

EVENTS OF 36TH STANZA

The 37th Stanza in the Life of Henry Thoreau

FALL 1853	JULY 1853	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
WINTER 1853/1854	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER 1853
SPRING 1854	JANUARY 1854	FEBRUARY	MARCH
SUMMER 1854	APRIL	MAY	JUNE 1854

Following the death of [Jesus Christ](#) there was a period of readjustment that lasted for approximately one million years.

-[Kurt Vonnegut](#), THE SIRENS OF TITAN



JULY 1853



[Henry David Thoreau](#)'s 37th stanza began on his birthday, July 12th, Tuesday, 1853.

- [Henry](#) sailed with the Emerson children, [14-year-old Ellen](#), [11-year-old Edith](#), and [9-year-old Eddie](#) for a sojourn of barberrying at Conantum. He and [Ellery Channing](#) were doing a lot of boating up and down the local water system of the [Concord River](#), the [Assabet River](#), and [Fair Haven Bay](#), while Ellery's wife [Ellen Fuller Channing](#) was taking the children [Margaret Fuller Channing](#) and [Caroline Sturgis Channing](#) and leaving their home in Concord. Thoreau was studying such river behaviors as meandering (while there was ice he was [skating](#)).
- He went again into the [Maine woods](#) (since his materials were put into an available book, we have never taken the trouble to present them as part of his journal).
- His local [surveying](#) business was prospering, which meant that on some days he was unable to write in his journal.
- [At the age of 36 he learned how to tie his own shoes!](#)
- For the Emerson family, he brought [Robert Bulkeley Emery](#) from the asylum to the funeral of his mother [Ruth Haskins Emerson](#).
- He carried around a petition in Concord –emphatically part of small-town America– protesting the abuse of [Irish](#) laborer [Michael Flannery](#) by local farmer [Abiel Heywood Wheeler](#). Eventually this would lead to the Thoreaus loaning money to bring Flannery's wife and



EVENTS OF 38TH STANZA

1853-1854

1853-1854

children to America –a debt they would never repay and forever resent– generation after generation of them instead relentlessly and resentfully demeaning their benefactor.



“In no other country are personal relations so effortless as in small-town America; nowhere else is there to be found the same generosity of spirit and absence of malice.”

– [Henry Kissinger](#)’s memoirs, Volume III (1999), “[YEARS OF RENEWAL](#)”



- When elected curator of the [Concord Lyceum](#), Thoreau declined due to the fact that the town had no real intention to fund such lecturers. “We commonly think that we cannot have a good journal in New England, because we have not enough writers of ability; but we do not suspect likewise that we have not good lecturers enough to make a Lyceum.”
- [Bronson Alcott](#) went off by train on his 1st lecture tour in the great West –where somebody promptly stole his overcoat– and at the end of this adventure had but a single dollar to exhibit to his children.
- Thoreau prepared the “F” and “G” versions of his “[WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#)” manuscript (refer to [The Development of a Manuscript](#)). To take his own word for it, after finishing this manuscript he was only marginally interested in the politics of the idea palaces of our nation: “I read some of the speeches in Congress about the Nebraska Bill, — a thing the like of which I have not done for a year. What trifling upon a serious subject! while honest men are sawing wood for them outside. Your Congress halls have an ale-house odor, — a place for stale jokes and vulgar wit. It compels me to think of my fellow-creatures as apes and baboons.”
- He received 706 unbound, unsold self-published copies of [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#) from [James Munroe & Co.](#), to store in his attic chamber in his mother’s boardinghouse.
- The [Anthony Burns](#) affair had brought about “Slavery in Massachusetts,” which appeared in [The Liberator](#) and [The New York Daily Tribune](#). Meanwhile, under his management of the family graphite business it was supplying, not pencils, but high-quality plumbago in bulk to the rotating presses of publishing businesses.
- At a picnic spot in [Framingham](#) draped in mourning black bunting, some 600 abolitionists celebrated our nation’s birthday and [Declaration of Independence](#) and [Henry](#), a person the [Standard](#) described as “a sort of literary recluse,” declared for dissolution of the federal union. He was a secessionist — he believed that New Englanders should secede from the federal union of the United States of America, as the necessary step in disentangling themselves from the US national sin of [race slavery](#).

BACKGROUND EVENTS OF 1853

BACKGROUND EVENTS OF 1854



1853-1854

1853-1854

 July 12, Tuesday: [Frances Richard Gourgass](#) died.

[Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) was refusing to meet with anyone of less than imperial Japanese rank. Therefore US commanders Franklin Buchanan and [Chief of Staff Henry Allen Adams, Captain of the Fleet](#) met with Kayama Yezaimen in the presence of interpreters, and were informed that [Commodore Perry](#) and his delegation of American officials would be received on a small island by officials appointed by the Emperor of [Japan](#) to negotiate, in order to allow him to hand over in a suitably dignified manner the letter he was hand-carrying from the President of the United States of America. A party was sent out to survey the island where the Japanese delegation was agreeing to receive the Commodore, and the surveyors proceeded to designate the small bay of that island as "Reception Bay."

In [San Francisco](#), the [Daily Alta California](#) reported on "Local Matters" such as the sale of pews in the First Congregational Church:

LOCAL MATTERS.

SALE OF PEWS. — At the sale of pews last evening in the First Congregational Church, the whole amount of premiums paid for choice of seats reached the sum of \$3,800. The first choice was taken by D.H. Haskell, Esq, at \$400. About fifty pews were sold at an advance on the appraised value. Notice was given that the Trustees would be in attendance at the Church every evening during the week, and that those wishing to rent pews would then be able to select their seats.

A VULTURE CAUGHT. — Officer Nugent succeeded in arresting in Sacramento, and bringing to this city last night, a man known here as Tom Lyons, who is one of the flock of vultures that hover in the region of Pacific wharf to pounce upon the unwary stranger. Lyons has been identified by the miner who was robbed of \$402 on Saturday morning last, as the one who first accosted him upon the wharf and afterwards robbed him of his little "pile."

HORSE THIEF. — Capt. M'Donald arrested yesterday a person by the name of Daniel McMillen, who is charged with stealing cattle in Tuolumne county, to the value at one time of \$1700, and at another about \$800.

POLICE COURT. — Before Recorder Baker.— July 11.
After the gallant "Major" had seated his flock, not forgetting to give the ladies the best places, the business of the Court commenced by calling upon—

James Cross, to answer to the charge of getting beastly drunk. James was found spread across the crossing, and rumor had whispered in the officers' ears that he was dead, but after they had felt of his pulse and such like et ceteras, they concluded a little switching would start him, which in fact it did. James looked very penitent, and pledged his honor that he was never drunk before; in fact he stated boldly that he had never drank any intoxicating liquor, before that day! Jeems looking very dismal, was allowed to cross the Major's path this time scott free.

John Chinaman was charged with helping himself to a nice pair of pants, and showed his good taste by taking them from the door of Keys & Co. The proof was positive as to his guilt, but the

1853-1854

1853-1854

case was continued until to-day, to give John a chance to explain through an interpreter why he takes this dangerous course to show his preference for American costume.

Mr. Golden and Mrs. Golden were charged with being very disorderly, especially Mr. G. An English lady, "fat, fair and forty," declared that Golden was going to shoot her twice, was going to throw a tumbler at her 'ead, in fact vary the performances in this weak, piping time of peace, by various other little eccentricities. Mr. Golden took great pride in stating that he "never was 'intoxicated' in his life; that he drank as much liquor as any other man, but he was used to it, and had been since he was ten years of age (?)." It was one of those free and easy cases all round so the Golden couple were allowed to depart upon payment of costs.

Mary Holt was the e [sic] as a vagrant. "Molly" has managed to live about ten months out of the last twelve in the station home; she was released but a few days since, but Mary can not keep from paying her devoirs to the "rosy god."

"Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis, 'tis true."

for Mary has been a fine, buxom looking lass; she was sent back to her *mouton*, the city prison, to be detained there six months.

Eden was another of the fair (?) sex, and sat cheek by jowl with Mary Holt; in fact she was a kindred spirit, and as spiritually inclined; but to hide her blushes, or so as not to disgrace the name of the gentle, lilly white sex, she had assumed the complexion of a negro, or had been born dark, for *she* was as black as the bottle she loved so well; her wooly head was encased in the ubiquitous plaid, cotton kerchief. She had been a slave; would get drunk all the time; her former mistress could not drive her away. She would call and did call a gentleman all the vile names that speech could frame; said gent's going to take a big club and kill her the next time (?) she appeared to be a regular "Topsy," and "Oh! I's so bad," seemed to be standing waiting to pop out from behind her ivory gates. The Recorder asked her if she had anything to say "Yeth indeedy, ise got a heap to say; 'taint neffen like it" "That will do, sit down. I shall send you below for 30 days." "No, no sir." "Sit down!"

Jean Dedeuvre was bound over to keep the peace in the sum of \$1000. towards a Mr. Cunningham or his workmen, and especially one that he had threatened to shoot for putting shanties on property, to the ownership of which as a matter of course there are several claimants.

Rose Church, charged with an assault with a deadly weapon, not appearing, her bail was declared forfeited.



July 12: White vervain. Checkerberry, maybe some days. Spikenard, not quite yet. The green-flowered lanceolate-leaved orchis at Azalea Brook will soon flower. Either *Gymnadenia tridentata* or *Platanthera flava*. *Circaea alpina* (?) there, but nearly eighteen inches high. *Lycopus Virginicus*, not open in shade; probably in a day or two. Wood horse-tail very large and handsome there.



1853-1854

1853-1854



July 13, Wednesday: The choral societies of Zürich joined outside of [Richard Wagner](#)'s window to provide him a torchlight serenade (now I'm jealous — nobody's ever done this for me).

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Tuesday the 12th, & Wednesday the 13th. Started this morning to travel the Kinney cutoff which is to take the left hand road after crossing Little Sandy, thence to Big Sandy for 17 miles, then strike it again for the last time. Filled our kegs and started for Green River 15 miles ahead, reached Green River about dark, drove up stream 2 miles and found good feed. (camped late) This is two days drive.

[Dante Gabriel Rossetti](#) was at the Red Horse Inn in Stratford on Avon while doing a tour of [Shakespeare](#) stuff (or supposed Shakespeare stuff — you know how that goes), and wrote to an artist friend [William Bell Scott](#):

My dear Scott,
I got here yesterday evening, walking 12 miles from Kenilworth. Since I got into Warwickshire, I have walked always from place to place, & have seen some stunning things. I saw Shakspeare's den last night, but it was too dark to see its inside properly, & I am eager to get at it again this morning, so this note is a very short one. You will hear from me again about my plans as soon as I am in London which will be in a day or two. Please, if any letters have come for me, send them on here at once on getting this. I feel a great deal better now, with constant walking, & the weather is splendid. I fill up the note with a master poem which I composed on the road yesterday on the occasion of plucking a honeysuckle.

I plucked a honeysuckle, where
The hedge was high & set with thorn,
And clambering for the prize, was torn,
And fouled my feet in quagmire there.
And by the thorns and by the wind
The blossom that I took was thinned,
And yet I found it sweet and fair.

Then to a richer bush I came,
Where, grown in mellow intercourse,
The honeysuckles sprang by scores;
Not harried like my single stem,—
All lamplike, full of scent & dew.
So from my hand that first I threw,
Yet plucked not any more of them.

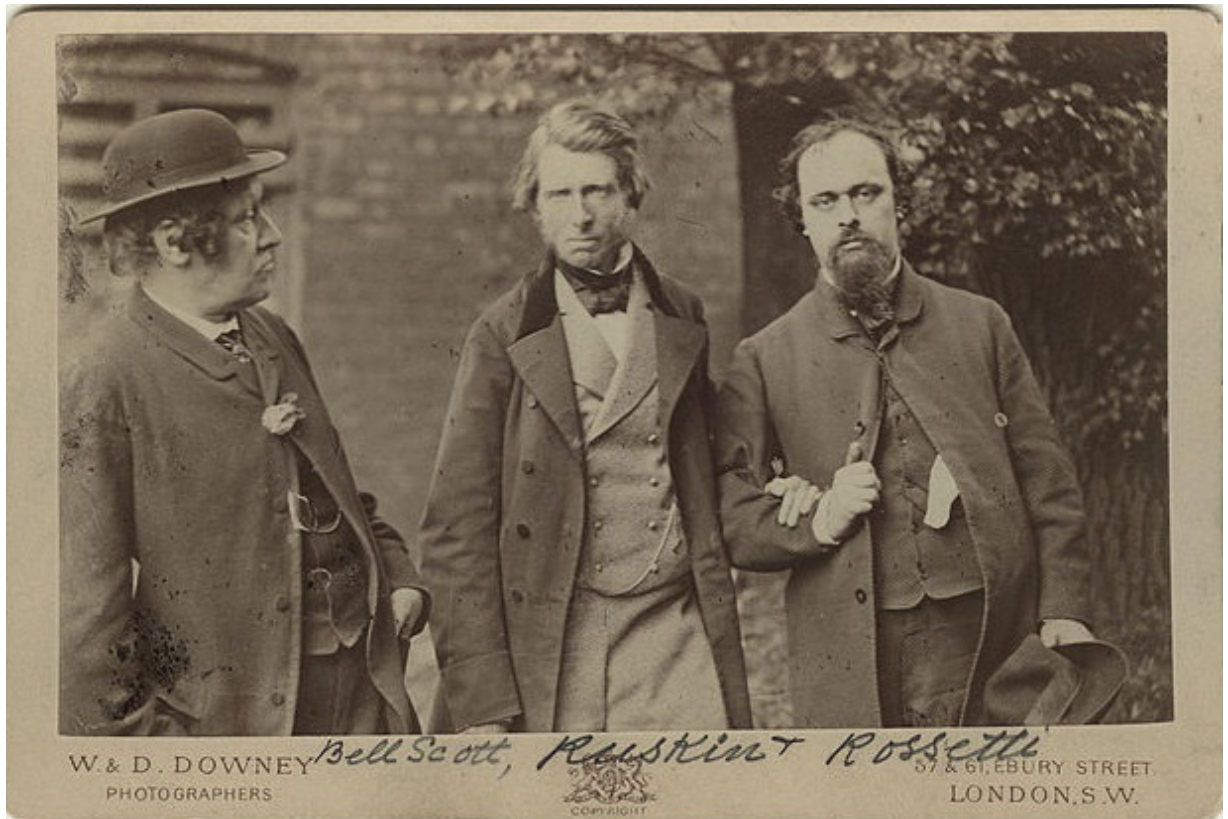
Remember me kindly to Mrs. Scott and Mrs. Norquoy. I expect on returning to London to find a certain amount of hair on end.

