronson Alcott](#) from England. [Harriet Martineau](#) had taken Miss [Elizabeth Palmer Peabody](#)'s RECORD OF MR. ALCOTT'S SCHOOL⁷ back to [London](#) with her, and had been showing it around as an example of the bad things she had found in America, and Greaves had seen this book



RECORD OF A SCHOOL

and instead of being dismayed by it — was fascinated. In this era of hopelessly high postage rates, when people were writing on tissue paper and were over-writing their left-to-right lines with bottom-to-top lines in order to save on postage weight, the intercontinental letter which Greaves would post to Alcott would be all of 30 pages long. Greaves was translating the works of [Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi](#) into English and had for a time been associated with Robert Dale Owen in the Infant School Society. He believed that the world was midway on a journey toward what he termed Love Spirit, and that this unfolding spirit could manifest itself in lives only through people's **being**, never their mere **doing**.

Spirit alone can whole.

Note that these English love-enthusiasts, although it appeared they were on the same road as Alcott, were in actuality going in the opposite direction. For Alcott, the world was good and life in the world was to be appreciated as a gift. For these people, the world was evil, propagation was evil, and life itself was to be regarded as an insult and an injury. Nevertheless, Alcott House in England was doing well, and the people there, who had come to think of Bronson as “the Concord [Plato](#),” were even suggesting to Alcott in Concord that he should come and be their Director.

THE ALCOTT FAMILY

[Waldo Emerson](#)'s “Thoughts on Modern Literature” in [THE DIAL](#) praised [Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi](#)

7. [Elizabeth Palmer Peabody](#). RECORD OF MR. ALCOTT'S SCHOOL, EXEMPLIFYING THE PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF MORAL CULTURE. Boston, New-York, Philadelphia: James Munroe and Company, 1835, 208 pages (2d edition 1836, Boston, New-York: Russell, Shattuck and Company, 198 pages; 3d edition 1874, Boston: Roberts Brothers)

<p align="center">QUARTER CARD OF DISCIPLINE AND STUDIES IN MR. ALCOTT'S SCHOOL FOR THE SPRING TERM CURRENT 1836.</p> <p align="center">THE TUITION AND DISCIPLINE ARE ADDRESSED IN DUE PROPORTION TO THE THREEFOLD NATURE OF CHILDHOOD.</p>								
		<p align="center">THE SPIRITUAL FACULTY.</p> <p align="center">MEANS OF ITS DIRECT CULTURE.</p>		<p align="center">THE IMAGINATIVE FACULTY.</p> <p align="center">MEANS OF ITS DIRECT CULTURE.</p>		<p align="center">THE RATIONAL FACULTY.</p> <p align="center">MEANS OF ITS DIRECT CULTURE.</p>		
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Listening to Sacred Readings. Conversations on the GOSPELS. Writing Journals. Self-Analysis and Self-Discipline. Discerning to Readings from Works of Genius. Motives to Study and Action. Government of the School. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Spelling and Reading. Writing and Sketching from Nature. Picturesque Geography. Writing Journals and Epistles. Illustrating Words. Listening to Readings. Conversation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Deadly Words. Analyzing Speech. Self-Analysis. Arithmetic. Study of the HUMAN BODY. Reasonings on Conduct. Discipline. 				
		<p align="center"><i>The Subjects of Study and Means of Discipline are disposed through the Week in the following general Order.</i></p>						
		SUNDAY.	MONDAY.	TUESDAY.	WEDNESDAY.	THURSDAY.	FRIDAY.	SATURDAY.
IX		Sacred READINGS with Conversations.	STUDYING Geography and Sketching Maps in Journals.	STUDYING THE GOSPEL and Writing in Journals.	STUDYING Parsing Lesson and Writing in Journals.	PARAPHRASING Text of Readings and Writing in Journals.	PARAPHRASING Text of Readings and Writing in Journals.	COMPLETING Account of Week's Studies in Journals.
X		Listening to Services at CHURCH and Reading BOOKS from School Library or others at Home.	RECITATIONS in Geography with Picturesque Readings and Conversations.	READINGS and Conversations on SPIRIT as displayed in the Life of CHRIST.	ANALYSING Speech on Written and Vocal Tablets with Illustrative Conversations.	READINGS with Illustrative Conversations on the Sense of the Text.	READINGS from Works of Genius with Applications and Conversations.	REVIEW of Journals Week's Conduct and Studies.
XI								
XII								
I								
III								
IV								

TEMPLE No. 7, MARCH 1st 1836.



THE DIAL

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(see **boldface**) as a change agent:

The favorable side of this research and love of facts is the bold and systematic criticism, which has appeared in every department of literature. From Wolf's attack upon the authenticity of the Homeric Poems, dates a new epoch in learning. Ancient history has been found to be not yet settled. It is to be subjected to common sense. It is to be cross examined. It is to be seen, whether its traditions will consist not with universal belief, but with universal experience. Niebuhr has sifted Roman history by the like methods. Heeren has made good essays towards ascertaining the necessary facts in the Grecian, Persian, Assyrian, Egyptian, Ethiopic, Carthaginian nations. English history has been analyzed by Turner, Hallam, Brodie, Lingard, Palgrave. Goethe has gone the circuit of human knowledge, as Lord Bacon did before him, writing True or False on every article. Bentham has attempted the same scrutiny in reference to Civil Law. **Pestalozzi out of a deep love undertook the reform of education.** The ambition of Coleridge in England embraced the whole problem of philosophy; to find, that is, a foundation in thought for everything that existed in fact. The German philosophers, Schelling, Kant, Fichte, have applied their analysis to nature and thought with an antique boldness. There can be no honest inquiry, which is not better than acquiescence. Inquiries, which once looked grave and vital no doubt, change their appearance very fast, and come to look frivolous beside the later queries to which they gave occasion.

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



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

March: [Waldo Emerson](#) wrote [Margaret Fuller](#) and listed [Ellery Channing](#) among possible contributors to [THE DIAL](#). Having no response to his letter to Channing, he tried to contact the poet with the famous name through their mutual friend Ward, and, Channing having abandoned his fields in [Illinois](#) without raising a crop, Emerson even paid a visit to Channing's father's house in hopes of discovering Channing there. (Channing had gone to visit at [Brook Farm](#)⁸ and had then returned toward the West.)

Thoreau composed the 1st version of what would become his essay on the Roman satirist [Aulus Persius Flaccus](#), "[AULUS PERSIUS FLACCUS](#)," "first printed paper of consequence," for July's issue of [THE DIAL](#).

THE DIAL, JULY 1840

This paper turned two tricks of interest. First, [Henry Thoreau](#) espoused an attitude of moving away from creedal closedness, associating creedal closedness with immodesty and openness with modesty rather than vice versa and developing that attitude out of comments such as *Haud cuivis promptum est, murmurque humilesque susurros / Tollere de templis; et aperto vivere voto:*



["AULUS PERSIUS FLACCUS"](#): It is not easy for every one to take murmurs and low Whispers out of the temple -*et aperto vivere voto*- and live with open vow,



Second, Thoreau perversely insisted on translating *ex tempore* in its literal etymological sense "out of time" ignoring what had become the primary sense of the phrase: "haphazard," "improvised." Thoreau mobilized this phrase to summon people to live not in time but in eternity.⁹



["AULUS PERSIUS FLACCUS"](#): The life of a wise man is most of all extemporaneous, for he lives out of an eternity that includes all time. He is a child each moment, and reflects wisdom. The far darting thought of the child's mind tarries not for the development of manhood; it lightens itself, and needs not draw down lightning from the clouds. When we bask in a single ray from the mind of Zoroaster, we see how all subsequent time has been an idler, and has no apology for itself. But the cunning mind travels farther back than Zoroaster each instant, and comes quite down to the present with its revelation. All the thrift and industry of thinking give no man any stock in life; his credit with the inner world is no better, his capital no larger. He must try his fortune again to-day as yesterday. All questions rely on the present for their solution. Time measures nothing but itself. The word that is written may be postponed, but not that on the lip. If this is what the occasion says, let the occasion say it. From a real sympathy, all the world is forward to prompt him who gets up to live without his creed in his pocket.

PEOPLE OF A WEEK

ZOROASTER

PERSIUS

8. [How could that be? Did the Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture and Education already exist in 1840, when they did not solicit [Thoreau](#) to join until March 3, 1841?]

9. EARLY ESSAYS AND MISCELLANIES 126.





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TIME AND ETERNITY

The force of the essay, then, was to provide [Thoreau](#) an opportunity to preach his own doctrines by satirizing a minor Roman satirist, and he admits as much: “As long as there is satire, the poet is, as it were, *particeps criminis*.” Young Henry is of course that poet, that accessory to the crime.

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





March 17, Tuesday: [Waldo Emerson](#) lectured at the New-York Mercantile Library, delivering the 3d lecture of his “Philosophy of History” series, “The Literature of the Present Age.” This lecture was to have appeared in the July initial issue of [THE DIAL: A MAGAZINE FOR LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION](#), but would need to wait for the October issue, in which the title would become “Thoughts on Modern Literature.”

Mihailo Obrenovic III became Prince of Serbia, succeeding a regency council.

Friedrich Wieck, who saw Liszt as a friend of [Robert Schumann](#), had been savaging Liszt in the Leipzig newspapers. Clara had taken her father’s side. The Leipzigers were blaming him for raising ticket prices, and for canceling complimentary tickets. After months of great successes in Vienna, Pest, Prague, and Dresden, the Leipzig audience greeted Franz Liszt’s transcription of the 6th Symphony of [Ludwig van Beethoven](#) with whistles.

**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.**

April 15, Wednesday: [Waldo Emerson](#) lectured at the [Concord Lyceum](#) in [Concord](#). This was the 3d lecture of the series, “Politics.”

He wrote [Margaret Fuller](#) that [Henry Thoreau](#) had “*too mean an opinion of ‘[Persius](#)’*” to revise it himself, but was willing that it be published in [THE DIAL](#) if it would appear as is, or if the editors would care themselves to revise it.

[“AULUS PERSIUS FLACCUS”](#)

April 21, Tuesday: [Waldo Emerson](#) wrote [Margaret Fuller](#) that he was going to “roll up” with [Henry Thoreau](#)’s essay on the Roman satirist [Aulus Persius Flaccus](#), “[AULUS PERSIUS FLACCUS](#).” “*I read it through this morning & foresee that it may give you some hesitations.... I wish it were shorter.*”

[THE DIAL](#)

April 23, Thursday: [Waldo Emerson](#) wrote [Margaret Fuller](#) that he had [Henry Thoreau](#)’s revised essay on the Roman satirist [Aulus Persius Flaccus](#) and that he advised that it appear in the initial issue of [THE DIAL](#).

[“AULUS PERSIUS FLACCUS”](#)

HDT

WHAT?

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THE DIAL

THE DIAL

April 25, Saturday: [Margaret Fuller](#) wrote [Waldo Emerson](#) that [Henry Thoreau](#)'s revised essay on the Roman satirist [Aulus Persius Flaccus](#) would appear in the initial issue of [THE DIAL](#).

["AULUS PERSIUS FLACCUS"](#)

April 27, Monday: Edward Whymper, who would become the 1st person to scale the Matterhorn, was born.



[Waldo Emerson](#) wrote [Margaret Fuller](#) that [Henry Thoreau](#) had again revised his essay on the Roman satirist [Aulus Persius Flaccus](#) and that it had become excellent.

["AULUS PERSIUS FLACCUS"](#)

[THE DIAL](#)

June 30, Tuesday: [Waldo Emerson](#) wrote [Thomas Carlyle](#) calling to his attention [Henry Thoreau](#)'s contributions in [THE DIAL](#):

In this number what say you to the [Elegy](#) written by a youth who grew up in this town and lives near me, – Henry Thoreau? A criticism of [Persius](#) is his also.

["AULUS PERSIUS FLACCUS"](#)



June 30: I sailed from Fair Haven last evening as gently and steadily as the clouds sail through the



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atmosphere. The wind came blowing blithely from the southwest fields, and stepped into the folds of our sail like a winged horse, pulling with a strong and steady impulse. The sail bends gently to the breeze, as swells some generous impulse of the heart, and anon flutters and flaps with a kind of human suspense. I could watch the motions of a sail forever, they are so rich and full of meaning. I watch the play of its pulse, as if it were my own blood beating there. The varying temperature of distant atmospheres is graduated on its scale. It is a free, buoyant creature, the bauble of the heavens and the earth. A gay pastime the air plays with it. If it swells and tugs, it is because the sun lays his windy finger on it. The breeze it plays with has been outdoors so long. So thin is it, and yet so full of life; so noiseless when it labors hardest, so noisy and impatient when least serviceable. So am I blown on by God's breath, so flutter and flap, and fill gently out with the breeze. In this fresh evening each blade and leaf looks as if it had been dipped in an icy liquid greenness. Let eyes that ache come here and look, — the sight will be a sovereign eyewater, — or else wait and bathe them in the dark. We go forth into the fields, and there the wind blows freshly onward, and still on, and we must make new efforts not to be left behind. What does the dogged wind intend, that, like a willful cur, it will not let me turn aside to rest or content? Must it always reprove and provoke me, and never welcome me as an equal? The truth shall prevail and falsehood discover itself, as long as the wind blows on the hills.

A man's life should be a stately march to a sweet but unheard music, and when to his fellows it shall seem irregular and inharmonious, he will only be stepping to a livelier measure; or his nicer ear hurry him into a thousand symphonies and concordant variations. There will be no halt ever but at most a marching on his post, or such a pause as is richer than any sound, when the melody runs into such depth and wildness, as to be no longer heard, but implicitly consented to with the whole life and being. He will take a false step never, even in the most arduous times; for then the music will not fail to swell into greater sweetness and volume, and itself rule the movement it inspired.

I have a deep sympathy with war it so apes the gait and bearing of the soul.

Value and effort are as much coincident as weight and a tendency to fall. In a very wide but true sense, effort is the deed itself, and it is only when these sensible stuffs intervene, that our attention is distracted from the deed to the accident. It is never the deed men praise, but some marble or canvas which are only a staging to the real work.

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





THE DIAL

THE DIAL

July 1, Wednesday: Publication of [THE DIAL: A MAGAZINE FOR LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION](#) (Volume I, Number 1, July 1840), a journal of Transcendentalist thought named in honor of the sundial, began at this point and continued into 1844:

“The name speaks of faith in Nature and in Progress.” – The Reverend James Freeman Clarke

This initial issue of [THE DIAL](#) included [Henry Thoreau](#)’s essay on the Roman satirist [Aulus Persius Flaccus](#), which has been termed his “first printed paper of consequence.”

[“AULUS PERSIUS FLACCUS”](#): The life of a wise man is most of all extemporaneous, for he lives out of an eternity that includes all time. He is a child each moment, and reflects wisdom. The far darting thought of the child’s mind carries not for the development of manhood; it lightens itself, and needs not draw down lightning from the clouds. When we bask in a single ray from the mind of Zoroaster, we see how all subsequent time has been an idler, and has no apology for itself. But the cunning mind travels farther back than Zoroaster each instant, and comes quite down to the present with its revelation. All the thrift and industry of thinking give no man any stock in life; his credit with the inner world is no better, his capital no larger. He must try his fortune again to-day as yesterday. All questions rely on the present for their solution. Time measures nothing but itself. The word that is written may be postponed, but not that on the lip. If this is what the occasion says, let the occasion say it. From a real sympathy, all the world is forward to prompt him who gets up to live without his creed in his pocket.

PEOPLE OF
A WEEK

ZOROASTER

PERSIUS





THE DIAL

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THE DIAL, JULY 1840

Thoreau would later recycle this paper on the satirist Persius with 28 minor modifications into the “Thursday” chapter of [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#):

A WEEK: The life of a wise man is most of all extemporaneous, for he lives out of an eternity which includes all time. The cunning mind travels further back than Zoroaster each instant, and comes quite down to the present with its revelation. The utmost thrift and industry of thinking give no man any stock in life; his credit with the inner world is no better, his capital no larger. He must try his fortune again to-day as yesterday. All questions rely on the present for their solution. Time measures nothing but itself. The word that is written may be postponed, but not that on the lip. If this is what the occasion says, let the occasion say it. All the world is forward to prompt him who gets up to live without his creed in his pocket.

PEOPLE OF
A WEEK

ZOROASTER
PERSIUS

Thoreau’s effort turned two tricks of interest. First, he espoused an attitude of turning away from creedal closedness, associating creedal closedness with immodesty and openness with modesty rather than vice versa and developing that attitude out of comments such as *Haud cuivis promptum est, murmurque humilesque susurros / Tollere de templis; et aperto vivere voto* which translates as “It’s not easy to take murmurs and low whispers out of the temple and live with open vow.” Second, Thoreau perversely insisted on translating *ex tempore* in its literal etymological sense “out of time” ignoring what had become the primary sense of the phrase: “haphazard,” “improvised.” Thoreau mobilized this phrase to summon people to live not in time but in eternity: “The life of a wise man is most of all extemporaneous, for he lives out of an eternity that includes all time. He is a child of each moment, and reflects wisdom.... He must try his fortune again to-day as yesterday. All questions rely on the present for their solution. Time measures nothing but itself. The word that is written may be postponed, but not that on the lip. If this is what the occasion says, let the occasion say it. From a real sympathy, all the world is forward to prompt him who gets up to live without his creed in his pocket.”¹⁰ The force of the essay, then, was to provide Thoreau an opportunity to preach his own doctrines by satirizing a minor Roman satirist, and he admits as much: “As long as there is satire, the poet is, as it were, *particeps criminis*.” Thoreau is of course that poet, that accessory to the crime.

Robert D. Richardson, Jr. points out that Thoreau ignored a trope in Persius that had been admired by [John](#)





Dryden, in order to do quite different things with this material:

With the cool effrontery of an Ezra Pound, Thoreau declares that there are perhaps twenty good lines in Persius, of permanent as opposed to historical interest. Ignoring the elegant shipwreck trope Dryden so admired in the sixth satire, Thoreau gives the main weight of his essay to a careful reading of seven of those lines. Two lines,

It is not easy for every one to take murmurs and low Whispers
out of the temple -*et aperto vivere voto*- and live with open vow,

permit Thoreau to insist on the distinction between the "man of true religion" who finds his open temple in the whole universe, and the "jealous privacy" of those who try to "carry on a secret commerce with the gods" whose hiding place is in some building. The distinction is between the open religion of the fields and woods, and the secret, closed religion of the churches.

EZRA POUND

I would point out here that those who are familiar with the poetry of the West Coast poet of place, Robinson Jeffers (and I presume Richardson to be as innocent of knowledge of Jeffers as was Jeffers of knowledge of Thoreau), rather than see a linkage to the spirit of a poet who worshiped the Young Italy of Benito Mussolini, will choose to perceive a more direct linkage to Jeffers's stance of "inhumanism." But to go on in Richardson's comment about the "Aulus Persius Flaccus" essay:

Thoreau's best point takes a rebuke from the third satire against the casual life, against living *ex tempore*, and neatly converts it into a Thoreauvian paradox. Taking *ex tempore* literally, Thoreau discards its sense of offhand improvisation and takes it as a summons to live outside time, to live more fully than our ordinary consciousness of chronological time permits.

The life of a wise man is most of all extemporaneous,
for he lives out of an eternity which includes all time.

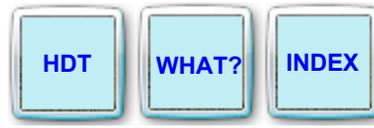
Interpreting Persius through the lens of Emerson's "History," Thoreau contends that

All questions rely on the present for their solution.
Time measures nothing but itself.

Thoreau's Persius has gone beyond Stoicism to transcendentalism, insisting on open religious feelings as opposed to closed institutional dogmatic creeds, and on a passionate articulation of the absolute value of the present moment.

(Well, first we have Thoreau being like a later poet who was renowned for his personal as well as his political craziness, and then we have Thoreau being an Emerson impersonator, interpreting things through the lens of





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the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson. That's about par for the course, on the Richardson agenda.)

This initial issue also contained some material from Charles Emerson:

The reason why Homer is to me like a dewy morning is because I too lived while Troy was, and sailed in the hollow ships of the Grecians to sack the devoted town. The rosy-fingered dawn as it crimsoned the tops of Ida, the broad seashore dotted with tents, the Trojan host in their painted armor, and the rushing chariots of Diomedes and Idomeneus, all these I too saw: my ghost animated the frame of some nameless Argive.... We forget that we have been drugged with the sleepy bowl of the Present. But when a lively chord in the soul is struck, when the windows for a moment are unbarred, the long and varied past is recovered. We recognize it all. We are no more brief, ignoble creatures; we seize our immortality, and bind together the related parts of our secular being.

– Notes from the Journal of a Scholar, The Dial, I, p. 14

This initial issue also contained on page 123 the poem by [Ellen Sturgis Hooper](#) “I slept and dreamed that life was Beauty” from which [Thoreau](#) would quote a large part as the conclusion of his “House-Warming” chapter.¹¹

11. Would she be married to Concord's Harry Hooper, and would he possibly be related to the signer of the [Declaration of Independence](#) who lived in the south after attending Boston's Latin School?



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WALDEN: The next winter I used a small cooking-stove for economy, since I did not own the forest; but it did not keep fire so well as the open fire-place. Cooking was then, for the most part, no longer a poetic, but merely a chemic process. It will soon be forgotten, in these days of stoves, that we used to roast potatoes in the ashes, after the Indian fashion. The stove not only took up room and scented the house, but it concealed the fire, and felt as if I had lost a companion. You can always see a face in the fire. The laborer, looking into it at evening, purifies his thoughts of the dross and earthiness which they have accumulated during the day. But I could no longer sit and look into the fire, and the pertinent words of a poet recurred to me with new force.-

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

“Never, bright flame, may be denied to me
Thy dear, life imaging, close sympathy.
What but my hopes shot upward e'er so bright?
What by my fortunes sunk so low in night?
Why art thou banished from our hearth and hall,
Thou who art welcomed and beloved by all?
Was thy existence then too fanciful
For our life's common light, who are so dull?
Did thy bright gleam mysterious converse hold
With our congenial souls? secrets too bold?
Well, we are safe and strong, for now we sit
Beside a hearth where no dim shadows flit,
Where nothing cheers nor saddens, but a fire
Warms feet and hands – nor does to more aspire
By whose compact utilitarian heap
The present may sit down and go to sleep,
Nor fear the ghosts who from the dim past walked,
And with us by the unequal light of the old wood fire talked.”

Mrs. Hooper



ELLEN STURGIS HOOPER



THE DIAL

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It is to be noted, as an exercise in becoming aware of how much our attitudes toward copyright have changed, that in the original edition the last line, indicating that the poem was by a Mrs. Hooper, did not appear.

The poem as it had been published in [THE DIAL](#) had been entitled “The Wood Fire.” It would appear that Thoreau had intended to quote even more of the poem, and that seven beginning lines had been suppressed in the process of shortening the [WALDEN](#) manuscript for publication:

**“When I am glad or gay,
Let me walk forth into the brilliant sun,
And with congenial rays be shone upon:
When I am sad, or thought-bewitched would be,
Let me glide forth in moonlight’s mystery.
But never, while I live this changeful life,
This Past and Future with all wonders rife,
Never, bright flame, may be denied to me,
Thy dear, life imaging, close sympathy.
What but my hopes shot upward e’er so bright?
What by my fortunes sunk so low in night?
Why art thou banished from our hearth and hall,
Thou who art welcomed and beloved by all?
Was thy existence then too fanciful
For our life’s common light, who are so dull?
Did thy bright gleam mysterious converse hold
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Warms feet and hands – nor does to more aspire
By whose compact utilitarian heap
The present may sit down and go to sleep,
Nor fear the ghosts who from the dim past walked,
And with us by the unequal light of the old wood fire talked.”**



THE DIAL

THE DIAL



Thoreau's poem "Sympathy," or "To a gentle boy" also appeared in this 1st issue of [THE DIAL](#).

The title of the journal came from a phrase that Bronson Alcott had been planning to use for his next year's diary,

DIAL ON TIME THINE OWN ETERNITY

and the "dial" in question was a garden sundial.¹² For purposes of this publication Bronson strove to emulate the selections from his writings that [Waldo Emerson](#) had excerpted at the end of the small volume NATURE, attempted, that is, to cast his wisdom in the form of epigrams or "Orphic Sayings" which, even if they were unchewable, at least could be fitted into one's mouth. In the timeframe in which these were being created, Alcott was reading [Hesiod](#) (he had in his personal library HESIOD'S WORKS, TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK, BY MR. T[HOMAS] COOKE, SECOND EDITION, 1740), Dr. Henry More, the Reverend Professor Ralph Cudworth,





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Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. When these were finally published, they were the only transcendental material to appear in [THE DIAL](#), of 24 pieces, that would bear the full name of the author rather than be offered anonymously or bear merely the author's initials. It was as if the other transcendentalist writers associated with [THE DIAL](#) were saying to their readers, "Look, this is A. Bronson Alcott here, you've got to make allowances." Here is one of the easier and more pithy examples:

Prudence is the footprint of Wisdom.

Some of these things, however, ran on and on without making any sense at all, and here is one that was seized upon by the popular press and mocked as a "Gastric Saying":

The popular genesis is historical. It is written to sense not to the soul. Two principles, diverse and alien, interchange the Godhead and sway the world by turns. God is dual, Spirit is derivative. Identity halts in diversity. Unity is actual merely....

Well, I won't quote the whole thing. Was Alcott a disregarded Hegelian who had never heard of Hegel?

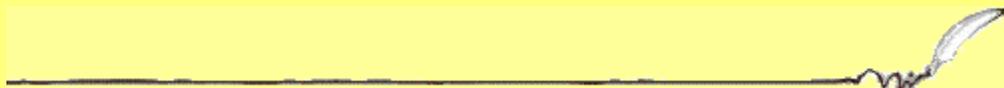
12. The name, of course, carried metaphysical freight. For instance, in his 1836 essay NATURE [Emerson](#) had quoted the following from Emmanuel Swedenborg — the Swedish religious mentor whom he would later characterize, in REPRESENTATIVE MEN, as the type of "the mystic":

The visible world and the relation of its parts, is the dial plate of the invisible.



And in December 1839, [Emerson](#) had written in his journal:

I say how the world looks to me without reference to Blair's Rhetoric or Johnson's Lives. And I call my thoughts The Present Age, because I use no will in the matter, but honestly record such impressions as things make. So transform I myself into a Dial, and my shadow will tell where the sun is.



HDT

WHAT?

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**Sophia Peabody (Hawthorne)'s Illustration for the 1st Edition of
"To a Gentle Boy" in TWICE-TOLD TALES**



Wouldn't this be a better world if [G.W.F. Hegel](#) also had been ignored? Go figure.¹³The initial issue included



Americans of Thoreau's day accepted as axiomatic the Lockean-Jeffersonian principle that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, and Thoreau did not challenge this axiom. But he applied it in an unorthodox way. The unit that gives consent, he asserts, is not the majority but the individual. The reason, he explains, is that consent is a moral judgment, for which each individual is accountable to his own conscience. The majority, on the other hand, is not a **moral** entity and its right to rule not a moral entitlement. As Bronson Alcott, who set Thoreau the example of resistance to civil government, aptly put it, "In the theocracy of the soul majorities do not rule." The alleged right of the majority to rule, Thoreau declared, is based merely on the assumption that "they are physically the strongest."

a poem by Christopher Pearse Cranch, "To the [Aurora Borealis](#)":

Arctic fount of holiest light,
Springing through the winter night,
Spreading far behind yon hill,
When the earth lies dark and still,
Rippling o'er the stars, as streams
O'er pebbled beds in sunny gleams;
O for names, thou vision fair,
To express thy splendours rare!

Blush upon the cheek of night,
Posthumous, unearthly light,
Dream of the deep sunken sun,
Beautiful, sleep-walking one,
Sister of the moonlight pale,
Star-obscuring meteor veil,
Spread by heaven's watching vestals;
Sender of the gleamy crystals
Darting on their arrowy course

From their glittering polar source,
Upward where the air doth freeze
Round the sister Pleiades;--

Beautiful and rare Aurora,
In the heavens thou art their Flora,
Night-blooming Cereus of the sky,
Rose of amaranthine dye,
Hyacinth of purple light,
Or their Lily clad in white!

Who can name thy wondrous essence,
Thou electric phosphorescence?
Lonely apparition fire!
Seeker of the starry choir!
Restless roamer of the sky,
Who hath won thy mystery?

13. July 1840, The Dial, "Orphic Sayings," xvii.



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Mortal science hath not ran
With thee through the Empyrean,
Where the constellations cluster
Flower-like on thy branching lustre.

After all the glare and toil,
And the daylight's fretful coil,
Thou dost come so milt and still,
Hearts with love and peace to fill;
As when after revelry
With a talking company,
Where the blaze of many lights
Fell on fools and parasites,
One by one the guests have gone,
And we find ourselves alone;
Only one sweet maiden near,
With a sweet voice low and clear,
Whispering music in our ear,--
So thou talkest to the earth
After daylight's weary mirth.
Is not human fantasy,
Wild Aurora, likest thee,
Blossoming in nightly dreams,
Like thy shifting meteor-gleams?

[Thoreau](#)'s own copy of this issue of [THE DIAL](#) is now at Southern Illinois University. It exhibits his subsequent pencil corrections.

Aulus Persius Flaccus

If you have imagined what a divine work is spread out for the poet, and approach this author too, in the hope of finding the field at length fairly entered on, you will hardly dissent from the words of the prologue,

“Ipse semipaganus
Ad sacra Vatum carmen affero nostrum.”

Here is none of the interior dignity of Virgil, nor the elegance and fire of Horace, nor will any Sibyl be needed to remind you, that from those older Greek poets, there is a sad descent to Persius. Scarcely can you distinguish one harmonious sound, amid this unmusical bickering with the follies of men. One sees how music has its place in thought, but hardly as yet in language. When the Muse arrives, we wait for her to remould language, and impart to it her own rhythm. Hitherto the verse groans and labors with its load, but goes not forward blithely, singing by the way. The best ode may be parodied, indeed is itself a parody, and has a poor and trivial sound, like a man stepping on the rounds of a ladder. Homer, and Shakspeare, and Milton, and Marvel, and Wordsworth, are but the rustling of leaves and crackling of twigs in the forest, and not yet the sound of any bird. The Muse has never lifted up her voice to sing. Most of all satire will not be sung. A Juvenal or Persius do not marry music to their verse, but are measured faultfinders at best; stand but just outside the faults they condemn, and so are concerned rather about the monster they have escaped, than



the fair prospect before them. Let them live on an age, not a secular one, and they will have travelled out of his shadow and harm's way, and found other objects to ponder.

As long as there is nature, the poet is, as it were, *particeps criminis*. One sees not but he had best let bad take care of itself, and have to do only with what is beyond suspicion. If you light on the least vestige of truth, and it is the weight of the whole body still which stamps the faintest trace, an eternity will not suffice to extol it, while no evil is so huge, but you grudge to bestow on it a moment of hate. Truth never turns to rebuke falsehood; her own straightforwardness is the severest correction. Horace would not have written satire so well, if he had not been inspired by it, as by a passion, and fondly cherished his vein. In his odes, the love always exceeds the hate, so that the severest satire still sings itself, and the poet is satisfied, though the folly be not corrected.

A sort of necessary order in the development of Genius is, first, Complaint; second, Plaint; third, Love. Complaint, which is the condition of Persius, lies not in the province of poetry. Ere long the enjoyment of a superior good would have changed his disgust into regret. We can never have much sympathy with the complainer; for after searching nature through, we conclude he must be both plaintiff and defendant too, and so had best come to a settlement without a hearing.

I know not but it would be truer to say, that the highest strain of the muse is essentially plaintive. The saint's are still tears of joy.

But the divinest poem, or the life of a great man, is the severest satire; as impersonal as nature herself, and like the sighs of her winds in the woods, which convey ever a slight reproof to the hearer. The greater the genius, the keener the edge of the satire.

Hence have we to do only with the rare and fragmentary traits, which least belong to Persius, or, rather, are the properest utterance of his muse; since that which he says best at any time is what he can best say at all times. The Spectators and Ramblers have not failed to cull some quotable sentences from this garden too, so pleasant is it to meet even the most familiar truths in a new dress, when, if our neighbor had said it, we should have passed it by as hackneyed. Out of these six satires, you may perhaps select some twenty lines, which fit so well as many thoughts, that they will recur to the scholar almost as readily as a natural image; though when translated into familiar language, they lose that insular emphasis, which fitted them for quotation. Such lines as the following no translation can render commonplace. Contrasting the man of true religion with those, that, with jealous privacy, would fain carry on a secret commerce with the gods, he says, -

“Haud cuivis promptum est, murmurque humilesque
Tollere susurros de templis; et aperto vivere voto.”

To the virtuous man, the universe is the only sanctum sanctorum, and the penetralia of the temple are the broad noon of his

[“nature” should read “satire”]



existence. Why should he betake himself to a subterranean crypt, as if it were the only holy ground in all the world he had left unprofaned? The obedient soul would only the more discover and familiarize things, and escape more and more into light and air, as having henceforth done with secrecy, so that the universe shall not seem open enough for it. At length, is it neglectful even of that silence which is consistent with true modesty, but by its independence of all confidence in its disclosures, makes that which it imparts so private to the hearer, that it becomes the care of the whole world that modesty be not infringed.

To the man who cherishes a secret in his breast, there is a still greater secret unexplored. Our most indifferent acts may be matter for secrecy, but whatever we do with the utmost truthfulness and integrity, by virtue of its pureness, must be transparent as light.

In the third satire he asks,

“Est aliquid quò tendis, et in quod dirigis arcum?
An passim sequeris corvos, testâve, lutove,
Securus quò pes ferat, atque ex tempore vivis?”

Language seems to have justice done it, but is obviously cramped and narrowed in its significance, when any meanness is described. The truest construction is not put upon it. What may readily be fashioned into a rule of wisdom, is here thrown in the teeth of the sluggard, and constitutes the front of his offence. Universally, the innocent man will come forth from the sharpest inquisition and lecturings, the combined din of reproof and commendation, with a faint sound of eulogy in his ears. Our vices lie ever in the direction of our virtues, and in their best estate are but plausible imitations of the latter. Falsehood never attains to the dignity of entire falseness, but is only an inferior sort of truth; if it were more thoroughly false, it would incur danger of becoming true.

“Securus quò pes ferat, atque ex tempore vivit,

is then the motto of a wise man. For first, as the subtle discernment of the language would have taught us, with all his negligence he is still secure; but the sluggard, notwithstanding his heedlessness, is insecure.

The life of a wise man is most of all extemporaneous, for he lives out of an eternity that includes all time. He is a child each moment and reflects wisdom. The far darting thought of the child's mind tarries not for the development of manhood; it lightens itself, and needs not draw down lightning from the clouds. When we bask in a single ray from the mind of Zoroaster, we see how all subsequent time has been an idler, and has no apology for itself. But the cunning mind travels farther back than Zoroaster each instant, and comes quite down to the present with its revelation. All the thrift and industry of thinking give no man any stock in life; his credit with the inner world is no better, his capital no larger. He must try his fortune again today as yesterday. All questions rely on the present for their solution. Time measures nothing but itself: The word that



is written may be postponed, but not that on the life. If this is what the occasion says, let the occasion say it. From a real sympathy, all the world is forward to prompt him who gets up to live without his creed in his pocket.

In the fifth satire, which is the best, I find,

“Stat contrà ratio, et recretam garrit in aurem.
Ne liceat facere id, quod quis vitiabit agendo.”

Only they who do not see how anything might be better done are forward to try their hand on it. Even the master workman must be encouraged by the reflection, that his awkwardness will be incompetent to do that harm, to which his skill may fail to do justice. Here is no apology for neglecting to do many things from a sense of our incapacity, – for what deed does not fall maimed and imperfect from our hands? – but only a warning to bungle less.

The satires of Persius are the farthest possible from inspired; evidently a chosen, not imposed subject. Perhaps I have given him credit for more earnestness than is apparent; but certain it is, that that which alone we can call Persius, which is forever independent and consistent, was in earnest, and so sanctions the sober consideration of all. The artist and his work are not to be separated. The most wilfully foolish man cannot stand aloof from his folly, but the deed and the doer together make ever one sober fact. The buffoon may not bribe you to laugh always at his grimaces; they shall sculpture themselves in Egyptian granite, to stand heavy as the pyramids on the ground of his character.

T.

The Editors to the Reader

We invite the attention of our countrymen to a new design. Probably not quite unexpected or unannounced will our Journal appear, though small pains have been taken to secure its welcome. Those, who have immediately acted in editing the present Number, cannot accuse themselves of any unbecoming forwardness in their undertaking, but rather of a backwardness, when they remember how often in many private circles the work was projected, how eagerly desired, and only postponed because no individual volunteered to combine and concentrate the free-will offerings of many cooperators. With some reluctance the present conductors of this work have yielded themselves to the wishes of their friends, finding something sacred and not to be withstood in the importunity which urged the production of a Journal in a new spirit.

As they have not proposed themselves to the work, neither can they lay any the least claim to an option or determination of the spirit in which it is conceived, or to what is peculiar in the design. In that respect, they have obeyed, though with great joy, the strong current of thought and feeling, which, for a few



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years past, has led many sincere persons in New England to make new demands on literature, and to reprobate that rigor of our conventions of religion and education which is turning us to stone, which renounces hope, which looks only backward, which asks only such a future as the past, which suspects improvement, and holds nothing so much in horror as new views and the dreams of youth.

With these terrors the conductors of the present Journal have nothing to do, – not even so much as a word of reproach to waste. They know that there is a portion of the youth and of the adult population of this country, who have not shared them; who have in secret or in public paid their vows to truth and freedom; who love reality too well to care for names, and who live by a Faith too earnest and profound to suffer them to doubt the eternity of its object, or to shake themselves free from its authority. Under the fictions and customs which occupied others, these have explored the Necessary, the Plain, the True, the Human, – and so gained a vantage ground, which commands the history of the past and the present.

No one can converse much with different classes of society in New England, without remarking the progress of a revolution. Those who share in it have no external organization, no badge, no creed, no name. They do not vote, or print, or even meet together. They do not know each other's faces or names. They are united only in a common love of truth, and love of its work. They are of all conditions and constitutions. Of these acolytes, if some are happily born and well bred, many are no doubt ill dressed, ill placed, ill made – with as many scars of hereditary vice as other men. Without pomp, without trumpet, in lonely and obscure places, in solitude, in servitude, in compunctions and privations, trudging beside the team in the dusty road, or drudging a hireling in other men's cornfields, schoolmasters, who teach a few children rudiments for a pittance, ministers of small parishes of the obscurer sects, lone women in dependent condition, matrons and young maidens, rich and poor, beautiful and hard-favored, without concert or proclamation of any kind, they have silently given in their several adherence to a new hope, and in all companies do signify a greater trust in the nature and resources of man, than the laws or the popular opinions will well allow.

This spirit of the time is felt by every individual with some difference, – to each one casting its light upon the objects nearest to his temper and habits of thought; – to one, coming in the shape of special reforms in the state; to another, in modifications of the various callings of men, and the customs of business; to a third, opening a new scope for literature and art; to a fourth, in philosophical insight; to a fifth, in the vast solitudes of prayer. It is in every form a protest against usage, and a search for principles. In all its movements, it is peaceable, and in the very lowest marked with a triumphant success. Of course, it rouses the opposition of all which it judges and condemns, but it is too confident in its tone to



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comprehend an objection, and so builds no outworks for possible defence against contingent enemies. It has the step of Fate, and goes on existing like an oak or a river, because it must.

In literature, this influence appears not yet in new books so much as in the higher tone of criticism. The antidote to all narrowness is the comparison of the record with nature, which at once shames the record and stimulates to new attempts. Whilst we look at this, we wonder how any book has been thought worthy to be preserved. There is somewhat in all life untranslatable into language. He who keeps his eye on that will write better than others, and think less of his writing, and of all writing. Every thought has a certain imprisoning as well as uplifting quality, and, in proportion to its energy on the will, refuses to become an object of intellectual contemplation. Thus what is great usually slips through our fingers, and it seems wonderful how a lifelike word ever comes to be written. If our Journal share the impulses of the time, it cannot now prescribe its own course. It cannot foretell in orderly propositions what it shall attempt. All criticism should be poetic; unpredictable; superseding, as every new thought does, all foregone thoughts, and making a new light on the whole world. Its brow is not wrinkled with circumspection, but serene, cheerful, adoring. It has all things to say, and no less than all the world for its final audience.

Our plan embraces much more than criticism; were it not so, our criticism would be naught. Everything noble is directed on life, and this is. We do not wish to say pretty or curious things, or to reiterate a few propositions in varied forms, but, if we can, to give expression to that spirit which lifts men to a higher platform, restores to them the religious sentiment, brings them worthy aims and pure pleasures, purges the inward eye, makes life less desultory, and, through raising man to the level of nature, takes away its melancholy from the landscape, and reconciles the practical with the speculative powers.

But perhaps we are telling our little story too gravely. There are always great arguments at hand for a true action, even for the writing of a few pages. There is nothing but seems near it and prompts it, – the sphere in the ecliptic, the sap in the apple tree, – every fact, every appearance seem to persuade to it.

Our means correspond with the ends we have indicated. As we wish not to multiply books, but to report life, our resources are therefore not so much the pens of practised writers, as the discourse of the living, and the portfolios which friendship has opened to us. From the beautiful recesses of private thought; from the experience and hope of spirits which are withdrawing from all old forms, and seeking in all that is new somewhat to meet their inappeasable longings; from the secret confession of genius afraid to trust itself to aught but sympathy; from the conversation of fervid and mystical pietists; from tear-stained diaries of sorrow and passion; from the manuscripts of young poets; and from the records of youthful taste commenting on old



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works of art; we hope to draw thoughts and feelings, which being alive can impart life.

And so with diligent hands and good intent we set down our Dial on the earth. We wish it may resemble that instrument in its celebrated happiness, that of measuring no hours but those of sunshine. Let it be one cheerful rational voice amidst the din of mourners and polemics. Or to abide by our chosen image, let it be such a Dial, not as the dead face of a clock, hardly even such as the Gnomon in a garden, but rather such a Dial as is the Garden itself, in whose leaves and flowers and fruits the suddenly awakened sleeper is instantly apprised not what part of dead time, but what state of life and growth is now arrived and arriving.

“Thoughts on Modern Literature”

There is no better illustration of the laws by which the world is governed than Literature. There is no luck in it. It proceeds by Fate. Every scripture is given by the inspiration of God. Every composition proceeds out of a greater or less depth of thought, and this is the measure of its effect. The highest class of books are those which express the moral element; the next, works of imagination; and the next, works of science; – all dealing in realities, – what ought to be, what is, and what appears. These, in proportion to the truth and beauty they involve, remain; the rest perish. They proceed out of the silent living mind to be heard again by the living mind. Of the best books it is hardest to write the history. Those books which are for all time are written indifferently at any time. For high genius is a day without night, a Caspian Ocean which hath no tides. And yet is literature in some sort a creature of time. Always the oracular soul is the source of thought, but always the occasion is administered by the low mediations of circumstance. Religion, Love, Ambition, War, some fierce antagonism, or it may be, some petty annoyance must break the round of perfect circulation, or no spark, no joy, no event can be. The poet rambling through the fields or the forest, absorbed in contemplation to that degree, that his walk is but a pretty dream, would never awake to precise thought, if the scream of an eagle, the cries of a crow or curlew near his head did not break the sweet continuity. Nay the finest lyrics of the poet come of this unequal parentage; the imps of matter beget such child on the soul, fair daughter of God. Nature mixes facts with thoughts to yield a poem. But the gift of immortality is of the mother's side. In the spirit in which they are written is the date of their duration, and never in the magnitude of the facts. Everything lasts in proportion to its beauty. In proportion as it was not polluted by any wilfulness of the writer, but flowed from his mind after the divine order of cause and effect, it was not his but nature's, and shared the sublimity of the sea and sky. That which is truly told, nature herself takes in charge against the whims and injustice of men. For ages, Herodotus was reckoned a credulous gossip in his descriptions of Africa, and



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now the sublime silent desert testifies through the mouths of Bruce, Lyons, Caillaud, Burckhardt, Belzoni, to the truth of the calumniated historian.