Most sincerely yours
D G Rossetti

JOHN RUSKIN

1853-1854

1853-1854



July 13: Purslane, probably to-day. *Chenopodium album*. Pontederias in prime. Purple bladderwort (*Utricularia purpurea*), not long, near Hollowell place, the buds the deepest-colored, the stems rather loosely leaved or branched, with whorls of five or six leaves. On the hard, muddy shore opposite Dennis's, in the meadow, *Hypericum Sarothra* in dense fields, also *Canadense*, both a day or two, also *ilysanthes*, sium with leaves a third of an inch wide, and the cardinal flower, probably the 11th. *Hypericum mutilum* in the meadow, maybe a day or two. Whorled bladderwort, for some time, even gone to seed; this, the purple, and the common now abundant amid the pads and rising above them. *Potamogeton compressus* (?) immersed, with linear leaves. I see no flower. I believe it is the radical leaves of the heart-leaf, — large, waved, transparent, — which in many places cover the bottom of the river where five or six feet deep, as with green paving-stones. Did not somebody mistake these for the radical leaves of the kalmiana lily?



1853-1854

1853-1854



July 14, Thursday: The American delegation was received by the [Japanese](#) delegation at the location, on a small island, that their surveying party had just designated was to be known henceforward as “Reception Bay.” “When we landed” William Speiden, Jr. recorded, “the [Japanese](#) to the number of six thousand were drawn up in lines along the borders of the Bay,” colorful banners and pennants flying. Speiden found the array a most beautiful appearance, albeit disturbingly warlike. The rowboat conveying [Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) of the United States Navy shoved off from the *USS Susquehanna* and landed on this small island as his various American military bands played “Hail Columbia.” The Commodore’s men fell into file and marched with him to a House of Reception specially prepared by the Lord of Toda, [Japan](#) for this ceremonial letter-hand-carry. Speiden was among these marchers. Perry informed the interpreters that because it would take time to receive a response from the Emperor, he intended to go away, and return the following spring with his flotilla of American warships. Meanwhile the American intention was merely to engage in a survey of the bay for purposes of (peaceful, hey, pay no attention to all the guns) navigation. This was an offer which it was supposing the locals couldn’t conceivably refuse, but nevertheless it was categorically rejected and Major Jacob Zeilin of the [US Marines](#) would need to climb back on board the *USS Mississippi*, and this American panjandrum would need to sail away into the sunrise emptyhanded.

[US MILITARY INTERVENTIONS](#)

President [Franklin Pierce](#) opened [The Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations](#) at [New-York](#)’s [Crystal Palace](#) on what would become Reservoir Square in what would become Bryant Park (adjacent to this, at the Latting Observatory, Elisha Graves Otis would be demonstrating his steam-powered passenger elevator).

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

The toll for ferrying across is six dollars per wagon. We concluded to ferry ourselves again, drove down the river and commenced operations, took one load over and had to stop on account of high winds. The 2nd load, when we reached the opposite shore the box being nearly full of water and the current very swift, on jumping out the boat capsized, but fortunately we had on the wheels and axles of the wagon which sunk to the bottom, the water about 7 ft. We soon hauled them out by means of a chain with a large hook on it and lost nothing but the bolt of the coupling. Got all over by dark without any further accident.

[Waldo Emerson](#) and [Henry Thoreau](#) discussed plant specimens.

[BOTANIZING](#)



July 14: Heavy fog.

I see a rose, now in its prime, by the river, in the water amid the willows and button-bushes, while others, lower on shore, are nearly out of bloom. Is it not the R. Carolina? Saw something blue, or glaucous, in Beck Stow’s Swamp to-day; approached and discovered the [Andromeda Polifolia](#), in the midst of the swamp at the north end, not long since out of bloom. This is another instance of a common experience. When I am shown from abroad, or hear of, or in any [way] become interested in, some plant or other thing, I am pretty sure to find it soon. Within a week [R.W.E.](#) showed me a slip of this in a botany, as a great rarity which [George Bradford](#) brought from Watertown. I had long

1853-1854

1853-1854

been interested in it by [Linnaeus](#)'s account.



I now find it in abundance. It is a neat and tender-looking plant, with the pearly new shoots now half a dozen inches long and the singular narrow revolute leaves. I suspect the flower does not add much to it.

There is an abundance of the buck-bean there also. Holly berries are beginning to be ripe. The Polygonum Hydropiper, by to-morrow. Spargula arvensis gone to seed and in flower. A very tall ragged orchis by the Heywood Brook, two feet high, almost like a white fringed one. Lower ones I have seen some time.

The clematis there (near the water-plantain) will open in a day or two. Mallows gone to seed and in bloom. Erigeron Canadensis, butter-weed.



July 15, Friday: Tanzi Bären op.134, a polka by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#), was performed for the initial time, in Vienna's Volksgarten.

[Amiel Weeks Whipple](#), son of David Whipple and Abigail Brown Pepper Whipple, who had grown up in the north part of [Concord, Massachusetts](#) where his father owned the Whipple Tavern and had attended the [Concord Academy](#) before teaching at the district school at Nine Acre Corner in Concord, had graduated 5th in his class from the West Point Military Academy. On this day Lieutenant Whipple led an expedition through the western United States to survey a possible route for a proposed transcontinental railway, starting at Fort Smith, Arkansas. The party would proceed along the 35th parallel, reaching southern [California](#) during March 1854.

Pledges were taken to erect a Congregational Church at Mission Dolores in [California](#).

The Placer, [California Herald](#) learned that the waters in the bed of American River were receding only slowly,



1853-1854

1853-1854

and had not yet fallen to the point at which gold miners could re-commence operation. They were using this time to get lumber on the ground and make other necessary arrangements, and planned to be ready to return to work in the bed of the river at the earliest possible moment. According to an advertisement in this issue of the gazette, claims of 15 feet in the bed of Middle Fork of American River opposite Poverty Bar, a place at which the river bed had not yet been worked but at which a 1,500-foot flume had been constructed, would be sold by sections on July 12, at 2PM on Sand Bar. The Daily Alta California printed an update about Murderer's Bar in the mountains (a location so called because in 1849, 3 miners had been murdered there by the Indians). In only about 6 weeks of work that had been possible the previous summer, due to half a dozen breakdowns in the flumes, miners had been able to take about \$100,000 in gold out of the river bed. The diggings in the river bed had been very deep, shafts having been sunk to 40 feet in some places, and without bottoming out in any bed rock. The Marysville Herald reported that it had learned from the Daily Union that considerable excitement prevails the good people of Sacramento City in consequence of a recent discovery of gold digging near or on the banks of the slough nearly opposite the mouth of 2nd Street, as much as \$13.25 to a pan full of earth was taken out. One wagon load of earth yielded over \$100. Several hundred dollars worth of gold has been taken from these new placers and more is anticipated.

The Grand Trunk Railway was formed by the amalgamation of the following companies:

- Grand Trunk Railway of Canada
- Grand Junction Railway
- Grand Trunk Railway Company of Canada East
- Quebec and Richmond Railway
- St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railway
- Toronto and Guelph Railway

(The Grand Trunk also leased the Atlantic and St. Lawrence Railway, giving access to Portland, Maine.)

HISTORY OF RR

The following appeared in Frederick Douglass' Paper:

Panorama of Uncle Tom's Cabin

This mammoth painting which has been on exhibition, with great success, in the Western Cities, is now on its way to Rochester, and will be presented to our citizens at Corinthian Hall on Friday Evening, the 15th inst., also every evening during the following week. From the manner our exchanges speak of this Panorama, we are led to believe it presents in a true light the leading characters of Mrs. Stowe's celebrated work. We would advise all who wish to see "Uncle Tom" and little "Eva" upon canvass to visit Corinthian Hall during the exhibition.

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra, her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Started this morning about 7 o'clock, traveled 8 miles and found a branch at the right of the road, 4 miles farther we struck the same branch again and camped at its crossing. Found good grass about 2 miles up this branch.



July 15: Common form of arrowhead. The *Rumex obtusifolius* shows its single grain now. Near Loring's ram that coarse mustard-like branched plant, one or two feet high, with racemes of small yellow flowers, — perhaps Gray's *Nasturtium palustre*¹ or Bigelow's *Sisymbrium amphibium*,²—in seed and in blossom.



July 16, Saturday: By this point the pestilence known as “[black vomit](#)” had in [New Orleans](#) taken more than 300 lives. The populace was fleeing the city.



Kayama Yezaimen had visited the *USS Susquehanna*. He had viewed the functions of a steam warship and inspected its engine and armaments. He had brought with him gifts of lacquerware and had been handed in return a choice selection of garden seeds and choice cases of wine. [Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) had transferred his command pennant from the *USS Susquehanna* to the side-wheel steam frigate *USS Mississippi*. On this day that vessel made its way up Yedo (Edo, now [Tokyo](#)) Bay. Pleasantries having been concluded, it was due time for the foreigners to just get the hell away and leave the Japanese the hell alone.

The *Niagara*, taking the [Hawthornes](#) away from America, docked in Liverpool.

The Placer, [California Herald](#) reported that at Lacy Bar, 4 gold miners had taken out as high as \$1,300 in one day, while in the neighborhood of Eastman Hill and Blue Canyon, which is the North Branch of the North Fork of American River 10 miles above Cold Springs, where 100 miners were at work, gold was being found in coarse pieces weighing from \$1.00 up to \$60. At Badger Bar, a short distance below the junction of the North and Middle Forks, there was bustle and activity because the Badger Co. had nearly completed construction of their flume. On the North Fork a mile and a half above Oregon Bar, 28 Chinamen were turning the river and 10 Americans who had a claim just above them had “joined flumes with the Celestials” and expected to be digging in the river bed in a fortnight. Earlier that spring, 3 miles above Rice’s Ferry higher up the North Fork, 17 Chinamen who had bought a river claim for \$1,000 had completed their flumes and would soon be washing out gold. A couple of miles above that point a party of Americans had completed their flume and were in the process of erecting a dam.

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Over hills and hollows, mountains and creeks, traveled 15 miles to-day and camped on Crow Creek.



July 16: *Rhus copallina* behind [Bent’s](#), budded, not quite open. *Solidago stricta* (?) at [Cato’s cellar](#), a day or two. The pasture thistle, more than a week. Is it the *Potamogeton heterophyllus* in Walden, now in flower and for some time? Door-grass.



-
1. For [Professor Asa Gray](#)’s *Nasturtium palustre*, refer to his [ELEMENTS OF BOTANY](#): *N. palústre*, DC. (MARSH CRESS.) Stem erect; *leaves pinnately cleft or parted*, or the upper lacinate; the lobes oblong, cut-toothed; *pedicels about as long as the small flowers and mostly longer than the oblong, ellipsoid, or ovoid pods*; style short. — Wet ditches and borders of streams, common. June — Sept. — Flowers only 1"-1½" long. Stems 1°- 3° high. — The typical form with oblong pods is rare (W. New York, *Dr. Sartwell*). Short pods and hirsute stems and leaves are common. Var. *hispidum* (N. *hispidum*, DC.) is this, with ovoid or globular pods. (Eu.)
 2. For [Professor Jacob Bigelow](#)’s *Sisymbrium amphibium*, refer to his [FLORULA BOSTONIENSIS](#): SISYMBRIUM. Silique cylindrical, opening with nearly straight valves; valves equalling the partition.



WALDEN: East of my bean-field, across the road, lived Cato Ingraham, slave of Duncan Ingraham, Esquire, gentleman of Concord village; who built his slave a house, and gave him permission to live in Walden Woods;-Cato, not Uticensis, but Concordiensis. Some say that he was a Guinea Negro. There are a few who remember this little patch among the walnuts, which he let grow up till he should be old and need them; but a younger and whiter speculator got them at last. He too, however, occupies an equally narrow house at present. Cato's half-obliterated cellar hole still remains, though known to few, being concealed from the traveller by a fringe of pines. It is now filled with the smooth sumach, (*Rhus glabra*,) and one of the earliest species of golden-rod (*Solidago stricta*) grows there luxuriantly.

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

CATO INGRAHAM
GOOSE POND



July 17, Sunday: Crowds of [Japanese](#) citizens gathered to witness the US squadron of warships leave anchorage and depart in stately fashion down the center of Tokyo Bay. (Have you noticed that this is not a perfect world? –in this procession the *USS Susquehanna* was ignominiously towing the *USS Saratoga* and the *USS Mississippi* was ignominiously towing the *USS Plymouth* but, other than that, everything was decidedly impressive.)

Bishop Alemany laid the cornerstone of St. Mary's Church at the corner of California Street and Dupont Street in [San Francisco](#).

The term of John C. Hays as Sheriff of [San Francisco, California](#) was completed.

Dedication of the 1st Unitarian Church at 805 Stockton Street near Sacramento Street in [San Francisco](#).



A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Anxious to get better grass we drove to Thomas's Fork about 12 miles keeping the left hand road around the mountain to the river. Here we camped for the day.



July 17: The common amaranth. Young toads not half an inch long at Walden shore. The smooth sumach resounds with the hum of bees, wasps, etc., at Water-target Pond. I see two great devil's-needles, three inches long, with red abdomens and bodies as big as hummingbirds [], sailing round this pond, round and round, and ever and anon darting aside suddenly; probably to seize some prey. Here and there the water-targets look red, perhaps their under sides. A duck at Goose Pond. Rank weeds begin to block up low wood-paths, — goldenrods, asters, etc. The pearly everlasting. *Lobelia infata*. The *Solidago nemoralis* (?) in a day or two,—gray goldenrod. I think we have no *Hieracium Gronovii*, though one not veined always and sometimes with two or more leaves on stem. No grass balls to be seen.



1853-1854

1853-1854



July 18, Monday: In the morning, [Henry Thoreau](#) and [Ellery Channing](#) went by boat to the Sudbury meadows of the Concord River.

At 9PM, 3 sand-scow workers who had been drinking attempted to make a crossing of the Niagara River above the [Falls](#) in a tiny boat, and blundered into the American Rapids. Their boat was swamped but one of the men, Joseph Avery, a German immigrant, managed to make his way to a rock about 500 feet above the lip. The others, we surmise, must have gone over the rim in the dark, still clinging to their overturned boat.

Knall-Kügerln op.140, a waltz by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#), was performed for the initial time, in the Bierhalle Fünfhaus of Vienna.

[Hendrik Antoon Lorentz](#) was born in Arnherm, Netherlands.

[New-York](#) debut of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" — the 1st play there not to provide either a curtain raiser or an afterpiece.

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

On the opposite side of the river is a long steep hill to climb, six miles farther is quaking asp grove and a fine spring at the left of the road, 3 miles father is Pleasant grove of pine and fir trees. Now down the mountain for six miles, plenty steep enough, to a valley and a fine stream of mountain water; thence up another mountain over into the far famed Bear River Valley.



July 18: *Sonchus oleraceus* well in bloom.

8.30 A.M. — To Sudbury meadows with [W.E.C.](#) by boat.

Hardhack in bloom perhaps a day or two. The button-bush beginning to open generally. The late, or river, rose spots the copses over the water, — a great ornament to the river's brink now. Three utricularias and perhaps the horned also common now. Rhexia, a day or two. The pads are now much eaten. Thoroughwort. Meadow haying has commenced. There is no pause between the English and meadow haying. There are thousands of yellow butterflies on the pontederia flowers, and of various colors on the buttonbush. In the Sudbury meadows are dense fields of pipes three feet high bordering the river. The common large rush, flowering at top, males black-looking squads there. The fields of pontederia are in some places four or five rods wide and almost endless, but, crossing from side to side on shore, are the open white umbels of the hemlock, and now the sium begins to show. These meadows, with their meandering stream, through whose weeds it is hard to push a boat, are very wild. The stake-driver [[American Bittern](#) [Botaurus lentiginosus](#)] and the *virescens* [[Green-backed Heron](#) [Butorides striatus](#) ([Green Bittern](#), [Small Bittern](#))] rise and go off with sluggish flight from time to time. What is that continual dry chucking sound heard about the pads? The darting of a fish, or of an insect? The heart-leaves are eaten and turned dark, but the less decayed part in the centres, still green, is of the form and appearance of the less cut leaves of the *Ranunculus Puschii*, — either leading to or following after that. As they decay, such a leaf as the less divided ones of the *R. Puschii* is left, or promises to be left, — is suggested. That smaller narrow-leaved polygonum which forms the first and lower rank in the river is in many places in blossom, rose-colored, whitish. What is that rather tall, coarse kind of aster, with a few broad rays, in the copse behind Bittern Cliff?³ Is it *Diplopappus cornifolius*? Now are the days to go a-berrying.

3. July 30th, a somewhat similar white aster with many middle-sized heads and a roughish stem in Dugan's [?] meadow.

1853-1854

1853-1854



July 19, Tuesday: Father [Isaac Hecker](#) wrote to [Orestes Augustus Brownson](#), LL.D.

At dawn an employee of the Cataract House, while trudging to work at the tourist hotel, had heard a cry for help. It was Joseph Avery on his rock out in the rapids about 500 feet above the lip of the [Niagara Falls](#). An alarm was raised and hundreds gathered on the bank. They obtained some cordage from a nearby construction site, the [Hydraulic Canal](#) project, and local merchants hurried their stocks of rope to the shore. When a long enough rope was assembled, they let out an empty skiff on a line from the Goat Island Bridge in the direction of the clinging man, but their makeshift line failed and the empty skiff vanished over the curling edge. In a 2d rescue effort, casting about for materials, a raft was put together of poles and planks and empty barrels lashed together with rope, and a heavier length of line was put together, and this raft was let out downstream, and Avery did manage to get onto it and tie himself down. Pulling the raft back toward the bridge, there were a number of scary incidents as the raft caught on rocks. Once Avery nearly drowned when the edge of the raft caught under a ledge.

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Our train divided. It was too large on account of grass. We started out alone again, having traveled some 799 miles in company with those 2 wagons and 7 men we joined on the Platte River. One mile from camp we found a good spring. 8 miles father and we come to Smith's Fork of Bear River, very bad to cross and a very rocky piece of road after crossing, but once over this we found a beautiful road and grass in abundance. Camped on the bank of the river after a drive of 18 miles.

Meanwhile a [telegram](#) had gone out to Buffalo, New York, and a boat made of sheet iron had been dispatched toward the falls on a railroad car, so the rescuers secured a bedsheet to use as a poster, and painted upon it:

THE LIFE BOAT IS COMING

1853-1854

1853-1854

and hung this over the rail of the bridge so that Avery could read it. This sheet iron boat was rushed to the scene and lowered into the river secured with two hawsers. It filled with water and, when one of its restraining hawsers snapped, it rammed into the makeshift raft. Then the other hawser snapped and it and rammed the raft to which Avery was lashed. When the other restraining line parted, the life boat vanished over the curling edge.

The rescuers let out a flat-bottomed scow from the bridge. Avery unlashed himself from the raft and rolled into this scow. Stripping off one of his boots, he began to bail water out of its bottom. As the scow was being hauled back toward the bridge, however, a tackle jammed and the haulers were forced to let out the rope in order to clear this jam. The scow wedged itself behind the raft and its ropes got caught on rocks. There are Daguerreotypes in which Avery can be seen at this point as a tiny black figure in the midst of rushing waters — the river, because of length of exposure, of course appeared as white. At this point Avery had been fighting for his life for more than 20 hours.

A ferry arrived at the scene at about 5PM and was let out from the bridge. Avery unlashed himself and, at about 6PM, made a lunge for its gunwale, but the boat lurched and smashed into his chest and he plunged into the water. As he was swept rapidly downstream he could be seen to be aiming himself toward a tiny island at the brink. As he went over the edge he was waving his arms in the air and screaming.

In 1871 [William Dean Howells](#) would perpetrate the following:

Avery. 1853

I.

All night long they heard in the houses beside the shore,
 Heard, or seemed to hear, through the multitudinous roar,
 Out of the hell of the rapids as 't were a lost soul's cries, —
 Heard and could not believe; and the morning mocked their eyes,
 Showing where wildest and fiercest the waters leaped and ran
 Raving round him and past, the visage of a man
 Clinging, or seeming to cling, to the trunk of a tree that, caught
 Fast in the rocks below, scarce out of the surges caught.
 Was it a life, could it be, to yon slender hope that clung?
 Shri!ll, above all the tumult, the answering terror rung.

II.

Under the weltering rapids a boat from the bridge is drowned,
 Over the rocks the line of another are tangled and wound;
 And the long, fateful hours of the morning have wasted soon,
 As it had been in some blessed trance, and now it is noon.
 Hurry, now with the raft! But O, build it strong and staunch,
 And to the lines and treacherous rocks look well as you launch!
 Over the foamy tops of the waves, and their foam-sprent sides,
 Over hidden reefs, and through the embattled tides,
 Onward rushes the raft, with many a lurch and leap, —
 Lord! if it strike him loose, from the hold he scarce can keep!
 No! through all peril unharmed, it reaches him harmless at last,
 And to its proven strength he lashes his weakness fast.
 Now, for the shore? But steady, steady, my men and slow;
 Taut, now, the quivering lines; now slack; and so, let her go!
 Thronging the shores around stand the pitying multitude;
 Wan as his own are their looks, and a nightmare seems to brood
 Heavy upon them, and heavy the silence hangs on all,
 Save for the rapids' plunge, and the thunder of the fall.
 But on a sudden thrills from the people still and pale,
 Chorusing his unheard despair, a desperate wail:
 Caught on a lurking point of rock, it sways and swings,
 Sport of the pitiless waters, the raft to which he clings.

III.

All the long afternoon it idly swings and sways:
 And on the shore the crowd lifts up its hands and prays:
 Lifts to Heaven and wrings the hands so helpless to save,
 Prays for the mercy of God on him whom the rock and the wave
 Battle for, fettered betwixt them, and who, amid their strife,
 Struggles to help his helpers, and fights so hard for his life, —
 Tugging at rope and at reef, while men weep and women swoon.
 Priceless second by second, so wastes the afternoon,
 And it is sunset now; and another boat and the last
 Down to him from the bridge through the rapids has safely passed.

IV.

Wild through the crowd comes flying a man that nothing can stay,
 Maddening against the gate that is locked athwart his way.
 “No! we keep the bridge for them that can help him. You,
 Tell us, who are you?” “His brother!” “God help you both! Pass through.”
 Wild, with wide arms of imploring, he calls aloud to him,
 Unto the face of his brother, scarce seen in the distance dim;
 But in the roar of the rapids his fluttering words are lost
 As in a wind of autumn the leaves of autumn are tossed.
 And from the bridge he sees his brother sever the rope
 Holding him to the raft, and rise secure in his hope;
 Sees all as in a dream the terrible pageantry, —
 Populous shores, the woods, the sky, the birds flying free;
 Sees, then, the form — that, spent with effort and fasting and fear,
 Flings itself feebly and fails of the boat that is lying so near —
 Caught in the long-baffled clutch of the rapids, and rolled and hurled
 Headlong on the cataract’s brink and out of the world.



July 19: Clematis has been open a day or two. The alisma will open to-morrow or next day. This morning a fog and cool. What is that small conyza-like aster, with flaccid linear leaves, in woods near Boiling Spring? Some woodbine, cultivated, apparently long since flowered. The same of some on Lee’s Cliff, where it is early.



July 20, Wednesday: While attempting to evict a squatter from a house on Mission Street in [San Francisco](#), undersheriff John A. Frenner was wounded.

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Joined one wagon this morning. Two wagons are enough to get along fast. One mile from camp the road left the river and passed to the right of a very bad slough and crossed Thomas’s Fork in 4 miles then down 10 miles; thence across the mountains again 6 miles over a very steep hill 2 miles, and to Bear River bottom again 6 miles over a very rough road crossing 2 or 3 branches in the distance. Camped again on the river bank, grass moderate. Drove 15 miles to-day.

[Henry Thoreau](#) took [Sophia Thoreau](#) by boat to Nawshawtuct to see the moonrise:



July 20: To Nawshawtuct at moonrise with [Sophia](#), by boat. Moon apparently full yesterday. A low mist in-crusts the meadow, — not so perceptible when we are on the water. Now we row through a thin low mist about as high as one’s head, now we come to a place where there

1853-1854


1853-1854

is no mist on the river or meadow, apparently where a slight wind stirs. The gentle susurrus from the leaves of the trees on shore is very enlivening, as if Nature were freshening, awakening to some enterprise. There is but little wind,' but its sound, incessantly stirring the leaves at a little distance along the shore, heard not seen, is very inspiring. It is like an everlasting dawn or awakening of nature to some great purpose. As we go up the hill we smell the sweet-briar. The trees are now heavy, dark masses without tracery, not as in spring or early in June; but I forgot to say that the moon was at first eclipsed by a vast black bank of cloud in the east horizon, which seemed to rise faster than it, and threatened to obscure it all the night. But suddenly she rose above it, and when, a few moments after, we thought to look again for the threatening cloud-bank, it had vanished, or a mere filmy outline could be faintly traced beneath her. It was the eclipse of her light behind it that made this evil look so huge and threatening, but now she had triumphed over it and eclipsed it with her light. It had vanished, like an ugly dream. So is it ever with evils triumphed over, which we have put behind us. What was at first a huge dark cloud in the east which threatened to eclipse the moon the livelong night is now suddenly become a filmy vapor, not easy to be detected in the sky, lit by her rays. She comes on thus, magnifying her dangers by her light, at first displaying, revealing them in all their hugeness and blackness, exaggerating, then casting them behind her into the light concealed. She goes on her way triumphing through the clear sky like a moon which was threatened by dark clouds at her rising but rose above them. [Excursions, page 329; Riv. 405.] That black, impenetrable bank which threatened to be the ruin of all our hopes is now a filmy dash of vapor with a faint-purplish tinge, far in the orient sky. From the hilltop we see a few distant lights in farmhouses down below, hard to tell where they are, yet better revealing *where* they are than the sun does. But cottage lights are not conspicuous now as in the autumn. As we looked, a bird flew across the disk of the moon. Saw two skunks carrying their tails about some rocks. Singular that, of all the animated creation, chiefly these skunks should be abroad in this moonlight. This is the midsummer night's moon. We have come round the east side of the hill to see the moon from amid the trees. I like best to see its light falling far in amid the trees and along the ground before me, while itself is hidden behind them or one side. It is cool, methinks with a peculiar coolness, as it were from the luxuriance of the foliage, as never in June. At any rate we have had no such sultry nights this month as in June. There is a greater contrast between night and day now, reminding me that even in Hindostan they freeze ice in shallow vessels at night in summer (?). There is a mist very generally dispersed, which gives a certain mellowness to the light, a waviness apparently, a creaminess. Yet the light of the moon is a cold, almost frosty light, white on the ground.

There [are] a few fireflies about. Green, their light looks sometimes, and crickets are heard. You are pretty sure also to hear some human music, vocal or instrumental, far or near. The masses of the trees and bushes would be called black, if our knowledge that they are leaves did not make us call them dark-green. Here is the *Pyenanthemum lanceolatum* near the boat's place, which I scent in the dark. It has been out some days, for some flowers are quite withered. I hear from tire copses or bushes along the shore, returning, a faint everlasting fine song from some small cricket, or rather locust, which it required the stillness of night to reveal. A bat hovers about us. How oily smooth the water in this moonlight! And the apparent depth where stars are reflected frightens [Sophia](#). These Yankee houses and gardens seen rising beyond this oily moon-lit water, on whose surface the circling insects are like sparks of fire, are like Italian dwellings on the shores of Italian lakes. When we have left the boat and the river, we are surprised, looking back from the bank, to see that the water is wholly concealed under a white mist, though it was scarcely perceptible when we were in its midst. The few bullfrogs are the chief music. I do not know but walnuts are peculiarly handsome by moonlight, — seeing the moon rising through them, and the form of their leaves. I felt some nuts. They have already their size and that bracing, aromatic scent.