And yet men imagine that books are dice, and have no merit in their fortune; that the trade and the favor of a few critics can get one book into circulation, and defeat another; and that in the production of these things the author has chosen and may choose to do thus and so. Society also wishes to assign subjects and methods to its writers. But neither reader nor author may intermeddle. You cannot reason at will in this and that other vein, but only as you must. You cannot make quaint combinations, and bring to the crucible and alembic of truth things far fetched or fantastic or popular, but your method and your subject are foreordained in all your nature, and in all nature, or ever the earth was, or it has no worth. All that gives currency still to any book, advertised in the morning's newspaper in London or Boston, is the remains of faith in the breast of men that not adroit book makers, but the inextinguishable soul of the universe reports of itself in articulate discourse to-day as of old. The ancients strongly expressed their sense of the unmanageableness of these words of the spirit by saying, that the God made his priest insane, took him hither and thither as leaves are whirled by the tempest. But we sing as we are bid. Our inspirations are very manageable and tame. Death and sin have whispered in the ear of the wild horse of Heaven, and he has become a dray and a hack. And step by step with the entrance of this era of ease and convenience, the belief in the proper Inspiration of man has departed.

Literary accomplishments, skill in grammar and rhetoric, knowledge of books, can never atone for the want of things which demand voice. Literature is a poor trick when it busies itself to make words pass for things. The most original book in the world is the Bible. This old collection of the ejaculations of love and dread, of the supreme desires and contritions of men proceeding out of the region of the grand and eternal, by whatsoever different mouths spoken, and through a wide extent of times and countries, seems, especially if you add to our canon the kindred sacred writings of the Hindoos, Persians, and Greeks, the alphabet of the nations, - and all posterior literature either the chronicle of facts under very inferior ideas, or, when it rises to sentiment, the combinations, analogies, or degradations of this. The elevation of this book may be measured by observing, how certainly all elevation of thought clothes itself in the words and forms of speech of that book. For the human mind is not now sufficiently erect to judge and correct that scripture. Whatever is majestically thought in a great moral element, instantly approaches this old Sanscrit. It is in the nature of things that the highest originality must be moral. The only person, who can be entirely independent of this fountain of literature and equal to it, must be a prophet in his own proper person. Shakspeare, the first literary genius of the world, the highest in whom the moral is not the



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predominating element, leans on the Bible: his poetry supposes it. If we examine this brilliant influence – Shakspeare – as it lies in our minds, we shall find it reverent not only of the letter of this book, but of the whole frame of society which stood in Europe upon it, deeply indebted to the traditional morality, in short, compared with the tone of the Prophets, *secondary*. On the other hand, the Prophets do not imply the existence of Shakspeare or Homer, – advert to no books or arts, only to dread ideas and emotions. People imagine that the place, which the Bible holds in the world, it owes to miracles. It owes it simply to the fact that it came out of a profounder depth of thought than any other book, and the effect must be precisely proportionate. Gibbon fancied that it was combinations of circumstances that gave Christianity its place in history. But in nature it takes an ounce to balance an ounce.

All just criticism will not only behold in literature the action of necessary laws, but must also oversee literature itself. The erect mind disparages all books. What are books? it saith: they can have no permanent value. How obviously initial they are to their authors. The books of the nations, the universal books, are long ago forgotten by those who wrote them, and one day we shall forget this primer learning. Literature is made up of a few ideas and a few fables. It is a heap of nouns and verbs enclosing an intuition or two. We must learn to judge books by absolute standards. When we are aroused to a life in ourselves, these traditional splendors of letters grow very pale and cold. Men seem to forget that all literature is ephemeral, and unwillingly entertain the supposition of its utter disappearance. They deem not only letters in general, but the best books in particular, parts of a preestablished harmony, fatal, unalterable, and do not go behind Virgil and Dante, much less behind Moses, Ezekiel, and St. John. But no man can be a good critic of any book, who does not read it in a wisdom which transcends the instructions of any book, and treats the whole extant product of the human intellect as only one age revisable and reversible by him.

In our fidelity to the higher truth, we need not disown our debt in our actual state of culture, in the twilights of experience to these rude helpers. They keep alive the memory and the hope of a better day. When we flout all particular books as initial merely, we truly express the privilege of spiritual nature; but, alas, not the fact and fortune of this low Massachusetts and Boston, of these humble Junes and Decembers of mortal life. Our souls are not self-fed, but do eat and drink of chemical water and wheat. Let us not forget the genial miraculous force we have known to proceed from a book. We go musing into the vault of day and night; no constellation shines, no muse descends, the stars are white points, the roses brick-colored leaves, and frogs pipe, mice cheep, and wagons creak along the road. We return to the house and take up Plutarch or Augustine, and read a few sentences or pages, and lo! the air swarms with life; the front of heaven is full of fiery shapes; secrets of magnanimity and



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grandeur invite us on every hand; life is made up of them. Such is our debt to a book. Observe, moreover, that we ought to credit literature with much more than the bare word it gives us. I have just been reading poems which now in my memory shine with a certain steady, warm, autumnal light. That is not in their grammatical construction which they give me. If I analyze the sentences, it eludes me, but is the genius and suggestion of the whole. Over every true poem lingers a certain wild beauty, immeasurable; a happiness lightsome and delicious fills the heart and brain, – as they say, every man walks environed by his proper atmosphere, extending to some distance around him. This beautiful result must be credited to literature also in casting its account.

In looking at the library of the Present Age we are first struck with the fact of the immense miscellany. It can hardly be characterized by any species of book, for every opinion old and new, every hope and fear, every whim and folly has an organ. It prints a vast carcass of tradition every year, with as much solemnity as a new revelation. Along with these it vents books that breathe of new morning, that seem to heave with the life of millions, books for which men and women peak and pine; books which take the rose out of the cheek of him that wrote them, and give him to the midnight a sad, solitary, diseased man; which leave no man where they found him, but make him better or worse; and which work dubiously on society, and seem to inoculate it with a venom before any healthy result appears.

In order to any complete view of the literature of the present age, an inquiry should include what it quotes, what it writes, and what it wishes to write. In our present attempt to enumerate some traits of the recent literature, we shall have somewhat to offer on each of these topics, but we cannot promise to set in very exact order what we have to say.

In the first place, it has all books. It reprints the wisdom of the world. How can the age be a bad one, which gives me Plato and Paul and Plutarch, St. Augustine, Spinoza, Chapman, Beaumont and Fletcher, Donne and Sir Thomas Browne, beside its own riches? Our presses groan every year with new editions of all the select pieces of the first of mankind, – meditations, history, classifications, opinions, epics, lyrics, which the age adopts by quoting them. If we should designate favorite studies in which the age delights more than in the rest of this great mass of the permanent literature of the human race, one or two instances would be conspicuous. First; the prodigious growth and influence of the genius of Shakspeare, in the last one hundred and fifty years, is itself a fact of the first importance. It almost alone has called out the genius of the German nation into an activity, which spreading from the poetic into the scientific, religious, and philosophical domains, has made theirs now at last the paramount intellectual influence of the world, reacting with great energy on England and America. And thus, and not by mechanical diffusion, does an original genius work and spread himself. Society becomes an immense Shakspeare.



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Not otherwise could the poet be admired, nay, not even seen; – not until his living, conversing, and writing had diffused his spirit into the young and acquiring class, so that he had multiplied himself into a thousand sons, a thousand Shakspeares, and so understands himself.

Secondly; the history of freedom it studies with eagerness in civil, in religious, in philosophic history. It has explored every monument of Anglo-Saxon history and law, and mainly every scrap of printed or written paper remaining from the period of the English Commonwealth. It has, out of England, devoted much thought and pains to the history of philosophy. It has groped in all nations where was any literature for the early poetry not only the dramatic, but the rudest lyric; for songs and ballads, the Nibelungen Lied, the poems of Hans Sachs and Henry of Alckmaer in Germany, for the Cid in Spain, for the rough-cast verse of the interior nations of Europe, and in Britain for the ballads of Scotland and of Robinhood.

In its own books also, our age celebrates its wants, achievements, and hopes. A wide superficial cultivation, often a mere clearing and whitewashing, indicate the new taste in the hitherto neglected savage, whether of the cities or the fields, to know the arts and share the spiritual efforts of the refined. The time is marked by the multitude of writers. Soldiers, sailors, servants, nobles, princes, women, write books. The progress of trade and the facilities for locomotion have made the world nomadic again. Of course it is well informed. All facts are exposed. The age is not to be trifled with: it wishes to know who is who, and what is what. Let there be no ghost stories more. Send Humboldt and Bonpland to explore Mexico, Guiana, and the Cordilleras. Let Captain Parry learn if there be a northwest passage to America, and Mr. Lander learn the true course of the Niger. Puckler Muskau will go to Algiers, and Sir Francis Head to the Pampas, to the Brunns of Nassau, and to Canada. Then let us have charts true and Gazeteers correct. We will know where Babylon stood, and settle the topography of the Roman Forum. We will know whatever is to be known of Australasia, of Japan, of Persia, of Egypt, of Timbuctoo, of Palestine.

Thus Christendom has become a great reading-room; and its books have the convenient merits of the newspaper, its eminent propriety, and its superficial exactness of information. The age is well bred, knows the world, has no nonsense, and herein is well distinguished from the learned ages that preceded ours. That there is no fool like your learned fool, is a proverb plentifully illustrated in the history and writings of the English and European scholars for the half millennium that preceded the beginning of the eighteenth century. The best heads of their time build or occupy such card-house theories of religion, politics, and natural science, as a clever boy would now blow away. What stuff in Kepler, in Cardan, in Lord Bacon. Montaigne, with all his French wit and downright sense, is little better: a sophomore would wind him round his finger. Some of the Medical Remains of Lord Bacon in the book for his own



use, "Of the Prolongation of Life," will move a smile in the unpoetical practitioner of the Medical College. They remind us of the drugs and practice of the leeches and enchanter's of Eastern romance. Thus we find in his whimsical collection of astringents:

- A stomacher of scarlet cloth; whelps or young healthy boys applied to the stomach; hippocratic wines, so they be made of austere materials.
- 8. To remember masticatories for the mouth.
- 9. An orange flower water to be smelled or snuffed up.
- 10. In the third hour after the sun is risen to take in air from some high and open place with a ventilation of *rosae moschatae* and fresh violets, and to stir the earth with infusion of wine and mint.
- 17. To use once during supper time wine in which gold is quenched.
- 26. Heroic desires.
- 28. To provide always an apt breakfast.
- 29. To do nothing against a man's genius.

To the substance of some of these specifics we have no objection. We think we should get no better at the Medical College to-day: and of all astringents we should reckon the best, "heroic desires," and "doing nothing against one's genius." Yet the principle of modern classification is different. In the same place, it is curious to find a good deal of pretty nonsense concerning the virtues of the ashes of a hedgehog, the heart of an ape, the moss that groweth upon the skull of a dead man unburied, and the comfort that proceeds to the system from wearing beads of amber, coral, and hartshorn; – or from rings of sea horse teeth worn for cramp; – to find all these masses of moonshine side by side with the gravest and most valuable observations.

The good Sir Thomas Browne recommends as empirical cures for the gout:

"To wear shoes made of a lion's skin.

"Try transplantation: Give poultices taken from the part to dogs.

"Try the magnified amulet of Muffetus, of spiders' legs worn in a deer's skin, or of tortoises' legs cut off from the living tortoise and wrapped up in the skin of a kid."

Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy is an encyclopaedia of authors and of opinions, where one who should forage for exploded theories might easily load his panniers. In daemonology, for example; "The air," he says, "is not so full of flies in summer as it is at all times of invisible devils. They counterfeit suns and moons, and sit on ships' masts. They cause whirlwinds on a sudden and tempestuous storms, which though our meteorologists



generally refer to natural causes, yet I am of Bodine's mind, they are more often caused by those aerial devils in their several quarters. Cardan gives much information concerning them. His father had one of them, an aerial devil, bound to him for eight and twenty years; as Agrippa's dog had a devil tied to his collar. Some think that Paracelsus had one confined in his sword pommel. Others wear them in rings. At Hammel in Saxony, the devil in the likeness of a pied piper carried away 130 children that were never after seen."

All this sky-full of cobwebs is now forever swept clean away. Another race is born. Humboldt and Herschel, Davy and Arago, Malthus and Bentham have arrived. If Robert Burton should be quoted to represent the army of scholars, who have furnished a contribution to his moody pages, Horace Walpole, whose letters circulate in the libraries, might be taken with some fitness to represent the spirit of much recent literature. He has taste, common sense, love of facts, impatience of humbug, love of history, love of splendor, love of justice, and the sentiment of honor among gentlemen; but no life whatever of the higher faculties, no faith, no hope, no aspiration, no question touching the secret of nature.

The favorable side of this research and love of facts is the bold and systematic criticism, which has appeared in every department of literature. From Wolf's attack upon the authenticity of the Homeric Poems, dates a new epoch in learning. Ancient history has been found to be not yet settled. It is to be subjected to common sense. It is to be cross examined. It is to be seen, whether its traditions will consist not with universal belief, but with universal experience. Niebuhr has sifted Roman history by the like methods. Heeren has made good essays towards ascertaining the necessary facts in the Grecian, Persian, Assyrian, Egyptian, Ethiopic, Carthaginian nations. English history has been analyzed by Turner, Hallam, Brodie, Lingard, Palgrave. Goethe has gone the circuit of human knowledge, as Lord Bacon did before him, writing True or False on every article. Bentham has attempted the same scrutiny in reference to Civil Law. Pestalozzi out of a deep love undertook the reform of education. The ambition of Coleridge in England embraced the whole problem of philosophy; to find, that is, a foundation in thought for everything that existed in fact. The German philosophers, Schelling, Kant, Fichte, have applied their analysis to nature and thought with an antique boldness. There can be no honest inquiry, which is not better than acquiescence. Inquiries, which once looked grave and vital no doubt, change their appearance very fast, and come to look frivolous beside the later queries to which they gave occasion.

This skeptical activity, at first directed on circumstances and historical views deemed of great importance, soon penetrated deeper than Rome or Egypt, than history or institutions, or the vocabulary of metaphysics, namely, into the thinker himself, and into every function he exercises. The poetry and the speculation of the age are marked by a certain philosophic turn, which



discriminates them from the works of earlier times. The poet is not content to see how "fair hangs the apple from the rock," "what music a sunbeam awoke in the groves," nor of Hardiknute, how "stately steppes he east the way, and stately steppes he west," but he now revolves, What is the apple to me? and what the birds to me? and what is Hardiknute to me? and what am I? And this is called *subjectiveness*, as the eye is withdrawn from the object and fixed on the subject or mind.

We can easily concede that a steadfast tendency of this sort appears in modern literature. It is the new consciousness of the one mind which predominates in criticism. It is the uprise of the soul and not the decline. It is founded on that insatiable demand for unity – the need to recognize one nature in all the variety of objects, – which always characterizes a genius of the first order. Accustomed always to behold the presence of the universe in every part, the soul will not condescend to look at any new part as a stranger, but saith, – "I know all already, and what art thou? Show me thy relations to me, to all, and I will entertain thee also."

There is a pernicious ambiguity in the use of the term *subjective*. We say, in accordance with the general view I have stated, that the single soul feels its right to be no longer confounded with numbers, but itself to sit in judgment on history and literature, and to summon all facts and parties before its tribunal. And in this sense the age is subjective. But, in all ages, and now more, the narrow-minded have no interest in anything but its relation to their personality. What will help them to be delivered from some burden, eased in some circumstance, flattered, or pardoned, or enriched, what will help to marry or to divorce them, to prolong or to sweeten life, is sure of their interest, and nothing else. Every form under the whole heaven they behold in this most partial light or darkness of intense selfishness, until we hate their being. And this habit of intellectual selfishness has acquired in our day the fine name of *subjectiveness*.

Nor is the distinction between these two habits to be found in the circumstance of using the first person singular, or reciting facts and feelings of personal history. A man may say *I*, and never refer to himself as an individual; and a man may recite passages of his life with no feeling of egotism. Nor need a man have a vicious *subjectiveness* because he deals in abstract propositions.

But the criterion, which discriminates these two habits in the poet's mind, is the tendency of his composition; namely, whether it leads us to nature, or to the person of the writer. The great always introduce us to facts; small men introduce us always to themselves. The great man, even whilst he relates a private fact personal to him, is really leading us away from him to an universal experience. His own affection is in nature, in *What is*, and, of course, all his communication leads outward to it, starting from whatsoever point. The great never with their own consent become a load on the minds they instruct. The more they



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draw us to them, the farther from them or more independent of them we are, because they have brought us to the knowledge of somewhat deeper than both them and us. The great never hinder us; for, as the Jews had a custom of laying their beds north and south, founded on an opinion that the path of God was east and west, and they would not desecrate by the infirmities of sleep the Divine circuits, so the activity of the good is coincident with the axle of the world, with the sun and moon, with the course of the rivers and of the winds, with the stream of laborers in the street, and with all the activity and well being of the race. The great lead us to nature, and, in our age, to metaphysical nature, to the invisible awful facts, to moral abstractions, which are not less nature than is a river or a coal mine; nay, they are far more nature, but its essence and soul.

But the weak and evil, led also to analyze, saw nothing in thought but luxury. Thought for the selfish became selfish. They invited us to contemplate nature, and showed us an abominable self. Would you know the genius of the writer? Do not enumerate his talents or his feats, but ask thyself, What spirit is he of? Do gladness and hope and fortitude flow from his page into thy heart? Has he led thee to nature because his own soul was too happy in beholding her power and love; or is his passion for the wilderness only the sensibility of the sick, the exhibition of a talent, which only shines whilst you praise it; which has no root in the character, and can thus minister to the vanity but not to the happiness of the possessor; and which derives all its eclat from our conventional education, but would not make itself intelligible to the wise man of another age or country? The water we wash with never speaks of itself, nor does fire, or wind, or tree. Neither does the noble natural man: he yields himself to your occasion and use; but his act expresses a reference to universal good.

Another element of the modern poetry akin to this subjective tendency, or rather the direction of that same on the question of resources, is, the Feeling of the Infinite. Of the perception now fast becoming a conscious fact, — that there is One Mind, and that all the powers and privileges which lie in any, lie in all; that I as a man may claim and appropriate whatever of true or fair or good or strong has anywhere been exhibited; that Moses and Confucius, Montaigne and Leibnitz are not so much individuals as they are parts of man and parts of me, and my intelligence proves them my own, — literature is far the best expression. It is true, this is not the only nor the obvious lesson it teaches. A selfish commerce and government have caught the eye and usurped the hand of the masses. It is not to be contested that selfishness and the senses write the laws under which we live, and that the street seems to be built, and the men and women in it moving not in reference to pure and grand ends, but rather to very short and sordid ones. Perhaps no considerable minority, perhaps no one man leads a quite clean and lofty life. What then? We concede in sadness the fact. But



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we say that these low customary ways are not all that survives in human beings. There is that in us which mutters, and that which groans, and that which triumphs, and that which aspires. There are facts on which men of the world superciliously smile, which are worth all their trade and politics, the impulses, namely, which drive young men into gardens and solitary places, and cause extravagant gestures, starts, distortions of the countenance, and passionate exclamations; sentiments, which find no aliment or language for themselves on the wharves, in court, or market, but which are soothed by silence, by darkness, by the pale stars, and the presence of nature. All over the modern world the educated and susceptible have betrayed their discontent with the limits of our municipal life, and with the poverty of our dogmas of religion and philosophy. They betray this impatience by fleeing for resource to a conversation with nature – which is courted in a certain moody and exploring spirit, as if they anticipated a more intimate union of man with the world than has been known in recent ages. Those who cannot tell what they desire or expect, still sigh and struggle with indefinite thoughts and vast wishes. The very child in the nursery prattles mysticism, and doubts and philosophizes. A wild striving to express a more inward and infinite sense characterizes the works of every art. The music of Beethoven is said by those who understand it, to labor with vaster conceptions and aspirations than music has attempted before. This Feeling of the Infinite has deeply colored the poetry of the period. This new love of the vast, always native in Germany, was imported into France by De Staël, appeared in England in Coleridge, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Felicia Hemans, and finds a most genial climate in the American mind. Scott and Crabbe, who formed themselves on the past, had none of this tendency; their poetry is objective. In Byron, on the other hand, it predominates; but in Byron it is blind, it sees not its true end – an infinite good, alive and beautiful, a life nourished on absolute beatitudes, descending into nature to behold itself reflected there. His will is perverted, he worships the accidents of society, and his praise of nature is thieving and selfish.

Nothing certifies the prevalence of this taste in the people more than the circulation of the poems, – one would say, most incongruously united by some bookseller, – of Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats. The only unity is in the subjectiveness and the aspiration common to the three writers. Shelley, though a poetic mind, is never a poet. His muse is uniformly imitative; all his poems composite. A good English scholar he is, with ear, taste, and memory, much more, he is a character full of noble and prophetic traits; but imagination, the original, authentic fire of the bard, he has not. He is clearly modern, and shares with Richter, Chateaubriand, Manzoni, and Wordsworth, the feeling of the infinite, which so labors for expression in their different genius. But all his lines are arbitrary, not necessary. When we read poetry, the mind asks, – Was this verse

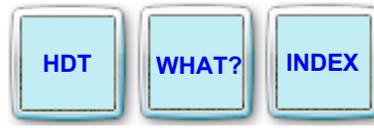


one of twenty which the author might have written as well; or is this what that man was created to say? But, whilst every line of the true poet will be genuine, he is in a boundless power and freedom to say a million things. And the reason why he can say one thing well, is because his vision extends to the sight of all things, and so he describes each as one who knows many and all.

The fame of Wordsworth is a leading fact in modern literature, when it is considered how hostile his genius at first seemed to the reigning taste, and with what feeble poetic talents his great and steadily growing dominion has been established. More than any other poet his success has been not his own, but that of the idea which he shared with his coevals, and which he has rarely succeeded in adequately expressing. The Excursion awakened in every lover of nature the right feeling. We saw stars shine, we felt the awe of mountains, we heard the rustle of the wind in the grass, and knew again the ineffable secret of solitude. It was a great joy. It was nearer to nature than anything we had before. But the interest of the poem ended almost with the narrative of the influences of nature on the mind of the Boy, in the first book. Obviously for that passage the poem was written, and with the exception of this and of a few strains of the like character in the sequel, the whole poem was dull. Here was no poem, but here was poetry, and a sure index where the subtle muse was about to pitch her tent and find the argument of her song. It was the human soul in these last ages striving for a just publication of itself. Add to this, however, the great praise of Wordsworth, that more than any other contemporary bard he is pervaded with a reverence of somewhat higher than (conscious) thought. There is in him that property common to all great poets, a wisdom of humanity, which is superior to any talents which they exert. It is the wisest part of Shakspeare and of Milton. For they are poets by the free course which they allow to the informing soul, which through their eyes beholdeth again and blesseth the things which it hath made. The soul is superior to its knowledge, wiser than any of its works.

With the name of Wordsworth rises to our recollection the name of his contemporary and friend, Walter Savage Landor – a man working in a very different and peculiar spirit, yet one whose genius and accomplishments deserve a wiser criticism than we have yet seen applied to them, and the rather that his name does not readily associate itself with any school of writers. Of Thomas Carlyle, also we shall say nothing at this time, since the quality and the energy of his influence on the youth of this country will require at our hands ere long a distinct and faithful acknowledgment.

But of all men he, who has united in himself and that in the most extraordinary degree the tendencies of the era, is the German poet, naturalist, and philosopher, Goethe. Whatever the age inherited or invented, he made his own. He has owed to Commerce and to the victories of the Understanding, all their spoils. Such was his capacity, that the magazines of the world's



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ancient or modern wealth, which arts and intercourse and skepticism could command – he wanted them all. Had there been twice so much, he could have used it as well. Geologist, mechanic, merchant, chemist, king, radical, painter, composer, – all worked for him, and a thousand men seemed to look through his eyes. He learned as readily as other men breathe. Of all the men of this time, not one has seemed so much at home in it as he. He was not afraid to live. And in him this encyclopaedia of facts, which it has been the boast of the age to compile, wrought an equal effect. He was knowing; he was brave; he was clean from all narrowness; he has a perfect propriety and taste, – a quality by no means common to the German writers. Nay, since the earth, as we said, had become a reading-room, the new opportunities seem to have aided him to be that resolute realist he is, and seconded his sturdy determination to see things for what they are. To look at him, one would say, there was never an observer before. What sagacity, what industry of observation! to read his record is a frugality of time, for you shall find no word that does not stand for a thing, and he is of that comprehension, which can see the value of truth. His love of nature has seemed to give a new meaning to that word. There was never man more domesticated in this world than he. And he is an apology for the analytic spirit of the period, because, of his analysis, always wholes were the result. All conventions, all traditions he rejected. And yet he felt his entire right and duty to stand before and try and judge every fact in nature. He thought it necessary to dot round with his own pen the entire sphere of knowables; and for many of his stories, this seems the only reason: Here is a piece of humanity I had hitherto omitted to sketch; – take this. He does not say so in syllables, – yet a sort of conscientious feeling he had to be up to the universe, is the best account and apology for many of them. He shared also the subjectiveness of the age, and that too in both the senses I have discriminated. With the sharpest eye for form, color, botany, engraving, medals, persons, and manners, he never stopped at surface, but pierced the purpose of a thing, and studied to reconcile that purpose with his own being. What he could so reconcile was good; what he could not, was false. Hence a certain greatness encircles every fact he treats; for to him it has a soul, an eternal reason why it was so, and not otherwise. This is the secret of that deep realism, which went about among all objects he beheld, to find the cause why they must be what they are. It was with him a favorite task to find a theory of every institution, custom, art, work of art, which he observes. Witness his explanation of the Italian mode of reckoning the hours of the day, as growing out of the Italian climate; of the obelisk of Egypt, as growing out of a common natural fracture in the granite parallelepiped in Upper Egypt; of the Doric architecture, and the Gothic; of the Venetian music of the gondolier originating in the habit of the fishers' wives of the Lido singing to their husbands on the sea; of the Amphitheatre, which is the enclosure of the natural cup of heads



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that arranges itself round every spectacle in the street; of the coloring of Titian and Paul Veronese, which one may verify in the common daylight in Venice every afternoon; of the Carnival at Rome; of the domestic rural architecture in Italy; and many the like examples.

But also that other vicious subjectiveness, that vice of the time, infected him also. We are provoked with his Olympian self-complacency, the patronizing air with which he vouchsafes to tolerate the genius and performances of other mortals, "the good Hiller," "our excellent Kant," "the friendly Wieland," &c. &c. There is a good letter from Wieland to Merck, in which Wieland relates that Goethe read to a select party his journal of a tour in Switzerland with the Grand Duke, and their passage through Valois and over the St. Gothard. "It was," says Wieland, "as good as Xenophon's Anabasis. The piece is one of his most masterly productions, and is thought and written with the greatness peculiar to him. The fair hearers were enthusiastic at the nature in this piece; I liked the sly art in the composition, whereof they saw nothing, still better. It is a true poem, so concealed is the art too. But what most remarkably in this as in all his other works distinguishes him from Homer and Shakspeare, is, that the Me, the *Ille ego*, everywhere glimmers through, although without any boasting and with an infinite fineness." This subtle element of egotism in Goethe certainly does not seem to deform his compositions, but to lower the moral influence of the man. He differs from all the great in the total want of frankness. Whoso saw Milton, whoso saw Shakspeare, saw them do their best, and utter their whole heart manlike among their brethren. No man was permitted to call Goethe brother. He hid himself, and worked always to astonish, which is an egotism, and therefore little.

If we try Goethe by the ordinary canons of criticism, we should say that his thinking is of great altitude, and all level; — not a succession of summits, but a high Asiatic table land. Dramatic power, the rarest talent in literature, he has very little. He has an eye constant to the fact of life, and that never pauses in its advance. But the great felicities, the miracles of poetry, he has never. It is all design with him, just thought and instructed expression, analogies, allusion, illustration, which knowledge and correct thinking supply; but of Shakspeare and the transcendant muse, no syllable. Yet in the court and law to which we ordinarily speak, and without adverting to absolute standards, we claim for him the praise of truth, of fidelity to his intellectual nature. He is the king of all scholars. In these days and in this country, where the scholars are few and idle, where men read easy books and sleep after dinner, it seems as if no book could so safely be put in the hands of young men as the letters of Goethe, which attest the incessant activity of this man to eighty years, in an endless variety of studies with uniform cheerfulness and greatness of mind. They cannot be read without shaming us into an emulating industry. Let him have the praise of the love of truth. We think, when we contemplate the



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stupendous glory of the world, that it were life enough for one man merely to lift his hands and cry with St. Augustine, "Wrangle who pleases, I will wonder." Well, this he did. Here was a man, who, in the feeling that the thing itself was so admirable as to leave all comment behind, went up and down from object to object, lifting the veil from everyone, and did no more. What he said of Lavater, may trulier be said of him, that "it was fearful to stand in the presence of one, before whom all the boundaries within which nature has circumscribed our being were laid flat." His are the bright and terrible eyes, which meet the modern student in every sacred chapel of thought, in every public enclosure.

But now, that we may not seem to dodge the question which all men ask, nor pay a great man so ill a compliment as to praise him only in the conventional and comparative speech, let us honestly record our thought upon the total worth and influence of this genius. Does he represent not only the achievement of that age in which he lived, but that which it would be and is now becoming? And what shall we think of that absence of the moral sentiment, that singular equivalence to him of good and evil in action, which discredits his compositions to the pure? The spirit of his biography, of his poems, of his tales, is identical, and we may here set down by way of comment on his genius the impressions recently awakened in us by the story of Wilhelm Meister.

All great men have written proudly, nor cared to explain. They knew that the intelligent reader would come at last, and would thank them. So did Dante, so did Machiavel. Goethe has done this in Meister. We can fancy him saying to himself; – There are poets enough of the ideal; let me paint the Actual, as, after years of dreams, it will still appear and reappear to wise men. That all shall right itself in the long Morrow, I may well allow, and my novel may easily wait for the same regeneration. The age, that can damn it as false and falsifying, will see that it is deeply one with the genius and history of all the centuries. I have given my characters a bias to error. Men have the same. I have let mischances befall instead of good fortune. They do so daily. And out of many vices and misfortunes, I have let a great success grow, as I had known in my own and many other examples. Fierce churchmen and effeminate aspirants will chide and hate my name, but every keen beholder of life will justify my truth, and will acquit me of prejudging the cause of humanity by painting it with this morose fidelity. To a profound soul is not austere truth the sweetest flattery?

Yes, O Goethe! but the ideal is truer than the actual. That is ephemeral, but this changes not. Moreover, because nature is moral, that mind only can see, in which the same order entirely obtains. An interchangeable Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, each wholly interfused in the other, must make the humors of that eye, which would see causes reaching to their last effect and reproducing the world forever. The least inequality of mixture, the excess of one element over the other, in that degree



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diminishes the transparency of things, makes the world opaque to the observer, and destroys so far the value of his experience. No particular gifts can countervail this defect. In reading *Meister*, I am charmed with the insight; to use a phrase of Ben Jonson's, "it is rammed with life." I find there actual men and women even too faithfully painted. I am, moreover, instructed in the possibility of a highly accomplished society, and taught to look for great talent and culture under a grey coat. But this is all. The limits of artificial society are never quite out of sight. The vicious conventions, which hem us in like prison walls, and which the poet should explode at his touch, stand for all they are worth in the newspaper. I am never lifted above myself. I am not transported out of the dominion of the senses, or cheered with an infinite tenderness, or armed with a grand trust.

Goethe, then, must be set down as the poet of the Actual, not of the Ideal; the poet of limitation, not of possibility; of this world, and not of religion and hope; in short, if I may say so, the poet of prose, and not of poetry. He accepts the base doctrine of Fate, and gleans what straggling joys may yet remain out of its ban. He is like a banker or a weaver with a passion for the country, he steals out of the hot streets before sunrise, or after sunset, or on a rare holiday, to get a draught of sweet air, and a gaze at the magnificence of summer, but dares not break from his slavery and lead a man's life in a man's relation to nature. In that which should be his own place, he feels like a truant, and is scourged back presently to his task and his cell. Poetry is with Goethe thus external, the gilding of the chain, the mitigation of his fate; but the muse never essays those thunder-tones, which cause to vibrate the sun and the moon, which dissipate by dreadful melody all this iron network of circumstance, and abolish the old heavens and the old earth before the free-will or Godhead of man. That Goethe had not a moral perception proportionate to his other powers, is not then merely a circumstance, as we might relate of a man that he had or had not the sense of tune or an eye for colors; but it is the cardinal fact of health or disease; since, lacking this, he failed in the high sense to be a creator, and with divine endowments drops by irreversible decree into the common history of genius. He was content to fall into the track of vulgar poets, and spend on common aims his splendid endowments, and has declined the office proffered to now and then a man in many centuries in the power of his genius – of a Redeemer of the human mind. He has written better than other poets, only as his talent was subtler, but the ambition of creation he refused. Life for him is prettier, easier, wiser, decenter, has a gem or two more on its robe, but its old eternal burden is not relieved; no drop of healthier blood flows yet in its veins. Let him pass. Humanity must wait for its physician still at the side of the road, and confess as this man goes out that they have served it better, who assured it out of the innocent hope in their hearts that a Physician will come, than this majestic Artist, with all the



treasuries of wit, of science, and of power at his command. The criticism, which is not so much spoken as felt in reference to Goethe, instructs us directly in the hope of literature. We feel that a man gifted like him should not leave the world as he found it. It is true, though somewhat sad, that every fine genius teaches us how to blame himself. Being so much, we cannot forgive him for not being more. When one of these grand monads is incarnated, whom nature seems to design for eternal men and draw to her bosom, we think that the old wearinesses of Europe and Asia, the trivial forms of daily life will now end, and a new morning break on us all. What is Austria? What is England? What is our graduated and petrified social scale of ranks and employments? Shall not a poet redeem us from these idolatries, and pale their legendary lustre before the fires of the Divine Wisdom which burn in his heart? All that in our sovereign moments each of us has divined of the powers of thought, all the hints of omnipresence and energy which we have caught, this man should unfold and constitute facts.

And this is the insatiable craving which alternately saddens and gladdens men at this day. The Doctrine of the Life of Man established after the truth through all his faculties; – this is the thought which the literature of this hour meditates and labors to say. This is that which tunes the tongue and fires the eye and sits in the silence of the youth. Verily it will not long want articulate and melodious expression. There is nothing in the heart but comes presently to the lips. The very depth of the sentiment, which is the author of all the cutaneous life we see, is guarantee for the riches of science and of song in the age to come. He, who doubts whether this age or this country can yield any contribution to the literature of the world, only betrays his own blindness to the necessities of the human soul. Has the power of poetry ceased, or the need? Have the eyes ceased to see that which they would have, and which they have not? Have they ceased to see other eyes? Are there no lonely, anxious, wondering children, who must tell their tale? Are we not evermore whipped by thoughts;

“In sorrow steeped and steeped in love
Of thoughts not yet incarnated?”

The heart beats in this age as of old, and the passions are busy as ever. Nature has not lost one ringlet of her beauty, one impulse of resistance and valor. From the necessity of loving none are exempt, and he that loves must utter his desires. A charm as radiant as beauty ever beamed, a love that fainteth at the sight of its object, is new to-day.

“The world does not run smoother than of old,
There are sad haps that must be told.”

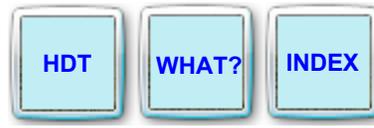
Man is not so far lost but that he suffers ever the great Discontent, which is the elegy of his loss and the prediction of his recovery. In the gay saloon he laments that these figures are not what Raphael and Guercino painted. Withered though he stand and trifler though he be, the august spirit of the world



looks out from his eyes. In his heart he knows the ache of spiritual pain, and his thought can animate the sea and land. What then shall hinder the Genius of the time from speaking its thought? It cannot be silent, if it would. It will write in a higher spirit, and a wider knowledge, and with a grander practical aim, than ever yet guided the pen of poet. It will write the annals of a changed world, and record the descent of principles into practice, of love into Government, of love into Trade. It will describe the new heroic life of man, the now unbelieved possibility of simple living and of clean and noble relations with men. Religion will bind again these that were sometime frivolous, customary, enemies, skeptics, self-seekers, into a joyful reverence for the circumambient Whole, and that which was ecstasy shall become daily bread.

New Poetry

The tendencies of the times are so democratical, that we shall soon have not so much as a pulpit or raised platform in any church or townhouse, but each person, who is moved to address any public assembly, will speak from the floor. The like revolution in literature is now giving importance to the portfolio over the book. Only one man in the thousand may print a book, but one in ten or one in five may inscribe his thoughts, or at least with short commentary his favorite readings in a private journal. The philosophy of the day has long since broached a more liberal doctrine of the poetic faculty than our fathers held, and reckons poetry the right and power of every man to whose culture justice is done. We own that, though we were trained in a stricter school of literary faith, and were in all our youth inclined to the enforcement of the strictest restrictions on the admission of candidates to the Parnassian fraternity, and denied the name of poetry to every composition in which the workmanship and the material were not equally excellent, in our middle age we have grown lax, and have learned to find pleasure in verses of a ruder strain, – to enjoy verses of *society*, or those effusions which in persons of a happy nature are the easy and unpremeditated translation of their thoughts and feelings into rhyme. This new taste for a certain private and household poetry, for somewhat less pretending than the festal and solemn verses which are written for the nations, really indicates, we suppose, that a new style of poetry exists. The number of writers has increased. Every child has been taught the tongues. The universal communication of the arts of reading and writing has brought the works of the great poets into every house, and made all ears familiar with the poetic forms. The progress of popular institutions has favored self-respect, and broken down that terror of the great, which once imposed awe and hesitation on the talent of the masses of society. A wider epistolary intercourse ministers to the ends of sentiment and reflection than ever existed before; the practice of writing diaries is becoming almost general; and every day witnesses new attempts to throw into verse the experiences of private life.



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What better omen of true progress can we ask than an increasing intellectual and moral interest of men in each other? What can be better for the republic than that the Capitol, the White House, and the Court House are becoming of less importance than the farm-house and the book-closet? If we are losing our interest in public men, and finding that their spell lay in number and size only, and acquiring instead a taste for the depths of thought and emotion as they may be sounded in the soul of the citizen or the countryman, does it not replace man for the state, and character for official power? Men should be treated with solemnity; and when they come to chant their private griefs and doubts and joys, they have a new scale by which to compute magnitude and relation. Art is the noblest consolation of calamity. The poet is compensated for his defects in the street and in society, if in his chamber he has turned his mischance into noble numbers.

Is there not room then for a new department in poetry, namely, *Verses of the Portfolio*? We have fancied that we drew greater pleasure from some manuscript verses than from printed ones of equal talent. For there was herein the charm of character; they were confessions; and the faults, the imperfect parts, the fragmentary verses, the halting rhymes, had a worth beyond that of a high finish; for they testified that the writer was more man than artist, more earnest than vain; that the thought was too sweet and sacred to him, than that he should suffer his ears to hear or his eyes to see a superficial defect in the expression.

The characteristic of such verses is, that being not written for publication, they lack that finish which the conventions of literature require of authors. But if poetry of this kind has merit, we conceive that the prescription which demands a rhythmical polish may be easily set aside; and when a writer has outgrown the state of thought which produced the poem, the interest of letters is served by publishing it imperfect, as we preserve studies, torsos, and blocked statues of the great masters. For though we should be loath to see the wholesome conventions, to which we have alluded, broken down by a general incontinence of publication, and every man's and woman's diary flying into the bookstores, yet it is to be considered, on the other hand, that men of genius are often more incapable than others of that elaborate execution which criticism exacts. Men of genius in general are, more than others, incapable of any perfect exhibition, because however agreeable it may be to them to act on the public, it is always a secondary aim. They are humble, self-accusing, moody men, whose worship is toward the Ideal Beauty, which chooses to be courted not so often in perfect hymns, as in wild ear-piercing ejaculations, or in silent musings. Their face is forward, and their heart is in this heaven. By so much are they disqualified for a perfect success in any particular performance to which they can give only a divided affection. But the man of talents has every advantage in the competition. He can give that cool and commanding



attention to the thing to be done, that shall secure its just performance. Yet are the failures of genius better than the victories of talent; and we are sure that some crude manuscript poems have yielded us a more sustaining and a more stimulating diet, than many elaborated and classic productions.

We have been led to these thoughts by reading some verses, which were lately put into our hands by a friend with the remark, that they were the production of a youth, who had long passed out of the mood in which he wrote them, so that they had become quite dead to him. Our first feeling on reading them was a lively joy. So then the Muse is neither dead nor dumb, but has found a voice in these cold Cisatlantic States. Here is poetry which asks no aid of magnitude or number, of blood or crime, but finds theatre enough in the first field or brookside, breadth and depth enough in the flow of its own thought. Here is self-repose, which to our mind is stabler than the Pyramids; here is self-respect which leads a man to date from his heart more proudly than from Rome. Here is love which sees through surface, and adores the gentle nature and not the costume. Here is religion, which is not of the Church of England, nor of the Church of Boston. Here is the good wise heart, which sees that the end of culture is strength and cheerfulness. In an age too which tends with so strong an inclination to the philosophical muse, here is poetry more purely intellectual than any American verses we have yet seen, distinguished from all competition by two merits; the fineness of perception; and the poet's trust in his own genius to that degree, that there is an absence of all conventional imagery, and a bold use of that which the moment's mood had made sacred to him, quite careless that it might be sacred to no other, and might even be slightly ludicrous to the first reader. We proceed to give our readers some selections, taken without much order from this rich pile of manuscript. We first find the poet in his boat.

Boat Song

The river calmly flows,
Through shining banks, through lonely glen,
Where the owl shrieks, though ne'er the cheer of men
Has stirred its mute repose,
Still if you should walk there, you would go there again.

The stream is well alive;
Another passive world you see,
Where downward grows the form of every tree;
Like soft light clouds they thrive:
Like them let us in our pure loves reflected be.

A yellow gleam is thrown
Into the secrets of that maze
Of tangled trees, which late shut out our gaze,
Refusing to be known;
It must its privacy unclose, — its glories blaze.

Sweet falls the summer air
Over her frame who sails with me:
Her way like that is beautifully free,



Her nature far more rare,
And is her constant heart of virgin purity.

A quivering star is seen
Keeping his watch above the hill,
Though from the sun's retreat small light is still
Poured on earth's saddening mien: —
We all are tranquilly obeying Evening's will.

Thus ever love the POWER;
To simplest thoughts dispose the mind;
In each obscure event a worship find
Like that of this dim hour, —
In lights, and airs, and trees, and in all human kind.

We smoothly glide below
The faintly glimmering worlds of light:
Day has a charm, and this deceptive night
Brings a mysterious show; —
He shadows our dear earth, — but his cool stars are white.

TWO YEARS BEFORE THE MAST

TWO YEARS BEFORE THE MAST. A Personal Narrative of Life at Sea.

New York: Harper and Brothers. 12mo. pp. 483.

This is a voice from the forecandle. Though a narrative of literal, prosaic truth, it possesses something of the romantic charm of Robinson Crusoe. Few more interesting chapters of the literature of the sea have ever fallen under our notice. The author left the halls of the University for the deck of a merchant vessel, exchanging "the tight dress coat, silk cap, and kid gloves of an undergraduate at Cambridge, for the loose duck trousers, checked shirt, and tarpaulin hat of a sailor," and here presents us the fruits of his voyage. His book will have a wide circulation; it will be praised in the public prints; we shall be told that it does honor to his head and heart; but we trust that it will do much more than this; that it will open the eyes of many to the condition of the sailor, to the fearful waste of man, by which the luxuries of foreign climes are made to increase the amount of commercial wealth. This simple narrative, stamped with deep sincerity, and often displaying an unstudied, pathetic eloquence, may lead to reflections, which mere argument and sentimental appeals do not call forth. It will serve to hasten the day of reckoning between society and the sailor, which, though late, will not fail to come.

SOCIAL DESTINY OF MAN

SOCIAL DESTINY OF MAN: OR ASSOCIATION AND REORGANIZATION OF INDUSTRY.

By ALBERT BRISBANE. Philadelphia. 12mo. pp. 480.

This work is designed to give a condensed view of the system of M. Fourier, for the improvement and elevation of productive industry. It will be read with deep interest by a large class of our population. The name of Fourier may be placed at the head of modern thinkers, whose attention has been given to the practical evils of society and the means of their removal. His



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general principles should be cautiously separated from the details which accompany their exposition, many of which are so exclusively adapted to the French character, as to prejudice their reception with persons of opposite habits and associations. The great question, which he brings up for discussion, concerns the union of labor and capital in the same individuals, by a system of combined and organized industry. This question, it is more than probable, will not be set aside at once, whenever its importance is fully perceived, and those who are interested in its decision will find materials of no small value in the writings of M. Fourier. They may be regarded, in some sense, as the scientific analysis of the cooperative principle, which has, within a few years past, engaged the public attention in England, and in certain cases, received a successful, practical application.

July 2, Thursday: [Waldo Emerson](#) noted that on page 18 of the printed version of [THE DIAL](#) in [Henry Thoreau](#)'s essay on the Roman satirist [Aulus Persius Flaccus](#) there was a truly egregious error, in that the word "nature" had been typeset rather than "satire." He asked [Margaret Fuller](#) to do the dog labor of pen-correcting this in all the printed copies that might come into her hand before they were posted.

THE DIAL, JULY 1840

[This pen correction couldn't have needed longer than an hour since the magazine never amounted to more than 220 copies. You will not be able to see Margaret's pen correction in the above electronic copy because it does not amount to electronic copy of one of the original posted copies, but instead actually is electronic copy of the material as it was then republished with three issues bound together as one "annual" volume.]

THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT



Before July 17: [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) again followed Miss Ellen Devereux Sewall to Scituate, before the 17th, and this time as he strolled with her on the beach, while her chaperone Miss Prudence Ward was resting on some rocks, out of earshot, he proposed marriage.¹⁴ She accepted him, then shortly afterward declined.



It is known that her mother learned of this proposal and responded that her minister father disapproved of [Transcendentalists](#); Miss Ellen would be sent to stay with relatives in Watertown, New York safely out of the

14. It is this incident to which [Thoreau](#) would refer on page 293 of [A WEEK](#):



[A WEEK](#): I am astonished at the singular pertinacity and endurance of our lives. The miracle is, that what is **is**, when it is so difficult, if not impossible, for anything else to be; that we walk on in our particular paths so far, before we fall on death and fate, merely because we must walk in some path; that every man can get a living, and so few can do anything more. So much only can I accomplish ere health and strength are gone, and yet this suffices. The bird now sits just out of gunshot. I am never rich in money, and I am never meanly poor. If debts are incurred, why, debts are in the course of events cancelled, as it were by the same law by which they were incurred. I heard that an engagement was entered into between a certain youth and a maiden, and then I heard that it was broken off, but I did not know the reason in either case. We are hedged about, we think, by accident and circumstance, now we creep as in a dream, and now again we run, as if there were a fate in it, and all things thwarted or assisted. I cannot change my clothes but when I do, and yet I do change them, and soil the new ones. It is wonderful that this gets done, when some admirable deeds which I could mention do not get done. Our particular lives seem of such fortune and confident strength and durability as piers of solid rock thrown forward into the tide of circumstance. When every other path would fail, with singular and unerring confidence we advance on our particular course. What risks we run! famine and fire and pestilence, and the thousand forms of a cruel fate, – and yet every man lives till he – dies. How did he manage that? Is there no immediate danger? We wonder superfluously when we hear of a somnambulist walking a plank securely, – we have walked a plank all our lives up to this particular string-piece where we are. My life will wait for nobody, but is being matured still without delay, while I go about the streets, and chaffer with this man and that to secure it a living. It is as indifferent and easy meanwhile as a poor man's dog, and making acquaintance with its kind. It will cut its own channel like a mountain stream, and by the longest ridge is not kept from the sea at last. I have found all things thus far, persons and inanimate matter, elements and seasons, strangely adapted to my resources. No matter what imprudent haste in my career; I am permitted to be rash. Gulfs are bridged in a twinkling, as if some unseen baggage-train carried pontoons for my convenience, and while from the heights I scan the tempting but unexplored Pacific Ocean of Futurity, the ship is being carried over the mountains piecemeal on the backs of mules and lamas, whose keel shall plough its waves, and bear me to the Indies.



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reach of those Thoreau boys. [Henry Thoreau](#) submitted "THE SERVICE" to [Margaret Fuller](#) for [THE DIAL](#):

"THE SERVICE": A man's life should be a stately march to an unheard music, and when to his fellows it seems irregular and inharmonious, he will be stepping to a livelier measure, which only his nicer ear can detect. There will be no halt ever, but at most a marching on his post, or such a pause as is richer than any sound – when the deepened melody is no longer heard, but implicitly consented to with the whole life and being. He will take a false step never, even in the most arduous circumstances, for then the music will not fail to swell into corresponding volume and distinctness and rule the movement it accompanies.

...

To the sensitive soul the Universe has her own fixed measure and rhythm, which is its measure also and constitutes the regularity and health of its pulse. When the body marches to the measure of the soul then is true courage and invincible strength.



In this, Thoreau made use of a couplet from [Robert Herrick](#)'s poem "To Fortune":

TUMBLE me down, and I will sit
Upon my ruins, smiling yet ;
Tear me to tatters, yet I'll be
Patient in my necessity.
Laugh at my scraps of clothes, and shun
Me, as a fear'd infection ;
Yet, scare-crow-like, I'll walk as one
Neglecting thy derision.

"THE SERVICE": The Romans "made Fortune surname to Fortitude," for fortitude is that alchemy that turns all things to good fortune. The man of fortitude, whom the Latins called *fortis* is no other than that lucky person whom *fors* favors, or *vir summae fortis*. If we will, every bark may "carry Cæsar and Cæsar's fortune." For an impenetrable shield, stand inside yourself; he was no artist, but an artisan, who first made shields of brass. For armor of proof, *mea virtute me involvo*, – I wrap myself in my virtue;

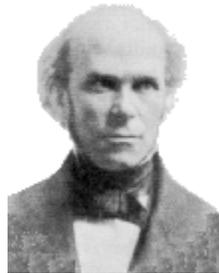
"Tumble me down, and I will sit
Upon my ruins, smiling yet."



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August 10, Monday: The Reverend [Theodore Parker](#) made an entry in his journal indicating that he considered [Henry Thoreau](#)'s essay on the Roman satirist [Aulus Persius Flaccus](#), "[AULUS PERSIUS FLACCUS](#)," to be "foolish"; the evening he had spent reading [THE DIAL](#) had been an "evening wasted." "I would recommend him to the editor of the [New World](#) to keep the youth out of mischief." (Had I any respect for the Transcendental genius of this reverend, this would have been one appropriate point, at which I might have inserted some sort of expression, of embarrassment. The reverend would persist in this sort of attitude, and when it would come time to form the [Massachusetts Quarterly Review](#), would in advance bar the very idea of ever allowing Thoreau to write anything at all for this new journal.)



The balloon of the intrepid master Boston goldbeater and aeronaut Louis Lauriat graced the skies above St. John, New Brunswick, [Canada](#), and traveled a lateral distance of some 21 miles.

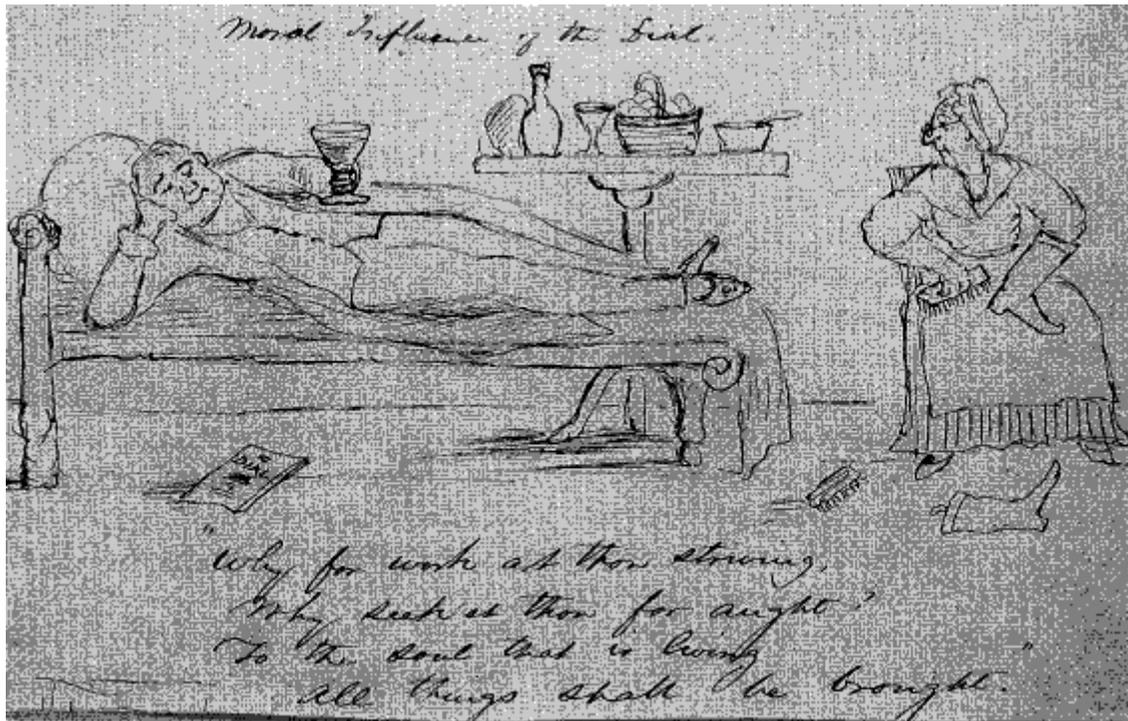


October: [Waldo Emerson](#)'s lecture of March 17th at the New-York Mercantile Library, "The Literature of the Present Age," appeared in the 2d issue of [THE DIAL: A MAGAZINE FOR LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION](#), under the title "Thoughts on Modern Literature."

A number of poems by [Mrs. Ellen Sturgis Hooper](#) appeared (anonymously) in this 2d issue — on page 187 her "The Poor Rich Man," on page 193 "The Wood-Fire," on page 194 "The Poet," and on page 216 "Wayfarers."

THE DIAL, OCTOBER 1840

A poem Caroline Sturgis titled "Life" inspired Christopher Pearse Cranch to perpetrate a piece of persiflage. Fortunately for all, this humor would go unpublished — it depicts an individual who is accessing the "Moral Influence of the Dial" in such manner as to avoid his obligations to others.



Note carefully, please, that the concerns expressed here by the cartoonist Cranch are the precise opposites of the concerns that would be expressed by [Henry Thoreau](#) in [WALDEN](#). Thoreau would express concern not that the audience would avoid their obligations to others, but rather, under the guise of "philanthropy," avoid their primary obligation, which is of course to themselves — the obligation to construct a personal human existence that is inspired and energetic and capable and fully functional:



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WALDEN: Philanthropy is almost the only virtue which is sufficiently appreciated by mankind. Nay, it is greatly overrated; and it is our selfishness which overrates it. A robust poor man, one sunny day here in Concord, praised a fellow-townsmen to me, because, as he said, he was kind to the poor; meaning himself. The kind uncles and aunts of the race are more esteemed than its true spiritual fathers and mothers. I once heard a reverend lecturer on England, a man of learning and intelligence, after enumerating her scientific, literary, and political worthies, Shakspeare, Bacon, Cromwell, Milton, Newton, and others, speak next of her Christian heroes, whom, as if his profession required it of him, he elevated to a place far above all the rest, as the greatest of the great. They were Penn, Howard, and Mrs. Fry. Every one must feel the falsehood and cant of this. The last were not England's best men and women; only, perhaps, her best philanthropists.

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

FREDERICK HENRY HEDGE
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
SIR FRANCIS BACON
OLIVER CROMWELL
JOHN MILTON
ISAAC NEWTON
WILLIAM PENN
JOHN HOWARD
ELIZABETH FRY

Viewed in the above perspective, this philanthropy project, where everybody supposedly lives by taking in everybody else's laundry, although it would ordinarily be meritorious, can readily transform itself into just another avoidance mechanism. Over-preoccupation with service to others can sometimes function for us as a mechanism of distraction, a tricky way by which we can evade this primary responsibility, our responsibility to ourselves.

December 1, Tuesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) was written to by [Margaret Fuller](#) in Jamaica Plain, to return his manuscript "THE SERVICE" rejected for [THE DIAL](#).¹⁵



1st Dec^r.
I am to blame for so long detaining your manuscript. But my thoughts have been so engaged that I have not found a suitable hour to reread it as I wished till last night. This second reading only confirms my impression from the first. The essay is rich in thoughts,

15. The piece would not be published until 1902.

"THE SERVICE" IN 1902



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*and I should be pained not to meet it again. But then the thoughts seem to me so out of their natural order, that I can not read it through without pain. I never once feel myself in a stream of thought, but seem to hear the grating of tools on the mosaic. It is true as Mr E. says, that essays not to be compared with this have found their way into the Dial. But then those are more unassuming in their tone, and have an air of quiet good-breeding which induces us to permit their presence. Yours is so rugged that it ought to be commanding. Yet I hope you will give it me again, and if you see no force in my objections disregard them.
S.M. Fuller.*



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January: [Mrs. Ellen Sturgis Hooper](#)'s poem "To the Ideal" appeared anonymously on page 400 of [THE DIAL](#).

[Waldo Emerson](#) published his own poem "The Snow-Storm."

THE DIAL, JANUARY 1841

[Emerson](#) belatedly reviewed [Jones Very](#)'s 1839 ESSAYS AND POEMS. BY JONES VERY:

This little volume would have received an earlier notice, if we had been at all careful to proclaim our favorite books. The genius of this book is religious, and reaches an extraordinary depth of sentiment. The author, plainly a man of a pure and kindly temper, casts himself into the state of the high and transcendental obedience to the inward Spirit. He has apparently made up his mind to follow all its leadings, though he should be taxed with absurdity or even with insanity. In this enthusiasm he writes most of these verses, which rather flow through him than from him. There is no *composition*, no elaboration, no artifice in the structure of the rhyme, no variety in the imagery; in short, no pretension to literary merit, for this would be departure from his singleness, and followed by loss of insight. He is not at liberty even to correct these unpremeditated poems for the press; but if another will publish them, he offers no objection. In this way they have come into the world, and as yet have hardly begun to be known. With the exception of the few first poems, which appear to be of an earlier date, all these verses bear the unquestionable stamp of grandeur. They are the breathings of a certain entranced devotion, which one would say, should be received with affectionate and sympathizing curiosity by all men, as if no recent writer had so much to show them of what is most their own. They are as sincere a litany as the Hebrew songs of David or Isaiah, and only less than they, because indebted to the Hebrew muse for their tone and genius. This makes the singularity of the book, namely, that so pure an utterance of the most domestic and primitive of all sentiments should in this age of revolt and experiment use once more the popular religious language, and so show itself secondary and morbid. These sonnets have little range of topics, no extent of observation, no playfulness; there is even a certain torpidity in the concluding lines of some of them, which reminds one of church hymns; but, whilst they flow with great sweetness, they have the sublime unity of the Decalogue or the Code of Menu, and if as monotonous, yet are they almost as pure as the sounds of Surrounding Nature. We gladly insert from a newspaper the following sonnet, which



appeared since the volume was printed.

THE BARBERRY BUSH.

BARBERRY

The bush that has most briers and bitter fruit,
Wait till the frost has turned its green leaves red,
Its sweetened berries will thy palate suit,
And thou may'st find e'en there a homely bread.
Upon the hills of Salem scattered wide,
Their yellow blossoms gain the eye in Spring;
And straggling e'en upon the turnpike's side,
Their ripened branches to your hand they bring,
I've plucked them oft in boyhood's early hour,
That then I gave such name, and thought it true;
But now I know that other fruit as sour
Grows on what now thou callest *Me* and *You*;
Yet, wilt thou wait the autumn that I see,
Will sweeter taste than these red berries be.

January 25, Monday: [Waldo Emerson](#) delivered “Man the Reformer” on economics and economy, before the Mechanics’ Apprentices’ Library Association in [Boston](#)’s Masonic Temple. In this lecture he responded to the [Reverend George Ripley](#)’s [Brook Farm](#) experiment in communal living and, in addition, to the [Reverend Orestes Augustus Brownson](#)’s hostile analysis of [Transcendentalism](#).¹⁶

March 7, Sunday: [Henry Thoreau](#) at this point in his journal did a stanza-by-stanza parsing of [Waldo Emerson](#)’s “The Sphinx” in the January issue of [THE DIAL](#).



March 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th 1841:

“The Sphinx”

The Sphinx is man’s insatiable and questioning spirit, which still, as of old, stands by the roadside in us and proposes the riddle of life to every passer.

The ancients represented this by a monster who was a riddle of herself, having a body composed of various creatures, as if to hint that she had no individual existence, but was nearly allied to and brooded over all. They made her devour those who were unable to explain her enigmas, as we are devoured by doubt, and struggle towards the light, as if to be assured of our lives. For we live by confidence, and our bravery is in some moment when we are certain — to that degree that our certainty cannot be increased, as when a ray bursts through a gap in a cloud, it darts as far, and reaches the earth as surely, as the whole sun would have done.

1. In the first four lines is described the mood in which the Sphinx bestirs herself in us. We must look on the world with a drowsy and half shut eye, that it may not be too much in our eye, and rather stand aloof from than within it. When we are awake to the real world, we are asleep to the actual. The sinful drowse to eternity — the virtuous to time. [Menu](#) says — that the “supreme omnipresent intelligence” is “a spirit which can only be conceived by a mind *slumbering*.” Wisdom and holiness always slumber — they are never active in the ways of the world. As in our night-dreams we are nearest to awakening — so in our daydreams we are nearest to a supernatural awakening, and the plain and flat satisfactoriness of life becomes so significant as to be questioned. The Sphinx hints that in the ages her secret is kept — but in the annihilation of ages alone is it revealed. So far from solving the problem of life, Time only serves to propose and keep it in. Time waits but for its solution to become eternity. Its lapse is measured by the successive failures to answer the incessant question, and the generations of men are the unskilful passengers devoured.

2. She hints generally at man’s mystery. He knows only that he is, not what — nor whence. Not only is he curiously and wonderfully wrought, but with Daedalian intricacy. He is lost in himself as a labyrinth and has no clue to get out by. If he could get out of his humanity, he would have got out of nature. “Daedalian expresses

16. This lecture would appear as an essay in the 4th issue of [THE DIAL](#), and should be compared and contrasted with the 1st chapter of [Thoreau](#)’s [WALDEN](#), titled “Economy.”



both the skill and the inscrutable design of the builder.
The insolubleness of the riddle is only more forcibly expressed by the lines, —
“Out of sleeping a waking,
Out of waking a sleep.”
They express the complete uncertainty — and renunciation of knowledge of the propounder.

3-4-5-6. In these verses is described the integrity of all animate and inanimate things but man, — how each is a problem of itself and not the solution of one — and presides over and uses the mystery of the universe as unhesitatingly as if it were the partner of God. How by a sort of *essential and practical faith* each understands all — for to see that we understand — is to know that we misunderstand. Each natural object is an end to itself— A brave, undoubting life do they all live, and are content to be a part of the mystery which is God — and throw the responsibility on man of explaining them and himself too.

3— The outlines of the trees are as correct as if ruled by God on the sky— The motions of quadrupeds and birds nature never thinks to mend but they are a last copy — and the flourishes of his hand.

4— The waves lapse with such a melody on the shore as shows that they have long been at one with nature. Theirs is as perfect play as if the heavens and earth were not — they meet with a sweet difference and independently — as old play-fellows. Nothing do they lack more than the world — the ripple is proud to be a ripple and balances the sea.— The atoms which are in such a continual flux notwithstanding their minuteness — have a certain essential valor and independence— They have the integrity of worlds, and attract & repel firmly as such. The least has more manhood than Democritus.

5— So also in nature the perfection of the whole is the perfection of the parts — and what is itself perfect serves to adorn and set off all the rest. Her distinctions are but reliefs. Night veileth the morning for the morning's sake, and the vapor adds a new attraction to the hill. Nature looks like a conspiracy for the advantage of all her parts — when one feature shines all the rest seem suborned to heighten its charm. In her circle each gladly gives precedence to the other— Day gladly alternates with night— Behind these the vapor atones to the hill for its interference, and this harmonious scene is the effect of that at-one-ment.

6— In a sense the babe takes its departure from nature as the grown man his departure out of her, and so during its nonage is at one with her, and as a part of herself. It is indeed the very flower and blossom of nature—

“Shines the peace of all being
Without cloud, in its eyes;
And the *sum* of the world
In soft *miniature* lies.”

To the charming consistency of the palm and thrush, this universal and serene beauty is added — as all the leaves of the tree flower in the blossom.

7 But alas, the fruit to be matured in these petals is fated to break the stem which holds it to universal consistency. It passes *through nature* to manhood, and becomes unnatural — without being as yet quite supernatural. Man's most approved life is but conformity — not a simple and independent consistency, which would make all things conform to it. His actions do not adorn nature nor one another, nor does she exist in harmony but in contrast with them. She is not their willing scenery. We conceive that if a true action were to be performed it would be assisted by nature — and perhaps be fondled and reflected many times as the rainbow. The sun is a true light for the trees in a picture, but not for the actions of men. They will not bear so strong a light as the stubble — the universe has little sympathy with them, and sooner or later they rebound hollowly on the memory. The April shower should be as reviving to our life as to the garden and the grove, and the scenery in which we live reflect our own beauty, as the dew drop the flower. It is the actual man, not the actual nature, that hurts the romance of the landscape. “He poisons the ground”. The haymakers must be lost in the grass of the meadow. They may be Faustus and Amyntas here — but near at hand they are Reuben and Jonas. The woodcutter must not be better than the wood, lest he be *worse*— Neither will bear to be considered as a distinct feature. Man's works must lie in the bosom of nature, cottages be buried in trees, or under vines and moss, like rocks, that they may not outrage the landscape. The hunter must be dressed in Lincoln green, with a plume of eagle's feathers — to imbosom him in nature. So the skilful painter secures the distinctness of the whole by the indistinctness of the parts.— We can endure best to consider our repose and silence. Only when — the city — the hamlet — or the cottage is viewed from a distance does man's life seem in harmony with the universe, but seen closely his actions have no eagle's feathers or Lincoln green to redeem them— The sunlight on cities at a distance is a deceptive beauty, but foretells the final harmony of man with nature.

Man as he is is not the subject of any art, strictly speaking— The naturalist pursues his study with love — but the moralist persecutes his with hate— In man is the material of a picture, with a design partly sketched — but



nature is such a picture drawn and colored.— He is a studio — nature a gallery. If men were not idealists no sonnets to beautiful persons, nor eulogies on worthy ones would ever be written. We wait for the preacher to express *such* love for his congregation as the Botanist for his herbarium.

8 Man, however, detects something in the lingering ineradicable sympathy of nature which seems to side with him against the stern decrees of the soul. Her essential friendliness is only the more apparent to his waywardness, (for disease and sorrow are but a rupture with her). In proportion as he renounces his will, she repairs his hurts — and if she burns, does oftener warm, if she freezes oftener refreshes. This is the motherliness which the poet personifies — and the Sphinx or wisely inquiring man, makes express a real concern for him. Nature shows us a stern kindness and only we are unkind. She endures long with us, and though the severity of her law is unrelaxed, yet its evenness and impartiality look relenting, and almost sympathize with our fault.

9-10-11-12-13-14. But to the poet there are no riddles, they are “pleasant songs” to him — his faith solves the enigmas which recurring wisdom does not fail to repeat. Poetry is the only solution time can offer. But the poet is soonest a pilgrim from his own faith. Our brave moments may still be distinguished from our wise. Though the problem is always solved for the soul, still does it remain to be solved by the intellect. Almost faith puts the question, for only in her light can it be answered. However true the answer it does not prevent the question — for the best answer is but plausible — and man can only tell his relation to truth, but render no account of truth to herself.

9. Believe, and ask not — says the poet—

“Deep love lieth under
These pictures of time;
They fade in the light of
Their meaning sublime.”

Nothing is plain but love.

10-11-12-13. Man comes short because he seeks perfection. He adorns no world, while he is seeking to adorn a better. His best actions have no reference to their actual scenery. For when our actions become of that worth that they might confer a grace on nature — they pass out of her into a higher arena — where they are still mean and awkward.

So that the world beholds only the rear of great deeds and mistakes them often for inconsistencies, not knowing with what higher they consist. Nature is beautiful as in repose — not promising a higher beauty tomorrow. Her actions are level to one another, and so are never — unfit or inconsistent. Shame and remorse, which are so unsightly to her, have a prospective beauty and fitness which redeem them. We would have our lover to be nobler than we, and do not fear to sacrifice our love to his greater nobleness. Better the disagreement of noble lovers than the agreement of base ones. In friendship each will be nobler than the other, and so avoid the cheapness of a level and idle harmony. Love will have its chromatic strains — discordant yearnings for higher chords — as well as symphonies.

13 Let us expect no finite satisfaction — who looks in the sun — will see no light else — but also he will see no shadow. Our life revolves unceasingly — but the centre is ever the same, and the wise will regard only the seasons of the soul.

14 The poet concludes with the same trust he began with, and jeers at the blindness which could inquire. But our sphinx is so wise as to put no riddle that can be answered. It is a great presumption — to answer conclusively a question which any sincerity has put. The wise answer no questions — (nor do they ask them—) She silences his jeers with the conviction that she is the eyebeam of his eye. Our proper eye never quails before an answer. To rest in a reply — as a response of the oracle — that is error — but to suspect time’s reply, because we would not degrade one of God’s meanings to be intelligible to us — that is wisdom. We shall never arrive at his meaning, but it will ceaselessly arrive to us. The truth we seek with ardor and devotion will not reward us with a cheap acquisition. We run unhesitatingly in our career — not fearing to pass any goal of truth in our haste. We career toward her eternally.— A truth rested in stands for all the vice of an age — and revolution comes kindly to restore health.

16 The cunning Sphinx who had been hushed into stony silence and repose in us — arouses herself and detects a mystery in all things — in infancy — the moon — fire — flowers — sea — mountain — and,

17 in the spirit of the old fable, declares proudly—

“Who telleth one of my meanings
Is master of all I am.”

When some OEdipus has solved one of her enigmas, she will go dash her head against a rock.



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You may find this as enigmatical as the Sphinx's riddle— Indeed I doubt if she could solve it herself.

THE DIAL, JANUARY 1841

July: [Henry Thoreau](#) contributed “Sic Vita” and two other poems to the current issue of [THE DIAL](#).

THE DIAL, JULY 1841

[Mrs. Ellen Sturgis Hooper](#)'s poem “The Out-Bid” appeared anonymously on page 519, and her “Farewell” on page 544.





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SIC VITA



I am a parcel of vain strivings tied
By a chance bond together,
Dangling this way and that, their links
Were made so loose and wide,
 Methinks,
For milder weather.

A bunch of violets without their roots,
And sorrel intermixed,
Encircled by a wisp of straw
Once coiled about their shoots,
 The law
By which I'm fixed.

A nosegay which Time clutched from out
Those fair Elysian fields,
With weeds and broken stems, in haste,
Doth make the rabble rout
 That waste
The day he yields.

And here I bloom for a short hour unseen,
Drinking my juices up,
With no root in the land
To keep my branches green,
 But stand
In a bare cup.

Some tender buds were left upon my stem
In mimicry of life,
But ah! the children will not know,
Till time has withered them,
 The woe
With which they're rife.

But now I see I was not plucked for naught,
And after in life's vase
Of glass set while I might survive,
But by a kind hand brought
 Alive
To a strange place.

That stock thus thinned will soon redeem its hours,
And by another year,
Such as God knows, with freer air,
More fruits and fairer flowers
 Will bear,
While I droop here.





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August 11, Wednesday: [Waldo Emerson](#) presented an oration “The Method of Nature” before the Society of the Adelphi at Waterville College in Maine. This would be printed, initially in Boston by Samuel G. Simpkins, and then at the back of the 1841 volume of the issues of [THE DIAL](#). Henry Thoreau would have a copy in his personal library.

AUGUST 11, 1841
THE DIAL, 1841

On this day and the following one, there would be two perspectives presented at an anti-slavery convention at the Atheneum Hall on [Nantucket Island](#). First, that of [William Lloyd Garrison](#).¹⁷



I attended an anti-slavery convention in Nantucket, at which it was my happiness to become acquainted with FREDERICK DOUGLASS.... I shall never forget his first speech at the convention – the extraordinary emotion it excited in my own mind – the powerful impression it created upon a crowded auditory, completely taken by surprise – the applause which followed from the beginning to the end of his felicitous remarks.... I rose, and declared that Patrick Henry of revolutionary fame, never made a speech more eloquent in the cause of liberty.... I reminded the audience of the peril which surrounded this self-emancipated young man.... I appealed to them, whether they would ever allow him to be carried back into slavery....



17. You will recognize this portrait: it hangs on the wall of the amalgamated home portrayed in that offensive cartoon.



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Then that of [Frederick Douglass](#):

I had not long been a reader of the "Liberator," before I got a pretty correct idea of the principles, measures and spirit of the anti-slavery reform. I took right hold of the cause.... I seldom had much to say at the meetings, because what I wanted to say was said so much better by others. But, while attending an anti-slavery convention at Nantucket, on the 11th of August, 1841, I felt strongly moved to speak, and was at the same time much urged to do so by Mr. William C. Coffin, a gentleman who had heard me speak in the colored people's meeting at New Bedford. It was a severe cross, and I took it up reluctantly. The truth was, I felt myself a slave, and the idea of speaking to white people weighed me down. I spoke but a few moments, when I felt a degree of freedom, and said what I desired with considerable ease. From that time until now, I have been engaged in pleading the cause of my brethren – with what success, and with what devotion, I leave those acquainted with my labors to decide.





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October 18, Monday: [Henry Thoreau](#) was written to by [Margaret Fuller](#), rejecting a poem “With frontier strength ye stand your ground” for [THE DIAL](#).¹⁸ This letter indicates that Thoreau was already contemplating going “to

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the lonely hut,” presumably meaning his purchase of the Hollowell Farm rather than his building a cabin on Walden Pond. This letter also referred to some sort of secret about Thoreau to which Fuller was privy, which Canby hypothesizes had to do with Thoreau’s unsuccessful proposal of marriage to Ellen Devereux Sewall.

18th Oct^r 1841.

I do not find the poem on the mountains improved by mere compression, though it might be by fusion and glow.

Its merits to me are a noble recognition of nature, two or three manly thoughts, and, in one place, a plaintive music. The image of the ships does not please me originally. It illustrates the greater by the less and affects me as when Byron compares the light on Jura to that of the dark eye of woman. I cannot define my position here, and a large class of readers would differ from me. As the poet goes on to “Unhewn, primeval timber

For knees so stiff, for masts so limber”

he seems to chase an image, already rather forced, into conceits.

Yet now that I have some knowledge of the man, it seems there is no objection I could make to his lines, (with the exception of such offences against taste as the lines about the humors of the eye & c as to which we are already agreed) which I could not make to him self.

He is healthful, sane, of open eye, ready hand, and noble scope.

He sets no limits to his life, nor to the invasions of nature; he is not wilfully pragmatical, cautious, ascetic or fantastical. But he is as yet a somewhat bare hill which the warm gales of spring have not visited. Thought lies too detached, truth is seen too much in detail, we can number and mark the substances embedded in the rock.

Thus his verses are startling, as much as stern; the thought does not excuse its conscious existence by letting us see its relation with life; there is a want of fluent music.

Yet what could a companion do at present unless to tame the guardian of the Alps too early? Leave him at peace amid his native snows.

He is friendly; he will find the generous office that shall educate him.

It is not a soil for the citron and the rose, but for the whortleberry, the pine or the heather. The unfolding of affections, a wider and deeper human experience, the harmonizing influences of other natures, will mould the man, and melt his verse. He will seek thought

less and find knowledge the more. I can have no advice or criticism for a person so sincere, but if I give my impression of him I will say

He says too constantly of nature She is mine; She is not yours till you

18. Material which Thoreau was eventually able to include in the essay “A Walk to Wachusett” and place in the [Boston Miscellany of Literature](#) for January 1843.



have been more hers. Seek the lotus, and take a draught of rapture. Say not so confidently All places, all occasions are alike. This will never come true till you have found it false.

I do not know that I have more to say now, perhaps these words will say nothing to you; If intercourse should continue, perhaps a bridge may be made between the minds so widely apart, for I apprehended you in spirit, and you did not seem to mistake me as widely as most of your kind do. If you should find yourself inclined to write to me, as you thought you might, I dare say many thoughts would be suggested to me! —many have already by seeing you day by day. Will you finish the poem in your own way and send it for the Dial. Leave out “And seems to milk the sky” —The image is too low. Mr Emerson thought so too. Farewell. May Truth be irradiated by Beauty!— Let me know whether you go to the lonely hut, and write to me about Shakspeare, if you read him there. I have many thoughts about him which I have never yet been led to express.

Margaret F.

The pencilled paper Mr E. put into my hands. I have taken the liberty to copy it— You expressed one day my own opinion that the moment such a crisis is passed we may speak of it. There is no need of artificial delicacy, of secrecy, it keeps its own secret, it cannot be made false. Thus you will not be sorry that I have seen the paper. Will you not send me some other records of the good week.

This issue of [THE DIAL](#) contained [Waldo Emerson](#)'s essay on [Walter Savage Landor](#):

We sometimes meet in a stage coach in New England an erect muscular man, with fresh complexion and a smooth hat, whose nervous speech instantly betrays the English traveller; — a man nowise cautious to conceal his name or that of his native country, or his very slight esteem for the persons and the country that surround him. When Mr. Bull rides in an American coach, he speaks quick and strong, he is very ready to confess his ignorance of everything about him, persons, manners, customs, politics, geography. He wonders that the Americans should build with wood, whilst all this stone is lying in the roadside, and is astonished to learn that a wooden house may last a hundred years; nor will he remember the fact as many minutes after it has been told him; he wonders they do not make elder-wine and cherry-bounce, since here are cherries, and every mile is crammed with elder bushes. He has never seen a good horse in America, nor a good coach, nor a good inn. Here is very good earth and water, and plenty of them, — that he is free to allow, — to all others gifts of nature or man, his eyes are sealed by the inexorable demand for the precise conveniences to which he is accustomed in England. Add to this proud blindness the better quality of great downrightness in speaking the truth, and the love of fair play, on all occasions, and, moreover, the



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peculiarity which is alleged of the Englishman, that his virtues do not come out until he quarrels. Transfer these traits to a very elegant and accomplished mind, and we shall have no bad picture of Walter Savage Landor, who may stand as a favorable impersonation of the genius of his countrymen at the present day. A sharp dogmatic man with a great deal of knowledge, a great deal of worth, and a great deal of pride, with a profound contempt for all that he does not understand, a master of all elegant learning and capable of the utmost delicacy of sentiment, and yet prone to indulge a sort of ostentation of coarse imagery and language. His partialities and dislikes are by no means calculable, but are often whimsical and amusing; yet they are quite sincere, and, like those of Johnson and Coleridge, are easily separable from the man. What he says of Wordsworth, is true of himself, that he delights to throw a clod of dirt on the table, and cry, "Gentlemen, there is a better man than all of you." Bolivar, Mina, and General Jackson will never be greater soldiers than Napoleon and Alexander, let Mr. Landor think as he will; nor will he persuade us to burn Plato and Xenophon, out of our admiration of Bishop Patrick, or "Lucas on Happiness," or "Lucas on Holiness," or even Barrow's Sermons. Yet a man may love a paradox, without losing either his wit or his honesty. A less pardonable eccentricity is the cold and gratuitous obtrusion of licentious images, not so much the suggestion of merriment as of bitterness. Montaigne assigns as a reason for his license of speech, that he is tired of seeing his Essays on the work-tables of ladies, and he is determined they shall for the future put them out of sight. In Mr. Landor's coarseness there is a certain air of defiance; and the rude word seems sometimes to arise from a disgust at niceness and over-refinement. Before a well-dressed company he plunges his fingers in a sess-pool, as if to expose the whiteness of his hands and the jewels of his ring. Afterward, he washes them in water, he washes them in wine; but you are never secure from his freaks. A sort of Earl Peterborough in literature, his eccentricity is too decided not to have diminished his greatness. He has capital enough to have furnished the brain of fifty stock authors, yet has written no good book.

But we have spoken all our discontent. Possibly his writings are open to harsher censure; but we love the man from sympathy, as well as for reasons to be assigned; and have no wish, if we were able, to put an argument in the mouth of his critics. Now for twenty years we have still found the "Imaginary Conversations" a sure resource in solitude, and it seems to us as original in its form as in its matter. Nay, when we remember his rich and ample page, wherein we are always sure to find free and sustained thought, a keen and precise understanding, an affluent and ready memory familiar with all chosen books, an industrious observation in every department of life, an experience to which nothing has occurred in vain, honor for every just and generous sentiment, and a scourge like that of the Furies for every oppressor, whether public or private, we feel how dignified is

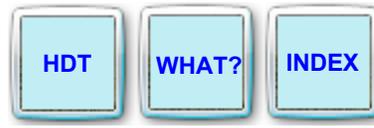


this perpetual Censor in his curule chair, and we wish to thank a benefactor of the reading world.

Mr. Landor is one of the foremost of that small class who make good in the nineteenth-century the claims of pure literature. In these busy days of avarice and ambition, when there is so little disposition to profound thought, or to any but the most superficial intellectual entertainments, a faithful scholar receiving from past ages the treasures of wit, and enlarging them by his own love, is a friend and consoler of mankind. When we pronounce the names of Homer and Aeschylus, — Horace, Ovid, and Plutarch, — Erasmus, Scaliger, and Montaigne, — Ben Jonson and Isaak Walton, — Dryden and Pope, — we pass at once out of trivial associations, and enter into a region of the purest pleasure accessible to human nature. We have quitted all beneath the moon, and entered that crystal sphere in which everything in the world of matter reappears, but transfigured and immortal. Literature is the effort of man to indemnify himself for the wrongs of his condition. The existence of the poorest playwright and the humblest scrivener is a good omen. A charm attaches to the most inferior names which have in any manner got themselves enrolled in the registers of the House of Fame, even as porters and grooms in the courts, to Creech and Fenton, Theobald and Dennis, Aubrey and Spence. From the moment of entering a library and opening a desired book, we cease to be citizens, creditors, debtors, housekeepers, and men of care and fear. What boundless leisure! what original jurisdiction! the old constellations have set, new and brighter have arisen; an elysian light tinges all objects.

“In the afternoon we came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon.”

And this sweet asylum of an intellectual life must appear to have the sanction of nature, as long as so many men are born with so decided an aptitude for reading and writing. Let us thankfully allow every faculty and art which opens new scope to a life so confined as ours. There are vast spaces in a thought; a slave, to whom the religious sentiment is opened, has a freedom which makes his master's freedom a slavery. Let us not be so illiberal with our schemes for the renovation of society and nature, as to disesteem or deny the literary spirit. Certainly there are heights in nature which command this; there are many more which this commands. It is vain to call it a luxury, and as saints and reformers are apt to do, decry it as a species of day-dreaming. What else are sanctities, and reforms, and all other things? Whatever can make for itself an element, means, organs, servants, and the most profound and permanent existence in the hearts and heads of millions of men, must have a reason for its being. Its excellency is reason and vindication enough. If rhyme rejoices us, there should be rhyme, as much as if fire cheers us, we should bring wood and coals. Each kind of excellence takes place for its hour, and excludes everything else. Do not brag of your actions, as if they were better than



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Homer's verses or Raphael's pictures. Raphael and Homer feel that action is pitiful beside their enchantments. They could act too, if the stake was worthy of them; but now all that is good in the universe urges them to their task. Whoever writes for the love of truth and beauty, and not with ulterior ends, belongs to this sacred class, and among these, few men of the present age, have a better claim to be numbered than Mr. Landor. Wherever genius or taste has existed, wherever freedom and justice are threatened, which he values as the element in which genius may work, his interest is sure to be commanded. His love of beauty is passionate, and betrays itself in all petulant and contemptuous expressions.

But beyond his delight in genius, and his love of individual and civil liberty, Mr. Landor has a perception that is much more rare, the appreciation of character. This is the more remarkable considered with his intense nationality, to which we have already alluded. He is buttoned in English broadcloth to the chin. He hates the Austrians, the Italians, the French, the Scotch, and the Irish. He has the common prejudices of the English landholder; values his pedigree, his acres, and the syllables of his name; loves all his advantages, is not insensible to the beauty of his watchseal, or the Turk's head on his umbrella; yet with all this miscellaneous pride, there is a noble nature within him, which instructs him that he is so rich that he can well spare all his trappings, and, leaving to others the painting of circumstance, aspire to the office of delineating character. He draws his own portrait in the costume of a village schoolmaster, and a sailor, and serenely enjoys the victory of nature over fortune. Not only the elaborated story of Normanby, but the whimsical selection of his heads prove this taste. He draws with evident pleasure the portrait of a man, who never said anything right, and never did anything wrong. But in the character of Pericles, he has found full play for beauty and greatness of behavior, where the circumstances are in harmony with the man. These portraits, though mere sketches, must be valued as attempts in the very highest kind of narrative, which not only has very few examples to exhibit of any success, but very few competitors in the attempt. The word Character is in all mouths; it is a force which we all feel; yet who has analyzed it? What is the nature of that subtle, and majestic principle which attaches us to a few persons, not so much by personal as by the most spiritual ties? What is the quality of the persons who, without being public men, or literary men, or rich men, or active men, or (in the popular sense) religious men, have a certain salutary omnipresence in all our life's history, almost giving their own quality to the atmosphere and the landscape? A moral force, yet wholly unmindful of creed and catechism, intellectual, but scornful of books, it works directly and without means, and though it may be resisted at any time, yet resistance to it is a suicide. For the person who stands in this lofty relation to his fellow men is always the impersonation to them of their conscience. It is a sufficient proof of the extreme



delicacy of this element, evanescent before any but the most sympathetic vision, that it has so seldom been employed in the drama and in novels. Mr. Landor, almost alone among living English writers, has indicated his perception of it.

These merits make Mr. Landor's position in the republic of letters one of great mark and dignity. He exercises with a grandeur of spirit the office of writer, and carries it with an air of old and unquestionable nobility. We do not recollect an example of more complete independence in literary history. He has no clanship, no friendships, that warp him. He was one of the first to pronounce Wordsworth the great poet of the age, yet he discriminates his faults with the greater freedom. He loves Pindar, Aeschylus, Euripides, Aristophanes, Demosthenes, Virgil, yet with open eyes. His position is by no means the highest in literature; he is not a poet or a philosopher. He is a man full of thoughts, but not, like Coleridge, a man of ideas. Only from a mind conversant with the First Philosophy can definitions be expected. Coleridge has contributed many valuable ones to modern literature. Mr. Landor's definitions are only enumerations of particulars; the generic law is not seized. But as it is not from the highest Alps or Andes, but from less elevated summits, that the most attractive landscape is commanded, so is Mr. Landor the most useful and agreeable of critics. He has commented on a wide variety of writers, with a closeness and an extent of view, which has enhanced the value of those authors to his readers. His Dialogue on the Epicurean philosophy is a theory of the genius of Epicurus. The Dialogue between Barrow and Newton is the best of all criticisms on the Essays of Bacon. His picture of Demosthenes in three several Dialogues is new and adequate. He has illustrated the genius of Homer, Aeschylus, Pindar, Euripides, Thucydides. Then he has examined before he expatiated, and the minuteness of his verbal criticism gives a confidence in his fidelity, when he speaks the language of meditation or of passion. His acquaintance with the English tongue is unsurpassed. He "hates false words, and seeks with care, difficulty, and moroseness, those that fit the thing." He knows the value of his own words. "They are not," he says, "written on slate." He never stoops to explanation, nor uses seven words where one will do. He is a master of condensation and suppression, and that in no vulgar way. He knows the wide difference between compression and an obscure elliptical style. The dense writer has yet ample room and choice of phrase, and even a gamesome mood often between his valid words. There is no inadequacy or disagreeable contraction in his sentence, any more than in a human face, where in a square space of a few inches is found room for every possible variety of expression.

Yet it is not as an artist, that Mr. Landor commends himself to us. He is not epic or dramatic, he has not the high, overpowering method, by which the master gives unity and integrity to a work of many parts. He is too wilful, and never abandons himself to his genius. His books are a strange mixture of politics,



etymology, allegory, sentiment, and personal history, and what skill of transition he may possess is superficial, not spiritual. His merit must rest at last, not on the spirit of the dialogue, or the symmetry of any of his historical portraits, but on the value of his sentences. Many of these will secure their own immortality in English literature; and this, rightly considered, is no mean merit. These are not plants and animals, but the genetical atoms, of which both are composed. All our great debt to the oriental world is of this kind, not utensils and statues of the precious metal, but bullion and gold dust. Of many of Mr. Landor's sentences we are fain to remember what was said of those of Socrates, that they are cubes, which will stand firm, place them how or where you will. We will enrich our pages with a few paragraphs, which we hastily select from such of Mr. Landor's volumes as lie on our table.