1853-1854

1853-1854

 July 21, Thursday: [New York State](#) accepted Boston Corner from Massachusetts.

The Wayne County [Erie Canal](#) village of Newark (later renamed Arcadia) was incorporated.

The [New York](#) legislature designated more than 750 acres of Manhattan Island in New-York for use as a Central Park.

[Henry Thoreau](#)'s "Slavery in Massachusetts" was published by [William Lloyd Garrison](#) in [The Liberator](#).

Here is an illustration of the period, indicating what sorts of people the illustrator believed read [The Liberator](#):



In this same illustration, note what the illustrator suspected that such a person might have on his wall, besides an illustration from a Shakespearean play:



1853-1854

1853-1854

I've had enough fun, I'll show you the whole illustration:



A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

This morning we traded a yoke of oxen for a horse as we need one very much. Have 3 yoke left and our load is light. Eight miles from camp is a branch 10 feet wide. Drove four miles beyond and camped for the day. Grass good anywhere about here.



July 21: 2 P.M. — Went, in pursuit of boys who had stolen my boat-seat, to Fair Haven.

Plenty of berries there now, — large huckleberries, blueberries, and blackberries. 'My downy-leaved plant of Annurnsack and under the Cliffs, now in bloom, and some days, is the *Pyenanthemum incanum*, — common mountain mint or wild basil. It is two or three feet high and very velvety-downy, while calamint is rigid. What is that small creeping plant covering the ground in the Cliff brook like a veronica, — leaf shaped like that of the small veronica on the Cliffs, leaves opposite but far apart, rooting at base? No traces of a flower. The small purple orchis, its spikes half opened. The *Rhus copallina* is most abundant on the low knoll beneath the Cliffs, not yet blossomed. *Euphorbia hypericifolia* (?) at Bittern Cliff, how long? Horse-mint, a day or two, the earliest. *Desmodium acuminatum*, some days; it is a delicate spike of flowers on a long peduncle. The berries of the alternate cornel are beginning to ripen. I am entering Fair Haven Pond. It is now perfectly still and smooth, like dark glass. Yet the westering sun is very warm. He who passes over a lake at noon, when the waves run, little imagines its serene and placid beauty at evening, as little as he anticipates his own serenity. There is no more beautiful part of the river than the entrance to this pond. The *Asclepias incarnata* is well named water silkweed, for it grows here amid the button-bushes and willows in the wettest places along the river. Nature is beautiful



1853-1854

1853-1854

only as a place where a life is to be lived. It is not beautiful to him who has not resolved on a beautiful life. The horned utricularia appears to be in its prime, though there was none here June 16th. It yellows the shore, together with the hyssop and filiform ranunculus, not to mention the lanceolate loosestrife. The spear thistle. The tall anemone grows by the red oak near the elms opposite the pond on Conantum and is still in flower. I am surprised by the abundance of large shining blackberries on the hillsides; every bush does its best. The river is so low and weedy that at Hubbard's bend, though there is most current at bends, three rails have been lodged in different places in mid-channel and have not advanced for a week or more. It rapidly grows cool toward sunset. The sun is now warm on my back, and when I turn round I have to shade my face with my hands; but some time before it sets the dews begin to fall, and a damp, cool air is felt over the water, and I want a thick coat. Ten minutes before sunset I saw large clear dewdrops at the tips, or half an inch below the tips, of the pontederia leaves.



July 22, Friday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Started quite early. Eight miles from camp are 2 branches 10 ft. wide crossing several smaller ones in the distance, to another branch 1 mile. The road here leaves the river and passes through a canyon to where we come in sight of the river 5 miles, to a spring 4 miles, to another branch 6 ft wide 8 miles. Camped near this branch. Drove 22 miles today.

John Shawney (or Schoney or Scholer) and Joseph Anderson VanZandt Dodge, deserters from the US Army of the frontier who had murdered a Delaware native American couple who had offered them food and company and had been caught with their stolen belongings, were [hanged](#) in St. Louis, Missouri (the bodies would be consigned to the Rock Springs Cemetery).

The following appeared in [Frederick Douglass' Paper](#):

The man who has not read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is a Congregational minister of this State, and made the confession publicly at the General Association, on Cape Cod, a few days ago.—*Boston Com.*

The Anti-Slavery Advocate and the Testimonial to Mrs. Stowe.

It will be remembered that we copied from the Advocate, in our paper of 27th May, a letter, purporting to have been written by "an American Abolitionist," opposing the appropriation of Mrs. Stowe's funds, to the "instruction or amelioration" of the condition of the free and fugitive slave portion of the colored people of the United States; denouncing all schemes of "instruction and amelioration," as delusive and cruel, while slavery lasts; ridiculing them as childish philanthropy; regarding such efforts as hurtful to the anti-slavery cause, and humiliating to the colored people.

We felt called upon as soon as we saw this letter in the discharge of a duty incumbent upon us, as an Advocate of the cause of the *nominally free*, as well as of the slave population of the United States, to expose, with some severity, the mischievous suggestions of this "American Abolitionist;" and it affords us much satisfaction to know that our "club" did good execution in the premises.

The Advocate of this month gives us the benefit of nearly three



1853-1854

1853-1854

columns, which we do not produce here, because we like, sometimes, to follow the example of our elders.—The Advocate having been careful to omit, from its columns, every connected sentence of the article of our's [sic] to which it professes to reply.

Of course, the man of the Advocate has everything his own way. He can attribute to us every absurdity, cruelty, injustice, and egotism he likes; and his readers have to swallow all on his authority: having nothing withal to excuse their incredulity.

We, however, will not follow the Advocate, literally; but, to whatever point we reply, that point shall be stated in his own words:

"The anti-slavery enterprise was not undertaken for the purpose of feeding, clothing, or educating the Free Colored people; nor for the purchase and liberation of individual slaves, or the relief of isolated [*Illegible*] of suffering, or to promote the escape of fugitives, or to found industrial institutions in Canada, or to forward emigration to the West Indies or anywhere else."

Stripped of all disguise, this Anti-Slavery Advocate affirms that it is no part of the duty of abolitionists to assist the struggling Free Colored man in efforts to educate and improve the condition of "the Free Colored people" of the United States. The enumeration which he makes is, evidently, intended, simply, to strengthen the general argument in favor of his main position. It is much to be regretted that this sort of abolitionism is not confined to Ireland. The editor of the Advocate has sympathizing friends on this side the Atlantic, in this view of the case; but we usually regard such abolitionists as sham abolitionists.

The Advocate is altogether mistaken in supposing the Free Colored people not to have been contemplated in the objects of the anti-slavery enterprise—the original declaration of sentiments pledged the American Anti-Slavery Society not merely to emancipate the slave, but to elevate the free people of color; and that has been considered quite orthodox work, among abolitionists generally, until very lately. Some few who have no notion of associating with colored people on terms of equality, would like "this elevation" part of abolitionism thrown tastefully into the back ground.

Such persons will exclude a colored man fro their offices and stores, and will not have him seen there, except in the capacity of a porter, or a waiter.

The Advocate assumes, throughout its article, that improving the condition of the Free Colored people is not appropriate anti-slavery work; that the Free Colored people may not receive the benefit of any funds intended for anti-slavery purposes; and that to help them is not, necessarily, to advance the anti-slavery cause. He says:

"We rejoice in everything that is done to help them, provided the funds for the promotion of the anti-slavery cause not be diverted to the benefit of those who have gained the priceless

1853-1854

1853-1854

treasure of liberty. This would be like appropriating the funds of an hospital for the sick, to establish and support a gymnasium for the benefit of the healthy."

It is evident, from the foregoing, that the Advocate has undertaken to plead a cause, about which, with all the assistance of "An American Abolitionist," he is but slightly informed. He is grossly ignorant of the real identity of the slave and the Free Colored people of the United States, who affirms the one to be sick and the other "healthy." There is, indeed, a difference between the slave and the free; but it is a difference to be described by no such extravagant simile as the Advocate makes. To talk of the Free Colored people as "healthy," while State after State passes laws for their expulsion; while the Fugitive Slave Law renders the liberty of every one of them insecure; while their children are excluded from schools in most of the States; and it is impossible for them to learn trades, and they are compelled to be the hewers of wood and drawers of water, proscribed, insulted and spit upon because of their identity with the slave—we say that to talk of the Free Colored people as "healthy," in these circumstances, is to add insult to injury. The Editor of the Advocate will have to change his philosophy on this point, before he can *fitly* speak for the American slave.

We, in this country, do not measure any man's abolitionism by his professed love of the slave at the South. We have a better way than this. It is, "How does he treat his black neighbor at the North?" If he care nothing about the education, improvement, and elevation of the blacks where he is, we have no difficulty in disposing of his claims as an abolitionist. Stupid as pro-slavery men are ever here, they have been sagacious enough to apply this test, and a capital one it is. It is the old scriptural method, "For he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?"

However strange it may seem to the impersonal Advocate, the Free Colored man in the United States is but *half* free; for although not a slave to an *individual*, he is a slave to society; and the genuine abolitionists so regard him. The Advocate takes refuge behind "THE AMERICAN ABOLITIONIST." He cracks him up very high; he says, "the obnoxious remark to which we replied, were communicated by one who has been much longer connected with the anti-slavery cause than himself; whose services to it have been far greater than his own; and who has sacrificed more to its promotion than he has ever done or is likely to do."

We do not object to any of this. It seems perfectly proper for the Advocate to compliment his friend, "the *American Abolitionist*," who, evidently, (for wise purposes,) prefers to be *incog*.

The anti-slavery enterprize, however, don't belong to anybody in particular, on the ground of priority; it is not an *invention*, about which there need be any quarreling. We have never "served" the cause too faithfully, though we've done what we could, and can boast of having emancipated others before emancipating ourselves. We should like, however, (for the mere fun of the thing,) to know who this very self-sacrificing abolitionist is,



1853-1854

1853-1854

and then we should be better able, perhaps, to appreciate his deep concern, lest money, designed to promote the cause of the slave, should be squandered in "delusive and cruel" efforts to educate the "Free Colored people."

The *Advocate* finds, however, another standard, before he gets through, by which to determine the merits of men; for, with the consistency of a true Hibernian, he says, when referring to *Gerrit Smith*:

"Still, there are many laborers in the anti-slavery cause, who, in their measures and according to their gifts, have done as well [as Gerrit Smith.] It does not follow, because everybody has not vast possessions and a heart to distribute them, that they cannot do as much for the slave in some other way."

Very good; and perhaps if you, Mr. *Advocate*, had thought of this in disposing of our poor merits, you might have raised us a peg higher than the estimate just given of us above; but neither our want of services, nor the services of that "American Abolitionist" in question, has anything to do with the point in controversy. Good men have erred, and will, probably, err again; and no good man, according to Mr. Phillips, should wish to be exempt from criticism.

Whatever the editor of the *Advocate* may think, we believe that no better appropriation could be made (even with a view to the emancipation of the slave) of the funds of Mrs. Stowe, than that of establishing in this country, an INSTITUTE, in which colored youth can be instructed in certain lucrative mechanical branches; and we are very happy to know that in this opinion, the excellent authoress of "*Uncle Tom's Cabin*" fully unites.

FREEDOM'S OFFERING—A Collection of Poems.

By Joseph C. Holly, Rochester: Charles H. McDonnell.

This little volume, dedicated to *Dr. J.W.C. Pennington*, is very modestly presented to the public by the author.

Mr. Holly is one of the proscribed race; and he wisely says that he does not appear as a competitor to Whittier, Lowell, Longfellow, Bryant, or Willis, but as a humble member of an oppressed people.

Many of the poems quite surpass mediocrity—several are very pretty—and when it is known that the author has had access only to a scanty library, and has possessed but few educational advantages, we are sure the kind-hearted will "lightly scan" any of the shortcomings that may be perceptible in this little work.

The address to Mrs. H.B. STOWE pleases us much; and we shall copy it.

TO MRS. HARRIET B. STOWE

Thy magic pen a power wields,
More potent than the steel clad hosts,
With glittering swords, and myriad shields;

1853-1854

1853-1854

Who guard around Oppression's posts
 Thou sawest thy brother bruised and bow'd,
 Tho' clothed in Afric's hated hue;
 Thou heard'st him groan and cry aloud,
 And to thy woman's heart proved true
 Unto his wrongs thou gav'st an ear;
 Unto his wounds thou gav'st a tongue;
 A list'ning world, came nigh to hear
 Thee sing the burthen of his song.
 The Britton heard it on the strand,
 The Frank upon the Elysee,
 The Arab on his Arid sand,
 The Russ upon the Baltic sea,
 The Greek upon his island home,
 The German at his classic lore;
 'Twas heard along the streets of Rome,
 And e'en on Afric's dusky shore,
 In Birmah, China and Japan,
 Myriads thy magic power own,
 And along the streets of Ispahan,
 Thy "Uncle Tom" and Cassy's known
 Truth, mighty is the falchion bright:
 Which thou with mystic arm doth wield,
 And her attendants love, and light
There are thy buckler and thy shield.
The book is for sale at this office.
 We hope it will find purchasers.



July 22: P.M. — To Annursnack.

The *Chenopodium hybridum* (?); at least its leaves are dark-green, rhomboidal, and heart-shaped. The orchis and spikenard at Azalea Brook are not yet open. The early roses are now about done, — the sweet-briar quite, I think. I see sometimes *houstonias* still. The *elodea* out. *Bochmeria* not yet. On one account, at least, I enjoy walking in the fields less at this season than at any other; there are so many men in the fields haying now. Observed, on the wild basil on Annursnack, small reddish butterflies which looked like a part of the plant. It has a singularly soft, velvety leaf. Smooth sumach berries crimson there.