"The great man is he who hath nothing to fear and nothing to hope from another. It is he, who while he demonstrates the iniquity of the laws, and is able to correct them, obeys them peaceably. It is he who looks on the ambitious, both as weak and fraudulent. It is he who hath no disposition or occasion for any kind of deceit, no reason for being or for appearing different from what he is. It is he who can call together the most select company when it pleases him..... Him I would call the powerful man who controls the storms of his mind, and turns to good account the worst accidents of his fortune. The great man, I was going on to show thee, is somewhat more. He must be able to do this, and he must have that intellect which puts into motion the intellect of others."

"All titulars else must be produced by others; a knight by a knight, a peer by a King, while a gentleman is self-existent."

"Critics talk most about the visible in sublimity ... the Jupiter, the Neptune. Magnitude and power are sublime, but in the second degree, managed as they may be. Where the heart is not shaken, the gods thunder and stride in vain. True sublimity is the perfection of the pathetic, which has other sources than pity; generosity, for instance, and self-devotion. When the generous and self-devoted man suffers, there comes Pity; the basis of the sublime is then above the water, and the poet, with or without the gods, can elevate it above the skies. Terror is but the relic of a childish feeling; pity is not given to children. So said he; I know not whether rightly, for the wisest differ on poetry, the knowledge of which, like other most important truths, seems to be reserved for a purer state of sensation and existence."

"O Cyrus, I have observed that the authors of good make men very bad as often as they talk much about them."

"The habit of haranguing is in itself pernicious; I have known even the conscientious and pious, the humane and liberal dried up by it into egoism and vanity, and have watched the mind,



growing black and rancid in its own smoke."

GLORY.

"Glory is a light which shines from us on others, not from others on us."

"If thou lovest Glory, thou must trust her truth. She followeth him who doth not turn and gaze after her."

RICHARD I.

"Let me now tell my story ... to confession another time. I sailed along the realms of my family; on the right was England, on the left was France; little else could I discover than sterile eminences and extensive shoals. They fled behind me; so pass away generations; so shift, and sink, and die away affections. In the wide ocean I was little of a monarch; old men guided me, boys instructed me; these taught me the names of my towns and harbors, those showed me the extent of my dominions; one cloud, that dissolved in one hour, half covered them.

"I debark in Sicily. I place my hand upon the throne of Tancred, and fix it. I sail again, and within a day or two I behold, as the sun is setting, the solitary majesty of Crete, mother of a religion, it is said, that lived two thousand years. Onward, and many specks bubble up along the blue Aegean; islands, every one of which, if the songs and stories of the pilots are true, is the monument of a greater man than I am. I leave them afar off.... and for whom? O, abbot, to join creatures of less import than the sea-mews on their cliffs; men praying to be heard, and fearing to be understood, ambitious of another's power in the midst of penitence, avaricious of another's wealth under vows of poverty, and jealous of another's glory in the service of their God. Is this Christianity? and is Saladin to be damned if he despises it?"

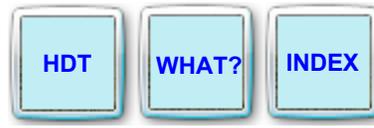
DEMOSTHENES.

"While I remember what I have been, I never can be less. External power can affect those only who have none intrinsically. I have seen the day, Eubulides, when the most august of cities had but one voice within her walls; and when the stranger, on entering them, stopped at the silence of the gateway, and said, 'Demosthenes is speaking in the assembly of the people.'"

"There are few who form their opinions of greatness from the individual. Ovid says, 'the girl is the least part of herself.' Of himself, certainly, the man is."

"No men are so facetious as those whose minds are somewhat perverted. Truth enjoys good air and clear light, but no playground."

"I found that the principal means (of gratifying the universal desire of happiness) lay in the avoidance of those very things, which had hitherto been taken up as the instruments of enjoyment



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and content; such as military commands, political offices, clients, adventures in commerce, and extensive landed property."

"Abstinence from low pleasures is the only means of meriting or of obtaining the higher."

"Praise keeps good men good."

"The highest price we can pay for a thing is to ask for it."

"There is a gloom in deep love as in deep water; there is a silence in it which suspends the foot; and the folded arms, and the dejected head are the images it reflects. No voice shakes its surface; the Muses themselves approach it with a tardy and a timid step, and with a low and tremulous and melancholy song."

"Anaxagoras is the true, firm, constant friend of Pericles; the golden lamp that shines perpetually on the image I adore."

[The Letter of Pericles to Aspasia in reply to her request to be permitted to visit Xenocrates.]

"Do what your heart tells you; yes, Aspasia, do all it tells you. Remember how august it is. It contains the temple, not only of Love, but of Conscience; and a whisper is heard from the extremity of one to the extremity of the other.

"Bend in pensiveness, even in sorrow, on the flowery bank of youth, whereunder runs the stream that passes irreversibly! let the garland drop into it, let the hand be refreshed by it – but – may the beautiful feet of Aspasia stand firm."

E.



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1842

Returning from his missionary labors in [Ohio](#) to New England, the Reverend Christopher Pearse Cranch discovered that his interest in [Transcendentalism](#) threatened his career as a [Unitarian](#) minister, so he turned to painting and to writing poetry for [THE DIAL](#). He would contribute also to the [Harbinger](#) and the [Western Messenger](#), and publish four volumes of his verse.

After a short stay in Mobile, Alabama, the [Reverend Charles Henry Appleton Dall](#) boarded ship for England. There he would meet [Unitarian](#) luminaries such as James Martineau, and observe British Unitarian efforts toward social reform. He would return to America at the end of the year.

The Wyandottes, [Ohio](#)'s last native tribe, headed west.

January: This issue of [THE DIAL](#) included a "Plan of the West Roxbury Community."

[BROOK FARM](#)

THE DIAL, JANUARY 1842

The 4th issue of [THE DIAL](#) contained portions of [Sir William Jones](#)'s and [Charles Wilkins](#)'s translations of the *THE HEETOPADES OF VEESHNOO-SARMA*, IN A SERIES OF CONNECTED FABLES, INTERSPERSED WITH MORAL, PRUDENTIAL, AND POLITICAL MAXIMS.¹⁹

[A WEEK](#): It is always singular, but encouraging, to meet with common sense in very old books, as the Heetopades of Veeshnoo Sarma; a playful wisdom which has eyes behind as well as before, and oversees itself.

[HITOPADESA](#)

[WALDEN](#): Why do precisely these objects which we behold make a world? Why has man just these species of animals for his neighbors; as if nothing but a mouse could have filled this crevice? I suspect that Pilpay & Co. have put animals to their best use, for they are all beasts of burden, in a sense, made to carry some portion of our thoughts.

[HITOPADESA](#)

[ÆSOP](#)

[XENOPHANES](#)

[PEOPLE OF WALDEN](#)

19. The *HITOPADESA* or "Salutary Instructions" is a very ancient collection and is also familiarly known to us as "THE FABLES OF *PILPAY*." Many of these tales are condensations of material to be found in the *PANCHATANTRA*, which consists of five apologues recited by a Brahmin teacher name of *Vishnu Sarma* for the instruction of his class of [Indian](#) princes in the principles of their princship. Since this collection emphasizes worldly-wiseness, it has been exceedingly popular, indeed even more popular than Machiavelli's *THE PRINCE*: we presently know of over 200 different editions in at least 50 languages around the world.



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April: Another issue of [THE DIAL](#).

[THE DIAL, APRIL 1842](#)

June 9, Thursday: [Frederick Douglass](#) spoke again in Northbridge, Massachusetts.

[Waldo Emerson](#) wrote to [Margaret Fuller](#) about Charles King Newcomb's article for [THE DIAL](#): "I wish you to know that I have Dolon in black & white, & that I account Charles K a true genius: his writing fills me with joy, so simple so subtle & so strong is it. There are sentences in Dolon worth the printing the Dial that they may go forth."

July: [Henry Thoreau](#) contributed poems and [NATURAL HISTORY OF MASSACHUSETTS](#) to [THE DIAL](#). [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) liked this review of the nature literature — but [Waldo Emerson](#) disliked it.

Cruikshank commentary

Professor of [Geology](#) Robert M. Thorson of the University of Connecticut has indicated on pages 34-5 of his [WALDEN'S SHORE: HENRY DAVID THOREAU AND NINETEENTH-CENTURY SCIENCE](#) why it is that the dust jacket of that history-of-science text published by Harvard University Press happens to be decorated with a photograph of a granite pebble containing a sparkling vein of quartz. The granite is intended to represent the Andover Granite bedrock far underneath the glacial detritus within which the waters of [Walden Pond](#) are situated. The pebble's quartz vein presents the "frost-work of a longer night" of which Thoreau wrote in his essay for [THE DIAL](#) "[NATURAL HISTORY OF MASSACHUSETTS](#)"—it is an emblem of Thoreau's affiliation with Vulcan rather than Neptune, [Plutonism](#) rather than [Neptunism](#) in the history of the development of scientific understanding — and the regular ovoid shape of the specimen would be indicative of its subsequent tumbling down a streambed of time. The one thing of which we are not informed in this text is whether or no this particular photographed pebble is one of those Henry **himself** picked out for the mineral collection he kept in his attic room in the Concord boardinghouse, a mineral collection that is now in storage at the Fruitlands Museum in Harvard, Massachusetts (and perhaps this would be something that matters only to me):

Being a big fan of Vulcan made Thoreau an easy mark for the plutonist school of thought, despite his formal education during the neptunian era. He sensed beneath Concord the presence of a great "subterranean fire," one responsible for creating gemlike crystals of quartz within the veins of the Andover Granite. These, he collected for his specimen cabinet. These he interpreted as the "frost-work of a longer night." This six-word snippet of prose-poetry densely abstracts three Huttonian verities. Crystals of water-ice and silica-ice were indeed both hexagonal "frosts" originating from fluids, whether vapor or liquid. Freezing quartz requires a "longer night" than freezing water. And these respective nights have different causes. In Playfair's words, the "revolutions within the earth are independent of revolutions within the celestial spheres." Thoreau correctly envisioned planet Earth emerging from an initially molten state under darkened skies. "Mornings of creation, I call them ... A morning which carries us back beyond the Mosaic creation, where crystallizations are fresh and





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unmelted. It is the poet's hour." This passage was inspired by a Promethean scene coming from a Concord field on a moonless night. From a distance, Henry saw a burning "heap of stumps half covered with earth," a "phosphorescence ... a strange, Titanic thing this Fire, this Vulcan... within are fiery caverns, incrustated with fire as a cave with saltpetre ... the glass men are nearer the truth than the men of science." This last clause offered playful support for the plutonists who, as "glass men," invoked a molten origin for local rock. Conversely, it was a dig at the neptunist thrall for their aqueous version of creation.



"Entomology extends the limits of being in a new direction, so that I walk in nature with a sense of greater space and freedom. It suggests besides, that the universe is not rough-hewn, but perfect in its details. Nature will bear the closest inspection; she invites us to lay our eye level with the smallest leaf, and take an insect view of its plain. She has no interstices; every part is full of life. I explore, too, with pleasure, the sources of the myriad sounds which crowd the summer noon, and which seem the very grain and stuff of which eternity is made. Who does not remember the shrill roll-call of the harvest fly? There were ears for these sounds in Greece long ago, as Anacreon's ode will show"



ANACREON

– [Henry Thoreau](#)

"Natural History of Massachusetts"
July 1842 issue of The Dial²⁰

20. [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) reported that "one of [Harvard College](#)'s natural historians" (we may presume this to have been [Dr. Thaddeus William Harris, Thoreau](#)'s teacher in natural science in his senior year) had remarked to Bronson Alcott that "if Emerson had not spoiled him, Thoreau would have made a good [entomologist](#)."



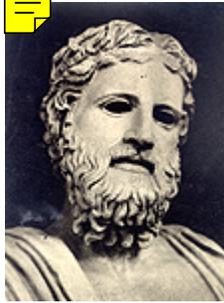
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Anacreon's Ode to the Cicada



We pronounce thee happy, cicada,
For on the tops of the trees,
Sipping a little dew
Like any king thou singest.
For thine are they all,
Whatever thou seest in the fields,
And whatever the woods bear.
Thou art the friend of the husbandmen.
In no respect injuring any one;
And thou art honored among men,
Sweet prophet of summer.
The muses love thee,
And Phoebus himself loves thee,
And has given thee a shrill song;
Age does not wrack thee,
Thou skilful – earth-born – song-loving,
Unsuffering – bloodless one;
Almost thou art like the gods.





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NUTTALL
ARISTOTLE

I have by me one of a pair of ospreys, which have for some years fished in this vicinity, shot by a neighboring pond, measuring more than two feet in length, and six in the stretch of its wings. Nuttall mentions that "The ancients, particularly Aristotle, pretended that the ospreys taught their young to gaze at the sun, and those who were unable to do so were destroyed. Linnæus even believed, on ancient authority, that one of the feet of this bird had all the toes divided, while the other was partly webbed, so that it could swim with one foot, and grasp a fish with the other." But that educated eye is now dim, and those talons are nerveless. Its shrill scream seems yet to linger in its throat, and the roar of the sea in its wings. There is the tyranny of Jove in its claws, and his wrath in the erectile feathers of the head and neck. It reminds me of the Argonautic expedition, and would inspire the dullest to take flight over Parnassus.

NUTTALL

The booming of the bittern, described by Goldsmith and Nuttall, is frequently heard in our fens, in the morning and evening, sounding like a pump, or the chopping of wood in a frosty morning in some distant farm-yard. The manner in which this sound is produced I have not seen anywhere described. On one occasion, the bird has been seen by one of my neighbors to thrust its bill into the water, and suck up as much as it could hold, then raising its head, it pumped it out again with four or five heaves of the neck, throwing it two or three feet, and making the sound each time.

In this issue of [THE DIAL](#) appeared [Thoreau](#)'s translation of one of [Anacreon](#)'s odes in *CARMINUM POETARUM NOUEM*, under the title "Return of Spring": "the works of men shine," etc.

In this issue of [THE DIAL](#), in the context of an article "Prayers" by [Waldo](#), a poem appeared in quotation without any attribution and without title. We suspect this sarcastic comment in the form of a prayer to have been contributed by [Thoreau](#):





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Great God, I ask thee for no meaner pelf
Than that I may not disappoint myself,
That in my action I may soar as high
As I can now discern with this clear eye.

And next in value, which thy kindness lends,
That I may greatly disappoint my friends,
Howe'er they think or hope that it may be,
They may not dream how thou'st
distinguished me.

That my weak hand may equal my firm faith,
And my life practice what my tongue saith;
That my low conduct may not show,
Nor my relenting lines,
That I thy purpose did not know,
Or overrated thy designs.

This issue of [THE DIAL](#) also contained portions selected by [Waldo](#) out of [Sir William Jones](#)'s and [Charles Wilkins](#)'s translations of the THE *HEETOPADES OF VEESHNOO-SARMA*, IN A SERIES OF CONNECTED FABLES, INTERSPERSED WITH MORAL, PRUDENTIAL, AND POLITICAL MAXIMS.²¹

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HITOPAESA

ÆSOP

XENOPHANES

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

THE DIAL, JULY 1842

We commence in the present number the printing of a series of selections from the oldest ethical and religious writings of men, exclusive of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. Each nation has its bible more or less pure; none has yet been willing or able in a wise and devout spirit to collate its own with those of other nations, and sinking the civil-historical and the ritual portions to bring together the grand expressions of the moral sentiment in different ages and races, the rules for the

21. The *HITOPAESA* or "Salutary Instructions" is a very ancient collection and is also familiarly known to us as "THE FABLES OF *PILPAY*." Many of these tales are condensations of material to be found in the *PANCHATANTRA*, which consists of five apologues recited by a Brahmin teacher name of *Vishnu Sarma* for the instruction of his class of [Indian](#) princes in the principles of their princship. Since this collection emphasizes worldly-wiseness, it has been exceedingly popular, indeed even more popular than Machiavelli's *THE PRINCE*: we presently know of over 200 different editions in at least 50 languages around the world.



guidance of life, the bursts of piety and of abandonment to the Invisible and Eternal; – a work inevitable sooner or later, and which we hope is to be done by religion and not by literature. The following sentences are taken from Charles Wilkins's translation of the Heetopades or Amicable Instructions of Veeshnoo Sarma, according to Sir William Jones, the most beautiful, if not the most ancient collection of apologues in the world, and the original source of the book, which passes in the modern languages of Europe and America, under the false name of Pilpay.

EXTRACTS FROM THE HEETOPADES OF VEESHNOO SARMA.

Whatsoever cometh to pass, either good or evil, is the consequence of a man's own actions, and descendeth from the power of the Supreme Ruler.

Our lives are for the purposes of religion, labor, love, and salvation. If these are destroyed, what is not lost? If these are preserved, what is not preserves?

A wise man should relinquish both his wealth and his life for another. All is to be surrendered for a just man when he is reduced to the brink of destruction.

Why dost thou hesitate over this perishable body composed of flesh, bones, and excrements? O my friend, [my body,] support my reputation!

If constancy is to be obtained by inconstancy, purity by impurity, reputation by the body, then what is there which may not be obtained?

The difference between the body and the qualities is infinite; the body is a thing to be destroyed in a moment, whilst the qualities endure to the end of the creation.

Is this one of us, or is he a stranger is the enumeration of the ungenerous; but to those by whom liberality is practised, the whole world is but as one family.

Fortune attendeth that lion amongst men who exerteth himself. They are weak men who declare Fate the sole cause.

It is said, Fate is nothing but the deeds committed in a former state of existence; wherefore it behoveth a man vigilantly to exert the powers he is possessed of.

The stranger, who turneth away from a house with disappointed hopes, leaveth there his own offences and departeth, taking with him all the good actions of the owner.

Hospitality is to be exercised even towards an enemy when he cometh to thine house. The tree does not withdraw its shade even from the wood-cutter.

Of all men thy guest is the superior.

The mind of a good man does not alter when he is in distress; the waters of the ocean are not to be heated by a torch of straw. Nor bathing with cool water, nor a necklace of pearls, nor anointing with sanders, yieldeth such comfort to the body oppressed with heat, as the language of a good man cheerfully uttered doth to the mind.



Good men extend their pity even unto the most despicable animals. The moon doth not withhold the light, even from the cottage of a Chandala.

Those who have forsaken the killing of all; those who are helpmates to all; those who are a sanctuary to all; those men are in the way of heaven.

Behold the difference between the one who eateth flesh, and him to whom it belonged. The first hath a momentary enjoyment, whilst the latter is deprived of existence.

Who would commit so great a crime against a poor animal, who is fed only by the herbs which grow wild in the woods, and whose belly is burnt up with hunger?

Every book of knowledge, which is known to Oosana or to Vreehaspatee, is by nature planted in the understanding of women.

The beauty of the Kokeela is his voice; the beauty of a wife is constancy to her husband; the beauty of the ill-favored is science; the beauty of the penitent is patience.

What is too great a load for those who have strength? What is distance to the indefatigable? What is a foreign country to those who have science? Who is a stranger to those who have the habit of speaking kindly?

Time drinketh up the essence of every great and noble action, which ought to be performed and is delayed in the execution.

When Nature is forsaken by her lord, be she ever so great, she doth not survive.

Suppose thyself a river, and a holy pilgrimage in the land of Bharata, of which truth is the water, good actions the banks, and compassion the current; and then, O son of Pandoo, wash thyself therein, for the inward soul is not to be purified by common water.

As frogs to the pool, as birds to a lake full of water, so doth every species of wealth flow to the hands of him who exerteth himself.

If we are rich with the riches which we neither give nor enjoy, we are rich with the riches which are buried in the caverns of the earth.

He whose mind is at ease is possessed of all riches. is it not the same to one whose foot is enclosed in a shoe, as if the whole surface of the earth were covered with leather?

Where have they, who are running here and there in search of riches, such happiness as those placid spirits enjoy who are gratified at the immortal fountain of happiness?

All hath been read, all hath been heard, and all hath been followed by him who, having put hope behind him, dependeth not upon expectation.

What is religion? Compassion for all things which have life. What is happiness? To animals in this world, health. What is kindness? A principle in the goode. What is philosophy? An entire separation from the world.

To a hero of sound mind, what is his own, and what a foreign country? Wherever he halteth, that place is acquired by the



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splendor of his arms.

When pleasure is arrived, it is worthy of attention; when trouble presenteth itself, the same; pains and pleasures have their revolutions like a wheel.

One, although not possessed of a mine of gold, may find the offspring of his own nature, that noble ardor which hath for its object the accomplishment of the whole assemblage of virtues.

Man should not be over-anxious for a subsistence, for it is provided by the Creator. The infant no sooner droppeth from the womb, than the breasts of the mother begin to stream.

He, by whom geese were made white, parrots are stained green, and peacocks painted of various hues, – even he will provide for their support.

He, whose inclination turneth away from an object, may be said to have obtained it.

[Wilkins, Sir Charles.

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THE HEETOPADES, transl. Bath, 1787.

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GRAMMAR OF THE SANSKRITA LANGUAGE. 1808.

[Horace Hayman Wilson.](#)

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THE DIAL

THE DIAL

July 9, Saturday: In an apartment at 13 West Street in [Boston](#), the apartment in which [Margaret Fuller](#) had held her “conversations” and out of which Miss [Elizabeth Palmer Peabody](#) had published [THE DIAL](#), the Reverend James Freeman Clarke united [Sophia Amelia Peabody](#) and [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) in holy matrimony, and then the married couple traveled by carriage to Concord, through occasional showers, arriving at their new/old home, the Old Manse which they had agreed to rent, at about 5PM. The Peabodys had attended this ceremony, but the Hawthornes, sensitive to the loss of the man of the family, had refrained. (The honeymoon couple would occupy the tiny rooms of the Old Manse, a colossal antique dollhouse, for the next three and a half years.)



August: [Joseph Smith, Jr.](#) “got married with” Martha McBride and with Ruth Vose Sayers as well.

[Margaret Fuller](#) suggested to [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) and Mrs. [Sophia Peabody Hawthorne](#) that her sister [Mrs. Ellen Fuller Channing](#) and husband [Mr. Ellery Channing II](#) be allowed to board at the Old Manse in [Concord](#) — but by letter this proposition was declined. However, [Henry Thoreau](#) was able to secure for the newlyweds the little red farmhouse next to [Waldo Emerson](#)’s garden, on the Cambridge Turnpike, at a rent of \$55.⁰⁰ (\$5.⁰⁰ more per year than the rental cost of The Manse because its antique rooms were undesirably tiny, and because it was so costly to heat during the winter). Margaret and Ellery stayed with the Emersons for several weeks and when they departed [Emerson](#) was the editor of [THE DIAL](#).

October: The current quarterly issue of THE EDINBURGH REVIEW, OR CRITICAL JOURNAL:

THE EDINBURGH REVIEW

[Mrs. Ellen Sturgis Hooper](#)’s poem “The Hour of Reckoning” appeared anonymously on page 358 of [THE DIAL](#). In this issue appeared [Henry Thoreau](#)’s poem “To the Maiden in the East,” that would later be inserted in somewhat altered form, minus three of the stanzas, into the “Sunday” chapter of [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#).

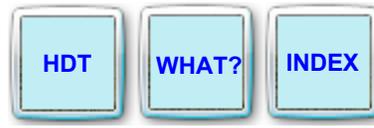
Low in the eastern sky
Is set thy glancing eye;
And though its gracious light
Ne’er riseth to my sight,
Yet every star that climbs
Behind the gnarled limbs
Of yonder hill,
Conveys thy gentle will.



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15 WEST STREET

NOVELIST NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE ONCE DESCRIBED 15 WEST STREET AS "MRS. PEABODY'S GARAVANSARY." IN REFERENCE TO THE DIVERSE ACTIVITIES OF THE PEABODY FAMILY WHO FROM 1840 TO 1854 MADE THEIR HOME IN THIS BUILDING. IN THE FRONT PARLOR, DAUGHTER ELIZABETH OPENED A BOOKSTORE, THE FIRST IN BOSTON TO OFFER WORKS BY FOREIGN AUTHORS. HERE SHE AND RALPH WALDO EMERSON PUBLISHED *THE DIAL*, THE QUARTERLY PERIODICAL OF THE TRANSCENDENTALIST POETS. HERE ALSO, JOURNALIST—CRITIC MARGARET FULLER HELD HER FAMOUS "CONVERSATIONS" WHICH TODAY ARE CONSIDERED LANDMARK TRACTS IN THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN FEMINISM. IN THE PRIVATE, REAR PARLOR, DAUGHTER SOPHIA IN 1842 MARRIED HAWTHORNE, AND DAUGHTER MARY IN 1843 MARRIED HORACE MANN, THE FATHER OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN AMERICA. DURING THE YEARS THE PEABODY FAMILY LIVED ON WEST STREET, THEY WERE HOSTS — AND FRIEND — TO MANY WHO HELPED BROADEN AMERICAN THOUGHT AND LITERATURE.



THE DIAL

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Believe I knew thy thought,
And that the zephyrs brought
Thy kindest wishes through,
As mine they bear to you,
That some attentive cloud
Did pause amid the crowd
 Over my head,
While gentle things were said.

Believe the thrushes sung,
And that the flower-bells rung,
That herbs exhaled their scent,
And beasts knew what was meant,
The trees a welcome waved,
And lakes their margins laved,
 When thy free mind
To my retreat did wind.

It was a summer eve,
The air did gently heave
While yet a low-hung cloud
Thy eastern skies did shroud;
The lightning's silent gleam,
Startling my drowsy dream,
 Seemed like the flash
Under thy dark eyelash.

From yonder comes the sun,
But soon his course is run,
Rising to trivial day
Along his dusty way;
But thy noontide completes
Only auroral heats,
 Nor ever sets,
To hasten vain regrets.

Direct thy pensive eye
Into the western sky;
And when the evening star
Doth glimmer from afar
Upon the mountain line,
Accept it for a sign
 That I am near,
And thinking of thee here.

I'll be thy Mercury,
Thou Cytherea to me,
Distinguished by thy face
The earth shall learn my place;
And near beneath thy light
Will I outwear the night,
 With mingled ray
Leading the westward way.

Still will I strive to be
As if thou wert with me;
Whatever path I take,
It shall be for thy sake,
Of gentle slope and wide,
As thou wert by my side,
 Without a root
To trip thy slender foot.



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I'll walk with gentle pace,
And choose the smoothest place,
And careful dip the oar,
And shun the winding shore,
And gently steer my boat
Where water-lilies float,
And cardinal-flowers
Stand in their sylvan bowers.





Also, [Thoreau](#)'s poem "The Summer Rain," with its reference to the red (ants) versus the black, which would appear in the "Thursday" chapter of [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#):

[A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#) :

My books I'd fain cast off, I cannot read,
'Twi'xt every page my thoughts go stray at large
Down in the meadow, where is richer feed,
And will not mind to hit their proper targe.

Plutarch was good, and so was Homer too,
Our Shakespeare's life were rich to live again,
What Plutarch read, that was not good nor true,
Nor Shakespeare's books, unless his books were men.

Here while I lie beneath this walnut bough,
What care I for the Greeks or for Troy town,
If juster battles are enacted now
Between the ants upon this hummock's crown?

Bid Homer wait till I the issue learn,
If red or black the gods will favor most,
Or yonder Ajax will the phalanx turn,
Struggling to heave some rock against the host.

Tell Shakespeare to attend some leisure hour,
For now I've business with this drop of dew,
And see you not, the clouds prepare a shower, —
I'll meet him shortly when the sky is blue.

This bed of herd's grass and wild oats was spread
Last year with nicer skill than monarchs use.
A clover tuft is pillow for my head,
And violets quite overtop my shoes.

And now the cordial clouds have shut all in,
And gently swells the wind to say all's well;
The scattered drops are falling fast and thin,
Some in the pool, some in the flower-bell.

I am well drenched upon my bed of oats;
But see that globe come rolling down its stem,
Now like a lonely planet there it floats,
And now it sinks into my garment's hem.

Drip, drip the trees for all the country round,
And richness rare distills from every bough;
The wind alone it is makes every sound,
Shaking down crystals on the leaves below.

For shame the sun will never show himself,
Who could not with his beams e'er melt me so;
My dripping locks — they would become an elf,
Who in a beaded coat does gayly go.

PEOPLE OF
A WEEK

PLUTARCH

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE





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THE DIAL, OCTOBER 1842

December 15, Thursday-30, Friday: By the middle of the month [Henry Thoreau](#)'s translation of the PROMETHEUS BOUND of [Æschylus](#), which would be in competition with the translation being prepared by Elizabeth Barrett (Browning) and has been generally considered to be somewhat the better job, was ready for [THE DIAL](#).

THE DIAL, JANUARY 1843

For the remainder of the month, [Frederick Douglass](#) would be speaking at a series of Latimer meetings.



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1843

January: The current quarterly issue of THE EDINBURGH REVIEW, OR CRITICAL JOURNAL:

THE EDINBURGH REVIEW

This issue of THE DIAL contained ten pages of Henry Thoreau's selections from the Sir William Jones translation from Sanskrit of INSTITUTES OF HINDU LAW; OR, THE ORDINANCES OF MENU, ACCORDING TO THE GLOSS OF CULUCCA, COMPRISING THE INDIAN SYSTEM OF DUTIES, RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL.



THE DIAL, JANUARY 1843

January-February: Henry Thoreau's health was poor: "I am a diseased bundle of nerves standing between time and eternity." Waldo Emerson was lecturing in New-York.

The essay "A Walk to Wachusett," about Thoreau's 4-day hike with Richard Fuller reading Virgil's GEORGICS, appeared in the Boston Miscellany of Literature. The 300-line poem "With frontier strength ye stand your ground" that had been rejected for THE DIAL had been written into this essay.

Here is an example, from this essay, of how Thoreau reprocessed his quotations and snippets:



Man is the artificer of his own happiness. Let him beware how he complains of the disposition of circumstances for it is his own disposition he blames. If this is sour or that rough, or the other steep — let him think if it be not his work. If his look curdles all hearts, let him not complain of a sour reception — if he hobble in his gait, let him not grumble at the roughness of the way — if he is weak in the knees — let him not call the hill steep. This was the pith of the inscription on the wall of the Swedish inn— "You will find at Trolhate excellent bread, meat, and wine, provided you bring them with you!"



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WALK: As we went on our way late in the afternoon, we refreshed ourselves by bathing our feet in every rill that crossed the road, and anon, as we were able to walk in the shadows of the hills, recovered our morning elasticity. Passing through Sterling, we reached the banks of the Stillwater, in the western part of the town, at evening, where is a small village collected. We fancied that there was already a certain western look about this place, a smell of pines and roar of water, recently confined by dams, belying its name, which were exceedingly grateful. When the first inroad has been made, a few acres leveled, and a few houses erected, the forest looks wilder than ever. Left to herself, nature is always more or less civilized, and delights in a certain refinement; but where the axe has encroached upon the edge of the forest, the dead and unsightly limbs of the pine, which she had concealed with green banks of verdure, are exposed to sight. This village had, as yet, no post-office, nor any settled name. In the small villages which we entered, the villagers gazed after us, with a complacent, almost compassionate look, as if we were just making our *début* in the world at a late hour. "Nevertheless," did they seem to say, "come and study us, and learn men and manners." So is each one's world but a clearing in the forest, so much open and inclosed ground. The landlord had not yet returned from the field with his men, and the cows had yet to be milked. But we remembered the inscription on the wall of the Swedish inn, "You will find at Trolhate excellent bread, meat, and wine, provided you bring them with you," and were contented. But I must confess it did somewhat disturb our pleasure, in this withdrawn spot, to have our own village newspaper handed us by our host, as if the greatest charm the country offered to the traveler was the facility of communication with the town. Let it recline on its Own everlasting hills, and not be looking out from their summits for some petty Boston or New York in the horizon.

February: [Henry Thoreau](#) apparently prepared an essay for [THE DIAL](#) that was refused by [Margaret Fuller](#).

(The essay remained unpublished as a fair copy with pencil revisions, until "Sir Walter Raleigh" would be published in 1905 in Boston by the Bibliophile Society as edited by Henry A. Metcalf and [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#).)

February 8, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) lectured on [Sir Walter Raleigh](#) and heroism at the Concord Lyceum.²²





[THE DIAL](#)

[THE DIAL](#)

April 9, Sunday: [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) finally made it all the way through “A. Bronson Alcott’s Works” in the latest issue of the [THE DIAL](#).



It is not very satisfactory, and has not taught me much.

[THE DIAL, APRIL 1843](#)

He found he liked [Margaret Fuller](#)’s article on Canova much better. He had been chopping wood for exercise, and had hit himself in the face with a stick of kindling and blacked both his eyes. When he walked down to the riverbank and found that the ice had broken up –presumably a few days earlier– and noticed that because the river was very high his boat *Pond Lily* was full of water and in no condition for a row through the meadows. Then the dinner bell rang and he went in to “an immense joint of roast veal.”

[Mrs. Ellen Sturgis Hooper](#)’s poem “Sweep Ho!” appeared anonymously on page 245 of [THE DIAL](#).²³



Amy Belding Brown has uncovered in the Congregational church records of Grafton MA that on this day, after long debate, the members had passed a resolution declaring [slaveholding](#) to be a sin.²⁴

22. Thoreau apparently prepared this essay for [THE DIAL](#) but was refused by [Margaret Fuller](#). The essay remained unpublished as a fair copy with pencil revisions, until “Sir Walter Raleigh” was published in 1905 in Boston by the Bibliophile Society, edited by Henry Aiken Metcalf and Franklin Benjamin Sanborn.

[SIR WALTER RALEIGH](#)

23. A Yale professor opined in this year, “Who reads [THE DIAL](#) for any purpose than to laugh at its baby poetry or at the solemn fooleries of its mystic prose?”

24. Imagine that.



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

April: In this month and the following one, two articles on [Buddhist](#) thought by [Professor Eugène Burnouf](#) were appearing in *La Revue Indépendante*, a prominent French journal which was presumably being stocked by Miss [Elizabeth Palmer Peabody](#) at her bookstore in downtown Boston. This month's article was entitled *Fragments des Prédications de Buddha*. [Professor Burnouf](#) was the 1st to translate the LOTUS SUTRA from Sanskrit into a European language and eventually [Henry Thoreau](#) would possess a personal copy of the 1852 edition of his *LE LOTUS DE LA BONNE LOI, TRADUIT DU SANSKRIT, ACCOMPAGNÉ D'UN COMMENTAIRE ET DE VINGT ET UN MÉMOIRES RELATIFS AU BUDDHISME, PAR M. E. BURNOUF* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale). An English translation of this French translation of Chapter V of the Sanskrit of THE LOTUS SUTRA would appear in [THE DIAL](#) for January 1844, and presumably either Thoreau or Peabody, busy as beavers, prepared that translation — which would amount to the very 1st presentation of any part of this essential Buddhist scripture in the English language!

THOREAU AND CHINA

[Thoreau](#) edited this issue (Volume III, Number 4) of [THE DIAL](#).

THE DIAL, APRIL 1843

The issue carried 21 quotes in its “Ethnical Scriptures: Sayings of [Confucius](#)” section, but these are not the ones which Thoreau would (probably later in this same year) retranslate from the French of [M.J. Pauthier](#)'s *CONFUCIUS ET MENCIVS*. Thoreau was still relying upon English editions, at least three of which he had at this point perused, and the translation he was relying upon at this point was one made in 1809 by the Reverend Joshua J. Marshman.²⁵

JOSHUA J. MARSHMAN



Heaven speaks, but what language does it use to preach to men, that there is a sovereign principle from which all things depend; a sovereign principle which makes them act and move? Its motion is its language; it reduces the seasons to their time; it agitates nature, it makes it produce. This silence is eloquent. (ANALECTS or *LUN-YÜ*, one of THE FOUR BOOKS), Book XVII, Chapter 19)

MENCIVS

LIGHT FROM CHINA

25. We know he read the English translation by Father Couplet, a Jesuit in [China](#) from 1658 to 1680, which had been in 1687 the very first notice of the writings of [Confucius](#) for an European audience, in an 1835 edition, plus two by a [Baptist](#) missionary in [India](#) in 1809, the Reverend Joshua J. Marshman, and one done in 1828 by David Collie, a member of the London Missionary Society who was at one time the principal of the Protestant Anglo-Chinese College at Malacca.

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Ethnical Scriptures.

Sayings Of Confucius.

1. Chee says, if in the morning I hear about the right way, and in the evening die, I can be happy.
2. A man's life is properly connected with virtue. The life of the evil man is preserved by mere good fortune.
3. Coarse rice for food, water to drink, and the bended arm for a pillow – happiness may be enjoyed even in these. Without virtue, riches and honor seem to me like a passing cloud.
4. A wise and good man was Hooi. A piece of bamboo was his dish, a cocoa-nut his cup, his dwelling a miserable shed. Men could not sustain the sight of his wretchedness; but Hooi did not change the serenity of his mind. A wise and good man was Hooi.
5. Chee-koong said, Were they discontented? The sage replies, They sought and obtained complete virtue;—how then could they be discontented?
6. Chee says, Yaou is the man who, in torn clothes or common apparel, sits with those dressed in furred robes without feeling shame.
7. To worship at a temple not your own is mere flattery.
8. Chee says, grieve not that men know not you; grieve that you are ignorant of men.
9. How can a man remain concealed! How can a man remain concealed! Have no friend unlike yourself.
10. Chee-Yaou enquired respecting filial piety. Chee says, the filial piety of the present day is esteemed merely ability to nourish a parent. This care is extended to a dog or a horse. Every domestic animal can obtain food. Beside veneration, what is the difference?
11. Chee entered the great temple, frequently enquiring about things. One said, who says that the son of the Chou man understands propriety? In the great temple he is constantly asking questions. Chee heard and replied- "This is propriety."
12. Choy-ee slept in the afternoon. Chee says, rotten wood is unfit for carving: a dirty wall cannot receive a beautiful color. To Ee what advice can I give?
13. A man's transgression partakes of the nature of his company. Having knowledge, to apply it; not having knowledge, to confess your ignorance; this is real knowledge.
14. Chee says, to sit in silence and recall past ideas, to study and feel no anxiety, to instruct men without weariness; —have I this ability within me?



15. In forming a mountain, were I to stop when one basket of earth is lacking, I actually stop; and in the same manner were I to add to the level ground though but one basket of earth daily, I really go forward.

16. A soldier of the kingdom of Ci lost his buckler; and having sought after it a long time in vain; he comforted himself with this reflection; "A soldier has lost his buckler, but a soldier of our camp will find it; he will use it."

17. The wise man never hastens, neither in his studies nor his words; he is sometimes, as it were, mute; but when it concerns him to act and practice virtue, he, as I may say, precipitates all.

18. The truly wise man speaks little; he is little eloquent. I see not that eloquence can be of very great use to him.

19. Silence is absolutely necessary to the wise man. Great speeches, elaborate discourses, pieces of eloquence, ought to be a language unknown to him; his actions ought to be his language. As for me, I would never speak more. Heaven speaks, but what language does it use to preach to men, that there is a sovereign principle from which all things depend; a sovereign principle which makes them to act and move? Its motion is its language; it reduces the seasons to their time; it agitates nature; it makes it produce. This silence is eloquent.²⁶

26. This last of the Marshman translations which Thoreau inserted into [THE DIAL](#) is now considered to have been a Taoist inclusion in the Confucian ANALECTS, so we cannot ever allege that Thoreau had **no contact whatever** with Taoism.



THE DIAL

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Dark Ages.

WE should read history as little critically as we consider the landscape, and be more interested by the atmospheric tints, and various lights and shades which the intervening spaces create, than by its groundwork and composition. It is the morning now turned evening and seen in, the west, – the same sun, but a new light and atmosphere. Its beauty is like the sunset; not a fresco painting on a wall, flat and bounded, but atmospheric and roving or free. In reality history fluctuates as the face of the landscape from morning to evening. What is of moment is its hue and color. Time hides no treasures; we want not its *then* but its *now*. We do not complain that the mountains in the horizon are blue and indistinct; they are the more like the heavens. Of what moment are facts that can be lost, – which need to be commemorated? The monument of death will outlast the memory of the dead. The pyramids do not tell the tale that was confided to them; the living fact commemorates itself. Why look in the dark for light? Strictly speaking, the historical societies have not recovered one fact from oblivion, but are themselves instead of the fact that is lost. The researcher is more memorable than the researched. The crowd stood admiring the mist, and the dim outlines of the trees seen through it, when one of their number advanced to explore the phenomenon, and with fresh admiration, all eyes were turned on his dimly retreating figure. It is astonishing with how little cooperation of the societies, the past is remembered. Its story has indeed had a different muse than has been assigned it. There is a good instance of the manner in which all history began, in Alwakidi's Arabian Chronicle. "I was informed by Ahmed Almatin Aljorhami, who had it from Rephaa Ebn Kais Alamiri, who had it from Saiph Ebn Fabalah Alchatquarmi, who had it from Thabet Ebn Alkamah, who said he was present at the action." These fathers of history were not anxious to preserve, but to learn the fact; and hence it was not forgotten. Critical acumen is exerted in vain to uncover the past; the *past* cannot be *presented*; we cannot know what we are not. But one veil hangs over past, present, and future, and it is the province of the historian to find out not what was, but what is. Where a battle has been fought, you will find nothing but the bones of men and beasts; where a battle is being fought there are hearts beating. We will sit on a mound and muse, and not try to make these skeletons stand on their legs attain. Does nature remember, think you, that they were men, or not rather that they are bones ?

Ancient history has an air of antiquity; it should be more modern. It is written as if the spectator should be thinking of the backside of the picture on the wall, or as if the author expected the dead would be his readers, and wished to detail to them their own experience. Men seem anxious to accomplish an orderly retreat through the centuries, earnestly rebuilding the works behind, as they are battered down by the encroachments of



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time; but while they loiter, they and their works both fall a prey to the arch enemy. It has neither the venerableness of antiquity, nor the freshness of the modern. It does as if it would go to the beginning of things, which natural history might with reason assume to do; but consider the Universal History, and then tell us— when did burdock and plantain sprout first? It has been so written for the most part, that the times it describes are with remarkable propriety called *dark ages*. They are dark, as one has observed, because we are so in the dark about them. The sun rarely shines in history, what with the dust and confusion; and when we meet with any cheering fact which implies the presence of this luminary, we excerpt and modernize it. As when we read in the history of the Saxons, that Edwin of Northumbria “caused stakes to be fixed in the highways where he had seen a clear spring,” and “brazen dishes were chained to them, to refresh the weary sojourner, whose fatigues Edwin had himself experienced.” This is worth all Arthur’s twelve battles.

But it is fit the past should be dark; though the darkness is not so much a quality of the past, as of tradition. It is not a distance of time but a distance of relation, which makes thus dusky its memorials. What is near to the heart of this generation is fair and bright still. Greece lies outspread fair and sunshiny in floods of light, for there is the sun and day-light in her literature and art, Homer does not allow us to forget that the sun shone — nor Phidias, nor the Parthenon. Yet no era has been wholly dark, nor will we too hastily submit to the historian, and congratulate ourselves on a blaze of light. If we could pierce the obscurity of those remote years we should find it light enough; only there is not our day. — Some creatures are made to see in the dark. — There has always been the same amount of light in the world. The new and missing stars, the comets and eclipses do not affect the general illumination, for only our glasses appreciate them. The eyes of the oldest fossil remains, they tell us, indicate that the same laws of light prevailed then as now. Always the laws of light are the same, but the modes and degrees of seeing vary. The gods are partial to no era, but steadily shines their light in the heavens, while the eye of the beholder is turned to stone. There was but the eye and the sun from the first. The ages have not added a new ray to the one, nor altered a fibre of the other.

T.



THE CULT OF NOTHINGNESS

Here is a review describing how Buddhism was being mis-appreciated, in the West during Thoreau's lifetime. It is important to understand that Thoreau had **no share whatever** in any of the various mis-appreciations of Buddhism which are here described.

Roger-Pol Droit. THE CULT OF NOTHINGNESS: THE PHILOSOPHERS AND THE BUDDHA. Translated by David Streight and Pamela Vohnson. Chapel Hill NC: U of North Carolina P, 2003

Reviewed for H_Buddhism by David R. Loy, Bunkyo University

Published by H_Buddhism in December 2003

In May this year media headlines announced the discovery that Buddhists are happier. Smaller print summarized the results of new research into the effects of meditation on brain activity, behavior, and even immune responses to flu vaccine. Richard Davidson, director of the Laboratory for Affective Neuroscience at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, and a participant in Dharamsala meetings with the Dalai Lama, used new scanning techniques to examine the brain activity of experienced meditators. MRI scanners and EEGs showed dramatic changes in brain function, including high activity in brain centers associated with positive emotions. Similar results were also achieved with new meditators. Although still provisional, these findings led the philosopher Owen Flanagan to comment in New Scientist magazine:

The most reasonable hypothesis is that there's something about conscientious Buddhist practice that results in the kind of happiness we all seek.²⁷

Such scientific results show a rather different perception of Buddhism than the understanding that horrified Westerners throughout most of the nineteenth century. Buddhism today is usually seen as a kind of pragmatic therapy that cures or reduces suffering, but from approximately 1820 to 1890 -the period of focus for Droit's book- Europe was haunted by the nightmare of an alternative religion that denied existence and recommended annihilation. THE CULT OF NOTHINGNESS: THE PHILOSOPHERS AND THE BUDDHA summarizes and analyzes the history of this (mis)understanding. He concludes that it had less to do with the rudimentary state of Buddhist studies during that period than with Europe's fears about its own incipient nihilism, which would later ripen into the horrors of the twentieth century. "Thinking they were talking about the Buddha, Westerners were talking about themselves" (p. 21).

At the end of the eighteenth century, new translations of Indian

27. The research results are summarized in Dharma Life 21 (Autumn 2003): pp. 8-9.



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texts were exciting European intellectuals, giving rise to hopes for another Renaissance greater than the one that had resulted from the late-medieval rediscovery of Greek texts. But it never happened. About 1820, when scholarly research first clarified the distinction from Brahmanism, "Buddhism" became constructed as a religion that, amazingly, worshiped nothingness, and European commentators reacted in horror.

In their descriptions of nirvana, earlier scholars such as Francis Buchanan and Henry Thomas Colebrooke had been careful to deny that it was equivalent to annihilation. Their influence, however, was overwhelmed by the philosophical impact of Hegel and later the unsurpassed authority of Eugene Burnouf at the Collège de France. Hegel established the strong link with Nichts that would endure throughout most of the century. Instead of benefiting from the best scholarship then available, he relied on earlier sources such as de Guignes and the Abbots Banier and Grosier, evidently because their views of Buddhism fit better into his equation of pure Being with pure Nothingness. In Hegel's system this equation signified the advent of interiority, a "lack of determination" that was not really atheistic or nihilistic in the modern sense – more like the negative theology of Rhineland mystics such as Meister Eckhart. Later, Burnouf's *INTRODUCTION A L'HISTOIRE DU BUDDHISME INDIEN* (1844) was immensely influential because it provided the first rigorous study of the Buddha's teachings, thus taking Buddhist studies to a new level of sophistication, but one which firmly established the nihilistic specter: despite making cautious qualifications due to the West's still-limited knowledge, Burnouf did not hesitate to identify nirvana with total annihilation.

Burnouf's scholarly objectivity was soon supplemented by apologetic and missionary ardor. Catholic preachers such as Ozanam declared that, behind his serene mask, the Buddha was Satan himself in a new incarnation. The Buddha's cult of nothingness aroused in Felix Neve's soul the need to liberate Buddhist peoples from their errors, weakness, and immobility. Victor Cousins, who played a major role in establishing philosophical education in mid-century France, and who proclaimed that Sanskrit texts were worthy of Western philosophical attention, nevertheless followed Burnouf in reacting against the Buddhist system: it was not only an anti-religion but a counterworld, a threat to order. His follower Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire took a further step and denied that such a "deplorable and absurd" faith could be philosophically relevant, even asking whether such a strange phenomenon meant that human nature in India "is still the same nature we feel within ourselves," since Buddhism's "gloomy meaning" led only to "moral suicide" (pp. 122-23). Ernest Renan called Buddha "the atheistic Christ of India" and attacked his revolting "Gospel of Nihilism" (p. 120).

Schopenhauer discovered in Buddhism many of his favorite themes –renunciation, compassion, negation of the will to live– but



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relatively late, so, according to Droit, Buddhism had no significant influence on his system. However, his annexation of Buddhist principles brought the Buddhist challenge back to Europe, from missionary conversion to counteracting home-grown nihilism. Ever the philosopher, however, Schopenhauer was careful to say that nirvana could only be nothingness "for us," since the standpoint of our own existence does not allow us to say anything more about it. Would that other commentators had been so sensible!

The nihilistic understanding of Buddhism had a significant impact on Arthur de Gobineau's *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races* (1853), which would become enormously influential for the Nazis and other twentieth-century racists. For Gobineau, humanity was rushing to perdition and nothingness due to degeneration caused by intermingling of the races. He viewed Buddhism as the effort of an inferior people to overthrow the racially superior Aryan Brahmins. The failure of this attempt - the fact that Buddhism was largely eliminated from India- was somewhat inconsistent with his own historical pessimism, which accepted the inevitability of decline; but it may have encouraged the Nazis to attempt their own program of extermination for the sake of racial purity.

Nietzsche, too, accepted the view of Buddhism as aspiring to nothingness, although for him it was the similarity with Christianity, not the difference, that was the problem. Despite the undoubted value of Buddhism as a moderate and hygienic way of living that denied transcendence and viewed the world from more rigorous psychological and physiological perspectives, in the end the choice is between Buddhism, Schopenhauer, India, weakness, and peaceful inactivity, or strength, conflict, Europe, pain, and tragedy. Buddhism's spread in Europe was unfortunate, Nietzsche believed, since "Nostalgia for nothingness is the negation of tragic wisdom, its opposite" (p. 148).

About 1864 the annihilationist view of Buddhism began to decline. Carl F. Koppen's *THE RELIGION OF THE BUDDHA* (2 vols., 1857-59), very influential in the 1860s and 70s, emphasized the Buddha's ethical revolution, which affirmed a human deliverance and proclaimed human equality. Although literary fascination with the worship of nothingness continued, by the early 1890s emphasis was on Buddhism as a path of knowledge and wisdom, a "neo-Buddhist" view attacked by a still-active Burnouf. In place of Christian apologetics, there was a growing tendency to think of different religions as converging, as Vivekananda argued at the 1893 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago (although elsewhere he imagined Buddhism as responsible for various spiritual degenerations). As Droit summarizes: "The cult of nothingness was ending.... The time of wars was soon to come. Another cult of nothingness was beginning" (p. 160).

He argues persuasively that the issue at stake was always Europe's own identity. With "Buddhism" Europe constructed a mirror in which it dared not recognize itself. (Here perhaps



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Droit could have strengthened his case with some more reflections on Darwin, the death of God, and Europe's own hopes for/fears of a religion of Reason without transcendence.)

When the question of the Buddha's atheism arose, it was the atheism of the Europeans that was really in question. No one really believed, and almost no one ever said, that the beliefs of the Buddhists on the other side of the world were going to come and wreak havoc among the souls of the West. It was not a conversion, a corrosion, a "contamination" of any kind that was threatening, coming from outside. It was in Europe itself that the enemy, and the danger, were to be found. (p. 163)

This was not only a threat to the foundations of one's personal belief-system, but a challenge that threatened to undermine social order. "The nothingness of order corresponded to the nothingness of being. Once again, this nothingness was not the equivalent of a pure and simple absence. It was supposed to undo and disorganize. It was dangerous because it shattered, it leveled, it instigated anarchy" (p. 165).

Tragically, the decline of this nihilistic view of Buddhism was accompanied by the unprecedented triumph of a more active nihilism in the following century, with well over a hundred million war-dead, two-thirds of them civilian non-combatants.

Today, to say it again, Buddhism for us has become a pragmatic and non-metaphysical kind of therapy that reduces suffering. But how confident should we be about this view, given how well it reflects the postmodern West's own pragmatic, anti-metaphysical, therapeutic self-understanding? If we cannot leap over our own shadow, must we resign ourselves to "misinterpretations" of Buddhism that always reflect our own prejudices? Or is "Buddhism" better understood as the still-continuing history of its interpretations? Interpretations that must reflect our prejudices because they reflect our own needs.

THE CULT OF NOTHINGNESS: THE PHILOSOPHERS AND THE BUDDHA concludes with a 65-page chronological bibliography of Western works on Buddhism, most of it derived from a more extensive (15,073 titles!) bibliography compiled by Shinsho Hanayama and published by the Hokuseido Press in 1961. Droit claims that his own bibliography is almost complete for 1638-1860, omitting only more specialized works on archaeology, philology, etc. for 1860-1890. The translation is clear and fluent, although I have not compared it with the French original. And, although not a specialist in this field, I do not doubt that this work is indispensable to anyone studying the history of the Western reception of Buddhism.



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April 7, Friday: [Ephraim Merriam](#) died at the age of 47. He had never married but (as Henry Thoreau would) had lived all his life with his mother.

Mrs. [Sophia Peabody Hawthorne](#) had gone to Boston to visit her sister [Mary Tyler Peabody](#), who was to marry [Horace Mann, Sr.](#) and have a honeymoon in Europe, and [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) had sort of taken a vow of silence during her absence. However, while he was trying to read the current issue of [THE DIAL](#), which contained an article “A. Bronson Alcott’s Works,” and was seriously considering trying to take a nap, who should knock on his door but [Henry Thoreau](#), with a book to return, bearing the news that he was considering “going to reside at [Staten Island](#), as private tutor in the family of Mr. Emerson’s brother,” and bearing the news that [Ellery Channing](#) was coming back to Concord and that Thoreau had on his behalf searched out and rented a house and land for \$55.⁰⁰ the year: “a little red cottage on the road, with one acre attached.” Thoreau had brought his music box gift from [Margaret Fuller](#) and [Richard F. Fuller](#) to leave in Hawthorne’s keeping during his absence on Staten Island. Hawthorne and Thoreau discussed the spiritual advantages of change of place (Hawthorne was for it), and discussed [THE DIAL](#), and discussed Bronson Alcott. All in all, Hawthorne was glad that Thoreau was going away, on his own account,



AMERICAN NOTEBOOKS: ... I arose, and began this record in the journal, almost at the commencement of which I was interrupted by a visit from Mr. Thoreau, who came to return a book, and to announce his purpose of going to reside at Staten Island, as private tutor in the family of Mr. Emerson’s brother. We had some conversation upon this subject, and upon the spiritual advantages of change of place, and upon the Dial, and upon Mr. Alcott, and other kindred or concatenated subjects. I am glad, on Mr. Thoreau’s own account, that he is going away; as he is physically out of health, and, morally and intellectually, seems not to have found exactly the guiding clue; and in all these respects, he may be benefitted by his removal;—also, it is one step towards a circumstantial position in the world. On my account, I should like to have him remain here; he being one of the few persons, I think, with whom to hold intercourse is like hearing the wind among the boughs of a forest-tree; and with all this wild freedom, there is high and classic cultivation in him too.

[Hawthorne](#) feared that, for Concord, [Channing](#) would be

but a poor substitute for Mr. Thoreau.

We perhaps best understand this distaste for the ersatz, if we take into consideration the sort of weighty drivel that the promising Ellery had to offer to the town of Concord, when he contemplated weighty topics such as

the new railroad past Walden Pond:²⁸

Oh! transient gleams yon hurrying noisy train,
 Its yellow carriages rumbling with might
 Of volleyed thunder on the iron rail
 Pieced by the humble toil of Erin's hand
 Wood and lake the whistle shrill awakening.



When [Channing](#) had completed his move to Concord, [Hawthorne](#) took him fishing in the *Pond Lily*. Hawthorne described their fishing expeditions this way: “Strange and happy times were those, when we cast aside all irksome forms and strait-laced habitudes, and delivered ourselves up to the free air, to live like Indians or any less conventional race, during one bright semi-circle of the sun.” Not only did the holy vessel *Musketaquid* that had carried the Thoreau brothers off on their adventure on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers not mean anything in particular to this author Hawthorne, but this accomplished author was able to transform even a fishing trip into his own adventure in ethnic chauvinism: “Indians or any less conventional race,” indeed! (Later, Hawthorne would pass the boat on to Channing rather than back to its builder to whom it had meant so much. The record of this which Thoreau chose to retain was that the boat had simply “passed

28. Notice in the above that the locomotive whistle is still of the “steam trumpet” model, that is, is still of the “whistle shrill” variety which we would associate with slumland factories rather than with bucolic railroads.



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from hand to hand” and had “gone down the stream of time.”)

WALDEN: The only house I had been the owner of before, if I except a boat, was a tent, which I used occasionally when making excursions in the summer, and this is still rolled up in my garret; but the boat, after passing from hand to hand, has gone down the stream of time. With this more substantial shelter about me, I had made some progress toward settling in the world. This frame, so slightly clad, was a sort of crystallization around me, and reacted on the builder. It was suggestive somewhat as a picture in outlines. I did not need to go out doors to take the air, for the atmosphere within had lost none of its freshness. It was not so much within doors as behind a door where I sat, even in the rainiest weather. The Harivansa says, “An abode without birds is like a meat without seasoning.” Such was not my abode, for I found myself suddenly neighbor to the birds; not by having imprisoned one, but having caged myself near them. I was not only nearer to some of those which commonly frequent the garden and the orchard, but to those wilder and more thrilling songsters of the forest which never, or rarely, serenade a villager, —the wood-thrush, the veery, the scarlet tanager, the field-sparrow, the whippoorwill, and many others.

WHIPPOORWILL
WOOD THRUSH

THOREAU RESIDENCES



Was this the house that needed work, that Ellery hired Henry to perform? On the list of improvements for Henry to perform was an interesting item:

“Privy — to be moved from where it is now, behind the end of the barn, the filth carried off, & hole filled in. The privy to be whitewashed & have a new door, & the floor either renewed or cleaned up.”



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 April 8, Saturday: Earlier, if we may presume from the following otherwise somewhat inaccurate passage on page 212 of SALEM IS MY DWELLING PLACE: A BIOGRAPHY OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE / BY EDWIN HAVILAND MILLER, [Mr. and Mrs. Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) had obtained pleasure from [Henry Thoreau](#)'s music box.²⁹



On her good days she [Sophia Hawthorne] like Hawthorne traveled back in time and danced "before him to the music of the musical box" given to them by Thoreau.

However, by this date, with his wife absent, when Hawthorne listened to Thoreau's music box, he found that it and [THE DIAL](#) were sopphorics. And [Waldo Emerson](#) visited "with a sunbeam in his face," and was complaining tiresomely about the owner of the music box, about having



suffered some inconveniency from his experience of Mr. Thoreau as an inmate. It may well be that such a sturdy and uncompromising person is fitter to meet occasionally in the open air, than to have as a permanent guest at table and fireside.

Thoreau may not have been a man who bored easily, but Hawthorne certainly was. He had quickly wearied of playing the music box that Thoreau had been listening to repeatedly:

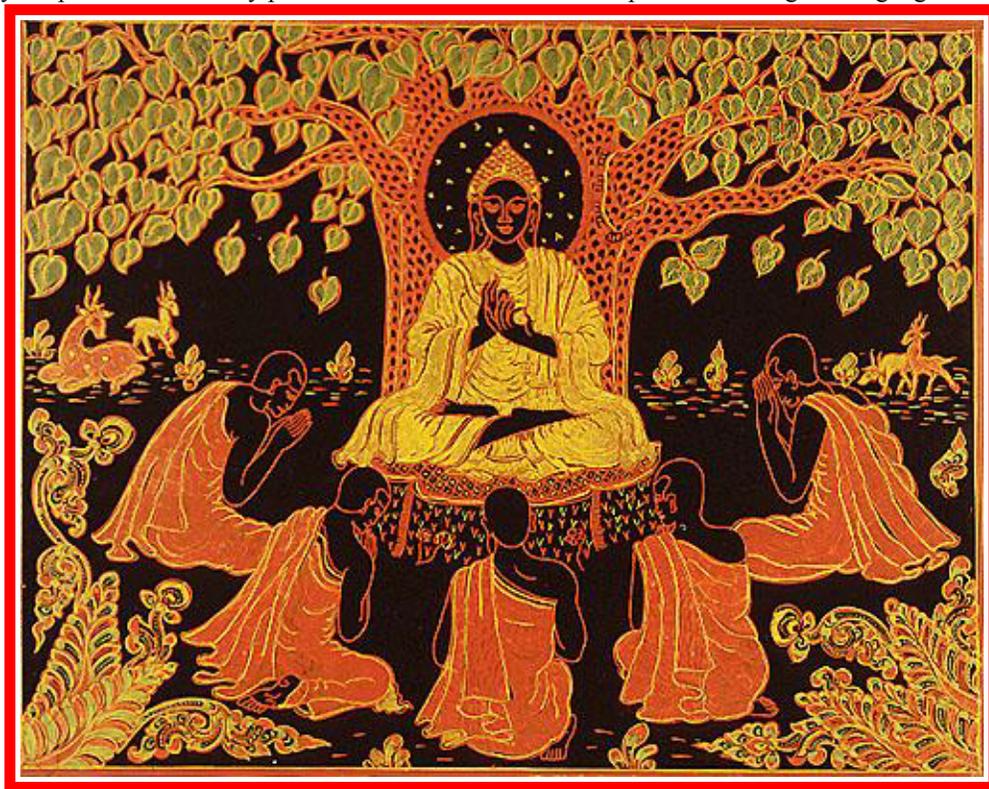
its peculiar sweetness has evaporated, and I am pretty sure that I should throw it out of the window, were I doomed to hear it long and often. It has not an infinite soul.

29. An interesting fact is that in the limited and circumspect erotic vocabulary of the 19th Century, the wife was, at this time in her journal, comparing their marital shenanigans to the Thousand and One Nights cycle of Iranian literature as transformed into carefully distanced English pornography by various adventurers, while the husband was, at this time in his journal, comparing them to the scriptural seven-veils dance of Salome before Herod Antipas for the head of John the Baptist.



May: Several members of the [Unitarian](#) Society formed what they termed the Unitarian Missionary Society.

In the previous month and this one, two articles on [Buddhist](#) thought by [Professor Eugène Burnouf](#) had been appearing in *La Revue Indépendante*, a prominent French journal which may have been available to Thoreau at the New York Society Library. The previous month's article had been entitled *Fragments des Prédications de Buddha* and this month's article was entitled *Considérations sur l'Origine du Bouddhisme*. [Professor Burnouf](#) was the 1st to translate the LOTUS SUTRA from Sanskrit into a European language and eventually [Henry Thoreau](#) would possess a personal copy of the 1852 edition of his *LE LOTUS DE LA BONNE LOI, TRADUIT DU SANSKRIT, ACCOMPAGNÉ D'UN COMMENTAIRE ET DE VINGT ET UN MÉMOIRES RELATIFS AU BUDDHISME, PAR M. E. BURNOUF* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale). An English translation of this French translation of Chapter V of the Sanskrit of THE LOTUS SUTRA would appear in [THE DIAL](#) for January 1844, and presumably either Thoreau or Miss [Elizabeth Palmer Peabody](#), busy as beavers, prepared that translation — which would amount to the very 1st presentation of any part of this essential Buddhist scripture in the English language!





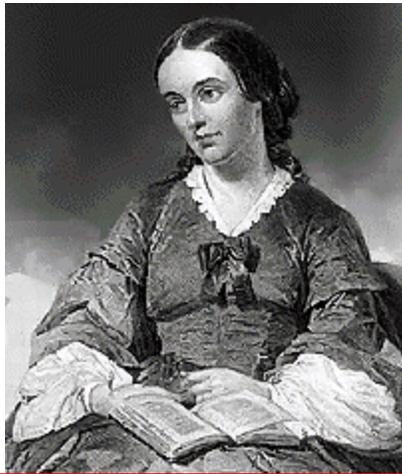
THE DIAL

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July: [Waldo Emerson](#)'s "Ethnical Scriptures ... from the *DESATIR*," his "Gifts," his poem "To Rhea," his review of [Thomas Carlyle](#)'s PAST AND PRESENT, and five other of his reviews, were presented in this issue of [THE DIAL](#).

PAST AND PRESENT

Also in these pages was to be found, however, a noteworthy landmark in feminism: [Margaret Fuller](#)'s "The Great Lawsuit: Man versus Men; Woman versus Women,"³⁰ which amounts to a first version of WOMAN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.



FEMINISM

THE DIAL, JULY 1843

In this essay Fuller insisted that as of 1843 the idea Man, however imperfectly realized, had been far more realized than the idea Woman, and that therefore the best way practically to aid the reformation of the sons of the age would be to improve the daughters of the age. While it is true that not all men have been given a fair chance, she pointed out, not one woman had been given a fair chance.

Fuller had seen, at the Allston Gallery in Boston in 1839, the statue of Orpheus that had been sculpted in Rome by Thomas Crawford. When the July issue of [THE DIAL](#) was read, it was notable that she had connected this

30. In 1844, when she republished this in expanded form as WOMAN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, she explained that by "Man" in this title she had meant both human males and human females, intending to "lay no especial stress on the welfare of either" because "the development of the one cannot be effected without that of the other." That is, she intended the same distinction, between "Man" and "Men," that Neil Armstrong intended between "man" and "mankind" when he stepped on the surface of the moon and went "That's a small step for [a] man, an giant leap for mankind." Boy-type human beings and girl-type human beings were regarded by her not as opposites, nor as natural antagonists in the mode of the "man-hating" early years of the feminist movement, but as, in a luminous metaphor, "twins," or "minds, partners in work and in life, sharing together on equal terms, public and private interests," who "work together for a common purpose, and, in all these instances, with the same implement, the pen." In other words, unlike certain later generation of feminists, Fuller was not sexist.



with [Bronson Alcott](#)'s "Orphic Sayings," from the first issue of the journal in 1840, as "lessons in reverence."

Orpheus was a lawgiver by theocratic commission. He understood nature, and made all her forms move to his music. He told her secrets in the form of hymns, nature as seen in the mind of God. Then it is the prediction, that to learn and to do, all men must be lovers, and Orpheus was, in a high sense, a lover. His soul went forth towards all beings, yet could remain sternly faithful to a chosen type of excellence. Seeking what he loved, he feared not death nor hell, neither could any presence daunt his faith in the power of the celestial harmony that filled his soul.

Referring to the statue's posture, of shading its eyes with its hand and staring forward, she penned a sonnet which began:

Each Orpheus must to the depths descend;
For only thus the Poet can be wise.

and which concluded with the following couplet:

If he already sees what he must do,
Well may he shade his eyes from the far-shining view.



July 11, Tuesday: The supporters of Representative John Quincy Adams celebrated his 76th birthday.

[Waldo Emerson](#) wrote [Margaret Fuller](#) to inform her that [Henry Thoreau](#), as well as others, had appreciated her "The Great Lawsuit: Man versus Men; Woman versus Women" in the current issue of [THE DIAL](#).



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July 13, Thursday: At 39 Beacon Street in Boston, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow got married with Frances Appleton.

On this day and the following one, [Frederick Douglass](#), George Bradburn, and John A. Collins were lecturing in [Middlebury](#), Vermont.

[Charles Wilkes](#), who had so long ago promoted himself from Lieutenant to Captain and begun to fly the flag of a Commodore as soon as he was out of sight of land, was at this point promoted to Commander.



(Clearly, abusing the men under your command is not regarded as a serious offense in the US Navy.)

At about this point [Henry Thoreau](#) was writing (presumably) to the publisher of [THE DIAL](#).





September 8, Friday: [Waldo Emerson](#) wrote from Concord to [Henry Thoreau](#) on [Staten Island](#) about his [review](#) of [Ellery Channing](#)'s volume [POEMS](#) that was currently appearing in [The United States Magazine and Democratic Review](#):

I beg you to tell my brother William that the review of Channing's poems, in the Democratic Review, has been interpolated with sentences and extracts, to make it long, by the editor, and I acknowledge, as far as I remember, little beyond the first page.

READ ELLERY'S POEMS
READ THE REVIEW

He reported on the continuation of the railroad right-of-way beyond Concord: "The mole which crosses the land of Jonas Potter and Mr. Stow [Cyrus Stow], from Ephraim Wheeler's high land to the depot, is eighteen feet high, and goes on two rods every day. A few days ago a new contract was completed, – from the terminus of the old contract to Fitchburg, –the whole to be built before October, 1844; so that you see our fate is sealed." This railroad would be described as follows:



The FITCHBURG RAILROAD, after leaving the depot in Causeway Street, passes through

Somerville,	South Acton,
Porter's,	West Acton,
Wellington Hill,	Littleton,
Waverley,	Groton Junction
Waltham,	Shirley,
Stony Brook,	Lunenburg,
Weston,	Leominster,
Lincoln,	Fitchburg.
Concord,	

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WHAT?

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[Waldo](#) had been editing [Henry](#)'s "A Winter Walk" essay to remove its "mannerisms," shortening the piece by a couple of pages so it could appear in [THE DIAL](#).



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October: "A WINTER WALK" in a shortened form, with [Henry Thoreau](#)'s "mannerisms" removed, eight of Thoreau's poems, and "Ethnical Scriptures: Chinese Four Books" (evidently selected by Thoreau out of Waldo Emerson's copy of THE CHINESE CLASSICAL WORK COMMONLY CALLED THE FOUR BOOKS; TRANSLATED, AND ILLUSTRATED WITH NOTES, BY [THE LATE REV. DAVID COLLIE](#), PRINCIPAL OF THE ANGLO-CHINESE COLLEGE, MALACCA), were appearing in this month's issue of [THE DIAL](#):

THE DIAL, OCTOBER 1843
DAVID COLLIE'S 4 BOOKS

**PEOPLE OF
A WEEK**

THE SCHOLAR.

Teen, son of the king of Tse, asked what the business of the scholar consists in? Mencius replied, In elevating his mind and inclination. What do you mean by elevating the mind? It consists merely in being benevolent and just. Where is the scholar's abode? In benevolence. Where is his road? Justice. To dwell in benevolence, and walk in justice, is the whole business of a great man.

Benevolence is man's heart, and justice is man's path. If a man lose his fowls or his dogs, he knows how to seek them. There are those who lose their hearts and know not how to seek them. The duty of the student is no other than to seek his lost heart.

He who employs his whole mind, will know his nature. He who knows his nature, knows heaven.

It were better to be without books than to believe all that they record.

A WEEK: Mencius says: "If one loses a fowl or a dog, he knows well how to seek them again; if one loses the sentiments of his heart, he does not know how to seek them again.... The duties of practical philosophy consist only in seeking after those sentiments of the heart which we have lost; that is all."

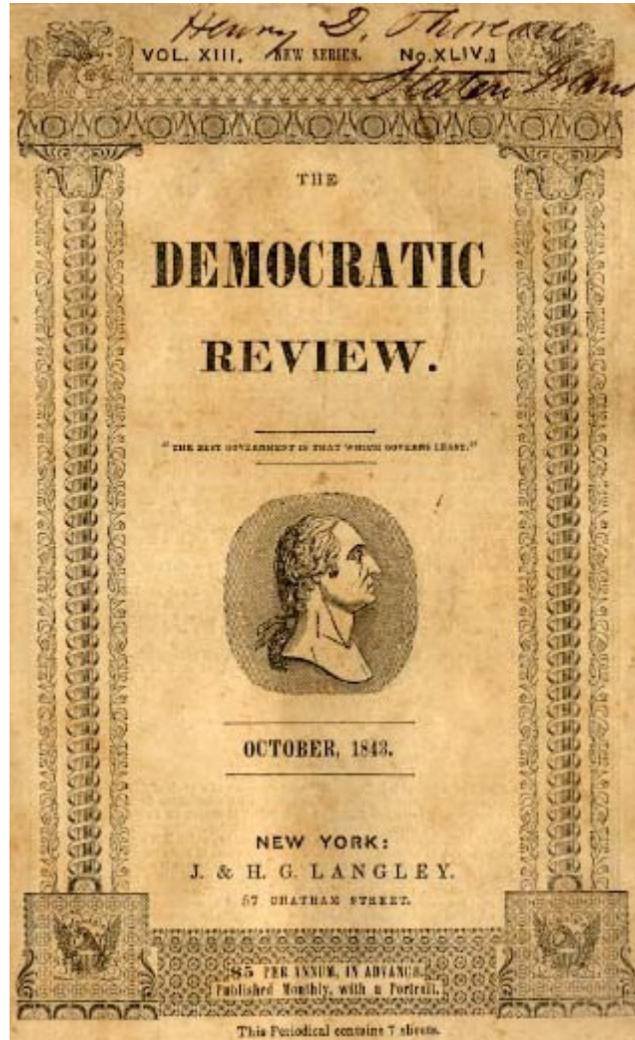
MENCIUS



THE DIAL

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[Thoreau](#) purchased the current copy of [The Democratic Review](#), containing his essay "[The Landlord.](#)" Here is his copy with his autograph:



(By the way, in this year the [Anglo-Chinese College](#) that had been established at Malacca in India in 1818 was in the process of relocating to Kowloon, [Hong Kong.](#))



[THE DIAL](#)

[THE DIAL](#)

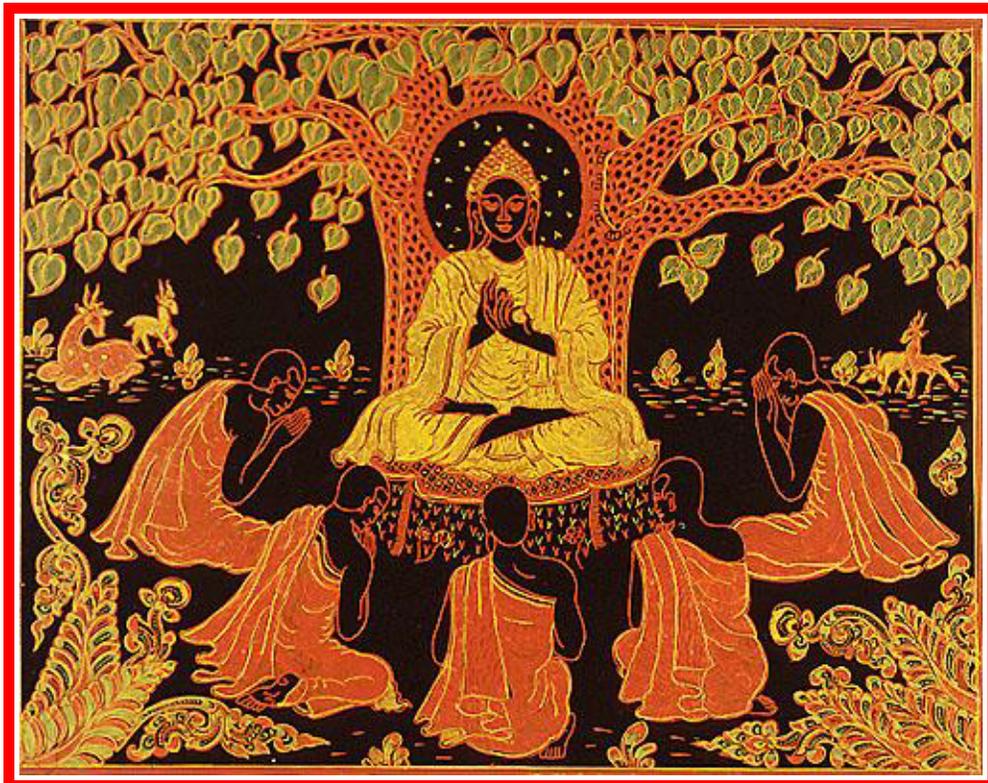
1844

January: [Henry Thoreau](#)'s translations from the odes of [Pindar](#) and his "[Homer](#), [Ossian](#), [Chaucer](#)." appeared in this current issue of [THE DIAL](#).

READ PINDAR'S ODES

[THE DIAL](#), JANUARY 1844

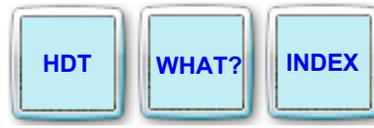
So, who then was the translator from French into English of the piece "The Preaching of [Buddha](#)" that also appeared? This amounts to the first English version of Chapter V of what we now know as THE LOTUS SUTRA. The piece was based upon two articles by [Professor Eugène Burnouf](#) that had appeared in French in the magazine *La Revue Indépendante* for April/May 1843 ([Professor Burnouf](#) having been the first to translate the LOTUS SUTRA from Sanskrit into a European language). In 1885, George Willis Cooke would finger Miss [Elizabeth Palmer Peabody](#), who not only knew French but also presumably carried the French magazine in question at her bookstore, as the English translator for this part of Thoreau's ethnical scriptures series, but there seems to be no document trail. (According to Sattelmeyer's THOREAU'S READING, item 1202 on page 264, Thoreau eventually would possess Burnouf's *LE LOTUS DE LA BONNE LOI...*, but since this book was not published until 1852 it does not bear upon the issue here.)



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15 WEST STREET

NOVELIST NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE ONCE DESCRIBED 15 WEST STREET AS "MRS. PEABODY'S GARAVANSARY." IN REFERENCE TO THE DIVERSE ACTIVITIES OF THE PEABODY FAMILY WHO FROM 1840 TO 1854 MADE THEIR HOME IN THIS BUILDING. IN THE FRONT PARLOR, DAUGHTER ELIZABETH OPENED A BOOKSTORE, THE FIRST IN BOSTON TO OFFER WORKS BY FOREIGN AUTHORS. HERE SHE AND RALPH WALDO EMERSON PUBLISHED *THE DIAL*, THE QUARTERLY PERIODICAL OF THE TRANSCENDENTALIST POETS. HERE ALSO, JOURNALIST—CRITIC MARGARET FULLER HELD HER FAMOUS "CONVERSATIONS" WHICH TODAY ARE CONSIDERED LANDMARK TRACTS IN THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN FEMINISM. IN THE PRIVATE, REAR PARLOR, DAUGHTER SOPHIA IN 1842 MARRIED HAWTHORNE, AND DAUGHTER MARY IN 1843 MARRIED HORACE MANN, THE FATHER OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN AMERICA. DURING THE YEARS THE PEABODY FAMILY LIVED ON WEST STREET, THEY WERE HOSTS — AND FRIEND — TO MANY WHO HELPED BROADEN AMERICAN THOUGHT AND LITERATURE.



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

January 25, Thursday: A review of [THE DIAL](#) in the New-York [Daily Tribune](#) selected [Henry Thoreau](#)'s essay for praise and took the occasion to make a back-handed compliment to Emerson: "We deeply desire to quote many pages, by different writers, from this number, but must be content for to-day with the following extracts from a Lecture on Poetry, by HENRY D. THOREAU, a young disciple and companion of Emerson, in whom the true spirit of the author's philosophy is reproduced, without the egotism and indifference to practical life we have regretted to see it cherish in less genial natures." Evidently the manuscript leaves Thoreau read from are lost to us either in consequence of their use as printers copy for [THE DIAL](#) or of his recycling them into an early draft of [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#). We can see in the title used in [THE DIAL](#) that at least three of the ancient poets Thoreau lectured on were [Homer](#), [Ossian](#), and [Geoffrey Chaucer](#); there is no evidence that he lectured on other poets. It is likely that what we now see as "Homer. Ossian. Chaucer." in EARLY ESSAYS AND MISCELLANIES, since it takes 35 to 40 minutes to read this aloud, would represent more than half of Thoreau's actual oral presentation.³¹

31. Edward E. Salisbury, "Memoir on the History of Buddhism," [Journal of the American Oriental Society](#) 1 (1843-49): 81-135. [Henry David Thoreau, ed.], "The Preaching of the Buddha," [The Dial](#) 4 (Jan. 1844): 391-401. On that piece see Roger C. Mueller, "A Significant Buddhist Translation by Thoreau," [The Thoreau Society Bulletin](#) (Winter 1977): 1-2. Mueller corrects earlier misunderstandings about the source of the selection in [The Dial](#): Thoreau translated the passages not from Eugène Burnouf's 1844 book but from two articles by that French scholar which were published in Paris the year before in [La revue indépendante](#).



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

April: Last issue of [THE DIAL](#), with an essay by Charles Lane arguing that in some respects primitive society was superior to civilization.

THE DIAL, APRIL 1844

In this issue appeared [Henry Thoreau](#)'s "Fragments of [Pindar](#)," with which he was dissatisfied, and his defense of Nathaniel Peabody Rogers's [Herald of Freedom](#), the weekly allegedly put out by the New Hampshire Anti-Slavery Society, from the attack by [William Lloyd Garrison](#).³² Thoreau may have derived his subtitle "Life in the Woods" from Lane because this was the title of his essay — or, possibly, he derived it from an article that had appeared in the October 1843 [American Pioneer](#) by John S. Williams, titled "Our Cabin; or, Life in the Woods."³³

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

With this literary magazine becoming history, [Thoreau](#) obviously needed to begin to seek other outlets. While preparing to go to [Walden Pond](#), he revised and copied relevant Journal entries into his Long Book, drafted original passages of narration and description, and incorporated Journal entries (1837-1844) not

32. Nathaniel Peabody Rogers was advocating that society could be reformed only through a process in which individuals reformed themselves, and therefore was abolitionist but was not attracted to the antislavery societies, which he believed were on a path toward self-institutionalization. [Thoreau](#) endorsed Rogers's principles.



He refused to adopt the new war-cry lifted up by Mr. Garrison — "No union with slave-holders." He could bring his lips only to say, "No union with slave-holding." He looked upon Anti-Slavery as exclusively a moral agitation, and felt that its high office was degraded by connecting it with party politics, or with a political party. He was a thorough, and meant to be a consistent, Non-resistant. As such, he warmly condemned the formation of the "Liberty Party;" and having denounced the "Third Party," he did not feel himself inclined to join a Fourth, and, with it, or in it, to commence an agitation for the dissolution of the Union, even though that party was headed by Mr. Garrison. He went farther. Having, in company with his non-resistant friends, repudiated all political organization, by following out the same principle, he became an advocate for "free meetings," and opposed putting the Anti-Slavery movement under the guardianship and control of Chairmen, Committees, and Boards. Disquieted by this inconvenient consistency, and this thorough carrying out of his non-resistant principles, his non-resistant friends in Massachusetts, consulting and coöperating with some of those in New Hampshire, decided that the property of the "Herald of Freedom" was not in him, but in the Board of the New Hampshire Anti-Slavery Society.

originally related to his river trip with his brother.



TIMELINE OF A WEEK

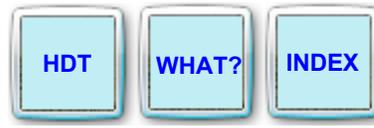
What follows is a hybrid of two versions of [Thoreau](#)'s essay on Nathaniel Peabody Rogers. The 1st was written before Rogers's death and published in [THE DIAL](#) in 1844; the 2d was composed after Rogers's 1846 death, and omits the portions displayed here in **red letters**, includes the paragraphs that follow those portions, and makes some minor changes (for instance, shifting some verbs to past-tense) to the rest of the text.

“Herald of Freedom (1844/1846),” by Henry David Thoreau

A review of Herald of Freedom, a magazine of the
New Hampshire Anti-Slavery Society.

We have occasionally, for several years, met with a number of this spirited journal, edited, as abolitionists need not to be informed, by Nathaniel P. Rogers, once a counselor at law in Plymouth, still further up the Merrimack, but now, in his riper years, come down the hills thus far, to be the Herald of Freedom

33. What is certain sure is that he did **not** derive this subtitle from a book published in New-York in 1849, by J.T. Headley, titled THE ADIRONDACK: OR LIFE IN THE WOODS, because although this book was then popular, it had not appeared until **after** James Munroe and Co. had **already** announced Thoreau's forthcoming WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS specifically by that title, in the back pages of the 1st edition of A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS as of its publication date of May 30th, 1849. 

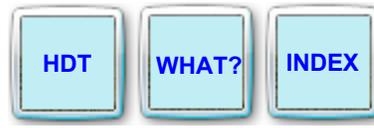


THE DIAL

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to those parts. We have been refreshed not a little by the cheap cordial of his editorials, flowing like his own mountain-torrents, now clear and sparkling, now foaming and gritty, and always spiced with the essence of the fir and the Norway pine; but never dark nor muddy, nor threatening with smothered murmurs, like the rivers of the plain. The effect of one of his effusions reminds us of what the hydropathists say about the electricity in fresh spring-water, compared with that which has stood over night, to suit weak nerves. We do not know of another notable and public instance of such pure, youthful, and hearty indignation at all wrong. The Church itself must love it, if it have any heart, though he is said to have dealt rudely with its sanctity. His clean attachment to the right, however, sanctions the severest rebuke we have read.

We have neither room, nor inclination, to criticise this paper, or its cause, at length, but would speak of it in the free and uncalculating spirit of its author. Mr. Rogers seems to us to occupy an honorable and manly position in these days, and in this country, making the press a living and breathing organ to reach the hearts of men, and not merely "fine paper, and good type," with its civil pilot sitting aft, and magnanimously waiting for the news to arrive the vehicle of the earliest news, but the **latest intelligence** recording the indubitable and last results, the marriages and deaths, alone. The present editor is wide awake, and standing on the beak of his ship; not as a scientific explorer under government, but a Yankee sealer rather, who makes those unexplored continents his harbors in which to refit for more adventurous cruises. He is a fund of news and freshness in himself has the gift of speech, and the knack of writing, and if anything important takes place in the Granite State, we may be sure that we shall hear of it in good season. No other paper that we know keeps pace so well with one forward wave of the restless public thought and sentiment of New England, and asserts so faithfully and ingenuously the largest liberty in all things. There is, beside, more unpledged poetry in his prose than in the verses of many an accepted rhymers; and we are occasionally advertised by a mellow hunter's note from his trumpet, that, unlike most reformers, his feet are still where they should be, on the turf, and that he looks out from a serener natural life into the turbid arena of politics. Nor is slavery always a sombre theme with him, but invested with the colors of his wit and fancy, and an evil to be abolished by other means than sorrow and bitterness of complaint. He will fight this fight with what cheer may be. But to speak of his composition. It is a genuine Yankee style, without fiction real guessing and calculating to some purpose, and reminds us occasionally, as does all free, brave, and original writing, of its great master in these days, Thomas Carlyle. It has a life above grammar, and a meaning which need not be parsed to be understood. But like those same mountain-torrents, there is rather too much slope to his channel, and the rainbow sprays and evaporations go double-quick-time to heaven, while the body of



his water falls headlong to the plain. We would have more pause and deliberation, occasionally, if only to bring his tide to a head more frequent expansions of the stream, still, bottomless, mountain tarns, perchance inland seas, and at length the deep ocean itself.

We cannot do better than enrich our pages with a few extracts from such articles as we have at hand. Who can help sympathizing with his righteous impatience, when invited to hold his peace or endeavor to convince the understandings of the people by well ordered arguments?

"Bandy compliments and arguments with the somnambulist, on 'table rock,' when all the waters of Lake Superior are thundering in the great horse-shoe, and deafening the very war of the elements! Would you not shout to him with a clap of thunder through a speaking-trumpet, if you could command it if possible to reach his senses in his appalling extremity! Did Jonah **argufy** with the city of Nineveh 'yet forty days,' cried the vagabond prophet, 'and Nineveh shall be overthrown! That was his salutation. And did the 'Property and Standing' turn up their noses at him, and set the mob on to him? Did the clergy discountenance him, and call him extravagant, misguided, a divider of churches, a disturber of parishes? What would have become of that city, if they had done this? Did they 'approve his principles' but dislike his '**measures**' and his '**spirit**'!

"Slavery must be cried down, denounced down, ridiculed down, and pro-slavery with it, or rather before it. Slavery will go when pro-slavery starts. The sheep will follow when the bell-wether leads. Down, then, with the bloody system, out of the land with it, and out of the world with it into the Red Sea with it. Men **shan't** be enslaved in this country any longer. Women and children **shan't** be flogged here any longer. If you undertake to hinder us, the worst is your own." "But this is all fanaticism. **Wait and see.**"

He thus raises the anti-slavery "war-whoop" in New Hampshire, when an important convention is to be held, sending the summons

"To none but the whole-hearted, fully-committed, cross-the-Rubicon spirits." "From rich 'old Cheshire,' from Rockingham, with her horizon setting down away to the salt sea." "From where the sun sets behind Kearsarge, even to where he rises gloriously over **Moses Norris's** own town of **Pittsfield**; and from Amoskeag to Ragged Mountains - Coos - Upper Coos, home of the everlasting hills, send out your bold advocates of human rights wherever they lay, scattered by lonely lake, or Indian stream, or 'Grant,' or 'Location' from the trout-haunted brooks of the Amoskeag, and where the adventurous streamlet takes up its mountain march for the St. Lawrence.