There is a kind of low blackberry which does not bear large fruit but very dense clusters, by wall-sides, shaded by the vine or other plants often, of clammy and strong-tasted berries.

Yellow butterflies in the road. I find the *Campanula Americana* of the West naturalized in our garden. Also a *silene* (?) without *visibly* viscid stem and with *swollen* joints; apparently the snapdragon catchfly otherwise. Leaves opposite, sessile, lanceolate.



July 23, Saturday: In the course of this week more than 400 had perished of the [black vomit](#) in [New Orleans](#).



A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

This morning we passed the greatest natural curiosity we have seen yet. It is called the Steamboat spring. It is situated on the left of the road near the waters edge. It is constantly boiling up to a height of 2 or 3 feet, through a hole in the rocks and is quite warm. It is also very strong with soda. There are numerous other springs in the vicinity of it. Five miles farther and we came to the forks of the road; the left hand being the Hedspeth cut-off, the right the Fort Hall road; We took the Ft. Hall road. Two miles from this is Basin spring. This is also strong with soda. Ten miles farther is a branch 10 ft wide. Camped on this branch at dark after a drive of 22 miles. About 9 o'clock discovered something the matter with our horse. We

1853-1854

1853-1854

immediately gave her some lard and vinegar and she soon got better.



July 23:P.M. — To P. Hutchinson's.

I cannot find a single crotalaria pod there this year. Stone-crop is abundant and has now for some time been out at R. Brown's watering-place; also the water-plantain, which is abundant there. About the water further north the elodea is very common, and there, too, the rhexia is seen afar on the islets, — its brilliant red like a rose. It is fitly called meadow-beauty. Is it not the handsomest and most striking and brilliant flower since roses and lilies began? Blue vervain out some days.

Bathing yesterday in the Assabet, I saw that many beems, apparently an old one with her young of various sizes, followed my steps and found their food in the water which I had muddied. The old one pulled lustily at a *Potamogeton hybridus*, drawing it off one side horizontally with her mouth full, and then swallowed what she tore off. The young pouts were two and a half inches long in Flint's Pond the 17th.



July 24, Sunday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

This morning our cattle and horses are all sick. We found we had camped on alkali grounds. We commenced pouring the lard and vinegar down them and the soon seemed better. Drove on to get away from this poisonous place. At noon we came to a small creek clear as crystal, passed several small branches in the distance, followed this creek 5 miles, fording deep and muddy. The road here strikes across to the foot of the mountain, to a fine branch 2 miles. Camped here for the day to let our cattle recover their strength. Drove 13 miles to-day. Fine grass all along here.

[Charles Darwin](#) wrote to [Francis Galton](#) about the volume recently published by John Murray in London on Galton's African expedition, [THE NARRATIVE OF AN EXPLORER IN TROPICAL SOUTH AFRICA](#).



July 24. 4.30 A.M. — By boat to Island.

Robins [[American Robin](#) *Turdus migratorius*], larks [[Eastern Meadowlark](#) *Sturnella magna* (~~Lark~~)], peawais [[Wood-Pewee](#), [Eastern](#) *Contopus virens* (~~Wood-Pewee~~ or ~~Peawai~~)], etc., as in the spring, at this hour. The mikania to-morrow or next day [July 29]. The Zizania, some days. The low, front-rank polygonums are still imbrowned in many places; as I think, have not recovered from the effect of late frosts.

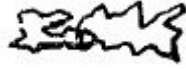
[Mr. Pratt](#) asked me to what animal a spine and broken skull found in the wall of James Adams's shop belonged, — within the partition. I found by its having but two kinds of teeth, and they incisive and molar, that it belonged to the order *Rodentia*, which, with us, consists of the Beaver, Hare, Rat (including squirrels), and Porcupine families. From its having "incisors [2 over 2], molars [3 over 3; 3 over 3] and "molars with a flat crown and zigzag plates of enamel," I knew it to be a muskrat, which probably got into the building at a time of high water. The molars appeared like one long tooth, their flat, smooth tops zigzagged with the edges of hard plates of enamel in this wise somewhat; but after looking long and sharply with a microscope, though on the side I could not



1853-1854

1853-1854

distinguish the separate teeth. I made out, by tracing about the edges of the enamel which intertwined



and broke joints curiously for strength, three separate enclosures, and, with full faith in this and in science, I told Pratt it was a muskrat, and gave him my proofs; but he could not distinguish the three molars even with a glass, or was still plainly uncertain, for he had thought them one tooth, when, taking his pincers, he pulled one out and was convinced, much to his and to my satisfaction and our confidence in science! How very hard must be the teeth of this animal whose food is clams! What keeps his incisors so sharp? Look at this strong head, with its upper jaw and incisor curved somewhat like a turtle's beak. What an apparatus for cutting, holding, crushing! What a trap to be caught in! It



is amusing to think what grists have come to this mill, though now the upper and nether stones fall loosely apart, and the brain-chamber above, where the miller lodged, is now empty (passing under the portcullis of the incisors), and the windows are gone.

With or without reason, I find myself associating with the idea of summer a certain cellar-like coolness, resulting from the depth of shadows and the luxuriance of foliage. I think that after this date the crops never suffer so severely from drought as in June, because of their foliage shading the ground and producing dews. We had fog this morning, and no doubt often the last three weeks, which my surveying has prevented my getting up to see.

It is the palmer-worm which has attacked the apple trees this year.

Surveying one very hot day, a week or two ago, and having occasion to strip a sapling of its bark, I was surprised to observe how cool the freshly exposed and sappy wood was, as if it extracted coolness from the cool cellars of the earth.

[Sophia's](#) *Viola pedata*, taken up in the spring, blossomed again a day or two ago. I perceive the peculiar scent of corn-fields.

Yesterday a dew-like, gentle summer rain. You scarcely know if you are getting wet.

At least two kinds of grass as tall as the *Zizania* have preceded it along the river. One has long since gone to seed, and looks flavid or yellowish now. The other is still in blossom, its chaff (?) being remarkably and regularly on one side of the glume (?). For a week or more I have perceived that the evenings were considerably longer and of some account to sit down and write in. Ate an early-harvest apple of my own raising yesterday; not quite ripe. The scent of some very early ones which I have passed in my walks, imparting some ripeness to the year, has excited me somewhat. It affects me like a performance, a poem, a thing done; and all the year is not a mere promise of Nature's.

How far behind the spring seems now, -farther off, perhaps, than ever, for this heat and dryness is most opposed to spring. Where most I sought for flowers in April and May I do not think to go now; it is either drought and barrenness or fall there now. The reign of moisture is long since over. For a long time the year feels the influence of the snows of winter and the long rains of spring, but now how changed! It is like another and a fabulous age to look back on, when earth's veins were full of moisture, and violets burst out on every hillside. Spring is the reign of water; summer, of heat and dryness; winter, of cold.

Whole families of plants that lately flourished have disappeared. Now the phenomena are tropical. Let our summer last long enough, and our land would wear the aspect of the tropics. The luxuriant foliage and growth of all kinds shades the earth and is converting every copse into a jungle. Vegetation is rampant. There is not such rapid growth, it is true, but it slumbers like a serpent that has swallowed its prey.

Summer is one long drought. Rain is the exception.

All the signs of it fail, for it is dry weather. Though it may seem so. the current year is not peculiar in this respect. It is a slight labor to keep count of all the showers, the rainy days, of a summer. You may keep it on your thumb nail.

P.M. — To Corner Spring and Fair Haven Hill.

Mimulus ringens at Heywood Brook, probably several days. The fruit of the skunk-cabbage is turned black. At Hubbard's Bathing-Place I tread on clams all across the river in mid-channel, flattening

1853-1854

1853-1854

them down, for they are on their edges. The small linear-leaved hypericum (*H. Canadense*) shows red capsules. The black choke-berry, probably some days. The dark indigo-blue ([Sophia](#) says), waxy, and dike blue china blue berries of the clintonia are already well ripe. For some time, then, though a few are yet green. They are numerous near the edge of Hubbard's lower meadow. They are in clusters of half a dozen on brittle stems eight or ten inches high, oblong or squarish round, the size of large peas with a dimple atop. Seen thus, above the handsome, regular green leaves which are still perfect in form and color and which, here growing close together, checker the ground, and also in the dense shade of the copse, there is something peculiarly celestial about them. This is the plant's true flower, for which it has preserved its leaves fresh and unstained so long. *Eupatorium pubescens* at Hubbard's burnt meadow. There is much near his grove. Also *Epilobium molle* there (put it with the *coloratum*), and *coloratum* and the common still in blossom. There is *erechthites* there, budded. Also *Lysimachia ciliata* and, by the causeway near, the ovate-leaved, quite distinct from the lanceolate, — I think not so early as the last. At the Corner Spring the berries of the trillium are already pink. The medeola is still in flower, though with large green berries. The swamp-pink still blooms and the morning-glory is quite fresh; it is a pure white, like a lady's morning gown.

The aspect of vegetation about the spring reminds me of fall. The angelica, skunk-cabbage, trillium, arum, and the lodged and flattened grass are all phenomena of the fall.


A spikenard just beyond the spring has already pretty large green berries, though a few flowers. Say July 10th. It is a great, plant, six feet high, seven long, with the largest pinnate leaves of this kind I think of. More than two feet by two, with single leaflets eleven inches by nine. The two-leaved convallaria and the *Smilacina racemosa* show ripening clusters. I hear incessantly a cricket or locust, inspired by the damp, cool shade, telling of autumn. I have not observed it more than a week. *Scutellaria galericulata*, maybe some time. The berries of the *Vaccinium vacillans* are very abundant and large this year on Fair Haven, where I am now. Indeed these and huckleberries and blackberries are very abundant in this part of the town. Nature does her best to feed man. The traveller need not go out of the road to get as many as he wants; every bush and vine teems with palatable fruit. Man for once stands in such relation to Nature as the animals that pluck and eat as they go. The fields and hills are a table constantly spread. Wines of all kinds and qualities, of noblest vintage, are bottled up in the skins of countless berries, for the taste of men and animals. To men they seem offered not so much for food as for sociality, that they may picnic with Nature, - diet drinks, cordials, wines. We pluck and eat in remembrance of Her. It is a sacrament, a communion. The not-forbidden fruits, which no serpent tempts us to taste. 'Slight and innocent savors, which relate us to Nature, make us her guests and entitle us to her regard and protection. It is a Saturnalia, and we quaff her wines at every turn. This season of berrying is so far respected that the children have a vacation to pick berries, and women and children who never visit distant hills and fields and swamps on any other errand are seen making baste thither now, with half their domestic utensils in their hands. The woodchopper goes into the swamp for fuel in the winter; his wife and children for berries in the summer.

The late rose, — *R. Carolina*, swamp rose, — I think has larger and longer leaves; at any rate they are duller above (light beneath), and the bushes higher. The shaggy hazelnuts now greet the eye, always an agreeable sight to rue, with which when a boy I used to take the stains of berries out of my hands and mouth. These and green grapes are found at berry time. High blueberries, when thick and large, bending the twigs, are a very handsome cool, rich, acid berry. On Fair Haven a quarter of an hour before sunset. -- How fortunate and glorious that our world is not roofed in, but open like a Roman house, - our skylight so broad and open! We do not climb the hills in vain. It is no crystal palace we dwell in. The windows of the sky are always open, and the storms blow in at them. The field sparrow sings with that varied strain. The night wind rises. On the eastern side of this hill it is already twilight. The air is cooler and clearer. The mountains which [were] almost invisible grow more distinct. The various heights of our hills are plainly shown by the more or less of the mountain bases seen from them. The atmosphere of the western horizon is impurpled, tingeing the mountains. A golden sheen is reflected from the river so brightly, that it dazzles me as much as the sun. The now silver-plated river is burnished gold there, and in midst of all I see a boat ascending with regular dip of its seemingly gilt oars. That which appears a strip of smooth, light silvery water on each side of the stream, not reflecting the sky, is the reflection of light from the pads. From their edges, there stream into the smooth channel sharp blue serrations or ripples of various lengths, sometimes nearly across, where seemingly a zephyr gliding off the pads strikes it. A boy is looking after his cows,



1853-1854

1853-1854

calling “ker ker ker ker,” impatient to go home. The sun is passing under the portcullis of the west. The nighthawk squeaks, and the chewink jingles his strain, and the wood thrush [**Wood Thrush**  *Catharus mustelina*]; but I think there is no loud and general serenade: From the birds. I hear no veery. How much more swiftly the sun seems to perform the morning and evening portions of his journey, when he is nearest his starting-place or goal! He is now almost ready to clip, -- a round red disk shorn of his beams, --- his head shaved like a captive led forth for execution. Meanwhile the night is rapidly gathering her forces in deepening lines of shade under the east side of the willow causeway and the woods. Now the sun has dipped into the western ocean. He is one half below the horizon, and I see lines of distinct forest trees, miles and miles away on some ridge, now revealed against his disk. It takes many a western woodland — go far enough, a whole Iowa. — to spare it. Now only the smallest segment of its sphere, like a coal of fire rising above the forest, is seen sending a rosy glow up the horizon sky. The illustrious traveller with whom we have passed a memorable day has gone his way, and we return slowly to our castle of the night. But for some minutes the glowing portal clouds are essentially unchanged.

Pycnanthemum muticum behind Wheeler’s cottages; put it with the earliest of its class.



July 25, Monday: Anton Bruckner applied for a position in the civil service.

Fire consumed the barks *Manco*, *Bacchus*, *Herbert*, and *Juno* that had been moored at the wharf at the foot of Market Street in San Francisco, with a loss estimated at \$50,000.

Allegedly, the bandit “[Joaquin Murieta](#)” ([Joaquin Murrieta](#) or [Murieta](#) or [Murietta Carrillo](#)) was shot dead. The white men who had gunned down this person, whoever he had been, when they followed smoke to a campfire in the San Joaquin Valley, asserted that his last words had been “No tire mass. Yo soy muerto.”