"Scattered and insulated men, wherever the light of philanthropy and liberty has beamed in upon your solitary spirits, come down to us like your streams and clouds and our own Grafton, all about among your dear hills, and your mountain-flanked valleys whether



you home along the swift Ammonoosuck, the cold Pemigewasset, or the ox-bowed Connecticut. –

"We are slow, brethren, dishonorably slow, in a cause like ours. Our feet should be 'as hinds' feet.' 'Liberty lies bleeding.' The leaden-colored wing of slavery obscures the land with its baleful shadow. Let us come together, and inquire at the hand of the Lord what is to be done."

And again; on occasion of the New England Convention in the Second-Advent Tabernacle, in Boston, he desires to try one more blast, as it were, "on Fabyan's White Mountain horn."

"Ho, then, people of the Bay State men, women, and children; children, women, and men, scattered friends of the **friendless**, wheresoever ye inhabit – if habitations ye have, as such friends have not **always** – along the sea-beat border of Old Essex and the Puritan Landing, and up beyond sight of the sea-cloud, among the inland hills, where the sun rises and sets upon the dry land, in that vale of the Connecticut, too fair for human content, and too fertile for virtuous industry – where deepens the haughtiest of earth's streams, on its seaward way, proud with the pride of old Massachusetts. Are there any friends of the friendless negro haunting such a valley as this? In God's name, I fear there are none, or few, for the very scene looks apathy and oblivion to the genius of humanity. I blow you the summons though. Come, if any of you are there.

"And gallant little Rhode Island; **transcendent** abolitionists of the tiny Commonwealth. I need not call you. You are **called** the year round, and, instead of sleeping in your tents, stand harnessed, and with trumpets in your hands every one!

"Connecticut! yonder, the home of the Burleighs, the Monroes, and the Hudsons, and the native land of old George Benson! are you ready? 'All ready!'

"Maine here, off east, looking from my mountain post, like an everglade. Where is your Sam. Fessenden, who stood storm-proof 'gainst New Organization in '38? Has he too much name as a jurist and orator, to be found at a New England Convention in '43? God forbid! Come one and all of you from 'Down East' to Boston, on the 30th and let the sails of your coasters whiten all the sea-road. Alas! there are scarce enough of you to man a fishing boat. Come up, mighty in your fewness.

"And green Vermont, what has become of your anti-slavery host thick as your mountain maples mastering your very politics not by balance of power, but by sturdy majority. Where are you now? Will you be at the **Advent** Meeting on the 30th of May? Has anti-slavery waxed too trying for your off-hand, how-are-ye, humanity? Have you heard the voice of Freedom of late? Next week will answer.

"Poor, cold, winter-ridden New-Hampshire – winter-killed, I like to have said – she will be there, bare-foot, and bare-legged, making tracks like her old bloody-footed volunteers at Trenton. She will be there, if she can work her passage. I guess her minstrelsy³⁴ will for birds can go independently of car, or tardy



stage-coach.

"Let them come as Macaulay says they did to the siege of Rome, when they did not leave old men and women enough to **begin** the harvests. Oh how few we should be, if every soul of us were there. How few, and yet it is the entire muster-roll of Freedom for all the land. We should have to beat up for recruits to complete the army of Gideon, or the **platoon** at the Spartan straits. The foe are like the grasshoppers for **multitude**, as for **moral power**. Thick grass mows the easier, as the Goth said of the enervated millions of falling Rome. They can't stand too thick, nor too tall for the anti-slavery scythe. Only be there at the mowing."

In noticing the doings of another Convention, he thus congratulates himself on the liberty of speech which anti-slavery concedes to all – even to the Folsoms and Lamsons:

"Denied a chance to speak elsewhere, because they are not mad after the fashion, they all flock to the anti-slavery boards as a kind of Asylum. And so the poor old enterprise has to father all the oddity of the times. It is a glory to anti-slavery, that she can allow the poor friends the right of speech. I hope she will always keep herself able to afford it. Let the constables wait on the State House, and Jail, and the **Meeting Houses**. Let the door-keeper at the Anti-Slavery Hall be that tall, celestial-faced Woman, that carries the flag on the National Standard, and says, 'without **concealment**,' as well as 'without compromise.' Let every body in, who has sanity enough to see the beauty of brotherly kindness, and let them say their fantasies, and magnanimously bear with them, seeing unkind pro-slavery drives them in upon us. We shall have **saner** and **sensibler** meetings then, than all others in the land put together."

More recently, speaking of the use which some of the clergy have made of Webster's plea in the Girard case, as a seasonable aid to the church, he proceeds:

"Webster is a great man, and the clergy run under his wing. They had better employ him as counsel against the Comeouters. He wouldn't trust the defence on the Girard will plea though, if they did. He would not risk his fame on it, as a religious argument. He would go and consult William Bassett, of Lynn, on the principles of the 'Comeouters,' to learn their strength; and he would get him a testament, and go into it as he does into the Constitution, and after a year's study of it he would hardly come off in the argument as he did from the conflict with Carolina Hayne. On looking into the case, he would advise the clergy not to go to trial – to settle – or, if they couldn't to 'leave it out' to a reference of 'orthodox deacons.'"

We will quote from the same sheet his indignant and touching satire on the funeral of those public officers who were killed by the explosion on board the *Princeton*, together with the President's slave; an accident which reminds us how closely



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slavery is linked with the government of this nation. The President coming to preside over a nation of **free** men, and the man who stands **next to him a slave!**

"I saw account," says he, "of the burial of those slaughtered politicians. The hearses passed along, of Upshur, Gilmer, Kennon, Maxcy, and Gardner but the dead slave, who fell in company with them on the deck of the *Princeton*, was not there. He was held their equal by the impartial gun-burst, but not allowed by the **bereaved** nation a share in the funeral." ... "Out upon their funeral, and upon the paltry procession that went in its train. Why didn't they enquire for the body of the **other man** who fell on that deck! And why hasn't the nation inquired, and its press? I saw account of the scene in a barbarian print, called the Boston *Atlas*, and it was dumb on the absence of that body, as if no such man had fallen. Why, I demand in the name of human nature, what was that sixth man of the game brought down by that great shot, left unburied and above ground – for there is no account yet that his body has been allowed the right of sepulture." ... "They didn't bury him even as a slave. They didn't assign him a jim-crow place in that solemn procession, that he might follow to wait upon his enslavers in the land of spirits. They have gone there without slaves or waiters." – "The poor black man they enslaved and imbruted him all his life, and now he is dead, they have, for aught appears, left him to decay and waste above ground. Let the civilized world take note of the circumstance."

We deem such timely, pure, and unpremeditated expressions of a public sentiment, such publicity of genuine indignation and humanity, as abound everywhere in this journal, the most generous gifts a man can make, and should be glad to see the scraps from which we have quoted, **and the others which we have not seen, collected into a volume. It might, perchance, penetrate into some quarters which the unpopular cause of freedom has not reached.**

Long may we hear the voice of this Herald.

But since our voyage Rogers has died, and now there is no one in New England to express the indignation or contempt which may still be felt at any cant or inhumanity.

When, on a certain occasion, one said to him, "Why do you go about as you do, agitating the community on the subject of abolition? Jesus Christ never preached abolitionism!" he replied, "Sir, I have two answers to your appeal to Jesus Christ. First, I deny your proposition, that he never preached abolition. That single precept of his 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them' reduced to **practice**, would abolish slavery over the whole earth in twenty-four hours. That is my first answer. I deny your proposition. Secondly, granting your proposition to be true and admitting what I deny that Jesus Christ did not preach the abolition of slavery, then I say, **he didn't do his duty.**"

His was not the wisdom of the head, but of the heart. If perhaps



he had all the faults, he had more than the usual virtues of the radical. He loved his native soil, her hills and streams, like a Burns or Scott. As he rode to an antislavery convention, he viewed the country with a poet's eye, and some of his letters written back to his editorial substitute contain as true and pleasing pictures of New England life and scenery as are anywhere to be found.

Whoever heard of Swamscot before?

"Swamscot is all fishermen. Their business is all on the deep. Their village is ranged along the ocean margin, where their brave little fleets lay drawn up, and which are out at day-break on the mighty blue where you may see them brooding at anchor still and intent at their **profound** trade, as so many flies on the back of a wincing horse, and for whose wincings they care as little as the Swamscot Fishers heed the restless heavings of the sea around their barks. Every thing about savors of fish. Nets hang out on every enclosure. Flakes, for curing the fish are attached to almost every dwelling. Every body has a boat and you'll see a huge pair of sea boots lying before almost every door. The air too savors strongly of the common finny vocation. Beautiful little beaches slope out from the dwellings into the Bay, all along the village where the fishing boats lie keeled up, at low water, with their useless anchors hooked deep into the sand. A stranded bark is a sad sight especially if it is above high water mark, where the next tide can't relieve it and set it afloat again. The Swamscot boats though, all look cheery, and as if sure of the next sea-flow. The people are said to be the freest in the region owing perhaps to their bold and adventurous life. The Priests can't ride them **out into the deep**, as they can the shore folks."

His style and vein though often exaggerated and affected were more native to New England than those of any of her sons, and unfinished as his pieces were, yet their literary merit has been overlooked.

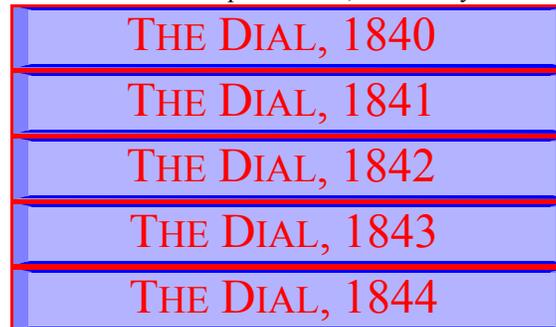


THE DIAL

THE DIAL

 May 18, Saturday: An announcement of regret for the closing of [THE DIAL](#) appeared in the New-York [Daily Tribune](#), noting that that journal had been “sustained for three years by the free-will contributions of” [Waldo Emerson](#), [Margaret Fuller](#), [Ellery Channing](#), the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#), Charles Lane, Charles A. Dana, [Henry Thoreau](#), [Elizabeth Palmer Peabody](#), “and others of the deepest thinkers and most advanced minds of our country.”³⁵

Here then are the accumulated issues of this publication, from midyear 1840 to midyear 1844:



Fall: [Ellery Channing](#) obtained a position on the staff of [Horace Greeley](#)'s New-York [Tribune](#) but, before reporting for work, he spent mid-November in the Catskills, three days of which vacation he spent with Caroline Sturgis and [Margaret Fuller](#) who were also in the Catskills, at Fishkill on the Hudson River. Fuller was living with Sturgis for six weeks while revising her “Great Lawsuit” paper from [THE DIAL](#) for publication as WOMAN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. While working at the [Tribune](#), Ellery chummed around with Giles Waldo and William Tappan,³⁶ but declined an invitation to visit the William Emersons at their home on Staten Island.

35. There would be a successor magazine, and one of the first principles of this successor magazine would be that no contribution would ever be accepted from Thoreau — his participation would be ruled out categorically from the get-go.

36. This William would have been what to the rich New York abolitionists Arthur Tappan and Lewis Tappan??



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

1846

At this point [Henry Thoreau](#) was working on drafts of both [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#) and [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#), using recent journal passages on memory, history, fable, and religion and probably inserting revised versions of “Dark Ages” and “[Homer. Ossian. Chaucer.](#)” from his articles in [THE DIAL](#). By February, the 2d draft of WEEK had expanded to nearly twice the length of the 1st draft.



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

1847

[Henry Thoreau](#) worked on drafts of both [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#) and [WALDEN: OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#), using recent Journal passages on memory, history, fable, and religion. He probably inserted revised versions of “Dark Ages” and “Homer. [Ossian](#). [Chaucer](#).” from [THE DIAL](#).

[The Manchester Times and Gazette](#) of Manchester, England, in their edition for December 28, Tuesday, 1847, presented a miscellaneous series of extracts from books. They had mixed among these extracts a paragraph from [Thoreau](#)’s “THE POETRY OF [OSSIAN](#)”:

In his poetry, as in Homer’s, only the simplest and most enduring features of humanity are seen, such essential parts of a man as Stonehenge exhibits of a temple; we see the circles of stone, and the upright shaft alone. The phenomena of life acquired almost an unreal and gigantic size, seen through his mists. Like all older and grander poetry, it is distinguished by the few elements in the lives of its heroes. They stand on the heath, between the stars and the earth, shrunk to the bones and sinews. The earth is a boundless plain for their deeds. They lead such a simple, dry, and everlasting life, as hardly needs depart with the flesh, but is transmitted entire from age to age. There are but few objects to distract their sight, and their life is as unincumbered [*sic*] as the course of the stars they gaze at. Compared with this simple, fibrous life, our civilised history appears the chronicle of debility, of fashion, and the arts of luxury. But the civilised man misses no real refinement in the poetry of the rudest era. It reminds him that civilization does but dress men. It makes shoes, but it does not toughen the soles of the feet. It makes cloth of finer texture, but it does not touch the skin. Inside the civilised man stands the savage still in the place of honour. We are those blue-eyed, yellow-haired Saxons, these slender, dark-haired Normans.



A WEEK: The genuine remains of Ossian, or those ancient poems which bear his name, though of less fame and extent, are, in many respects, of the same stamp with the Iliad itself. He asserts the dignity of the bard no less than Homer, and in his era we hear of no other priest than he. It will not avail to call him a heathen, because he personifies the sun and addresses it; and what if his heroes did "worship the ghosts of their fathers," their thin, airy, and unsubstantial forms? we worship but the ghosts of our fathers in more substantial forms. We cannot but respect the vigorous faith of those heathen, who sternly believed somewhat, and are inclined to say to the critics, who are offended by their superstitious rites, – Don't interrupt these men's prayers. As if we knew more about human life and a God, than the heathen and ancients. Does English theology contain the recent discoveries? Ossian reminds us of the most refined and rudest eras, of Homer, Pindar, Isaiah, and the American Indian. In his poetry, as in Homer's, only the simplest and most enduring features of humanity are seen, such essential parts of a man as Stonehenge exhibits of a temple; we see the circles of stone, and the upright shaft alone. The phenomena of life acquire almost an unreal and gigantic size seen through his mists. Like all older and grander poetry, it is distinguished by the few elements in the lives of its heroes. They stand on the heath, between the stars and the earth, shrunk to the bones and sinews. The earth is a boundless plain for their deeds. They lead such a simple, dry, and everlasting life, as hardly needs depart with the flesh, but is transmitted entire from age to age. There are but few objects to distract their sight, and their life is as unencumbered as the course of the stars they gaze at.

...

The profession of the bard attracted more respect in those days from the importance attached to fame. It was his province to record the deeds of heroes. When Ossian hears the traditions of inferior bards, he exclaims, –

“I straightway seize the unfruitful tales,
And send them down in faithful verse.”

His philosophy of life is expressed in the opening of the third Duan of Ca-Lodin.

“Whence have sprung the things that are?
And whither roll the passing years?
Where does Time conceal its two heads,
In dense impenetrable gloom,
Its surface marked with heroes' deeds alone?
I view the generations gone;
The past appears but dim;
As objects by the moon's faint beams,
Reflected from a distant lake.
I see, indeed, the thunderbolts of war,
But there the unmighty joyless dwell,
All those who send not down their deeds
To far, succeeding times.”...



A WEEK: There are other, savager, and more primeval aspects of nature than our poets have sung. It is only white man's poetry. Homer and Ossian even can never revive in London or Boston. And yet behold how these cities are refreshed by the mere tradition, or the imperfectly transmitted fragrance and flavor of these wild fruits. If we could listen but for an instant to the chant of the Indian muse, we should understand why he will not exchange his savageness for civilization. Nations are not whimsical. Steel and blankets are strong temptations; but the Indian does well to continue Indian. After sitting in my chamber many days, reading the poets, I have been out early on a foggy morning, and heard the cry of an owl in a neighboring wood as from a nature behind the common, unexplored by science or by literature. None of the feathered race has yet realized my youthful conceptions of the woodland depths. I had seen the red Election-bird brought from their recesses on my comrades' string, and fancied that their plumage would assume stranger and more dazzling colors, like the tints of evening, in proportion as I advanced farther into the darkness and solitude of the forest. Still less have I seen such strong and wilderness tints on any poet's string. These modern ingenious sciences and arts do not affect me as those more venerable arts of hunting and fishing, and even of husbandry in its primitive and simple form; as ancient and honorable trades as the sun and moon and winds pursue, coeval with the faculties of man, and invented when these were invented. We do not know their John Gutenberg, or Richard Arkwright, though the poets would fain make them to have been gradually learned and taught. According to Gower, -

“And Iadahel, as saith the boke,
Firste made nette, and fishes toke.
Of huntynge eke he fond the chace,
Whiche nowe is knowe in many place;
A tent of clothe, with corde and stake,
He sette up first, and did it make.”

Also, Lydgate says: -

“Jason first sayled, in story it is tolde,
Toward Colchos, to wynne the flees of golde.
Ceres the Goddess fond first the tilthe of londe;
Also, Aristeus fonde first the usage
Of mylke, and cruddis, and of honey swote;
Peryodes, for grete avauntage,
From flyntes smote fuyre, daryng in the roote.”

PEOPLE OF
A WEEK

OSSIAN



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March 14, Sunday: At the Alder Creek camp, George Donner was dying from infection in the hand he injured months before. His wife Tamzene, though in comparatively good health, refuses to leave him; she sends her three little girls on without her. The Third Relief departs with Frances, Georgia, and Eliza Donner and Simon Murphy. Elizabeth and Lewis Donner have died. Samuel Donner, Levinah Murphy, and Louis Keseberg are too weak to travel. Jean-Baptiste Trudeau and rescuer Nicholas Clark are left behind to care for the Donners, but abandon them to catch up with the Relief.



The Reverend [Theodore Parker](#) wrote to [Waldo Emerson](#) recommending the creation of a successor journal to [THE DIAL](#) that would engage the real political events of the era.

[MASSACHUSETTS QUARTERLY REVIEW](#)

April 14, Wednesday: [Waldo Emerson](#) invited 13 of his friends to his home to discuss the possibility of a successor journal to [THE DIAL](#), a new quarterly review to address the major political, theological, and literary topics of the era. [Bronson Alcott](#), Alfred W. Arrington of Texas, George Partridge Bradford, [James Elliot Cabot](#), the Reverend [William Henry Channing](#), the Reverend John Weiss, the Reverend James Freeman Clarke, the Reverend John Sullivan Dwight, the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#), the Reverend Caleb Stetson, Thomas T. Stone, Charles Sumner, and [Henry Thoreau](#) were on the list. The Reverend Parker stated that his concept of this journal was that it was to be “the DIAL with a beard.” Although Thoreau wanted it explained to him why the large number of existing journals was inadequate so that they had to create yet another one, Emerson agreed to write the address to the public to be included in the 1st issue, and the Reverend Parker would start the [Massachusetts Quarterly Review](#) and put out three volumes.³⁷

37. The Reverend [Theodore Parker](#) made a triage list in which he pre-evaluated his potential contributors:

- Certain and Valuable
- Valuable but not Certain
- Certain but not Valuable

He placed [Thoreau](#)'s name in the unfortunate category, “Certain but not Valuable,” but it appears the Reverend was in error for we don't know Thoreau ever offered a manuscript to such a man — despite the fact that [Waldo](#) tried to coax him to give the Reverend [Parker](#) some help.



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1848

Mid-March: H.G.O. Blake wrote [Henry Thoreau](#) for the 1st time, from Worcester, discussing his essay on the Roman satirist [Aulus Persius Flaccus](#), "[AULUS PERSIUS FLACCUS](#)," which had appeared during July 1840 in the initial issue of [THE DIAL](#):

It has revived in me
a haunting impression of you, which I carried
away from some spoken words of yours....
When I was last in Concord, you spoke of retir-
ing farther from our civilization. I asked you
if you would feel no longings for the society of
your friends. Your reply was in substance, "No,
I am nothing." That reply was memorable to
me. It indicated a depth of resources, a com-
pleteness of renunciation, a poise and repose in
the universe, which to me is almost inconceiva-
ble; which in you seemed domesticated, and to
which I look up with veneration. I would know
of that soul which can say "I am nothing." I
would be roused by its words to a truer and
purer life. Upon me seems to be dawning with
new significance the idea that God is here; that
we have but to bow before Him in profound sub-
mission at every moment, and He will fill our
souls with his presence. In this opening of the
soul to God, all duties seem to centre; what else
have we to do?... If I understand rightly the
significance of your life, this is it: You would
sunder yourself from society, from the spell of
institutions, customs, conventionalities, that you
may lead a fresh, simple life with God. Instead
of breathing a new life into the old forms, you
would have a new life without and within.
There is something sublime to me in this atti-
tude, - far as I may be from it myself....
Speak to me in this hour as you are prompted.
... I honor you because you abstain from ac-
tion, and open your soul that you may be some-
what. Amid a world of noisy, shallow actors it
is noble to stand aside and say, "I will simply
be." Could I plant myself at once upon the
truth, reducing my wants to their minimum,
... I should at once be brought nearer to na-
ture, nearer to my fellow-men, - and life would
be infinitely richer. But, alas! I shiver on the
brink.

THE DIAL, JULY 1840



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THE DIAL

1852

In London, [Lajos Kossuth](#) became an intimate of [Giuseppe Mazzini](#), and joined his revolutionary committee.

ITALY

[Thomas Mayne Reid, Jr.](#)'s THE YOUNG VOYAGEURS; OR, THE BOY HUNTERS IN THE NORTH. The author engaged in a plan for [Kossuth](#) to travel incognito across Europe as his man-servant "James Hawkins" under a Foreign Office passport "for the free passage of Captain Mayne Reid, British subject, travelling on the Continent with a man-servant."

In [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#)'s THE BLITHEDALE ROMANCE (initially being issued in London by Chapman and Hall as 2 volumes octavo in blind-stamped brown cloth with spines lettered in gilt, prior to being printed in America) there was talk of the reading of [THE DIAL](#):

Being much alone, during my recovery, I read interminably [page 677] in Mr. Emerson's Essays, the Dial, Carlyle's works, George Sand's romances, (lent me by Zenobia,) and other books which one or another of the brethren or sisterhood had brought with them. Agreeing in little else, most of these utterances were like the cry of some solitary sentinel, whose station was on the outposts of the advance-guard of human progression; or, sometimes, the voice came sadly from among the shattered ruins of the past, but yet had a hopeful echo in the future. They were well adapted (better, at least, than any other intellectual products, the volatile essence of which had heretofore tintured a printed page) to pilgrims like ourselves, whose present bivouac was considerably farther into the waste of chaos than any mortal army of crusaders had ever marched before. Fourier's works, also, in a series of horribly tedious volumes, attracted a good deal of my attention, from the analogy which I could not but recognize between his system and our own. There was far less resemblance, it is true, than the world chose to imagine; inasmuch as the two theories differed, as widely as the zenith from the nadir, in their main principles.



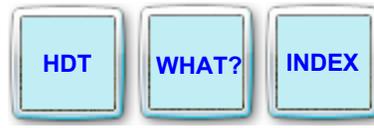
There was also talk of the reading of [Waldo Emerson](#)'s essays:

Being much alone, during my recovery, I read interminably [page 677] in Mr. Emerson's Essays, the Dial, Carlyle's works, George Sand's romances, (lent me by Zenobia,) and other books which one or another of the brethren or sisterhood had brought with them. Agreeing in little else, most of these utterances were like the cry of some solitary sentinel, whose station was on the outposts of the advance-guard of human progression; or, sometimes, the voice came sadly from among the shattered ruins of the past, but yet had a hopeful echo in the future. They were well adapted (better, at least, than any other intellectual products, the volatile essence of which had heretofore tintured a printed page) to pilgrims like ourselves, whose present bivouac was considerably farther into the waste of chaos than any mortal army of crusaders had ever marched before. Fourier's works, also, in a series of horribly tedious volumes, attracted a good deal of my attention, from the analogy which I could not but recognize between his system and our own. There was far less resemblance, it is true, than the world chose to imagine; inasmuch as the two theories differed, as widely as the zenith from the nadir, in their main principles.

At some point during this year the proud author sat for his portrait in the studio of G.P.A. Healy at West Street and Washington Street in Boston. His new book was in part about "the Juvenalian and Thoreauvian ideology of [Blithedale](#)," an experiment in community which was "in spite of its Edenic pretensions, located in an area of market gardens catering to the needs of the expanding 'New England metropolis'."

When "Wakefield" was published in 1836, most of Hawthorne's audience, like Hawthorne himself, would only have known of the conditions of urban life treated in the sketch by having read about them. Hawthorne takes advantage of the exoticism of a European metropolitan setting, just as Poe was to have done a few years later in "The Man of the Crowd" and "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." Yet by 1852, when THE BLITHEDALE ROMANCE was published, the urbanization of American was no longer an abstract possibility; it was, thanks to economic growth, industrial development, and large-scale immigration, an increasingly insistent reality. The intellectual and social movements represented by the Blithedale community were, in large measure, a response to these historic changes. The process of urbanization is therefore never entirely out of sight in THE BLITHEDALE ROMANCE. Expressing the ideas implicit in the agrarian experiment, Coverdale offers several standard Transcendentalist criticisms of urban life. Driving through the streets of Boston, he describes "how the buildings, on either





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side, seemed to press too closely upon us, insomuch that our mighty hearts found barely room enough to throb between them" (3:11). Observing how the snow falling upon the city is blackened by smoke, and molded by boots, Coverdale makes it into a metaphor for the way in which human nature is corrupted by the "falsehood, formality, and error" (3:11) of city life. In addition, Coverdale identifies cities as the sources of the "selfish competition," which powers the "weary treadmill of established society" (3:19). Yet, although Coverdale will occasionally express the Juvenalian and Thoreauvian ideology of Blithedale, he implicitly recognizes, late in the book, that it may be futile to attempt to arrest the advance of urban civilization. When he observes a crowd at a village lyceum, it seems to him to be "rather suburban than rural" (3:197). The decline of authentic rusticity has been implied earlier when we learn that Blithedale, in spite of its Edenic pretensions, is located in an area of market gardens catering to the needs of the expanding "New England metropolis." From the very beginning of *THE BLITHEDALE ROMANCE*, we know that the utopian experiment has failed and that Coverdale has returned to the urban existence he originally fled.

During this year [Kossuth](#) was fundraising practically everywhere in America, including in the First Church at [Northampton](#). He had a letter of introduction to the Motts of Philadelphia, and they invited him to dinner at their home. The Governor's advisers insisted that he call there only for an informal chat while refraining from breaking bread with any such notorious abolitionists — lest news of such an indiscretion get out and he be embarrassed. During his visit and chat, [Friend Lucretia](#) somehow formed the opinion that although this politician was afraid to say so, in his heart he would have to be opposed to human slavery in any form. (Madam Pulzysky, Kossuth's sister, also visited the Motts, and by way of contrast she was willing to argue the advantages of human slavery with them.)

What sort of man was this Kossuth? Utterly ruthless. Cold-blooded murder was not beyond him, when the result would prove useful. When he had needed to safeguard the royal gems of Hungary, for instance, including the crown of St. Stephen which was held to be necessary for the coronation of any true king of Hungary, he had had them buried at a spot on the banks of the Danube, and he had employed for this work "a detachment of prisoners who were shot after the concealment was complete." His plot was that this portable property was to be recovered later, packed in marmalade, and carried via Constantinople to "the well-known Philhellene" of Boston, [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#). However, when it came to be time, during this year, to dig up the jewels and pack them in marmalade for shipment to Boston, the man whom he would entrust to do this would betray his trust. —Eventually the jewels, including the crown of St. Stephen, would come into the control of the government of Austria.





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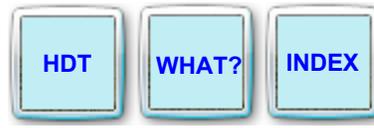
Kossuth somehow suborned the cooperation of [William James Stillman](#) in his abortive scheme to recover the jewels, and this American artist sailed off to Hungary on this wild-goose chase.

According to page 153 and pages 161-6 of Larry J. Reynolds's influence study *EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONS AND THE AMERICAN LITERARY RENAISSANCE* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1988), virtually everything about [Henry Thoreau](#) during this period is to be accounted for in terms of the manifold influences upon him and upon the times, of European revolutionaries such as [Kossuth](#) here:



Faced with this threat of mental contamination, our guy allegedly has become literally obsessed with maintaining his self-concept and his self-satisfaction:

[Thoreau](#), stirred by [Lajos Kossuth](#)'s visit and news of European affairs, returned to the manuscript of *WALDEN* and revised and expanded it throughout 1852. Although engaged by current events, Thoreau fought a spiritual battle to remain aloof, "to preserve the mind's chastity" by reading "not the Times" but "the Eternities." Imagining that he had won, he celebrated his victory in *WALDEN*.... Kossuth's visit to the United States and [Concord](#) brought to a head a struggle Thoreau had been engaged in for some time. During the years following the European revolutions of 1848-1849, Thoreau struggled to develop his spiritual side and rid himself of what he considered a degrading interest in current events. He also tried to communicate to [Waldo Emerson](#) and the world his own capacity for heroism. After the disappointing reception of [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#) in the summer of 1849, Thoreau had become uncertain about how to proceed with his life. Setting the third draft of *WALDEN* aside as unpublishable, he studied Hinduism, visited Cape Cod several times, took a trip to [Canada](#), and began his Indian book project. The next year, 1851, he started to focus his energies, and, as Lewis Leary has said, these twelve months were a watershed in his life, a time of consolidation, of self-discovery, of preparation for some important new effort. "I find myself uncommonly prepared for **some** literary work...", he wrote in his journal on September 7, 1851. "I am prepared not so much for contemplation, as for forceful expression." Subsequently, 1852 became Thoreau's *annus mirabilis*, the year his months of living deliberately yielded a value of its own, he lavished upon it the care and craft that turned it into his richest literary



achievement; he also wrote at this time most of his essay "Life without Principle," which, as Walter Harding has observed, "contains virtually all the fundamental principles upon which he based his life"; and, more important, he radically revised and reshaped WALDEN, changing it from a factual account of his life in the woods into the embryo of a profound spiritual autobiography, illuminated by the idea of spiritual renewal, shaped and informed by the cycle of the seasons.

The catalyst for the metamorphosis of [WALDEN](#) was [Thoreau's](#) desire to resolve, in writing if not in fact, the conflict he felt between the spiritual and the animal in himself. On the one hand, his recent communion with nature had yielded, as it had in his youth, transcendence – not of the world of material fact, but rather of the world of trivial fact. At times he achieved a state of pure spirituality in the woods. On August 17, 1851, for example, he recorded in his journal, "My heart leaps into my mouth at the sound of the wind in the woods. I, whose life was but yesterday so desultory and shallow, suddenly recover my spirits, my spirituality, through my hearing.... I did not despair of worthier moods, and now I have occasion to be grateful for the flood of life that is flowing over me." At such times, he reexperienced the ecstasy of his youth, when, as he put it, "the morning and the evening were sweet to me, and I led a life aloof from society of men." Despite these experiences, which he valued greatly, another aspect of Thoreau's personality cared about society, cared passionately about justice, about the actions of governments, about the fate of actual men in the nineteenth century. This part of him, however, he associated with his impure animal nature, and he sought to purge it.

Thoreau had no way of knowing whether the body was [Margaret Fuller's](#) or not, but she was surely on his mind, and her endeavor to convince others of the legitimacy of her "title" may have been as well. His description, which obviously contrasts with his earlier one, reveals the power and significance the facts possessed in his eyes. Here as always he cared too much about the human to dismiss its annihilation with convincing disdain.

During the last months of 1850 and all of 1851, [Thoreau](#) dedicated himself to living deliberately, to fronting what he called the essential. During these months, he spent many hours walking through the fields and woods of [Concord](#), recording his observations in his journal. At the same time, he read the newspapers and found himself engaged by what he found. The political news from Europe focused upon the failure of the republican movement, the reaction and reprisals, the futile attempts by exiles such as [Mazzini](#) and [Kossuth](#) to enlist aid in the struggle for a new round of upheavals. Austria, meanwhile, charged that the United States, especially its new Secretary of State [Daniel Webster](#), was encouraging anti-Austrian sentiment and intruding in the affairs of Europe. On November 17, 1850, Thoreau revealed both his disdain for the news of the day and his concern about its power to capture his attention: "It is a



strange age of the world this, when empires, kingdoms, and republics come a-begging to our doors and utter their complaints at our elbows. I cannot take up a newspaper but I find that some wretched government or other, hard pushed and on its last legs, is interceding with me, the reader, to vote for it, – more importunate than an [Italian](#) beggar." At times the newspapers contributed to the problem he called "the village," which kept him from getting to the woods in spirit, although he walked miles into it bodily. One way he tried to overcome this problem was through the process of diminution, which can be seen in the following outburst of May 1, 1851: "Nations! What are nations? Tartars! and Huns! and Chinamen! Like insects they swarm. The historian strives in vain to make them memorable. It is for want of a man that there are so many men." Quoting from "The Spirit of Lodin," ... he claims to "look down from my height on nations, / And they become ashes before me." By adopting an Olympian point of view, Thoreau elevates himself and diminishes men both in size and importance. Like [Waldo Emerson](#) in the "Mind and Manners" lectures, he also reaffirms his belief that the regeneration of the self, the building up of the single solitary soul, is far more important than the activities of masses of men, be they parties, tribes, or nations.

Throughout 1851, as Thoreau continued to read the papers, he developed a loathing for them linked to that part of himself unable to ignore them. The news, he came to assert, could profane the "very *sanctum sanctorum*" of the mind:

I find it so difficult to dispose of the few facts which to me are significant, that I hesitate to burden my mind with the most insignificant, which only a divine mind could illustrate. Such is, for the most part, the news, – in newspapers and conversation. It is important to preserve the mind's chastity in this respect.... By all manners of boards and traps, threatening the extreme penalty of the divine law, ... it behooves us to preserve the purity and sanctity of the mind.... It is so hard to forget what it is worse than useless to remember. If I am to be a channel or thoroughfare, I prefer that it be of the mountain springs, and not the town sewers, – the Parnassian streams.

"I do not think much of the actual," he wrote himself. "It is something which we have long since done with. It is a sort of vomit in which the unclean love to wallow." During the writing of the 4th version of *WALDEN*, which coincided with Kossuth's tour of the country, [Thoreau](#) created a myth about himself as someone who had risen above the affairs of men, someone who felt the animal dying out in him and the spiritual being established.

In [WALDEN](#), the European revolutions of 1848-1849, the reaction and reprisals that followed, all the attention given in the newspapers to Kossuth's visit, to Louis Napoleon's *coup d'état*, to a possible war between France and Great Britain, all these



go unmentioned, and the absence reveals how earnestly, perhaps even how desperately, Thoreau sought to diminish their importance to his life. In his journals we see his fascination with and antagonism toward the news of national and international affairs. He devotes half of his essay "Life without Principle," moreover, to a castigation of the news, telling the reader about its dangers, its foulness, its profanity – even mentioning Kossuth by name and ridiculing the "stir" about him: "That excitement about Kossuth, consider how characteristic, but superficial, it was!... For all the fruit of that stir we have the Kossuth hat."³⁸ In WALDEN, however, he purifies his book and his *persona* by ignoring contemporary world affairs. Characterizing himself (untruthfully) as one "who rarely looks into the newspapers," he claims that "nothing new does ever happen in foreign parts, a French revolution not excepted."

Thoreau's struggle to achieve an oriental aloofness from the affairs of men seems to have first become a serious endeavor for him in the summer of 1850, when [Emerson](#) asked him to go to Fire Island to retrieve the body and possessions of [Margaret Fuller](#). As Robert D. Richardson, Jr. has pointed out, "Death gave life a new imperative for Thoreau." Despite Fuller's rejections of his [DIAL](#) contributions in the early 1840s, Thoreau became her friend and admirer, and during her last summer in [Concord](#), he took her boat riding at dawn on the river. The task he faced at Fire Island thus could not have been pleasant, yet in his journal and in letters to others, he strove to project a philosophical serenity about what he found. In a letter to his admirer H.G.O. Blake, he wrote that he had in his pocket a button torn from the coat of [Giovanni Angelo](#), *marchése d'Ossoli*: "Held up, it intercept the light, – and actual button, – and yet all the life it is connected with is less substantial to me, and interests me less, than my faintest dream. Our thoughts are the epochs in our lives: all else is but a journal of the winds that blew while we were here." Thoreau had not known Ossoli, so his aloof serenity here comes easily; he had known Fuller though, and his attempt to rise above the fact of her death shows strain.

When [Thoreau](#) arrived at the site of the wreck, Fuller's body had not been found, but he stayed in the area and a week later learned that something once human had washed ashore. As he approached it, he saw bones, and in the draft of this letter to Blake he asserted, "There was nothing at all remarkable about them. They were simply some bones lying on the beach. They would not detain the walker there more than so much seaweed. I should think that the fates would not take the trouble to show me any bones again, I so slightly appreciated the favor." He recalled the experience in his journal some three months later, however,

38. The Kossuth hat was a black, low-crowned felt hat with left brim fastened to crown, having a peacock feather. The story of its "invention" by John Nicholas Genin (1819-1878) and its rise to high fashion is told in Donald S. Spencer's *LOUIS KOSSUTH AND YOUNG AMERICA — A STUDY IN SECTIONALISM AND FOREIGN POLICY, 1848-1852* (Columbia, London: U of Missouri P, 1977, pages 59-61). This proprietor of a hat shop on Broadway in New-York next to the American Museum, Genin, also designed a best-selling Jenny Lind Riding Hat.



and there revealed the difficulty he had in dismissing what he had seen: "I once went in search of the relics of a human body..." he wrote, "which had been cast up the day before on the beach, though the sharks had stripped off the flesh.... It was as conspicuous on that sandy plain as if a generation had labored to pile up a cairn there.... It reigned over the shore. That dead body possessed the shore as no living one could. It showed a title to the sands which no living ruler could."

In the winter of 1851-1852, Thoreau's struggle to assure his own purity became obsessive. Sherman Paul has traced his dissatisfaction with himself to surveying, which [Thoreau](#) found trivial and coarsening. Mary Elkins Moller has speculated that Thoreau was also having sexual fantasies about Mrs. [Lidian Emerson](#) and felt ashamed of them. Whatever the truth of these views (and I think the second takes Thoreau's references to chastity too literally), the fact remains that Thoreau at this time was also struggling to escape from his interest in current events. Surprisingly, this private denouncer of the press had become a subscriber to Horace Greeley's Weekly Tribune, a fact that heightened the tension he felt about preserving his mind's chastity. On January 20, 1852, he wrote,

I do not know but it is too much to read one newspaper in a week, for I now take the weekly Tribune, and for a few days past, it seems to me, I have not dwelt in Concord; the sun, the clouds, the snow, the trees say not so much to me. You cannot serve two masters.... To read the things distant and sounding betrays us into slighting these which are then apparently near and small. We learn to look abroad for our mind and spirit's daily nutriment, and what is this dull town to me? ...All summer and far into the fall I unconsciously went by the newspapers and the news, and now I find it was because the morning and the evening were full of news to me. My walks were full of incidents. I attended not to the affairs of Europe, but to my own affairs in Concord fields.

[Thoreau](#)'s quest for purity and serenity had become particularly difficult because of the excitement surrounding [Lajos Kossuth](#)'s visit and the new interest [Waldo Emerson](#) had taken in things Thoreau considered trivial, including Kossuth. The gradual estrangement of the two men may have begun while Emerson was in England in 1847-1848, writing letters home for Lidian and Thoreau which were little more than catalogues of the great people he had met. Although we know this was his way of providing himself a record of his activities, it probably disappointed. After his return from Europe, Emerson had lectured throughout the country, praising England and its people, but when he engaged Thoreau in a conversation on the topic, Henry, not surprisingly, said that the English were "mere soldiers" and their business was "winding up." In the summer of 1851, Emerson, unaware of the new scope and grandeur of Thoreau's journal,



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unaware of the growth in his spiritual development, wrote off his friend as one who "will not stick." "He is a boy," Emerson added, "& will be an old boy. Pounding beans is good to the end of pounding Empires, but not, if at the end of years, it is only beans."

In a like manner, [Thoreau](#) at about this time began to see that his friend would continue to disappoint him. He bristles at Emerson's patronizing attitude; he disagreed with his treatment of [Margaret Fuller](#) in the MEMOIRS; and most of all he resented his new worldliness. In ENGLISH TRAITS (1856) Emerson, drawing on his lectures of 1848-1850, would celebrate the manners of the British aristocracy and assert that "whatever tends to form manners or to finish men, has a great value. Every one who has tasted the delight of friendship will respect every social guard which our manners can establish." For Thoreau, there was "something devilish in manners" that could come between friends, and writing of Emerson in the winter of 1851, he complained, "One of the best men I know often offends me by uttering made words – the very best words, of course, or dinner speeches, most smooth and gracious and fluent repartees.... O would you but be simple and downright! Would you but cease your palaver! It is the misfortune of being a gentleman and famous." As Joel Porte has observed, the failure of [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#) and Emerson's "manifest success" had probably contributed to Thoreau's bitterness.

A pushy little ultra-conservative mofo, the [Reverend Professor Francis Bowen](#) had what was termed at the time "a remarkable talent for giving offense." Precisely while [Kossuth](#) was riding the crest of the wave of American political correctness, Bowen publicly denounced that revolutionary. (*Nota Bene*: This differs from [Henry Thoreau](#)'s reaction not merely as public denunciation differs from private distaste but also as cheap motivation differs from abundant reason.)

But this is all very easy to figure out, at least as far as Larry J. Reynolds is concerned — what has happened was merely that [Kossuth](#) has come between [Waldo Emerson](#) and [Thoreau](#)! – Wow, now that we understand that, it all becomes perfectly clear. Continuing to quote, from pages 166-70 of this extraordinarily confident EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONS AND THE AMERICAN LITERARY RENAISSANCE influence study:

In the early months of 1852, Kossuth's visit to [Concord](#) widened the separation between [Thoreau](#) and [Emerson](#) into a permanent gulf. As Thoreau spent more and more time communing with nature, trying to cleanse himself of what he called the "news," Emerson saw fit to criticize him for these efforts. Frustrated, Thoreau declared in his journal, "I have got to that pass with my friend that our words do not pass with each other for what they are worth. We speak in vain; there is none to hear. He finds fault with me that I walk alone, when I pine for want of a companion; that I commit my thoughts to a diary even on my walks, instead of seeking to share them generously with a friend; curses my practice even." Emerson, who would soon lecture on the "Conduct of Life" in [Canada](#) and then deliver his "Address to Kossuth" in [Concord](#), could not see the heroism in Thoreau's aloofness. Thoreau, meanwhile, who sought to become a better man through



his solitary walks, felt unappreciated and frustrated. On May 4, in an entry both defensive and immodest, he dismissed the great [Kossuth](#) and those like Emerson who honored him:

This excitement about Kossuth is not interesting to me, it is so superficial. It is only another kind of dancing or of politics. Men are making speeches to him all over the country, but each expresses only the thought, or the want of thought, of the multitude. No man stands on truth.... You can pass your hand under the largest mob, a nation in revolution even, and, however solid a bulk they may make, like a hail-cloud in the atmosphere, you may not meet so much as a cobweb of support. They may not rest, even by a point, on eternal foundations. But an individual standing on truth you cannot pass your hand under, for his foundations reach to the centre of the universe. So superficial these men and their doings, it is life on a leaf or a chip which has nothing but air or water beneath.

The length and tone of this entry reveals the importance of the matter to him; obviously, he considers himself the "individual standing on truth," whose depth far exceeds that of any "nation in revolution" or military hero. And one week later, during the excitement surrounding Kossuth's visit to [Concord](#), during the afternoon of Emerson's speech and reception, Thoreau, in order to show how little he thought of these matters, entered only the following in his journal: "P.M. - **Kossuth here.**"

All of Thoreau's struggle with current events, with Kossuth's visit, with Emerson's worldliness and disesteem lay behind the important fourth version of [WALDEN](#). As he revised and expanded his manuscript throughout 1852, Thoreau endowed his persona with a serene aloofness, creating a hero interested in eternal truths, not pointless political ones. Having discovered that "a sane and growing man revolutionizes every day" and that no "institutions of man can survive a morning experience," he fashioned an answer to his best friend, who thought Kossuth a great man and Henry Thoreau an unsociable boy.