The Riggers’ and Stevedores’ Union of [San Francisco](#) was organized, after longshoremen struck for higher pay and better working conditions.

In the Far East, the side-wheel steam frigate *USS Mississippi* returned to anchor at Lew Chew.

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Our stock are very weak yet. Concluded to lie still till noon. Started at one o’clock and drove through a canyon to the head of a hollow 7 miles. This is the summit of the dividing ridge between the waters of Columbia and Bear River. One mile from the summit is a very large spring, one mile more is a similar one, 2 miles farther is a fine branch on which we camped. Good grass and excellent water.

[Henry Thoreau](#) reported with amusement that, belatedly, he had learned how to tie his shoes, and marveled that such a thing had not been part of his formal education:



July 25: Dodder, probably the 21st. Blue-curls. Burdock, probably yesterday.

P.M. — To Le Grosse’s.

Cerasus Virginiana, — choke-cherry, — just ripe. White and red huckleberries said to be in Le Grosse’s or Wetherbee’s pasture. Could not find them. *Cynoglossum Morisoni*, beggar’s-lice, roadside between Sam Barrett’s mill and the next house east, in flower and fruiting probably ten

1853-1854

1853-1854

days. Probably the same with plant found beyond the stone bridge, gone to seed, last year. I have for years had a great deal of trouble with my shoe-strings, because they get untied continually. They are leather, rolled and tied in a hard knot. But some days I could hardly go twenty rods before I was obliged to stop and stoop to tie my shoes. My companion and I speculated on the distance to which one tying would carry you, — the length of a shoe-tie, — and we thought it nearly as appreciable and certainly a more simple and natural measure of distance than a stadium, or league, or mile. Ever and anon we raised our feet on whatever fence or wall or rock or stump we chanced to be passing, and drew the strings once more, pulling as hard as we could. It was very vexatious, when passing through low scrubby bushes, to become conscious that the strings were already getting loose again before we had fairly started. What should we have done if pursued by a tribe of Indians? My companion sometimes went without strings altogether, but that loose way of proceeding was not [to] be thought of by me. One shoemaker sold us shoestrings made of the hide of a South American jackass, which he recommended; or rather he gave them to us and added their price to that of the shoes we bought of him. But I could not see that these were any better than the old. I wondered if anybody had exhibited a better article at the World's Fair, and whether England did not bear the palm from America in this respect. I thought of strings with recurved prickles and various other remedies myself. At last the other day it occurred to me that I would try an experiment, and, instead of tying two simple knots one over the other the same way, putting the end which fell to the right over each time, that I would reverse the process, and put it under the other. Greatly to my satisfaction, the experiment was perfectly successful, and from that time my shoe-strings have given me no trouble, except sometimes in untying them at night.



On telling this to others I learned that I had been all the while tying what is called a granny's knot, for I had never been taught to tie any other, as sailors' children are; but now I had blundered into a square knot, I think they called it, or two running slip-nooses. Should not all children be taught this accomplishment, and an hour, perchance, of their childhood be devoted to instruction in tying knots? Those New-Hampshire-like pastures near Asa Melvin's are covered or dotted with bunches of indigo, still in bloom, more numerous than anywhere that I remember.

Famous Last Words:



"What school is more profitably instructive than the death-bed of the righteous, impressing the understanding with a convincing evidence, that they have not followed cunningly devised fables, but solid substantial truth."



— A COLLECTION OF MEMORIALS CONCERNING DIVERS
DECEASED MINISTERS, Philadelphia, 1787

"The death bed scenes & observations even of the best & wisest afford but a sorry picture of our humanity. Some men endeavor to live a constrained life — to subject their whole lives to their will as he who said he might give a sign if he were conscious after his head was cut off — but he gave no sign Dwell as near as possible to the channel in which your life flows."

—Thoreau's JOURNAL, March 12, 1853





1853-1854

1853-1854

1851	John James Audubon	shooting at sitting ducks on his estate, at age 66 despite stroke and senility	<i>"You go down that side of Long Pond and I'll go down this side and we'll get the ducks!"</i>
1852	Daniel Webster	his attendant was tardy in administering some brandy	<i>"I still live!"</i>
1853	Joaquin Murieta	he was being chased and shot at	<i>"No tire mass. Yo soy muerto."</i>
1857	Auguste Comte	he had been making himself the pope of a religion of science, "Positivism"	<i>"What an irreparable loss!"</i>
1859	John Brown	request	<i>"I am ready at any time — do not keep me waiting."</i>
1862	Henry David Thoreau	he was editing manuscript	<i>"moose ... Indian"</i>
1864	General John Sedgwick	Battle of Spotsylvania	<i>"They couldn't hit an elephant at this distance."</i>
1865	Abraham Lincoln	on stage, an actor ad-libbed a reference to the presence of the President	The President laughed
<i>... other famous last words ...</i>			

 July 26, Tuesday: [Joseph Polis](#) wrote the following on a tree:

"Niasoseb. Polis clioi sia Olta ouke ni quambi."

"Nr~ya Sosep Polis Kala~jihlesa Olta wz|wiko nihkjzpi"

"I (pron.), Joseph Polis, (personal name), I am going in that direction (AI lp. sg.. pres. perf.), Old Town (place name), (AI 3p. sg. He lives continuously, he camps), now (pc.)."

Polis translated the words for [Henry Thoreau](#), who would memorialize this in [THE MAINE WOODS](#), page 262, as:

"I alone, Joseph Polis start for Old Town right away."

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Started quite early. Three miles from camp is a very steep hill to descent and a large branch to cross at the foot of it. Down this branch 10 miles, passed through a canyon, grass, water and wood plenty. The road left the branch for one or two miles in this distance. Coming into the valley we found a new road, took it and crossed the branch and left Ft. Hall to the right some 7 miles. This was on account of the road being washed away. This new road is some nearer and very good, but it is 10 miles without water or grass to Ft. Neuf River. Crossed and camped after a drive of 25 miles.

1853-18





1853-1854

July 26. I reckon that about nine tenths of the flowers of the year have now blossomed.

Dog-days, — sultry, sticky (?) weather, — now when the corn is topped out. Clouds without rain. Rains when it will. Old spring and summer signs fail.

P.M. — To Fair Haven Hill.

The lycopodium which I see not yet out. The *Potentilla Norvegica* is common and tall, the tallest and now most flourishing of the potentillas. The xyris, some time, on Hubbard's meadow, south of the water-plantain, whose large, finely branched, somewhat pyramidal panicle of flowers is attractive. The bobolinks [**Bobolink**  *Dolichonyx oryzivorus* ~~Rice-bird~~] are just beginning to fly in flocks, and I hear their link link. I see the young birds also, just able to get out of my way above the weeds and bushes of the low grounds, their tails not grown out to steady them. Larks [**Eastern Meadowlark**  *Sturnella magna* (~~Lark~~)], too, seen now, four or five together, sing

as of yore; also the goldfinch [**American Goldfinch**  *Carduelis tristis*] twitters over oftener.

That other kind of amaranth is apparently quite out in some places. The *Hypericum corymbosum*, which may have been out nearly as long as the perforatum. I see on all hands the hardback's slender rosy pyramid spring above the walls and hedges. It is a fine coarse plant and must rank with the rhexia or near it. The broader, more cone-like meadow-sweet also. The swamp rose and the polygalas are other reds now in prime which I think of, not to include the orchis. {Footnote: But there are the cardinal, thistles, milkweeds, etc., etc.}

The small bluish-white berries of the trientalis appear to be ripe. *Gnaepalium polycephalum*, less downy and greener than the pearly one. I notice to-day the first purplish aster, a pretty sizable one; may have been out a day or two, near the brook beyond Hubbard's Grove. — A. *Radula* (?).

I mark again the sound of crickets or locusts about alders, etc., about this time when the first asters open, which makes you fruitfully meditative, helps condense your thoughts, like the mel dews in the afternoon.

This the afternoon of the year. How apt we are to be reminded of lateness, even before the year is half spent! Such little; objects check the diffuse tide of our thoughts and bring it to a head, which thrills us. They are such fruits as music, poetry, love, which humanity bears.

Saw one of the common wild roses (*R. lucida*?). The swamp blackberry ripe in open ground. The *Rhus copallina* is not yet quite out, though the *glabra* is in fruit. The smaller purple fringed orchis has not quite filled out its spike. What a surprise to detect under the dark, damp, cavernous copse, where some wild beast might fitly prowl, this splendid flower, silently standing with all its eyes on you! It has a rich fragrance withal. Rain in the evening.



1853-1854

1853-1854



July 27, Wednesday: A treaty between the federal government of the United States of America and headmen of the Comanche, Kiowa, and Apache tribes. This treaty was entered into, as per usual, in good faith.

READ THE FULL TEXT

A treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation between the United States of America and Argentina.

READ THE FULL TEXT

Some 10 days after the ignominious completion of [Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry](#)'s 1st visit, Tokugawa Ieyoshi (1793-1853) died and was succeeded as 13th shogun of the Tokugawa Shogunate of [Japan](#) by his son Tokugawa Iesada (1824-1858). (Shogun Iesada being in poor health, the 1854 negotiations with this foreigner would be conducted primarily by his emissary Abe Masahiro.)

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

This morning we took out on the sage plains again, 6 miles brought us along side of the river again, 5 miles more and we come to a branch 10 ft. wide, very bad to cross, 3 miles farther we strike the river bottom. Here we camped again. Drove 17 miles.

Something that is of considerable significance to us may or may not have occurred on this day, of which there is no trace in [Henry Thoreau](#)'s journal:



July 27th. 8 A.M. — Rain, still quite soakingly. June & July perhaps only are the months of drought. The draught ceases with the dog-days.

P.M. — To White Pond in rain.

The autumnal dandelion now appears more abundantly within a week, *Solidago Lancelolata* also a few days prob. though only partially open.



1853-1854

1853-1854

There are no torn-out pages in this area of Thoreau's journal, or blank spaces, to indicate that anything has been erased or removed. The above material is exactly everything that Thoreau had that he needed to offer a record of on July 27th, 1853. However, we happen now to know, which is to say we know **if the story as told by Alexander H. Japp is to be trusted** – a door allegedly happened to swing open unexpectedly while Henry was bathing and bandaging feet — on this day, Henry and his sister Sophia were caring in their home for a runaway slave.

Here is the incident as it would be presented by [Dr. Edward Waldo Emerson](#) without any accidentally swinging-open door:



When I went [to the Thoreau home] next morning, I found them all in a state of excitement by reason of the arrival of a fugitive negro from the South, who had come fainting to their door about daybreak and thrown himself upon their mercy. Thoreau took me in to see the poor wretch, whom I found to be a man with whose face, as that of a slave from the South, I was familiar. The negro was much terrified at seeing me, supposing I was one of his pursuers. Having quieted his fears by the assurance that I, too, but in a different sense [Conway is evidently referring to the fact that he had forgone his inheritance because of his family's owning slaves], was a refugee from the bondage he was escaping, and at the same time being able to attest the negro's genuineness, I sat and watched the singularly tender and lowly devotion of the scholar to the slave. He must be fed, his swollen feet bathed, and he must think of nothing but rest: again and again this coolest and calmest of men drew near to the trembling negro, and soothed him and bade him feel at home, and have no fear that any power should again wrong him. Thoreau could not walk with me that day, as had been agreed, but must mount guard over the fugitive, for slave-hunters were not extinct in those days, and so I went away, after a while.

Here is the same incident as it would be related in 1904 by the Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) in his late-



1853-1854

1853-1854

life autobiography, again minus any accidentally swinging-open door:



He invited me to come next day for a walk, but in the morning, I found the Thoreaus agitated by the arrival of a coloured fugitive from Virginia, who had come to their door at daybreak. Thoreau took me to a room where his excellent sister, Sophia, was ministering to the fugitive, who recognized me as one he had seen. He was alarmed, but his fears passed into delight when after talking with him about our county I certified his genuineness. I observed the tender and lowly devotion of Thoreau to the African. He now and then drew near to the trembling man, and with a cheerful voice bade him feel at home, and have no fear that any power should again wrong him. That whole day he mounted guard over the fugitive, for it was a slave-hunting time. But the guard had no weapon, and probably there was no such thing in the house.

The next day the fugitive was got off to Canada, and I enjoyed my first walk with Thoreau.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

VOLUME II



1853-1854

1853-1854

There are no torn-out pages in this area of Thoreau's journal, or blank spaces, to indicate that anything has been erased or removed. This is exactly everything that Thoreau had, that he wanted to make a record of on July 27, 1853. However, we happen now to know, which is to say we know if the story as told by [Alexander H. Japp](#) is to be trusted—a door allegedly happened to swing open unexpectedly while Henry was bathing and bandaging feet—on this day, Henry and his sister Sophia were caring in their home for a runaway slave.

Here is the incident as it would be presented by [Dr. Edward Waldo Emerson](#) without any accidentally swinging-open door:



When I went [to the Thoreau home] next morning, I found them all in a state of excitement by reason of the arrival of a fugitive negro from the South, who had come fainting to their door about daybreak and thrown himself upon their mercy. Thoreau took me in to see the poor wretch, whom I found to be a man with whose face, as that of a slave from the South, I was familiar. The negro was much terrified at seeing me, supposing I was one of his pursuers. Having quieted his fears by the assurance that I, too, but in a different sense [Conway is evidently referring to the fact that he had forgone his inheritance because of his family's owning slaves], was a refugee from the bondage he was escaping, and at the same time being able to attest the negro's genuineness, I sat and watched the singularly tender and lowly devotion of the scholar to the slave. He must be fed, his swollen feet bathed, and he must think of nothing but rest: again and again this coolest and calmest of men drew near to the trembling negro, and soothed him and bade him feel at home, and have no fear that any power should again wrong him. Thoreau could not walk with me that day, as had been agreed, but must mount guard over the fugitive, for slave-hunters were not extinct in those days, and so I went away, after a while.

Here is the same incident as it would be related in 1904 by the Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) in his late-



1853-1854

1853-1854

life autobiography, again minus any accidentally swinging-open door:



He invited me to come next day for a walk, but in the morning, I found the Thoreaus agitated by the arrival of a coloured fugitive from Virginia, who had come to their door at daybreak. Thoreau took me to a room where his excellent sister, Sophia, was ministering to the fugitive, who recognized me as one he had seen. He was alarmed, but his fears passed into delight when after talking with him about our county I certified his genuineness. I observed the tender and lowly devotion of Thoreau to the African. He now and then drew near to the trembling man, and with a cheerful voice bade him feel at home, and have no fear that any power should again wrong him. That whole day he mounted guard over the fugitive, for it was a slave-hunting time. But the guard had no weapon, and probably there was no such thing in the house. The next day the fugitive was got off to Canada, and I enjoyed my first walk with Thoreau.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

VOLUME II



July 28, Thursday: Ambassadors of the great powers in Austria formulated the “Vienna Note” in an attempt to diffuse the Russia-Ottoman tension. This called on the Ottomans to reaffirm the treaties of Küçük Kaynarca and Edirne, making Russia and France joint guarantors.

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Started early this morning to get away from the mosquitoes after eating a good breakfast of fresh fish. Four miles from camp we come to the river again. The road is on a kind of second bluff. Two miles more and we are at the American Falls. These Falls are about 60 ft. Fine place to fish below them. The road here takes the bluff again for three miles from thence to a Rocky pass 4 miles, road still near the river. Two miles from this is a fine creek. One mile beyond this we camped again on the bank of the river. Grass not very good. Drove 20 miles today.

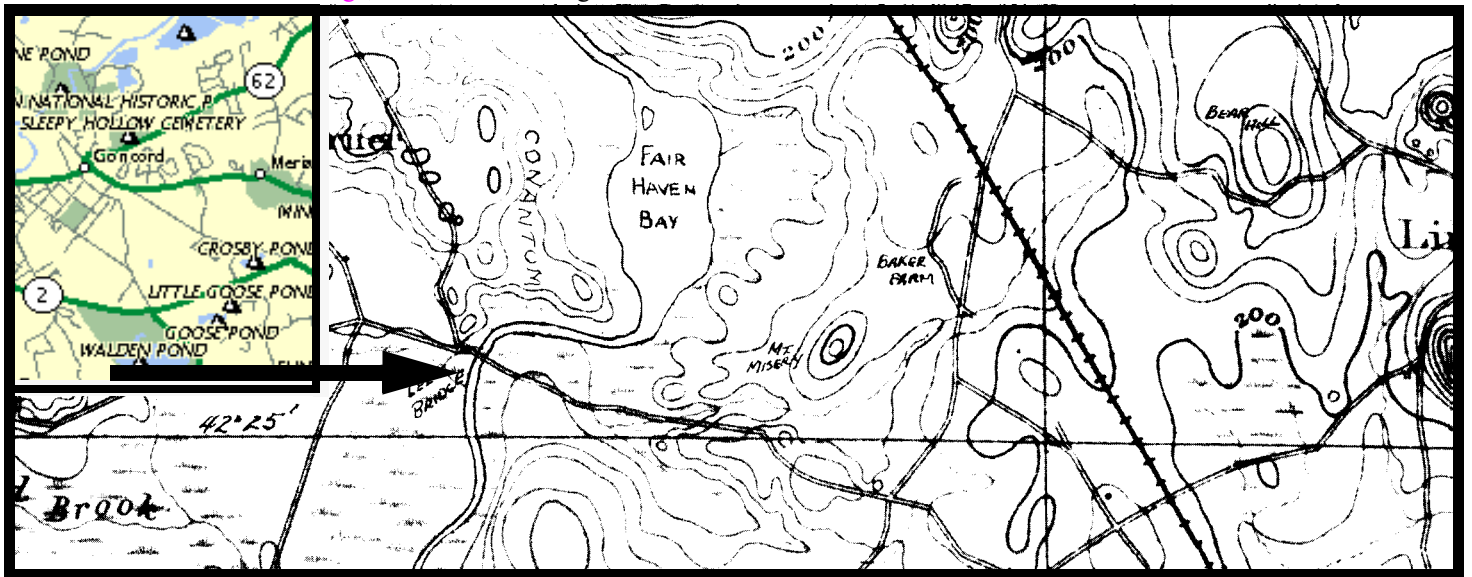
1853-1854

1853-1854

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) and the Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) crossed over the [Sudbury River](#)



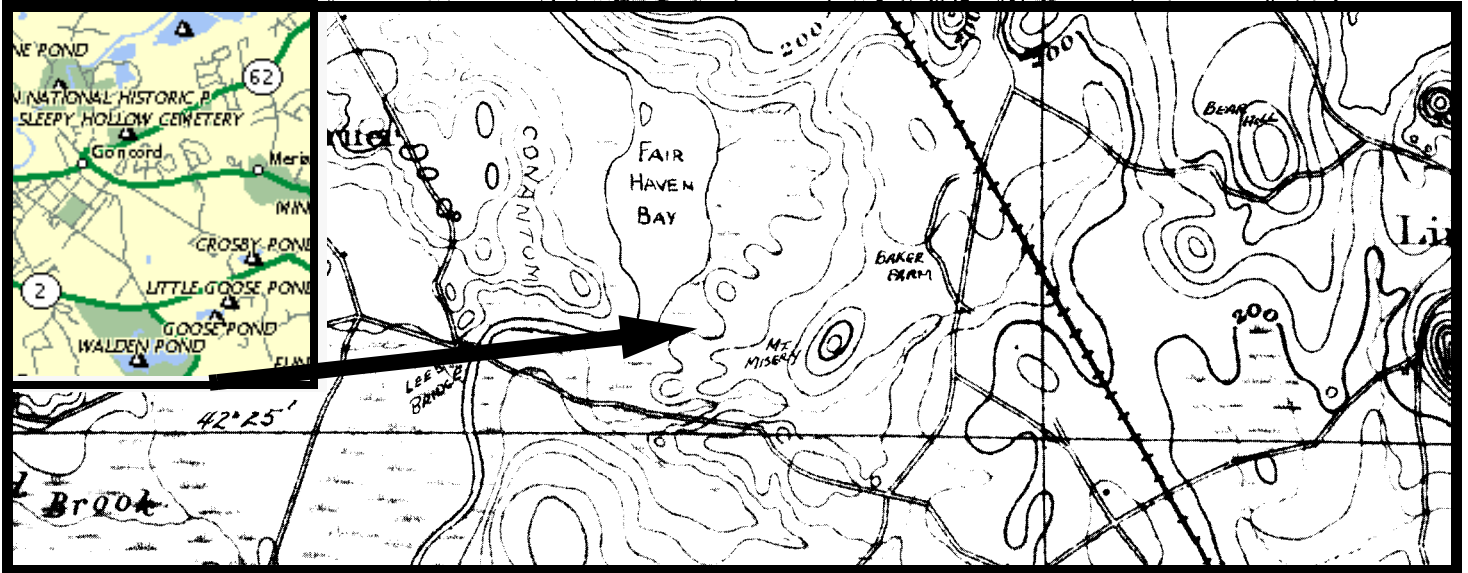
on [Lee's Bridge](#), or the Corner Bridge:



1853-1854

1853-1854

and went on to [Clematis Brook](#) between [Fair Haven Bay](#) and [Mount Misery](#):



July 28: 7 A.M. — To Azalea Brook.

The mikania is hardly out yet;⁴ like the eupatoriums, shows its color long before it opens. The vernonia not quite yet. The lilies, though a little less numerous, appear freer from insects than at first. Their pads not so much eaten as those of the nuphar. The pickerel-weed has passed its prime. The petty-morel at the brook not out, though that by the Corner Spring has berries.

P.M. — To Clematis Brook via Lee's with [Mr. Conway](#).⁵

Tells me of a kind of apple tree with very thick leaves near the houses in Virginia called the tea-tree, under which they take tea, even through an ordinary shower, it sheds the rain so well, and there the table constantly stands in warm weather.

The *Gerardia fava* in the hickory grove behind Lee's Cliff, some days. Answers apparently in every respect to the above, yet its lower leaves are like narrow white oak leaves. Have I seen the *G. quercifolia*? Is that the *Cicuta bulbifera* just out at Clematis Brook, with decomposed leaves and linear leaflets fringed-toothed?⁶ That low herbaceous, hairy, especially the lower part, with several hairy, obovate or oblanceolate leaves, remotely, very slightly, toothed, and glandular hairs on peduncles and calyx, a few heads, some days at least. *Vide* herbarium. Saw lower leaves of the white vervain turned a reddish lake or claret. Nightshade berries begin to ripen, — to be red. Is that rather coarse flower about Mrs. Brooks's house (escaped from cultivation), called Bouncing Bet, and which has been open ten days or more, *Saponaria Vaccaria*, -cow-herb? The mullein pink is also escaped from gardens thereabouts. *Aster linariifolius*.

4. *Vide* 29th.

5. [Rev. Moncure D. Conway. See his AUTOBIOGRAPHY, vol. i, pp. 141, 142, where he speaks of walking with [Thoreau](#) in the summer of 1853.]

6. Yes.



1853-1854

1853-1854



July 29, Friday: Excerpts from [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) were published by [Horace Greeley](#)'s [New-York Tribune](#) under, of all possible titles,

A Massachusetts Hermit.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Plenty of mosquitoes again last night. Two miles from camp is Fall Creek, very steep bank to go up, creek 20 ft. wide. The road follows down the river 3 miles then strikes across to Raft River 7 miles. Camped here again. Drove 13 miles. Grass scarce.





July 29: P.M. — To hibiscus, Beck Stow's, and Brister's Hill.

Galcopsis Tetrahit, a good while. Vernonia, just opened, a few central ones. *Polygonum hydropiperoides*. At Vernonia Meadow I notice the beds of horse-mint now in flower, — bluish whorls of flowers, — now in its prime. Now is the time to gather thorough-wort. Cardinals are in their prime. The hibiscus is barely budded, but already the meadow-hay mowers have sheared close to it.

Most fields are so completely shorn now that the walls and fence-sides, where plants are protected, appear unusually rich. I know not what aspect the flowers would present if our fields and meadows were untouched for a year, if the mower were not permitted to swing his scythe there. No doubt some plants contended long in vain with these vandals, and at last withdrew from the contest. About these times some hundreds of men with freshly sharpened scythes make an irruption into my garden when in its rankest condition, and clip my herbs all as close as they can, and I am restricted to the rough hedges and worn-out fields which had little to attract them, to the most barren and worthless pastures. I know how some fields of johnswort and goldenrod look, left in the natural state, but not much about our richest fields and meadows. Those huckleberries near the hibiscus are remarkably glossy, fresh, and plump in the lowland, but not so sweet as some. Crossed the river there, carrying over my clothes.

The Great Meadows present a very busy scene now. There are at least thirty men in sight getting the hay, revealed by their white shirts in the distance, the farthest mere specks, and here and there great loads of hay, almost concealing the two dor-bugs that draw them — and horse racks [*sic*] pacing regularly back and forth. It is refreshing to behold and scent even this wreck of the meadow-plants. Here is a man sedulously cocking up great heaps composed almost alone of flowering fern, yet perfectly green. Here are many owners side by side, each taking his slice of the great meadow. The mower fixes bits of newspaper to stakes in straight lines across the meadow to guide him, lest he cut over his bounds. The completion of haying might be celebrated by a farmers' festival.

The wormwood, perhaps; has hardly opened yet. Peter appears to have cut all the liatris before its time. [No.] The *Solidago stricta* begins to yellow the Great Fields in front of his house, but the nemoralis is hardly out there yet. The crotalaria has some fully formed pods, together with flowers, a little further east than before. It must be three weeks old at least. The sight of the small rough sunflower about a dry ditch bank and Hedge advances me at once further toward autumn. At the same time I hear a dry, ripe, autumnal chirp of a cricket. It is the next stop to the first goldenrod. It grows where it escapes the mower, but no doubt, in our localities of plants, we do not know where they would prefer to grow if unmolested by man, but rather where they best escape his vandalism. How large a proportion of flowers, for instance, are referred to and found by hedges, walls, and fences.

I see three or four (apparently) young marsh hawks , but full grown, circling and tumbling about not much above the ground and playing with one another. They are quite a reddish brown. They utter a squeak (not a shrill scream), much like a small bird or animal. I noticed that my hen-hawks  screamed and circled round their old nest yesterday, though their young must be fully grown.

Butterflies of various colors are now more abundant than I have seen them before, especially the small reddish or coppery ones. I counted ten yesterday on a single *Sericocarpus conyzoides*. They were in singular harmony with the plant, as if they made a part of it. The insect that comes after the honey or pollen of a plant is necessary to it and in one sense makes a part of it. Being constantly in motion and, as they moved, opening and closing their wings to preserve their balance, they presented a very lifesome scene. To-day I see them on the early goldenrod (*Solidago stricta*).

I broke through Heywood's thick wood, north of Moore's land, going toward Beck Stow's in the Great Fields, and unexpectedly came into a long, narrow, winding, and very retired blueberry swamp which I did not know existed there. A spot seemingly untrudden, — a deep withdrawn meadow, sunk low amid the forest and filled

1853-1854

1853-1854

with green waving sedge, three feet high, and low andromeda and hardhack, for the most part dry to the feet and with no print of man or beast, interspersed with islands of blueberry bushes and surrounded by a dense hedge of high blueberry bushes, paniced andromeda, high choke-berry, wild holly, with its beautiful crimson berries, etc., etc., this being the front rank to a higher wood. Thus hedged about these places are, so that it is only at some late year that you stumble upon them. Crouching you thread your way amid some dense shrub oak wood some day, descending next through the almost impenetrable hedge, and stand to your surprise on the edge of this fair open meadow with a bottom of unfathomed mud, as retired and novel as if it were a thousand miles removed from your ordinary walks. Not penetrable except in midsummer. It is as far off as Persia from Concord. I entered from this swamp to that next south, through a narrow passage hardly a foot wide, stooping close to the ground, worn by some cows once, brushing off blueberries in my passage, and then burst out into another yet larger swamp, or meadow, of a similar character. And in the first I found great blueberries as big as old-fashioned bullets or cranberries, — the ambrosial fruit. These grew side by side in singular harmony in the dense hedge with crimson holly berries and black choke-berries. Over these meadows the marsh hawk [] circles undisturbed. What means this profusion of berries at this season only? Beck Stow's is much frequented by cows, which burst through the thickest bushes.