As he revised [WALDEN](#), [Thoreau](#) made major additions.... The thrust of almost all of these additions is to show how nature, which is holy and heroic, can bestow those virtues on one who practices chastity. His central statement on chastity was added, of course, to "Higher Laws" and asserts that "we are conscious of an animal in us, which awakens in proportion as our higher nature slumbers.... Chastity is the flowering of man; and what are called Genius, Heroism, Holiness, and the like, are but various fruits which succeed it. Man flows at once to God when the channel of purity is open.... He is blessed who is assured that the animal is dying out in him day by day, and the divine being established. Not surprisingly, Thoreau presents himself as having achieved this assuredness. He is among the blessed.

The chastity Thoreau has in mind is as much intellectual as

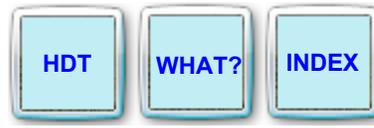


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physical, and to attain it one must abstain not merely from sexual intercourse but also from trivial thoughts and interests. In his addition to "Solitude" he explains the process it involves: "By a conscious effort of the mind we can stand aloof from actions and their consequences; and all things, good and bad, go by us like a torrent." The result is a feeling of doubleness, whereby a person "may be either a drift-wood in the stream, or Indra in the sky looking down on it." He admits that "this doubleness may easily make us poor neighbors and friends sometimes," but he makes it clear that it is worth the price. In "The Ponds" he adds paragraphs stressing the "serenity and purity" of Walden and suggests a correspondence between it and himself. "Many men have been likened to it," he writes, "But few deserve that honor." That he has earned the honor through his way of life is a point made repeatedly. In his addition to "Baker Farm", Thoreau highlights the blessedness which communion with nature has accorded him. Like Walt Whitman's persona in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," or more recently Loren Eiseley's star thrower, Thoreau's hero becomes literally illuminated by nature. He stands one day at the base "of a rainbow's arch, which filled the lower stratum of the atmosphere, tinged the grass and leaves around, and dazzling [him] as if [he] looked through colored crystal." TO emphasize the religious implications of the experience, he adds, "As I walked on the railroad causeway, I used to wonder at the halo of light around my shadow, and would fain fancy myself one of the elect." In the additions to the "Conclusion," Thoreau makes explicit the successful effort to achieve spiritual renewal through aloofness. "I delight to come to my bearings, -" he declares, "not walk in procession with pomp and parade, in a conspicuous place, but to walk even with the Builder of the universe, if I may, - not to live in this restless, nervous, bustling, trivial Nineteenth Century, but stand or sit thoughtfully while it goes by."

The place he would sit, of course, is far above men and their doings, which diminishes them in his eyes. And this particular view is the one dramatized in his most famous addition, the classic battle of the ants in "Brute Neighbors." The episode comes from an entry made in his journal on January 22, 1852, while [Kossuth](#) was visiting Washington and while Horace Greeley in his [Tribune](#) and James Watson Webb in his [Courier and Enquirer](#) were debating the nature of the Hungarian War. Thoreau, like most of his contemporaries, found himself engaged (against his will, however) by what called "the great controversy now going on in the world between the despotic and the republican principle," and this is why he associates the two tribes of warring ants with the European revolutionary scene and calls them "the red republicans and the black despots or imperialists." His description of their war has become famous because of its frequent use in anthologies, and is surely right when he says that one reason for its selection is that it is "easily taken from its context."



Raymond Adams errs though in adding that "it is an episode that hardly has so much as a context." By virtue of both its hidden connection to revolutionary Europe and its subtle connection to the theme of spiritual serenity, the episode is part of larger contexts that shaped its features.

As [Thoreau](#) describes the battle of the ants, he reveals that side of his personality engaged by physical heroism in the actual world. The ferocity and resolve of the combatants, the mutilation and gore that attend their life-and-death struggle thoroughly engage him. "I felt for the rest of that day," he admits, "as if I had had my feelings excited and harrowed by witnessing the struggle, the ferocity and carnage, of a human battle before my door." On the other hand, through the use of the mock-heroic, Thoreau generates an irony that allows him to stress once more the spiritual side of his persona, the side that dismisses politics, revolutions, and wars as trivial. The mother of a single red ant, we are told, has charged her son "to return with his shield or upon it," and the fighting ants, the narrator speculates, could, not to his surprise, have "had their respective musical bands stationed on some eminent chip, and played their national airs the while, to excite the slow and cheer the dying combatants." With such irony Thoreau diminishes the importance, not of the ants, but of the men they resemble. Just as he claimed that [Kossuth](#) and his American admirers were involved in "life on a leaf or a chip," he here brings the metaphor to life and makes the same statement about warring nations. The purpose of this addition, and of his others, is to show that true heroism is associated with aloof serenity, not brutal warfare.

When Thoreau revised his journal entry for inclusion in [WALDEN](#), he claimed the ant battle occurred "in the Presidency of [James Knox Polk](#), five years before the passage of [Daniel Webster's](#) Fugitive-Slave Bill," thus making it contemporaneous with his stay at the pond and registering his criticism, as he had in "Civil Disobedience," of the [Mexican War](#). Ultimately, the issue of slavery disturbed him far more than revolution in Europe, and he found it difficult to resist the temptation to speak out against it. In later versions of [WALDEN](#), Thoreau expanded upon the ideas he introduced in 1852, extending his treatment of the triumph of the spiritual over the animal and filling out his account of the progress of the seasons, which, of course, complements the theme of renewal. Meanwhile, paradoxically, he remained a deeply passionate man, more engaged than others of his acquaintance by the "trivial Nineteenth Century." When the slave Anthony Burns was arrested in 1854, Thoreau, burning with rage, publicly denounced the Massachusetts authorities in his inflammatory "Slavery in Massachusetts": "I walk toward one of our ponds," he thundered, "but what signifies the beauty of nature when men are base? ...Who can be serene in a country where both the rulers and the ruled are without principle? The remembrance of my country spoils my walk. My thoughts are murder



to the State, and involuntarily go plotting against her." Five years later, of course, he stepped forward to defend John Brown more ardently than anyone else in the country. Clearly then, in 1852, when Thoreau endowed the persona of WALDEN with remarkable purity and serenity, he was mythologizing himself; he was, in response to the "tintinnabulum from without," creating a new kind of hero for a revolutionary age.

Have we got this very clear now? According to Larry J. Reynolds, it has been demonstrated that Thoreau, a boy playing at life, was not merely fighting a spiritual battle to remain aloof but indeed was fantasizing that he had won this battle, and celebrating his final victory. But Thoreau has been detected as nevertheless full of bitterness, as resentful, as feeling unappreciated and frustrated. Fundamentally a "defensive and immodest" pretense rather than any sort of record of a spiritual journey, [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) merely celebrated cheaply in words what its author could not accomplish in fact: the big win in a struggle between the spiritual in its author and the warrior-wannabee. This is Thoreau as a mere self-deluding boy who, when confronted by a real life hero out of the real world of struggle, struggles to stand "aloof" in order to console himself by considering himself to be the true hero, to be indeed the "individual standing on truth" whose real worth far exceeds the appreciation offered to any such mere celebrity wrapped up in mere mundane push-and-shove concerns. It is hard to imagine that Reynolds is not terming Thoreau a self-deluded coward.

April 28, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) commented in his journal about his reading either in [Évariste Régis Huc](#)'s 1850 work in French, *SOUVENIRS D'UN VOYAGE DANS LA TARTARIE, LE THIBET ET LA CHINE PENDANT LES ANNÉES 1844, 1845, ET 1846*, or in William Hazlett's translation HUC AND GABET: TRAVELS IN TARTARY, THIBET AND CHINA, DURING THE YEARS 1844-5-6 which had appeared in 1851: "I scarcely know why I am excited when in M. Huc's Book I read of the country of the Mongol Tartars as the "Land of Grass," but I am as much as if I were a cow."

[CHINA](#)



In [Ellery Channing](#)'s journal we find that on this date Thoreau caught a hyla, that is, a tree frog, but it was able to effect an escape.

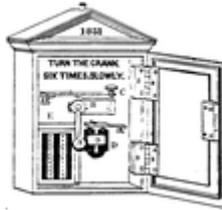
At 12 o'clock noon a telegraphic fire alarm system, constructed on the basis of plans prepared by Dr. [William Francis Channing](#) and a self-effacing telegraphic engineer, Moses Gerrish Farmer, went into operation in [Boston](#), with the fire alarm office being situated in the City Building at Court Square and Williams Court. Staff included a superintendent, fire alarm operators, and repairmen. The system consisted of a closed electrically supervised assembly of circuits, street fire alarm boxes with code wheels and key breaks determining the number of current interruptions which produced coded signals on local instruments at a central office, where an operator transmitted signals received over separate fire alarm circuits to the appropriate fire house. The system featured telegraphic communication by key and sounder between individual street boxes and the



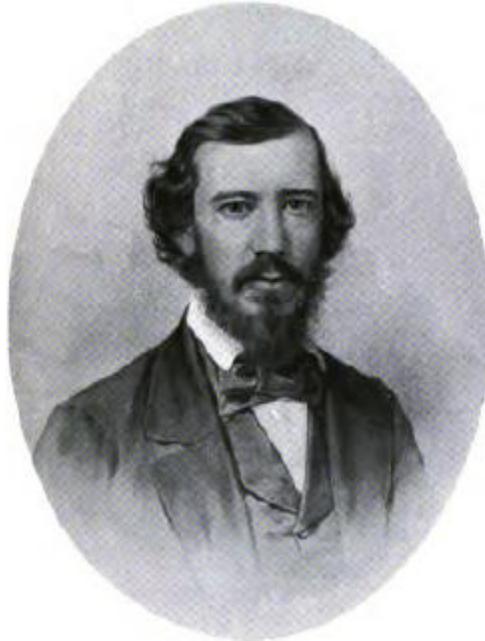
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central office. The system consisted of 40 street boxes connected into 3 box circuits, 3 bell circuits, 16 additional alarm bells for a total of 19, and a crude central office apparatus. The street fire alarm boxes were painted black and had an outside door that was kept locked. Each such box contained a manual crank (the sort of alarm device on which one merely pulled an arm downward would not be introduced, experimentally, until 1864).



Soon after his older brother Peyton's death, [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) appeared at the big brick [Quaker](#) meetinghouse in Sandy Spring, [Maryland](#). He was due to resume his duties as a Methodist circuit-rider but was troubled whether he was "living in full faith up to the Inward Voice." One of the Quakers, [Friend](#) Roger Brooke,³⁹ took him home to dinner and conversation after silent worship:



My uncle Dr. John Henry Daniel said to me, when I was leaving home, "So you are going to be a journeyman soul-saver." I did not begin life with that burden on me, and, when it came, was too young to question whether it was part of me – my hunch – or a pack of outside things like that strapped on Bunyan's pilgrim. My pack was symbolized in my saddle-bags, where the Bible, Emerson's "Essays," Watson's "Theology," Carlyle's "Latter Day Pamphlets," Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying," the Methodist Discipline, and Coleridge's "Aids to Reflection" got

39. A relative of the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, the Honorable Roger Brooke Taney, as our Southern correspondent does not hesitate to make clear.



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on harmoniously, – for a time. Dr. Daniel's label, "a journeyman soul-saver," told true in a sense: it was really my own enmeshed soul I had to save. I was struggling at the centre of an invisible web of outer influences and hereditary forces. I was without wisdom. How many blunders I made in my sermons, with which I took so much pains, I know not, but I remember a friendly hint from the wife of the Hon. Bowie Davis that a sermon was too "agrarian." In another case the recoil was more serious; it came through my presiding elder, who said, "From what I hear, a sermon of yours on the new birth was too profound." This troubled me deeply. I had supposed that Jesus meant to be profound, and put much study into the sermon, the only favourable response to which was from an aged negro woman who, long after I had left Methodism, laid her hand on my head, and said, "I never knew what the Lord meant by our being born again until I heard you preach about it, and bless the Lord, it's been plain ever since!" My early training in law courts determined my method of preaching. In preparing a sermon I fixed on some main point which I considered of vital importance, and dealt with it as if I were pleading before judge and jury. This method was not Methodism. I was in continual danger of being "too profound," and though congregations were interested in my sermons, they brought me more reputation for eccentricity than for eloquence. This, however, was not a matter of concern to me. Ambition for fame and popularity was not among my faults. My real mission was personal, – to individuals. In each neighbourhood on my circuit there were some whom I came to know with a certain intimacy, aspiring souls whose confidences were given me. However far away I might be, they rose before me when I was preparing for that appointment; they inspired passages in the sermon. No general applause could give me the happiness felt when these guests of my heart met me with smiles of recognition, or clasped my hand with gratitude.

It was an agricultural region, in which crime and even vices were rare. Slavery existed only in its mildest form, and there was no pauper population to excite my reformatory zeal. Nor was there even any sectarian prejudice to combat; the county was divided up between denominations friendly to each other and hospitable to me. My personal influence was thus necessarily humanized. I could not carry on any *propaganda* of Methodism in the homes of non-Methodist gentlemen and ladies who entertained me, – even had I felt so inclined, ? without showing my church inferior to theirs.

My belief is that I gradually preached myself out of the creeds by trying to prove them by my lawyer-like method. Moreover, I had the habit of cross-examining the sermons of leading preachers, finding statements that in a law court would have told against their case. At a camp-meeting in 1851 I learned that our presiding elder was about to preach on the resurrection of the body. I slipped into his hand the following query: ?

A soldier fallen in the field remains unburied; his body mingles with the sod, springs up in the grass; cattle graze there and



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atoms of the soldier's body become beef; the beef is eaten by a man who suddenly dies while in him are particles of the soldier's body conveyed to him by the grass-fed beef. Thus two men die with the same material substance in them. How can there be an exact resurrection of both of those bodies as they were at the moment of death?

The preacher read out the query, and said, "All things are possible with God." Nothing more. It made a profound impression on me that a divine should take refuge in a phrase. The doctrine in question involved the verbal inspiration of Scripture and the "Apostles' Creed."

I made a note of another thing at this camp-meeting. The Rev. Lyttleton Morgan, an accomplished preacher, declared that in his Passion and Crucifixion Christ suffered all that the whole human race must have suffered in hell to all eternity but for that sacrifice. At dinner some ministers demurred at this doctrine; I maintained that it appeared to be a logical deduction from our theory of the Atonement. But I soon recognized that it was a *reductio ad absurdum*.

Rockville Circuit being near Washington, I was able at times to pass a few days in the capital, where I had relatives and acquaintances. I attended the debates in Congress, and in the Supreme Court, — where I heard Daniel Webster's speech in the famous Gaines case. It was a powerful speech, impressively delivered, but I had sufficient experience in courts to recognize several passages meant for the fashionable audience with which the room was crowded. He was against the appellant, Mrs. Gaines, who was pleading for her legitimacy as well as property, and described his client persistently besieged by litigation as a rock beaten by ocean waves. He drew all eyes on pleasant Myra Gaines, and I remember thinking the metaphor infelicitous. My sympathies were with the lady, and the "rock" might symbolize the stony heart of the man holding on to her property. But I was so interested in Webster's look and manner that, in my ignorance of the evidence, my attention to what he said was fitful, and the speech was obliterated by the thrilling romance rehearsed by the judges in their decisions. For it was in favor of the man holding on to her property. But I was so interested in Webster's look and manner that, in my ignorance of the evidence, my attention to what he said was fitful, and the speech was obliterated by the thrilling romance rehearsed by the judges in their decisions, for it was in two volumes, the minority opinion of Justice Wayne and Justice Daniel (my grand-uncle) in favour of Mrs. Gaines being especially thrilling. No American novelist would venture on such a tale of intrigue, adultery, bigamy, disguises, betrayal, as those justices searched through unshrinkingly, ignoring the company present. On one of my visits to Washington I heard a sermon from the famous Asbury Roszel which lifted the vast audience to exultation and joy. His subject was the kingdom of God and triumphs of the Cross, and he began by declaring that it was universally agreed that ideal government was the rule of one



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supreme and competent individual head. This Carlylean sentiment uttered in the capital of the so-called Republic gave me some food for thought at the time; and I remembered it when I awakened to the anomaly of disowning as a republican the paraphernalia of royalty, while as a preacher I was using texts and hymns about thrones and Crowns and sceptres, and worshipping a king. My interest in party politics had declined; I began to study large human issues. One matter that I entered into in 1851 was International Copyright. On this subject I wrote an article which appeared in the "National Intelligencer." I took the manuscript to the office, and there saw the venerable Joseph Gales, who founded the paper, and W.W. Seaton, the editor. Mr. Seaton remarked that I was "a very young man to be in holy orders," and after glancing at the article said he was entirely in sympathy with it. In that article I appealed to Senator Sumner to take up the matter, and thenceforth he sent me his speeches. I little imagined how much personal interest I was to have some years later in Gales and Seaton, who were among the founders of the Unitarian church in Washington. I used sometimes to saunter into the bookshop of Frank Taylor, or that of his brother Hudson Taylor, afterwards intimate Unitarian friends, before I knew that there was a Unitarian church in Washington. From one of them I bought a book that deeply moved me: "The Soul: her Sorrows and her Aspirations. By Francis William Newman." I took this book to heart before I was conscious of my unorthodoxy, nothing in it then suggesting to me that the author was an unbeliever in supernaturalism.

The setting given by Newman's book to Charles Wesley's hymn — "Come, O thou Traveller unknown" — made that hymn my inspiration, and it has been my song in many a night wherein I have wrestled with phantoms.

But my phantoms were not phantasms, and brought no horrors into those beautiful woods and roads of Montgomery County. These were my study. I was wont to start off to my appointments early, in order that I might have no need to ride fast, and when clear of a village, take from my saddlebags my Emerson, my Coleridge, or Newman, and throwing the reins on my horse's neck, read and read, or pause to think on some point.

I remember that in reading Emerson repeatedly I seemed never to read the same essay as before: whether it was the new morning, or that I had mentally travelled to a new point of view, there was always something I had not previously entered into. His thoughts were mother-thoughts, to use Balzac's word. Over the ideas were shining ideals that made the world beautiful to me; the woods and flowers and birds amid which I passed made a continuous chorus for all this poetry and wit and wisdom. And science also; from Emerson I derived facts about nature that filled me with wonder. On one of my visits to Professor Baird, at the Smithsonian Institution, I talked of these statements; he was startled that I should be reading Emerson, with whose writings he was acquainted. At the end of our talk Baird said, "Whatever may be thought of Emerson's particular views of



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nature, there can be no question about the nature in him and in his writings: that is true and beautiful."

A college-mate, Newman Hank, was the preacher on Stafford Circuit, Virginia, and it was arranged that for one round of appointments he and I should exchange circuits. I thus preached for a month among those who had known me from childhood. Though few of them were Methodists, they all came to hear me, and I suppose many were disappointed. I had formerly spoken in their debating societies with the facility of inexperience, but was no longer so fluent.

At Fredericksburg, June 19, I preached to a very large congregation, and was invited to the houses of my old friends (none of them Methodists); but the culminating event was my sermon in our own town, Falmouth, three days later. How often had I sat in that building listening to sermons – Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian – occasionally falling under the spell of some orator who made me think its pulpit the summit of the world! How large that church in my childhood, and how grand its assemblage of all the beauty and wealth of the neighbourhood! When I stood in the pulpit and realized how small the room was, and could recognize every face, and observe every changing expression, – and when I saw before me my parents, my sister and brothers, with almost painful anxiety in their loving eyes, – strange emotions came to me; the first of my phantoms drew near and whispered, "Are you sure, perfectly sure, that the seeds you are about to sow in these hearts that cherish you are the simple truth of your own heart and thought?" My text was, "Thou wilt show me the path of life;" my theme, that every human being is on earth for a purpose. The ideal life was that whose first words were, "I must be about my Father's business," and the last, "It is finished."

When we reached home my uncle Dr. John Henry Daniel said, "There was a vein of Calvinism running all through that sermon." "I hate Calvinism," cried I. "No matter: the idea of individual predestination was in your sermon. And it may be true." My father was, I believe, gratified by the sermon, but he said, with a laugh, "One thing is certain, Monc: should the devil ever aim at a Methodist preacher, you'll be safe!"

In this sermon, which ignored hell and heaven, and dealt with religion as the guide and consecration of life on earth, I had unconsciously taken the first steps in my "Earthward Pilgrimage." When I returned to my own circuit, a burden was on me that could not roll off before the cross.

Our most cultured congregation was at Brookville, a village named after the race of which Roger Brooke was at this time the chief. Our pretty Methodist church there was attended by some Episcopalian families – Halls, Magruders, Donalds, Coulters – who adopted me personally. The finest mansion was that of John Hall, who insisted on my staying at his house when I was in the neighbourhood. He was an admirable gentleman and so friendly with the Methodists that they were pleased at the hospitality shown their minister. Mrs. Hall, a grand woman intellectually



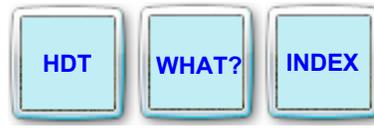
and physically, was a daughter of Roger Brooke. She had been "disowned" by the Quakers for marrying "out of meeting," but it was a mere formality; they all loved her just as much. Her liberalism had leavened the families around her. She was not interested in theology, and never went to any church, but encouraged her lovely little daughters (of ten and twelve years) to enjoy Sunday like any other day. After some months she discovered that some of my views resembled those of her father, and desired me to visit him.

There was a flourishing settlement of Hicksite Quakers at Sandy Spring, near Brookville, but I never met one of them, nor knew anything about them. "Hicksite" was a meaningless word to me. "Uncle Roger," their preacher, was spoken of throughout Montgomery County as the best and wisest of men, and I desired to meet him. When I afterwards learned that "Hicksite" was equivalent to "unorthodox," it was easy to understand why none of them should seek the acquaintance of a Methodist minister. The Quakers assembled twice a week, and happening one Wednesday to pass their meeting-house, I entered, – impelled by curiosity. Most of those present were in Quaker dress, which I did not find unbecoming for the ladies, perhaps because the wearers were refined and some of them pretty. After a half-hour's silence a venerable man of very striking appearance, over six feet in height and his long head full of force, arose, laid aside his hat, and in a low voice, in strange contrast with his great figure, uttered these words: "Walk in the light while ye are children of the light, lest darkness come upon you." Not a word more. He resumed his seat and hat, and after a few minutes' silence shook hands with the person next him; then all shook hands and the meeting ended.

I rode briskly to my appointment, and went on with my usual duties. But this my first Quaker experience had to be digested. The old gentleman, with his Solomonic face (it was Roger Brooke), who had broken the silence with but one text, had given that text, by its very insulation and modification, a mystical suggestiveness.

After I had attended the Quaker meeting several times, it was heard of by my Methodist friends. One of these, a worthy mechanic, told me that Samuel Janney had preached in the Quaker meeting, and once said that "the blood of Jesus could no more save man than the blood of a bullock." This brother's eyes were searching though kindly. Roger Brooke belonged to the same family as that of Roger Brooke Taney, then chief justice of the United States. His advice, opinion, arbitration, were sought for in all that region. Despite antislavery and rationalistic convictions, he leavened all Montgomery County with tolerance.⁴⁰ One morning as I was riding off from the Quaker meeting, a youth overtook me and said uncle Roger wished to speak to me. I turned and approached the old gentleman's carriole. He said, "I have seen thee at one or two of our meetings. If thee can find it

40. Helen Clark, daughter of the Right Hon. John Bright, showed me a diary written by Mr. Bright's grandmother, Rachel Wilson, while travelling in America in 1768-69. She was a much esteemed Quaker preacher, and gives a pleasant account of her visit to the Friends at Sandy Spring, where she was received in the home of Roger Brooke. This was the grandfather of "uncle Roger."



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convenient to go home with us to dinner, we shall be glad to have thee." The faces of his wife and daughter-in-law beamed their welcome, and I accepted the invitation. The old mansion, "Brooke Grove," contained antique furniture, and the neatness bespoke good housekeeping. So also did the dinner, for these Maryland Quakers knew the importance of good living to high thinking.

There was nothing sanctimonious about this home of the leading Quaker. Uncle Roger had a delicate humour, and the ladies beauty and wit. The bonnet and shawl laid aside, there appeared the perfectly fitting "mouse-colour" gown, of rich material, with unfigured lace folded over the neck: at a fancy ball it might be thought somewhat coquettish.

They were fairly acquainted with current literature, and though not yet introduced to Emerson, were already readers of Carlyle. I gained more information about the country, about the interesting characters, about people in my own congregations, than I had picked up in my circuit-riding. After dinner uncle Roger and I were sitting alone on the veranda, taking our smoke, - he with his old-fashioned pipe, - and he mentioned that one of his granddaughters had rallied him on having altered a Scripture text in the meeting. "In the simplicity of my heart I said what came to me, and answered her that if it was not what is written in the Bible I hope it is none the less true." I afterwards learned that he had added in his reply, "Perhaps it was the New Testament writer who did not get the words quite right." I asked him what was the difference between "Hicksite" and "Orthodox" Quakers; but he turned it off with an anecdote of one of his neighbours who, when asked the same question, had replied, "Well, you see, the orthodox Quakers will insist that the Devil has horns, while we say the Devil is an ass." I spoke of the Methodist ministers being like the Quakers "called by the Spirit" to preach, and he said, with a smile, "But when you go to an appointment what if the Spirit does n't move you to say anything?"

Uncle Roger had something else on his mind to talk to me about. He inquired my impression of the Quaker neighbourhood generally. I said he was the first Quaker I had met, but the assembly I had seen in their meeting had made an impression on me of intelligence and refinement. For the rest their houses were pretty and their farms bore witness to better culture than those in other parts of the county. "That I believe is generally conceded to us," he answered; "and how does thee explain this superiority of our farms?" I suggested that it was probably due to their means, and to the length of time their farms had been under culture. The venerable man was silent for a minute, then fixed on me his shrewd eyes and said, "Has it ever occurred to thee that it may be because of our paying wages to all who work for us?"

For the first time I found myself face to face with an avowed abolitionist! My interest in politics had lessened, but I remained a Southerner, and this economic arraignment of slavery



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came with some shock. He saw this and turned from the subject to talk of their educational work, advising me to visit Fairhill, the Friends' school for young ladies.

The principal of the school was [William Henry Farquhar](#), and on my first visit there I heard from him an admirable lecture in his course on History. He had adopted the novel method of beginning his course with the present day and travelling backward. He had begun with the World's Fair and got as far as Napoleon I, – subject of the lecture I heard. It was masterly. And the whole school – the lovely girls in their tidy Quaker dresses, their sweet voices and manners, the elegance and order everywhere – filled me with wonder. By this garden of beauty and culture I had been passing for six months, never imagining the scene within.

The lecture closed the morning exercises, and I had an opportunity for addressing the pupils. I was not an intruder, but taken there by Mrs. Charles Farquhar, daughter of Roger Brooke and sister-in-law of the principal, so I did not have the excuse that it would not be "in season" to try and save some of these sweet sinners from the flames of hell. It was the obvious duty of the Methodist preacher on Rockville Circuit to cry, – "O ye fair maids of Fair Hill, this whited sepulchre of unbelief, – not one of you aware of your depravity, nor regenerate through the blessed bloodshed – your brilliant teacher is luring you to hell!" Those soft eyes of yours will be lifted in torment, those rosebud mouths call for a drop of water to cool your parched tongues; all your affection, gentleness, and virtues are but filthy rags, unless you believe in the Trinity, the blood atonement, and in the innate corruption of every heart in this room!"

But when the junior preacher is made, the susceptible youth is not unmade. According to Lucian, Cupid was reproached by his mother Venus for permitting the Muses to remain single, and invisibly went to their abode with his arrows; but when he discovered the beautiful arts with which the Muses were occupied, he had not the heart to disturb them, and softly crept away. This "pagan" parable of a little god's momentary godlessness may partly suggest why no gospel arrows were shot that day in Fairhill school; but had I to rewrite Lucian's tale I should add that Cupid went off himself stuck all over with arrows from the Muses' eyes.

However, Cupid had nothing to do with the softly feathered and imperceptible arrows that were going into my Methodism from the Quakers, in their homes even more than in this school. I found myself introduced to a circle of refined and cultivated ladies whose homes were cheerful, whose charities were constant, whose manners were attractive, whose virtues were recognized by their most orthodox neighbours; yet *what I was preaching as the essentials of Christianity were unknown among them*. These beautiful homes were formed without terror of hell, without any cries of what shall we do to be saved? How had these lovely maidens and young men been trained to every virtue, to domestic



affections and happiness? I never discussed theology with them; but their lives, their beautiful spirit, their homes, did away with my moral fears, and as the dogmas paled, creedless freedom began to flush with warm life. These good and sweet women, who said no word against my dogmas, unconsciously to themselves or me charmed me away from the dogmatic habitat.

When I left the Baltimore Conference, the Quakers were given by many Methodists the discredit of having undermined my faith, but their only contribution to my new faith was in enabling me to judge the unorthodox tree by its fruits of culture and character. If theology were ever discussed by them, it was I who introduced the subject. They had no proselyting spirit. I thought of joining the Quaker Society, but Roger Brooke advised me not to do so. "Thee will find among us," he said, "a good many prejudices, for instance, against music, of which thou art fond, and while thou art mentally growing would it be well to commit thyself to any organized society?"⁴¹

How often have I had to ponder those words of Jesus, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Men do not forsake their God, he forsakes them. It is the God of the creeds that first forsakes us. More and more the dogmas come into collision with plain truth: every child's clear eyes contradict the guilty phantasy of inherited depravity, every compassionate sentiment abhors the notions of hell and salvation by human sacrifice. Yet our tender associations, our affections, are intertwined with these falsities, and we cling to them till they forsake us. For more than a year I was like one flung from a foundered ship holding on to a raft till it went to pieces, then to a floating log till buffeted off, — to every stick, every straw. One after another the gods forsake us, — forsake our common sense, our reason, our justice, our humanity.

In the autumn of my first ministerial year I had to take stock of what was left me that could honestly be preached in Methodist pulpits. About the Trinity I was not much concerned; the morally repulsive dogmas, and atrocities ascribed to the deity in the Bible became impossible. What, then, was "salvation"? I heard from Roger Brooke this sermon, "He shall save the people from their sins, — not *in* them." It is the briefest sermon I ever heard, but it gave me a Christianity for one year, for it was sustained by my affections. They were keen, and the thought of turning my old home in Falmouth into a house of mourning, and grieving the hearts of my friends in Carlisle, and congregations that so trusted me, appeared worse than death. My affections were at times rack and thumbscrew.

I had no friend who could help me on the intellectual, moral, and philosophical points involved. Roger Brooke and William Henry Farquhar were rationalists by birthright; they had never had any dogmas to unlearn, nor had they to suffer the pain of being sundered from relatives and friends. In my loneliness I stretched appealing hands to Emerson. After his death my friend

41. When Benjamin Hallowell, the eminent teacher in Alexandria, Va., came to reside at Sandy Spring, I had many interesting talks with him, but found that even his philosophical mind could not free itself from the prejudice against musical culture. The musical faculty, he admitted, had some uses — e.g., that mothers might sing lullabies.



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

Edward Emerson sent me my letters to his father, and the first is dated at Rockville, November 4, 1851. Without any conventional opening (how could I call my prophet "Dear Sir"!) my poor trembling letter begins with a request to know where the "[Dial](#)" can be purchased, and proceeds: -

I will here take the liberty of saying what nothing but a concern as deep as Eternity should make me say. I am a minister of the Christian Religion, - the only way for the world to reënter Paradise, in my earnest belief. I have just commenced that office at the call of the Holy Ghost, now in my twentieth year. About a year ago I commenced reading your writings. I have read them all and studied them sentence by sentence. I have shed many burning tears over them; because you gain my assent to Laws which, when I see how they would act on the affairs of life, I have not courage to practise. By the Law sin revives and I die. I sometimes feel as if you made for me a second Fall from which there is no redemption by any atonement.

To this there came a gracious response: -

Concord, Mass., 13th November, 1851.

Dear Sir, - I fear you will not be able, except at some chance auction, to obtain any set of the "[Dial](#)." In fact, smaller editions were printed of the later and latest numbers, which increases the difficulty.

I am interested by your kind interest in my writings, but you have not let me sufficiently into your own habit of thought, to enable me to speak to it with much precision. But I believe what interests both you and me most of all things, and whether we know it or not, is the morals of intellect; in other words, that no man is worth his room in the world who is not commanded by a legitimate object of thought. The earth is full of frivolous people, who are bending their whole force and the force of nations on trifles, and these are baptized with every grand and holy name, remaining, of course, totally inadequate to occupy any mind; and so sceptics are made. A true soul will disdain to be moved except by what natively commands it, though it should go sad and solitary in search of its master a thousand years. The few superior persons in each community are so by their steadiness to reality and their neglect of appearances. This is the euphrasy and rue that purge the intellect and ensure insight. Its full rewards are slow but sure; and yet I think it has its reward in the instant, inasmuch as simplicity and grandeur are always better than dapperness. But I will not spin out these saws farther, but hasten to thank you for your frank and friendly letter, and to wish you the best deliverance in that contest to which every soul must go alone.

Yours, in all good hope,



R.W. EMERSON.

This letter I acknowledged with a longer one (December 12, 1851), in which I say: "I have very many correspondents, but I might almost say yours is the only Letter that was ever written to me."

Early in 1852 Kossuth visited Washington, and enthusiasm for him and his cause carried me there. The Washington pulpits had not yet said anything about slaves at our own doors, but it was easy to be enthusiastic for liberty as far away as Hungary, and so the preachers all paid homage to Kossuth. I stopped at the house of Rev. Lyttleton Morgan, whose wife was an authoress, and her sister, Carrie Dallam, the most attractive friend I had in Washington. With her I went to the New Year "levee" at the White House, and also to call on the widow of President John Quincy Adams, a handsome and entertaining old lady. I also think it was then and by her that I was taken to see the widow of Alexander Hamilton. Mayor Seaton entered, and in courtly style took her hand in both of his and kissed it, bending low. She was still (her ninety-fifth year) a cheerful and handsome lady, gracious and dignified. Her narratives of society in that city, as she remembered it, sounded like ancient legends. I remember particularly her account of a president's drawing-room in the time of President Jackson. Mrs. Hamilton was, I believe, the first to introduce ices into the country. At any rate, she told me that President Jackson, having tasted ices at her house, resolved to have some at his next reception, - for in those days so simple and small were the receptions that refreshments were provided. Mrs. Hamilton related that at the next reception the guests were seen melting each spoonful of ice-cream with their breath preparatory to swallowing it! The reception itself was, she said, more like a large tea-party than anything else.

Kossuth was a rather small man with a pale face, a soft eye, a poetic and pathetic expression, and a winning voice. He spoke English well, and his accent added to his eloquence by reminding us of his country, for which he was pleading. I followed him about Washington, to the Capitol, the White House, the State Department, etc., listening with rapt heart to his speeches, and weeping for Hungary. I find this note (undated): "Kossuth received to-day a large number of gentlemen and ladies, to whom he discoursed eloquently of the wrongs of Hungary. Many were moved to tears, and some ladies presented their rings and other trinkets for the cause of the oppressed. A large slave-auction took place at Alexandria just across the river on the same day."⁴² But, alas, I presently had a tragedy of my own to weep for, the death of my elder brother, Peyton. He had long suffered from the *sequelæ* of scarlatina, but, nevertheless, had studied law and begun practice. During the summer of 1851 he visited me on my circuit (Rockville) and accompanied me to St. James Camp-

42. When this entry was written no word had reached me of the vain efforts of abolitionists to get from Kossuth an expression of sympathy with their cause. The "independence" pleaded for by Kossuth had no more to do with personal freedom than this had to do with the "independence" fought for in 1776 by American slaveholders, who forced Jefferson to strike out of the Declaration its antislavery section.



meeting. He was deeply affected on hearing me preach, and approached the "mourner's bench." No "conversion" occurred, and he returned home (Falmouth) in a sad mood. Then there arose in him the abhorrence of dogmas and the ideal of a church of pure reason, absolutely creedless and unecclesiastical, uniting all mankind. Alas, little did he know that his brother, even myself, was at that moment in mortal inward struggle with a creed! But this I learned only after his death. For at that critical moment he died of typhoid fever, - March 18, 1852, fourteen days after his twenty-second birthday. There was bequeathed to my later years the miserable reflection that possibly he might have survived the attack but for the lowering of his strength by agitation under my preaching at the camp-meeting.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY | **VOLUME II**



April 28, Wednesday: I scarcely know why I am excited when in M. [Huc](#)'s Book I read of the country of the Mongol Tartars on the "Land of Grass", but I am as much as if I were a cow.

2 1/2 Pm to Cliffs & Heywood's Brook.

Are not the flowers which appear earliest in the spring the most primitive & simplest? They have been in this town thus far, as I have observed them this spring, putting them down in the order in which I think they should be named.

Using Grays names-

- Symplocarpus Foetidus
- Alnus Incana Ap. 11
- " Serrulata 8th
- Acer Rubrum 9th one by Red Bridge
- Willow earliest 12
- Ulmus Americana 15 one - Cheney's (others 10 days or 14 later)
- Populus Tremuloides 15
- Corylus Americana 16 perhaps before the last
- Carex Pennsylvanica 22
- Caltha Palustris 25 many
- Stellaria Media 26 Cheney's garden
- Capsella Bursa Pastoris 26 "
- Taraxacum Dens-leonis 25 one in water (seen by another the 20th)
- Equisetum Arvense 25 in water
- Gnaphalium Purpureum 27
- Saxifraga Virginiensis 27
- Antennaria Plantaginifolia 27
- Ranunculus Fascicularis 28 only 2

All but the 3d 8th 11th 12th observed in the **very best** season. & these within a day (?) of their flowering. I observe that the first six are decidedly water or water-loving plants & the 10, 13th, & 14th were found in the water - & are equally if not more confined to that element. ---The 7th & 8th belong to the cooler zones of the earth - the 7th ac. to Emerson as far N as 64° - & comes up (is it this?) on burnt lands first & will grow in dry cool dreary places. --- The 9th on a dry warm rocky hill-side the earliest(?) grass to blossom also the



18th--the 11th & 12 in cold damp gardens -- like the earth first made dry land. -- --the 15th & 17 on dry (scantly clad with grass) fields & hills -- hardy-- --the 16th sunny bare rocks -- in seams on moss where also in a day or two the columbine will bloom. The 18th is also indebted to the warmth of the rocks-- This may perhaps be nearly the order of the world's creation-- Thus we have in the spring of the year the spring of the world represented-- Such were the first localities afforded for plants --Water-bottoms -- bare rocks -- & scantily clad lands -- & land recently bared of water.

The spotted tortoise is spotted on shell head --tail --& legs. Fresh leaves of a *Neottia* pale & not distinctly veined. Red solomon seal berries on their short stems prostrate on the dead leaves, some of them plump still. One man has turned his cows out to pasture. Have not seen the Slate col. snowbird [**Dark-eyed Junco**  *Junco hyemalis*] for a few days. I am getting my greatcoat off, but it is a cold & wintry day -- with snow clouds appearing to draw water, but cold water surely or out of the north side of the well. a few flakes in the air -- drawing snow as well as water. From fair Haven the landscape all in shadow apparently to the base of the mts -- but the Peterboro hills are in sun shine and unexpectedly are white with snow (no snow here unless in some hollows in the woods) reflecting the sun -- more obvious for the sun shine-- I never saw them appear so near. It is startling thus to look into winter.

How suddenly the flowers bloom -- 2 or 3 days ago I could not or did not find the leaves of the crowfoot. Today not knowing it well I looked in vain. --till at length in the very warmest nook in the grass above the rocks of the Cliff -- I found 2 bright yellow blossoms which betrayed the inconspicuous leaves & all. The spring flowers wait not to perfect their leaves before they expand their blossoms. The blossom in so many cases precedes the leaf so with poetry? --they flash out. In the most favorable locality you will find flowers earlier than the May goers will believe. This year at least one flower (of several) hardly precedes another -- but as soon as the storms were over & pleasant weather came -- all bloomed at once. having been retarded so long.-- This appears to be particularly true of the herbaceous flowers. How much does this happen every year?

There is no important change in the color of the woods yet-- There are fewer dry leaves -- buds color the maples -- and perhaps the bark on some last year's shoots as the willows are brighter & some willows covered with catkins--& even alders maples elms & poplars show at a distance. The earth has now a greenish tinge-- & the ice of course has universally given place to water for a long time past. These are general aspects-- The *Veratrum Viride* at Well meadow is 15 or 16 inches high -- the most of a growth this year. The *angelica*? at the Corner Spring is pretty near it.

I suppose the geese [**Canada Goose**  *Branta canadensis*] are all gone. And the ducks? Did the Snow birds [**Dark-eyed Junco**  *Junco hyemalis*] go off with the pleasant weather. Standing above the 1st little pond E of Fair Haven-- This bright reflecting water surface is seen plainly at a higher level than the distant pond --It has a singular but pleasant effect on the beholder to see considerable sheets of water standing at different levels.-- Pleasant to see lakes like platters full of water. Found a large cockle (?) shell by the shore of this little pond-- It reminds me that all the earth is sea-shore-- The sight of these little shells inland It is a beach I stand on. Is the male willow on the E End of this pondlet -- catkins about 3/4 inch long & just bursting commonly on the side & all before any leaves, the Brittle Gray W. S. *grisea*.

That small flat downy gnaphalium in sandy paths -- is it the fragrant life-everlasting.

The *Andromeda* requires the sun-- It is now merely a dull reddish brown -- with light (greyish?) from the upper surface of the leaves.

Frogspawn a mass of transparent jelly bigger than the two fists composed of contiguous globules or eyes with each a little squirming pollywog? in the centre 1/3 inch long -- Walden is yellowish (apparently) next the shore where you see the sand -- then green in still shallow water -- then or generally deep blue. This as well under the R.R. and now that the trees have not leaved out -- as under pines.

That last long storm brought down a coarse elephantine sand foliage in the Cut. Slumbrous ornaments for a cave or subterranean temple, such as at Elephantium? I see no willow leaves yet-- A maple by Heywood's meadow has opened its sterile blossoms -- why is this (and maples generally) so much later than the Red Bridge one?

A week or more ago I made this list of early willows in Mass according to Gray putting Emerson in brackets--
Salix tristis. Sage Willow

- S. humilis (Low Bush Willow) S. Muhlenbergiensis. S Conifera.
- S. discolor (Glaucus Willow) [2 Colored Willow.--Bog Willow] S. Sensitiva.
- S. eriocephala (Silky Headed Willow) S. Prinooides?
S crassa. "closely resembles the last" i.e. S. discolor [Wolly Headed Swamp]
- S. sericea (Silky-leaved Willow) S. Grisea. [Brittle-Gray]



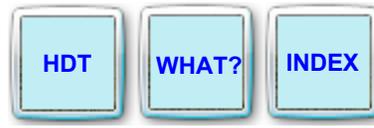
At Lancy, a village near Geneva, [Henri-Frédéric Amiel](#), who would be referred to as the “Swiss [Thoreau](#),” wrote in his *JOURNAL INTIME*: “Once more I feel the spring languor creeping over me, the spring air about me. This morning the poetry of the scene, the song of the birds, the tranquil sunlight, the breeze blowing over the fresh green fields, all rose into and filled my heart. Now all is silent. O silence, thou art terrible! terrible as that calm of the ocean which lets the eye penetrate the fathomless abysses below. Thou showest us in ourselves depths which make us giddy, inextinguishable needs, treasures of suffering. Welcome tempests! at least they blur and trouble the surface of these waters with their terrible secrets. Welcome the passion blasts which stir the wares of the soul, and so veil from us its bottomless gulfs! In all of us, children of dust, sons of time, eternity inspires an involuntary anguish, and the infinite, a mysterious terror. We seem to be entering a kingdom of the dead. Poor heart, thy craving is for life, for love, for illusions! And thou art right after all, for life is sacred.

In these moments of tête-à-tête with the infinite, how different life looks! How all that usually occupies and excites us becomes suddenly puerile, frivolous and vain. We seem to ourselves mere puppets, marionettes, strutting seriously through a fantastic show, and mistaking gewgaws for things of great price. At such moments, how everything becomes transformed, how everything changes! Berkeley and Fichte seem right, Emerson too; the world is but an allegory; the idea is more real than the fact; fairy tales, legends, are as true as natural history, and even more true, for they are emblems of greater transparency. The only substance properly so called is the soul. What is all the rest? Mere shadow, pretext, figure, symbol, or dream.

Consciousness alone is immortal, positive, perfectly real. The world is but a firework, a sublime phantasmagoria, destined to cheer and form the soul. Consciousness is a universe, and its sun is love.... Already I am falling back into the objective life of thought. It delivers me from — shall I say? no, it deprives me of the intimate life of feeling. Reflection solves reverie and burns her delicate wings. This is why science does not make men, but merely entities and abstractions. Ah, let us feel and live and beware of too much analysis! Let us put spontaneity, naïveté, before reflection, experience before study; let us make life itself our study. Shall I then never have the heart of a woman to rest upon? a son in whom to live again, a little world where I may see flowering and blooming all that is stifled in me? I shrink and draw back, for fear of breaking my dream. I have staked so much on this card that I dare not play it. Let me dream again....

Do no violence to yourself, respect in yourself the oscillations of feeling. They are your life and your nature; One wiser than you ordained them. Do not abandon yourself altogether either to instinct or to will. Instinct is a siren, will a despot. Be neither the slave of your impulses and sensations of the moment, nor of an abstract and general plan; be open to what life brings from within and without, and welcome the unforeseen; but give to your life unity, and bring the unforeseen within the lines of your plan. Let what is natural in you raise itself to the level of the spiritual, and let the spiritual become once more natural. Thus will your development be harmonious, and the peace of heaven will shine upon your brow; always on condition that your peace is made, and that you have climbed your Calvary.

Afternoon — Shall I ever enjoy again those marvelous reveries of past days, as, for instance, once, when I was still quite a youth, in the early dawn, sitting among the ruins of the castle of Faucigny; another time in the mountains above Lavey, under the midday sun, lying under a tree and visited by three butterflies; and again another night on the sandy shore of the North Sea, stretched full length upon the beach, my eyes wandering over the Milky Way? Will they ever return to me, those grandiose, immortal, cosmogonic dreams, in which one seems to carry the world in one's breast, to touch the stars, to possess the infinite? Divine moments, hours of ecstasy, when thought flies from world to world, penetrates the great enigma, breathes with a respiration large, tranquil, and profound, like that of the ocean, and hovers serene and boundless like the blue heaven! Visits from the muse, Urania, who traces around the foreheads of those she loves the phosphorescent nimbus of contemplative power, and who pours into their hearts the tranquil intoxication, if not the authority of genius,



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moments of irresistible intuition in which a man feels himself great like the universe and calm like a god! From the celestial spheres down to the shell or the moss, the whole of creation is then submitted to our gaze, lives in our breast, and accomplishes in us its eternal work with the regularity of destiny and the passionate ardor of love. What hours, what memories! The traces which remain to us of them are enough to fill us with respect and enthusiasm, as though they had been visits of the Holy Spirit. And then, to fall back again from these heights with their boundless horizons into the muddy ruts of triviality! what a fall! Poor Moses! Thou too sawest undulating in the distance the ravishing hills of the promised land, and it was thy fate nevertheless to lay thy weary bones in a grave dug in the desert! Which of us has not his promised land, his day of ecstasy and his death in exile? What a pale counterfeit is real life of the life we see in glimpses, and how these flaming lightnings of our prophetic youth make the twilight of our dull monotonous manhood more dark and dreary!”



1854

August 15, Tuesday: At 5:15AM [Henry Thoreau](#) went by boat to Nawshawtuct or Lee's Hill (Gleason F6). Beginning at 9AM, he and [Ellery Channing](#) walked all day, northwest into Acton and [Carlisle](#). In the evening, at Miss MacKay's, Thoreau looked through Mr. Russell's microscope at a section of pontederia leaf.

There appeared a review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#), by "W," under the heading "New Publications" in the Albany, New York [Argus](#), 2:7:

The book purports to have been written chiefly while the author resided in the woods, and earned his living by the labor of his hands. It contains a record of a strange experience, in connection with the many bright thoughts on various subjects that were suggested by it. It is an intensely entertaining production.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

A review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) appeared under the heading "New Publications, &c" in the [Massachusetts Life Boat: Devoted to Temperance, Morals, Education, Business and General Information](#), 2:6:

The author is certainly a great genius, and though something of a hermit, is making his mark in the world.... While we admire many passages in the book, and not a few of the author's thoughts, we cannot subscribe to all his sentiments. [Long Quotation from the final chapter of the book]

Meanwhile Elizabeth Rogers Mason Cabot,⁴³ a Boston debutante who ordinarily lived at 63 Mount Vernon Street in Boston but who was vacationing at the Cabots' summer home in New Hampshire, was writing

43. Any relation to the Nathaniel Peabody Rogers of Concord, New Hampshire who put out the [Herald of Freedom](#) prior to his death in 1846, and about whom [Thoreau](#) wrote in the last issue of [THE DIAL](#)? To Thoreau's friend James Elliot Cabot who had written on the philosophy of the Hindoos?



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in her diary:



I have finished this morning Thoreau's CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS; it has given me a little tidbit of reading every day for a long time, and is far from exhausted yet, for I am eager to go back and examine some of the truths more thoroughly. It is a life-giving book and gives a picture of life from a point of view entirely unaffected by the artificial world created by man. He is a man without money, not poor, because able to get his daily bread with small toil, and desiring nothing more, untrammelled entirely (as no man with very warm affections I think could be) by the opinions or feelings of others, afraid of nothing, intimate with nature as a bosom friend, learned in all the wisdom of the world handed down in books, ignoring ambition, position, aimless as far as concerns this world, and as unbiased as I can imagine possible. Added to these advantages are a pure large nature, vigorous intellect, and healthy life moral and physical. He is all-convincing at the time, and ought to be, for he is merely putting in practice, the principles which all daily preach, but none entirely make facts. Yet when we would follow him, our old habits of feeling rush back on us, making his purer practice a sort of dream, from which we awake, sorry that it is gone, and almost doubting still which is the unreality, the world we have left, or the world we awake to. I believe solemnly and sincerely that the spiritual life should be first, material last, and needs a very small corner, and yet we place it practically first, because other people do. I know no better reason. -FROM MORE THAN COMMON POWERS OF PERCEPTION: THE DIARY OF ELIZABETH ROGERS MASON CABOT edited by P.A.M. Taylor (Boston MA: Beacon Press, 1991).



1859

November 23, Wednesday: In [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#)'s journal:

- [EDMUND HOSMER](#)
- [BRONSON ALCOTT](#)
- [LOUISA MAY ALCOTT](#)
- [ABBY MAY ALCOTT](#)
- [ANNA BRONSON ALCOTT](#)



Walked after breakfast to Edmund Hosmer's farm, spent an hour with him and his youngest daughter, an intelligent and well educated young woman. Called at Mr. Alcott's and dined with him in his library on boiled rice, grated cheese, cider, and apples. Walked this P.M. with Thoreau to the Hallowell farm; returned to Thoreau's room; plain talk, perhaps too much so. Called at Mr. Alcott's this evening; he was at Mr. Emerson's. Sat till nearly 9 with the two young ladies; introduced to Mr. Pratt, engaged to Miss Anna Alcott, who was also in the room a short time. Spent the night at the Middlesex House, kept by a Mr. Newton, formerly a stage-driver between Taunton and Boston. Retired at 10. Talk in the barroom with several persons.

William H. Bonney (Billy the Kid) was born.

[Henry Thoreau](#) responded to the Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#)'s letter of November 19th, that he was already fully committed but did hope for the success of the new Cincinnati incarnation of [THE DIAL](#).

[NO ENTRIES IN THOREAU'S JOURNAL FOR 23 NOVEMBER]

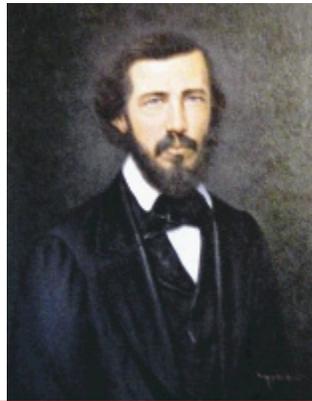


[THE DIAL](#)

[THE DIAL](#)

1860

January: The initial issue of [THE DIAL](#): A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION. M.D. Conway, Editor. *Horas non numero nisi serenas*. Cincinnati: Office, No. 76 West 3rd Street. 1860. [Subscriptions \$2.00 per year.]. This would be largely the effort of the Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) (of some 200 articles, he would have to write not fewer than 30, in addition to some 70 of the book reviews).



[READ THE FULL TEXT](#)

January 29, Sunday: The sermon of the Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) celebrated the birthday of [Thomas Paine](#) (this would be distributed in the form of a pamphlet by the Office of [THE DIAL](#): A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION in Cincinnati, Ohio).

[READ THIS PAMPHLET](#)



Jan. 29. Colder than before, and not a cloud in the sky to-day.

P.M.—To Fair Haven Pond and return *via* Andromeda Ponds and railroad.

Half an inch or more of snow fell last night, the ground being half bare before. It was a snow of small flakes not star-shaped.

As usual, I now see, walking on the river and river-meadow ice, thus thinly covered with the fresh snow, that conical rainbow, or parabola of rainbow-colored reflections, from the myriad reflecting crystals of the snow, *i.e.*, as I walk toward the sun,—



always a little in advance of me, of course, angle of reflection being equal to that of incidence.

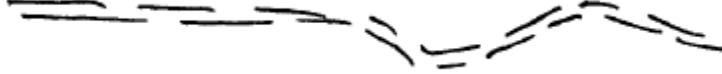
To-day I see quite a flock of the lesser redpolls eating the seeds of the alder, picking them out of the cones just



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as they do the larch, often head downward; and I see, under the alders, where they have run and picked up the fallen seeds, making chain-like tracks, two parallel lines.



Not only the Indian, but many wild birds and quadrupeds and insects, welcomed the apple tree to these shores. As it grew apace, the bluebird, robin, cherrybird, kingbird, and many more came with a rush and built their nests in it, and so became orchard-birds. The woodpecker found such a savory morsel under its bark that he perforated it in a ring quite round the tree, a thing he had never done before. It did not take the partridge **[Ruffed Grouse  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)]** long to find out how sweet its buds were, and every winter day she flew and still flies from the wood to pluck them, much to the farmer's sorrow. The rabbit too was not slow to learn the taste of its twigs and bark. The owl crept into the first one that became hollow, and fairly hooted with delight, finding it just the place for him. He settled down into it, and has remained there ever since. The lackey caterpillar saddled her eggs on the very first twig that was formed, and it has since divided her affections with the wild cherry; and the canker-worm also in a measure abandoned the elm to feed on it. And when the fruit was ripe, the squirrel half carried, half rolled, it to his hole, and even the musquash crept up the bank and greedily devoured it; and when it was frozen and thawed, the crow and jay did not disdain to peck it. And the beautiful wood duck, having made up her mind to stay a while longer with us, has concluded that there is no better place for her too.



In order to obtain evidence, that the River Meadow Association needed for use against the [Middlesex Canal Corporation](#) in the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (they were accused of having deliberately elevated the waters of the river system above the dams which fed water into their canal, in such manner as to have caused damage to river meadows belonging to others),⁴⁴ Thoreau made a chart of all the bridges along 22.15 miles of the Concord and Sudbury Rivers from East Sudbury to Billerica. He utilized Loammi Baldwin's 2d map, of May 1834, which had been surveyed and drawn originally by B.F. Perham and which Thoreau had analyzed and brought up to date during his July 1859 river soundings.

February: The 2d issue of [THE DIAL](#): A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION. M.D. Conway, Editor, of Cincinnati.

MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY

[READ THE FULL TEXT](#)

March: The 3d issue of [THE DIAL](#): A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION. M.D. Conway, Editor, of Cincinnati.

MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY

[READ THE FULL TEXT](#)

April: The 4th issue of [THE DIAL](#): A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION. M.D. Conway, Editor, of Cincinnati.

MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY

[READ THE FULL TEXT](#)

44. Note that the [Middlesex Canal](#) itself had had to be abandoned in 1853 due to its inability to compete economically with the new rail system, and that whatever business this shell corporation was doing was in the genre of water supply for power, water level regulation, etc.



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

May: The 5th issue of [THE DIAL](#): A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION. M.D. Conway, Editor, of Cincinnati.

MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY

READ THE FULL TEXT

June: The 6th issue of [THE DIAL](#): A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION. M.D. Conway, Editor, of Cincinnati.

MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY

READ THE FULL TEXT

The popular weekly literary magazine of London, Once A Week. An Illustrated Miscellany of Literature, Art, Science, and Popular Information:



JUN 1860 ONCE A WEEK



THE DIAL

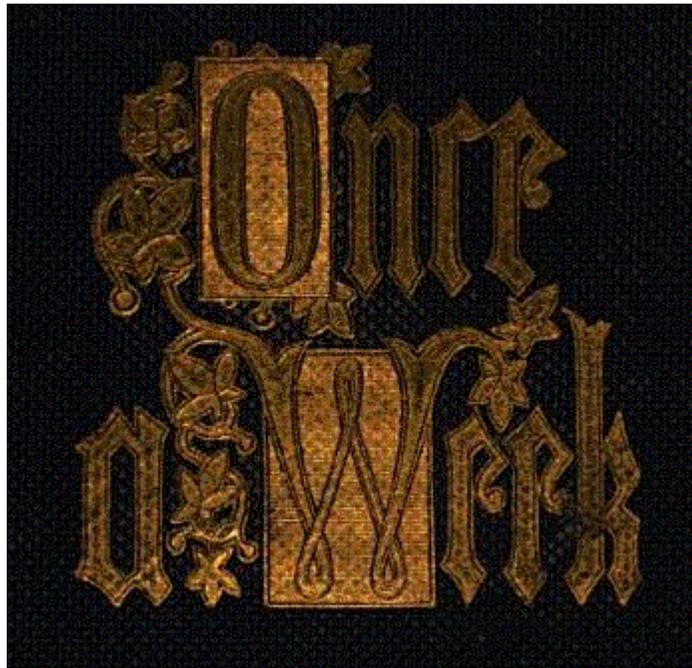
THE DIAL

July: The 7th issue of [THE DIAL](#): A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION. M.D. Conway, Editor, of Cincinnati.

READ THE FULL TEXT

The Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) was on a 3-week summer vacation, and attended the dinner at the Boston Literary Club that welcomed [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) back to the United States after his spoils-system sojourn as consul in Liverpool, England.

The popular weekly literary magazine of London, Once A Week. An Illustrated Miscellany of Literature, Art, Science, and Popular Information:



JUL 1860 ONCE A WEEK

[Richard Henry Horne](#)'s poetical tragedy THE DEATH OF MARLOWE, A TRAGEDY IN ONE ACT, which had premiered in London in 1837, was successfully re-staged in Australia at Melbourne's Theatre Royal. In this period, however, his 5-act comedy in blank verse A SPEC IN CHINA was so derogated that it lasted but two nights. The playwright would need to continue to earn his keep as a warden at the Blue Mountains goldfield near Trentham.



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

August: The 8th issue of [THE DIAL](#): A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION. M.D. Conway, Editor, of Cincinnati.

MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY

[READ THE FULL TEXT](#)

The popular weekly literary magazine of London, Once A Week. An Illustrated Miscellany of Literature, Art, Science, and Popular Information:



AUG 1860 ONCE A WEEK



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

September: The 9th issue of [THE DIAL](#): A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION. M.D. Conway, Editor, of Cincinnati.

MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY

READ THE FULL TEXT

The popular weekly literary magazine of London, Once A Week. An Illustrated Miscellany of Literature, Art, Science, and Popular Information:



SEP 1860 ONCE A WEEK



THE DIAL

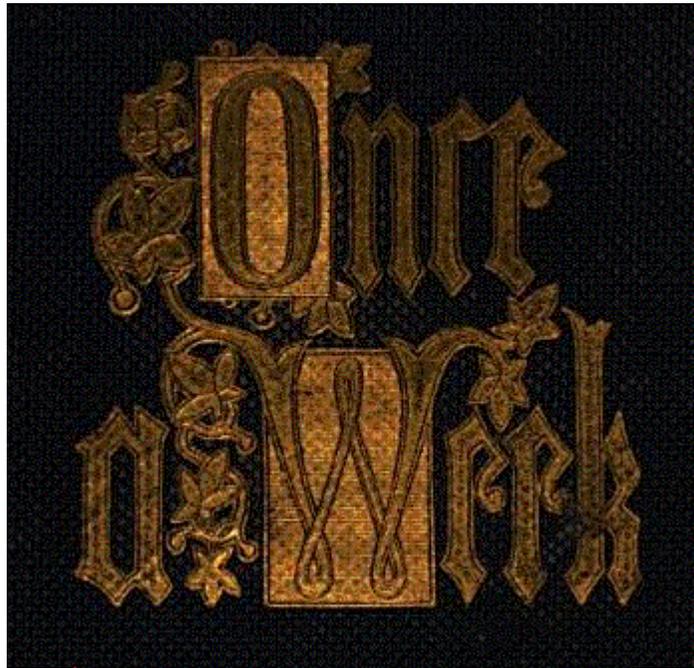
THE DIAL

October: The 10th issue of **THE DIAL**: A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION. M.D. Conway, Editor, of Cincinnati.

MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY

READ THE FULL TEXT

The popular weekly literary magazine of London, Once A Week. An Illustrated Miscellany of Literature, Art, Science, and Popular Information:



OCT 1860 ONCE A WEEK



[THE DIAL](#)

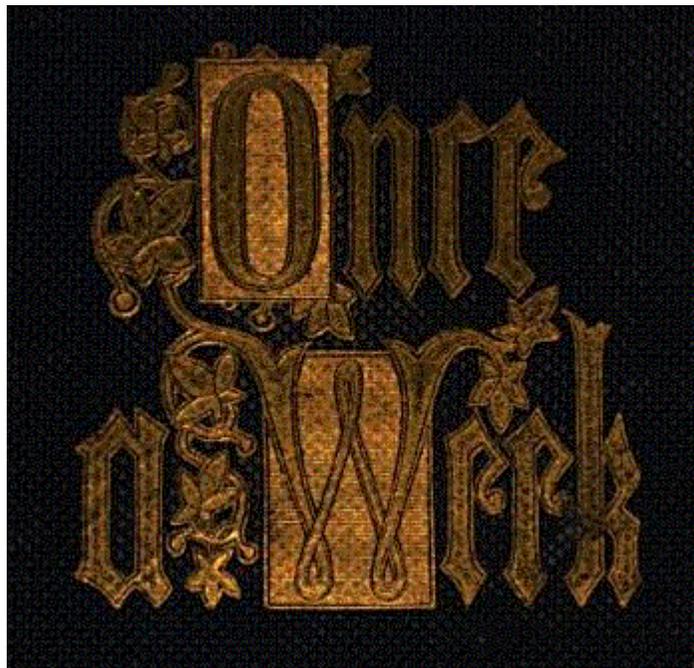
[THE DIAL](#)

November: The 11th issue of [THE DIAL](#): A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION.
M.D. Conway, Editor, of Cincinnati.

[MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY](#)

[READ THE FULL TEXT](#)

The popular weekly literary magazine of London, [Once A Week. An Illustrated Miscellany of Literature, Art, Science, and Popular Information:](#)



[NOV 1860 ONCE A WEEK](#)

November 26, Tuesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) was again being written to by the Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) in Cincinnati, this time with a request that he be allowed to publish “The Succession of Forest Trees.” He mentioned that he was considering converting [THE DIAL](#) from a monthly journal into a quarterly journal.

Cincinnati, Nov. 26.

My dear Mr. Thoreau,

We are thinking of issuing the Dial next year as a Quarterly instead of a Monthly; and I wish to ask if you will be so bountiful as to let me publish therein your Agricultural Address.

Your friend,

M. D. Conway.

Mr H D Thoreau.



November 26: P.M.—To E. Hubbard’s Wood.

I see in the open field east of Trillium Wood a few pitch pines springing up, from seeds blown from the wood a dozen or fifteen rods off. Here is one just noticeable on the sod—though by most it would be mistaken for a single sprig of moss—which came from the seed this year. It is, as it were, a little green star with many rays, half an inch in diameter, lifted an inch and a half above the ground on a slender stem. What a feeble beginning for so long-lived a tree! By the next fall it will be a star of greater magnitude, and in a few years, if not disturbed, these seedlings will alter the face of nature here. How significant, how ominous, the presence of these green moss-like stars is to the grass, heralding its doom! Thus from pasture this portion of the earth’s surface becomes forest. These which are now mistaken for mosses in the grass may become lofty trees which will endure two hundred years, under which no vestige of this grass will be left.

In Hubbard’s Wood at north end I measure the stump of either a red or black oak: 21 inches [IN] diameter and 141 rings.

I examine quite a number of oak stumps thereabouts and find them all seedlings. This, of course, must be the case with old forests generally, for in the beginning the trees were not cut.

A red oak about in middle of the wood 6 1/2 feet circumference at 3 ft.

A canoe birch, 45 inches " " "

Another " 45 " " " "

A white oak on the east side rather toward south, 7 feet " " "

Some of the white oaks have a very loose scaly bark, commencing half a dozen feet from the ground. I see pitch pine bark four to five inches thick at the ground. There are in this wood many little groves of white pines two to four feet high, quite dense and green, but these are in more open spaces, and are vigorous just in proportion to the openness. There are also seedling oaks and chestnuts ten to thirty years old, yet not nearly so numerous as the pines. The large wood is mixed oak and pine,—more oak at the north and more pine, especially pitch pine, at the south. The prospect is that in course of time the white pines will very greatly prevail over all other trees here. This is also the case with Inches’, Blood’s, and Wetherbee’s woods.

If I am not mistaken, an evidence of more openness where the little pines are is to be found in the greater prevalence of pyrola and lycopodiums there. There are even some healthy Juniperus repens in the midst of these woods. Though the pitch pines are the prevailing trees at the south end, I see no young pitch pines under them. Perhaps this is the way that a natural succession takes place. Perhaps oak seedlings do not so readily spring up and thrive within a mixed white pine and oak wood as pines do,—in the more open parts,—and thus, as the oaks decay, they are replaced by pines rather than by oaks.

But where did the pitch pines stand originally? Who cleared the land for its seedlings to spring up in? It is commonly referred to very poor and sandy land, yet I find it growing on the best land also. The expression "a pitch pine plain" is but another name for a poor and sandy level. It grows both on the sand and [IN] the swamp, and the fact that it grows on the sand chiefly is not so much evidence that it prefers it as that other trees have excluded it from better soil. If you cut down the pines on the pitch pine plain, oaks will come up there too. Who knows but the fires or clearings of the Indians may have to do with the presence of these trees there? They regularly cleared extensive tracts for cultivation, and these were always level tracts where the soil was light—such as they could turn over with their rude hoes. Such was the land which they are known to have cultivated extensively in this town, as the Great Fields and the rear of Mr. Dennis’s,—sandy plains. It is in such places chiefly that you find their relics in any part of the county. They did not cultivate such soil as our maple swamps occupy, or such a succession of hills and dales as this oak wood covers. Other trees will grow where the pitch pine does, but the former will maintain its ground there the best. I know of no tree so likely to spread rapidly over such areas when abandoned by the aborigines as the pitch pines—and next birches and white pines.

While I am walking in the oak wood or counting the rings of a stump, I hear the faint note of a nuthatch like the creak of a limb, and detect [IT] on the trunk of an oak much nearer than I suspected, and its mate or companion not far off. This is a constant phenomenon of the late fall or early winter; for we do not hear them in summer that I remember. [In ’61 hear one occasionally a month earlier than this.] I heard one not long since in the street. I see one of those common birch fungi on the side of a birch stake which has been used to bound a lot sold at auction, three feet or more from the ground, and its face is toward the earth as usual, though the birch is bottom up.

I saw that nuthatch to-day pick out from a crevice in the bark of an oak trunk, where it was perpendicular, something white once or twice and pretty large. May it not have been the meat of an acorn? Yet commonly they



are steadily hopping about the trunks in search of insect food. Possibly some of those acorn-shells I see about the base of trees may have been dropped from the crevices in the bark above by birds—nuthatch or jay—as well as left by squirrels.

Mother says that Lidy Bay, an Indian woman (so considered), used to live in the house beyond Caesar's and made baskets, which she brought to town to sell, with a ribbon about her hat. She had a husband.

The value of these wild fruits is not in the mere possession or eating of them, but in the sight or enjoyment of them. The very derivation of the word "fruit" would suggest this. It is from the Latin fructus, meaning that which is used or enjoyed. If it were not so, then going a-berrying and going to market would be nearly synonymous expressions. Of course it is the spirit in which you do a thing which makes it interesting, whether it is sweeping a room or pulling turnips. Peaches are unquestionably a very beautiful and palatable fruit, but the gathering of them for the market is not nearly so interesting as the gathering of huckleberries for your own use.

A man fits out a ship at a great expense and sends it to the West Indies with a crew of men and boys, and after six months or a year it comes back with a load of pineapples. Now, if no more gets accomplished than the speculator commonly aims at,—if it simply turns out what is called a successful venture,—I am less interested in this expedition than in some child's first excursion a-huckleberrying, in which it is introduced into a new world, experiences a new development, though it brings home only a gill of huckleberries in its basket. I know that the newspapers and the politicians declare otherwise, but they do not alter the fact. Then, I think that the fruit of the latter expedition was finer than that of the former. It was a more fruitful expedition. The value of any experience is measured, of course, not by the amount of money, but the amount of development we get out of it. If a New England boy's dealings with oranges and pineapples have had more to do with his development than picking huckleberries or pulling turnips have, then he rightly and naturally thinks more of the former; otherwise not.

Do not think that the fruits of New England are mean and insignificant, while those of some foreign land are noble and memorable. Our own, whatever they may be, are far more important to us than any others can be. They educate us, and fit us to live in New England. Better for us is the wild strawberry than the pineapple, the wild apple than the orange, the hazelnut or pignut than the cocoanut or almond, and not on account of their flavor merely, but the part they play in our education.

In the Massachusetts Historical Collections, First Series, volume x, Rev. John Gardner of Stow furnishes a brief historical notice of that town in a letter dated 1767. He says, "The Indian names of this place were Pompociticut and Shabbukin, from two notable hills."

I anticipated the other day that if anybody should write the history of Boxboro, once a part of Stow, he would be pretty sure to omit to notice the most interesting thing in it—its forest—and lay all the stress on the history of its parish; and I find that I had conjectured rightly, for Mr. Gardner, after telling us who was his predecessor in the ministry and where he himself was settled, goes on to say: "As for any remarkables, I am of the mind there have been the fewest of any town of our standing in the Province. . . . I can't call to mind above one thing worthy of public notice, and that is the grave of Mr. John Green," who, it appears, "was made . . . clerk of the exchequer" by Cromwell. "Whether he was excluded the Act of Oblivion or not I cannot tell," says Mr. Gardner. At any rate he tells us that he returned to New England, "lived and died, and lies buried in this place." I can assure Mr. Gardner that he was not excluded from the act of oblivion.

However, Boxboro was less peculiar for its woods a hundred years ago.

I have been surprised when a young man who had undertaken to write the history of a country town,—his native place,—the very name of which suggested a hundred things to me, referred to it, as the crowning fact of his story, that that town was the residence of General So-and-so and the family mansion was still standing.



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

December: Mrs. Ellen Dana Conway, wife of the Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#), became again pregnant.

The popular weekly literary magazine of London, Once A Week. An Illustrated Miscellany of Literature, Art, Science, and Popular Information:



DEC 1860 ONCE A WEEK

The 12th and what would turn out to be the last issue of [THE DIAL](#): A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION. M.D. Conway, Editor, of Cincinnati.

READ THE FULL TEXT

The Reverend Conway would, however, have all twelve issues bound together and reissued as a volume with a master index of articles.⁴⁵

PUBLISHED AS A BOOK

 The "Dial" at the end of the first year was really slain by the Union war several months in advance of its outbreak. For five months after the election of President Lincoln, while the farther Southern States were seceding, the struggle was between the antislavery and the unionists who proposed pacification of the secessionists by a total surrender of Freedom. We at Cincinnati were in the very thick of this conflict of pens and words, and it was impossible to continue the literary and philosophical discussions of the "Dial."

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

VOLUME II



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

45. [Moncure Daniel Conway](#). [THE DIAL](#): A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION. M.D. Conway, Editor. Cincinnati. Office, No. 76 West Third Street, 1860. S.G. Cobb, Printer, Times Building, January to December, 1860. Twelve Numbers.



1885

Brazil freed all [slaves](#) over the age of 60.

In the period after the US Civil War there was much reappraisal of that notion which had been so persuasive prior to the upheaval, that some heroic figures among humankind were animated by a “divine light” which released them from the constraints which ordinary mortals of limited vision were wise to operate in accordance with. Although citizens continued to think of rebellion as justified under the most oppressive regimes, the attempts to compare John Brown to [Spartacus](#)⁴⁶ or Frederick Douglass to Toussaint Louverture had come to be regarded as the most abjectly erroneous of readings.⁴⁷ In [THE DIAL](#) for this period we find assertions that



the “great man” theory of history as found in the Secret “Six” conspiracy before the US Civil War was

incompatible with the American belief in general progress:

[Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) wrote within [Thomas Carlyle](#)'s theory of Great men namely that the world runs down ... through the deficiencies of merely common men, and would go to the bad entirely only it is so arranged that just in the nick of time the Lord sends down a Hero ... so ... that we can then get along for ... a generation or two.

The story of Brown's last stand as a martyr was under heavy attack. A certification written by Brown's jailor,

46. To attempt to compare Brown with Spartacus would be to attempt to compare a person who desired to eliminate the evil of [slavery](#) with a person whose desire it was to become himself the [slavemaster](#) — which would be, wouldn't you say, the mother of all Hollywoodish-inane category mistakes?

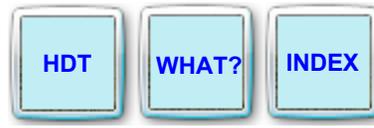


"...the slave, dreaming of the death of slavery..."
— Kirk Douglas,
preparing himself to play
the title role in the 1961
Hollywood movie "[Spartacus](#)"



"SPARTACUS"

KIRK DOUGLAS
1960-61



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

Captain John Avis, appeared as eyewitness testimony to counter the story that Brown had kissed a black child, to refute the story had grown up to the effect that Brown had exhibited cheerfulness as he walked toward his place of execution, and to refute the account that had him giving thanks to God for the opportunity to die in such a cause.

The family of the Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) returned to the United States, settling in New-York.

47. Refer to Brown, David, "Sanborn's Life of John Brown," Dial 6 (1885-1886):139-40, to an editorial entitled "John Brown," New England and Yale Review 45 (1886):289-302, and to Jenks, Leland H. "The John Brown Myth," American Mercury (1924):268.



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

1902

The Rowfant Club of Cleveland, [Ohio](#) reprinted [THE DIAL](#) issues that had been originally put out by Emerson, Fuller, Peabody, and Thoreau in Massachusetts.

They also put out 127 copies of George Willis Cooke's AN HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION TO ACCOMPANY [THE DIAL](#) AS REPRINTED IN NUMBERS FOR THE ROWFANT CLUB.

THE DIAL, VOLUME I

THE DIAL, VOLUME II

[Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#)'s edition of [Henry Thoreau](#)'s article "The Service," that had been rejected in 1840 by [Margaret Fuller](#) for [THE DIAL](#):

"THE SERVICE" IN 1902





THE DIAL

THE DIAL

1905

[Margaret Fuller](#) had evidently rejected [Henry Thoreau](#)'s 1843 lecture "[Sir Walter Raleigh](#)" in essay form for [THE DIAL](#). It remained a fair copy with pencil revisions until the publication in this year of SIR WALTER RALEIGH: LATELY DISCOVERED AMONG HIS UNPUBLISHED JOURNALS AND MANUSCRIPTS as edited by Henry Aiken Metcalf and [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) by the Bibliophile Society in Boston in 489 copies "for members only."

SIR WALTER RALEIGH

Its editors had access to three drafts: Thoreau's preliminary notes, a heavily corrected 2d draft he produced from these preliminary notes which comprised the working manuscript he used to produce the fair copy, and the fair copy itself. (This 2d draft was acquired as part of the Bixby collection by the Huntington Library, but then they sold it at auction in 1916, perhaps by mistake. That draft is now in the hands of an anonymous private collector who, wouldn't you know, refuses to let anyone see it.)



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

1958

Professor Sherman Paul's *THE SHORES OF AMERICA: THOREAU'S INWARD EXPLORATION* offered an explanation for [Henry Thoreau](#)'s hound, horse, and turtle-dove parable in terms of [Mencius](#)'s "heart" as "man's inner goodness, which was lost by his contact with the world ... — to pierce to the heart of things, to discover the laws of the seasons and of inspiration, growth, and maturity, and, as he had set down as an afterthought in the JOURNAL, 'To find the bottom of Walden Pond...'"⁴⁸

[I]n the celebrated passage of the hound, bay horse, and turtledove, he [Thoreau] represented, as he explained to an inquisitive correspondent, his "losses" — though even in his reply he was evasive.... Many have tried to determine what his losses were and the source of his symbols; even Emerson suggested that the hound was the book he would have liked to have written, the bay horse his desire for property, and the turtledove the wife of his dream. But Emerson never recognized that Thoreau had lost reality, and he seems to have forgotten that Thoreau had selected for [THE DIAL: A MAGAZINE FOR LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION](#) this passage from Mencius: [quoting [Mencius](#) on losing fowls, dog, heart]

THE SCHOLAR.

Teen, son of the king of Tse, asked what the business of the scholar consists in? Mencius replied, In elevating his mind and inclination. What do you mean by elevating the mind? It consists merely in being benevolent and just. Where is the scholar's abode? In benevolence. Where is his road? Justice. To dwell in benevolence, and walk in justice, is the whole business of a great man.

Benevolence is man's heart, and justice is man's path. If a man lose his fowls or his dogs, he knows how to seek them. There are those who lose their hearts and know not how to seek them. The duty of the student is no other than to seek his lost heart.

He who employs his whole mind, will know his nature. He who knows his nature, knows heaven.

It were better to be without books than to believe all that they record.

48. Sherman Paul. *THE SHORES OF AMERICA: THOREAU'S INWARD EXPLORATION*. Urbana IL: U of Illinois P, 1958; reprinted 1972

Paul noticed that for Thoreau, Nature was merely "the middle term in the progression from a lower to a higher society,"

a "place of renewal" rather than any sort of "final goal."



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

A WEEK: Mencius says: "If one loses a fowl or a dog, he knows well how to seek them again; if one loses the sentiments of his heart, he does not know how to seek them again.... The duties of practical philosophy consist only in seeking after those sentiments of the heart which we have lost; that is all."

**PEOPLE OF
A WEEK**

MENCIUS



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

WALDEN: In any weather, at any hour of the day or night, I have been anxious to improve the nick of time, and notch it on my stick too; to stand on the meeting of two eternities, the past and future, which is precisely the present moment; to toe that line. You will pardon some obscurities, for there are more secrets in my trade than in most men's, and yet not voluntarily kept, but inseparable from its very nature. I would gladly tell all that I know about it, and never paint "No Admittance" on my gate.

I long ago lost a hound, a bay horse, and a turtle-dove, and am still on their trail. Many are the travellers I have spoken concerning them, describing their tracks and what calls they answered to. I have met one or two who had heard the hound, and the tramp of the horse, and even seen the dove disappear behind a cloud, and they seemed as anxious to recover them as if they had lost them themselves.

To anticipate, not the sunrise and the dawn merely, but, if possible, Nature herself! How many mornings, summer and winter, before yet any neighbor was stirring about his business, have I been about mine! No doubt many of my townsmen have met me returning from this enterprise, farmers starting for Boston in the twilight, or woodchoppers going to their work. It is true, I never assisted the sun materially in his rising, but, doubt not, it was of the last importance only to be present at it.



The
WALDEN
parable

The
other
analyses



THE DIAL

THE DIAL



[It] will probably never be solved to everyone's satisfaction.

— [Walter Roy Harding](#) and Carl Bode (eds.)
THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HENRY
DAVID THOREAU. NY, 1958, page 749



According to page 395 of Professor Paul's THE SHORES OF AMERICA, Thoreau's favorite poem in the 2d edition of Walt Whitman's LEAVES OF GRASS had been "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry." He compares this poem to Thoreau's A WEEK. According to page 349 of Robert D. Richardson, Jr.'s HENRY THOREAU: A LIFE OF THE MIND, the point of connection which Paul had recognized was that the "core of [A WEEK is] about how all eras and places are equal and how we, in the present, are as lucky and blessed as any." According to page 121 of Malcolm Clemens Young's doctoral dissertation, entitled "Thoreau's Religious Practices,"

Whitman in general and this poem in particular appealed to Thoreau because of the way it renders the process of perception. For Whitman and Thoreau perception relates fundamentally to the construction of our identity. Both men passionately believe that landscapes become part of us when we are attentive to how we see and hear them. They both believe in the "glories strung like beads on [our] smallest sights and hearings." They both hope to cultivate a perception that would make them sensitive to the whole or what Whitman calls the "scheme." They both are nourished by "impalpable sustenance ... from all things at all hours of the day." They want to see the world "face to face."



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

1961

George Willis Cooke's A HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION TO ACCOMPANY [THE DIAL](#) (NY: Russell & Russell). "[Elizabeth P. Peabody](#)," Volume 1, pages 140-157.



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

1976

 Moller, Mary Elkins. "Thoreau, Womankind, and Sexuality." ESQ 22 (1976): 123-48

HOMOSEXUALITY



[THE DIAL](#)

[THE DIAL](#)

"A Review From Professor Ross's Seminar"

FIRST REVIEW: In this article Moller analyzes [Henry Thoreau's](#) attitudes toward women and his own sexuality. She identifies two popular opinions regarding this subject: that Thoreau was "a woman-hater, and that his feeling about sex was consistently negative." Moller, however, recognizes a "functional distinction" between Thoreau's view of women in general and his view of sexuality and proceeds to prove the "striking contradictions" – the "frequent ambivalence" – existing between them.

Thoreau's relationships with the members of his own family, reveal that "there is little in what is known ... which would have disposed him to serious or chronic misogyny." He had a good relationship with his active mother [[Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#)], a close relationship with his older sister [Helen Louisa Thoreau](#), and after Helen's death, an increasingly strong relationship with his other sister [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#). And although the death of his brother [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) made the family "quite lopsidedly female," Thoreau's "escapes" into the countryside are balanced by his desired returns to the [Concord](#) home.

During the years 1837-1842, his "impressionable years," several women evoked Thoreau's response. Among these is [Margaret Fuller](#), the intelligent, strong-willed editor of [THE DIAL](#), with whom he maintained a constant though never intimate friendship. In contrast to his admiration of Margaret, Thoreau revealed his impatience with the lecturer Mrs. Elizabeth Oakes Smith, whose "flirtatiousness or frivolity" annoyed him. Thoreau included several "exasperated outbursts" in his JOURNAL as he reacted against the stereotypical "ideal woman": the woman whose priority was "to be as pretty and charming as possible, and as pliant, and helpless as necessary, in order to attract the admiration of men." While he condemned women's "slavery" to fashion and to the idea of marriage, he praised [Waldo Emerson's](#) aunt, [Mary Moody Emerson](#), for her wisdom and clear thinking. Thoreau also maintained positive relationships with other women in the Concord community, women such as Emerson's daughters [[Ellen Emerson](#) and [Edith Emerson](#)], [Sophia Peabody Hawthorne](#), [Mrs. Mary Peabody Mann](#), etc.

However, there were four women to whom Thoreau was attracted romantically during 1837-1845. The first was [Mrs. Lucy Jackson Brown](#), Mrs. [Lidian Emerson's](#) elder sister. Although she was twenty years older than he, Thoreau revealed a "half younger-brotherly and half lover-like" affection for her. It was Ellen Devereux Sewall, however, to whom Thoreau eventually proposed. During a visit with her grandmother then living with the Thoreaus, Ellen sparked the interest of both John and Henry. Later, after John had proposed to Ellen, been initially accepted then rejected, Henry asked for her hand in marriage but was also refused. This was Thoreau's "closest brush with matrimony." His third romantic encounter was with Mary Ellen Russell, a young friend of the Emersons who sometimes acted as the children's governess. While both she and Thoreau were living in the Emerson home, they developed a strong mutual attraction.

But it was Mrs. [Lidian Emerson](#) for whom Thoreau probably maintained the longest sustained admiration and attraction. Getting to know Lydia during his residences in the Emerson home, Thoreau wrote letters to her that were often intimate in tone, although there is no evidence "that any physical intimacy ever took place." Thoreau realized Lidian was "ultimately inaccessible" and eventually decided he would never



THE DIAL

THE DIAL

“A Review From Professor Ross’s Seminar”

marry. This decision did not seem to be based solely on the fact that he could not marry the woman he loved or on some critics’ assumption that he was not capable of propagation. Indeed, Thoreau appeared to be “an extraordinarily sensuous man” who had “by no means lost all interest in sexual love.”

His view of love and marriage, however, seemed to be ambivalent. While taking offense at Channing’s vulgar allusions to sex, [Henry Thoreau](#) often maintained a seemingly “puritanical” attitude: he expressed “diffidence and shame” regarding his thoughts in the piece “Chastity and Sensuality” and in a journal entry expressed “disgust” toward his own body with its sexual desires. Nevertheless, Thoreau at times wrote idealistically of the “passionate love between men and women,” revealing “his own yearning for a mate.” And in many different passages Thoreau used “erotically suggestive imagery” or “sex-related figures of speech.” Clearly Thoreau was not “hostile” to the idea of sexual love but “acknowledged his own sexuality, and that of every other man and woman, as a valued part of his and their emotional nature and thus at the core of a sympathetic relatedness to all other human beings.”

[Janet B. Ergino (Sommers), May 1989]

“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING: HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY

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"A Review From Professor Ross's Seminar"

SECOND REVIEW: A long article the sole purpose of which seems to be to prove that Thoreau was heterosexual, had sexual attractions to several women (we know which ones), and perhaps was actually sexually active.

Moller makes a distinction between Thoreau's general attitude toward women and his feelings for specific women. She points out his idealization of women and contrasts it with the way he felt about young, non-intellectual women. "What Thoreau reacted against was a traditional stereotype of ideal womanhood: the assumption that the first business of any girl or woman is to be as pretty and charming as possible" to attract a mate and that intellect and independence are dangerous. She then cites several journal passages which are critical of women's frivolity and explores Thoreau's feelings toward older, intellectual women, such as [Mary Moody Emerson](#) and Mrs. [Lidian Emerson](#).

Moller discounts [homosexual](#) tendencies that Thoreau might have had with a cursory look at his poem "Sympathy" (the "gentle boy" poem). She calls his attraction to Edmund Quincy Sewall, Jr. "a fleeting emotional complication." She does not however mention any journal passages from that time which are also homoerotic and celebrate masculinity. She cites four passages that illustrate Thoreau's feelings for Ellen Devereux Sewall at that time, though she admits that by the time he proposed to her he probably wasn't seriously interested.

She, of course, spends a lot of time on the relationship with Lidian Emerson and points out the passionate letters. She contrasts the letters from Staten Island to later letters which treat Lidian as a sister.

Finally Moller discusses "Love" and "Chastity and Sensuality." Her conclusion is that Thoreau meant "control" when he said "chastity" and not "celibacy." She asserts that sexual love was not necessarily taboo for Thoreau unless it was outside of a truly affectionate and highly intellectual relationship. She suggests that Thoreau may have been sexually active himself, though he probably was limited to wet dreams and [masturbation](#).

The point of all this sex talk, of course, is to find out what Thoreau's sexuality had to do with his writing and his views of women, ideas of purity, etc. Moller doesn't discuss Thoreau's asceticism at all and largely ignores his feelings toward men and the sexuality that may have been behind it. The article seems to be a justification of Thoreau as a lover of women and not a misogynist.

[James J. Berg, May 8, 1989]



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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 17, 2015



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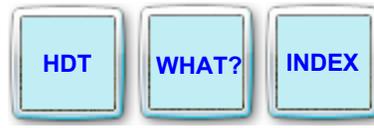
ARRGH AUTOMATED RESEARCH REPORT

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