Crossed over to Tuttle's. Aaron's-rod not yet. The high blackberries began to be ripe about a week ago. The small flowers of the *Helianthemum Canadense* (eistus). Its leaves are like the *Lechea major*, for which. I took it last (?) fall, when surrounded with frost at its base (hence called frost-weed). Started a pack of grouse two-thirds grown. *Spiranthes gracilis* in Hubbard's Wood Path, coming toward his Close. May have been out some time. *Hypopitys lanuginosa*, American pine-sap, just pushing up, false beechdrops. Gray says from June to August. It is cream-colored or yellowish under the pines in Hubbard's Wood Path. Some near the fence east of the Close. A plant related to the tobacco-pipe. Remarkable this doubleness in nature, — not only that nature should be composed of just these individuals, but that there should be so rarely or never an individual without its kindred, — its cousin. It is allied to something else. There is not only the tobacco-pipe, but pine-sap. Moist banks covered with the nearly grown, but green, partridge-berries now. Prenanthes, almost. Tobacco-pipe, how long? Coral-root well out, — *Corallorhiza multiflora*, — at Brister's Hill. There are some beautiful glossy, firm ferns there, — *Polystichum acrostichoides* (?), — shield fern. Nature made ferns for pure leaves, to show what she could do in that line. I also see some small, umbrella-shaped (with sharp cones), shining and glossy yellow fungi, like an election cake atop, also some dead yellow and orange. Clethra, a day or two in some places. In the Poorhouse Meadow, the white orchis spike almost entirely out, some days at least. This is the best place to find the *Pycnanthemum muticum* and *lanceolatum* that I know. *Eupatorium purpureum*. We are willing this coarse plant should be called Joe-Pye-weed. *Rhus copallina* behind Bent's, out a day or two; earlier than at Cliffs. *Acalypha Virginica* probably out in some places; not the plant I saw. Some scarlet thorn leaves are yellow-spotted now. By railroad causeway a large smooth-stemmed goldenrod (not yet out), with smooth (both sides) linear-lanceolate sharply toothed leaves. Another in a meadow, smaller, downy, with broader leaves, already out, like (?) the first. That was probably the *Scirpus lacustris*, — the black rush of the Sudbury meadows, long since out; panicle just below the top.

Perchance the moon shines sometimes merely to tempt men forth to view creation by night, but soon wanes to warn them that day is the season appointed for their labors.



July 29, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to [James Walter Spooner](#).

Concord July 29th 1853.
Dear Sir,
I should like to
visit Plymouth again, though,
as you suspect, not particu-
larly on the day of the celebration.
I should like to stand once
more on your open beach, and
be reminded of that simple
sea shore it symbolizes, on
which we pilgrims all landed
not long since; though most



1853-1854

1853-1854

*of us have wandered far
inland, and perchance lost
ourselves, and the savor of
our salt, amid the hills
and forests of this world.
I should like to meet there
my Sea-born & Peregrine
cousins, and have a
social chat with them about
the time when we came over;
—but at present it may
not be [] It is not convenient
for me to come; but*

Page 2

*be assured that whenever I
may do so, I will remember
the spirit of your very kind
invitation
Yrs Henry D. Thoreau.*

The following appeared in Frederick Douglass' Paper:


Panorama of Uncle Tom's Cabin.

We have just received information that a young and talented anti-slavery artist has been, for the last year, engaged in painting a panorama of Uncle Tom's Cabin. It will contain some fifty scenes, life size, and will illustrate the whole story of the Cabin. The friend who communicated this to us, says of the painting, "It is decided, by competent judges, to be a splendid work."

We learn that some months will elapse ere the painting will be ready to present to the public.—J.G.

1853-1854

1853-1854

 July 30, Saturday: [Robert Schumann](#) suffered what was probably a stroke during a visit to Bonn.

Here is a panorama of Boston's Tremont Street, from Court Street to the Common, per [Gleason's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion](#). The top panel and the left side of the middle panel as printed in that magazine depicted the buildings along the east side of the street, while the right side of the middle panel and the lower panel depicted the buildings along the west side, and here I have arranged the various woodcut elements in a simpler form:



A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:


Started out this morning again alone as this is the last junction of the California and Oregon roads. Our company were going to California and were compelled to separate. We parted, however, with all good wishes and feeling after a pleasant part of the trip with them. We traveled over a very rough road today to Marshy Creek 17 miles without water.



July 30. I have for some time noticed the emersed leaves of the *Bidens Beckii* above the river surface, and this morning find the first flower. Last year I found none. Was it owing to the high water? The river has risen some since the dog-days. Wool-grass appears now in its prime. The weeds in the river seem to be subject to more casualties than elsewhere.

Many go to Europe to *finish their education*, and when they have returned their friends remark that the most they have acquired is a correct pronunciation of English. It is a premature hardening but hollowing of the shell. They become valuable utensils of the gourd kind, but have no palatable and nutritious inside. Instead of acquiring nutritious and palatable qualities to their pulp, it is all absorbed into a prematurely hardened shell. They went away squashes, and they return gourds. They are all expressed, or squeezed out; their essential oil is gone. They are pronounced for you; they are good to stand before or for a noun or man as handles; not even hollow gourds always, but the handle without the mug. They pronounce with the sharp precise report of a rifle, but the likeness is in the sound only, for they have no bullets to fire.

P.M. — To Ministerial Swamp.

Going through Dennis's and Hosmer's meadows, I see a dozen or more men at work. In almost every meadow throughout the town they are thus engaged at present. In every meadow you see far or near the lumbering hay-cart with its mountainous load and the rakers and mowers in white shirts. The bittern  hardly knows where to lay its eggs. By the way, I have heard no stake-driver for some time. If the meadows were untouched, I should no doubt see many more of the rare white and the beautiful smaller purple orchis there, as I now see a few along the shaded brooks and meadow's edge.

The choke-cherries (*Cerasus Virginiana*) near Hosmer's Spring are very abundant now; the bushes, about as high as your head, are loaded with full racemes, two or three inches long, of shining dark-red berries, the size of a pea, slightly oblong or oval, but, as yet at least, very astringent, puckering the mouth for a long time. No doubt frequently mistaken at sight for the rum cherry.

1853-1854

1853-1854

The angelica has gone to seed, and its great umbels, six inches in diameter, are turned brown at the top of its still purple hollow steins, sometimes seven feet high, the joints two feet long, and one and one third inches in diameter. By a meandering line of tall bare steins, surmounted by dark, dry umbels, I can trace the course of Nut Meadow Brook for half a mile. Nay, I find it by their aid when concealed by the grass even within a rod of me, for they indicate every meander. They rise much above everything else in the meadow. Close at hand, also, this brook is seen to be lined with the slender *Cicuta maculata* — there is much of this poisonous plant in our meadows - and *bulbifera*, with their smaller white umbels. This is a good place to look for the latter. I suppose it is the *Rumex hydrolapathum*, or great water dock, now going to seed there, with large valves and three large glands. I find some fruit on the *Ribes hirtellum* in J.P. Brown's land. It is globular, smooth, and red, marked by internal meridian lines, and inclined to be flattened at the poles. This does not blossom so early as our earliest in garden, but its fruit is more like this in color (though more smooth and glossy), while our later one is a dark purple or blue. Rather acid and wild-tasted. Is that the *Cirsium horridulum*, now out of bloom, on the north side of T. Wheeler's meadow, with tall, downy stem and the lower leaves almost entire and downy both sides, upper clasping and cut? Apparently the same by the L. Hosmer road at Nut Meadow Brook in Brown's meadow. The painted-cup still, and there. I was correct about the alders. The *incana* has a rounder leaf; the other is more oblong and is quite smooth beneath. I have missed the veery [Veery [Catharus fuscescens] for some time, but the wood thrush [Wood Thrush [Catharus mustelina] still sings and the peawai [Wood-Pewee, Eastern [Contopus virens (Wood-Pewee or Peawai)].

The wayfarer's tree! How good a name! Who bestowed it? How did it get adopted? The mass of men are very unpoetic, yet that Adam that names things is always a poet. The boor is ready to accept the name the poet gives. How nameless is the poet among us! He is abroad, but is not recognized. He does not get crowned with the laurel.

Goodyera pubescens on hillside south of Ministerial Swamp. Its veiny leaves, a hoary green, completely cover the ground on the damp and shady hillside, like a rug, sprinkled with dry oak leaves, which it has lifted as it grew. It is just sending up its green scapes amid the sere ones of last year, and one has partly blossomed. The hunter often sits on a shady bank and reuses on this beautiful leaf, wondering what rare virtues it may possess.

The tobacco-pipe has also pushed up there amid the dry leaves in the shade. It is abundant now, and here. Both stem and flowers and scales are a pure and delicate crystalline white. What to name it? Sheathed with delicate white scales. It reminded me of a maiden in her robes of purity who has always been nurtured in a shady and vault-like seclusion,— a nun of spotless purity, a daughter of Tellus and Cælum too, making her entrance into the world. Pushing aside the doorway of dry leaves, three sisters of various heights issue from their hidden convent and stand side by side in the presence of the light. We are surprised to see such pure robes court from the bowels of the earth. Yet this white and crystalline purity smacks of the cellar and shade. They, come forth to be proved, and stand abashed in presence of the light, with hanging heads and faces toward the ground under their pure white hoods and capes, striving at first to conceal their nakedness and tenderness. A few loose, scanty, but beautiful, pearly sheaths alone invested them, and the broader capes of their hoods. The sisters then came forth of spotless purity, but soon, exposed to light and air, their virtue dried black. I was surprised to hear that this was called the tobacco-pipe! Their untried virtue cannot long stand the light and air. These and pine-sap the plants the dog-days (?) produce.

Here, too, are clintonia berries and, with the neottia in the pyrolas, now generally almost out of bloom. *Lygodium palmatum* now apparently in bloom. It is a most beautiful slender and delicate fern, twining like [a] vine. about the stem of the meadow-sweet, paniced andromeda, goldenrods, cite., to the height of three feet or more, and difficult to detach from them. Tic lower half, in the shade, of small leafy sterile frondlets, the upper half, exposed to the light, of the finely divided fertile frondlets: Our most beautiful fern, and most suitable for wreaths or garlands. It is rare. Round-leaved sundew — for some time. *Bartonia* or *centaurella* almost out, not spread, somewhat like the former now. Tansy has been the prevailing yellow flower for some time. It precedes the golden rods.

This month has not been so warm as June. There have been no such bathing days as we had last year, two or three. Methinks our warm weather hardest to bear is the last half of June and the first half of July. Afterward the shade and the dog-days give us moisture and coolness, especially at night.

Saw some green galls on a goldenrod (?) three quarters of an inch in diameter, shaped like a fruit or an Eastern temple, with two or three little worms inside, completely changing the destiny of the



1853-1854

1853-1854

plant, showing the intimate relation between animal and vegetable life. The animal signifies its



wishes by a touch, and the plant, instead of going on to blossom and bear its normal fruit, devotes itself to the service of the insect and becomes its cradle and food. It suggests that Nature is a kind of gall, that the Creator stung her and man is the grub she is destined to house and feed. The plant rounds off and paints the gall with as much care and love as its own flower and fruit, admiring its perchance even more.

I see a rusty-colored shorter-wooled cotton-grass, which may be the *Eriophorum Virginicum*.



July 31, Sunday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Sunday again but not to our weary train. Besides we are now among the most hostile tribe of Indians on the route. Many emigrants have been killed here. There should not be less than 15 or 16 wagons together. We camped alone last night, but we kept a constant guard. We have not been troubled as yet. We will join some train the first one we come up with that suits. The road follows down Marshy Creek about 4 miles and crosses and leave it 2 mi. farther. We came quite close to Snake River, 2 miles more and we went down on the river bottom which we followed for 1 mile, then up the bluff again and struck across to Goose Creek. Here we found some grass and water, and a train we were some little acquainted with and after exchanging a few words found they were well acquainted with our relatives in the State of N. York. We joined this train and lay by with them till morning it being quite early when we found them. Only 13 miles today.

Petition of Elisha Mitchell Requesting a Leave of Absence

The undersigned, professor in the University of [North Carolina](#), respectfully represents to the Hon. Board of Trustees of the same that he graduated at Yale College in Sept. 1813 – that after the lapse of 40 years (nearly) the surviving members of the class to which he belonged propose to have a “reunion” on the 27th day of July next being the day preceding the annual commencement in that institution.

It would be very agreeable to him to see those who were his companions in study in some instances at the preparatory school – and in others his associates during a period of four years – to see them once more.

He therefore craves leave of absence from the University for a term of not less than fourteen days, after the 24th of July next; with a view to the object just specified as also, to transact some business connected with the course of instruction in the department of which he has the charge.

Which is respectfully submitted by

E. Mitchell

University of N.C. July 31st 1853

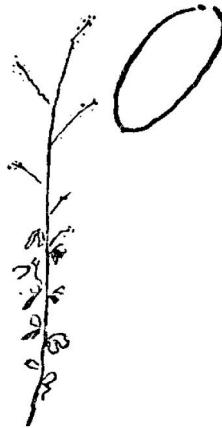
1853-18



1853-1854

July 31. *Sunday*. P.M. — To Walden.

The bristly aralia berries in dense patches with their numerous umbels, the central ones ripe for two or three days. They are about two inches in diameter and perfect hemispheres of dark-blue or blue-black berries, size of a huckleberry, on slender peduncles of equal length, forming a dense hemispherical umbel, two inches in diameter. I counted a hundred and thirty such berries in one. Rum cherry just ripe. Purple gerardia by to-morrow or the next day; the linear-leafed gerardia. The anychia, or forked chickweed, grows larger, spreading red stems, on the south side of Heywood Peak. The commonest *Lespedeza violacea*, with small elliptical leaves, perhaps a week. *Desmodium nudiflora*, naked-flowered tick-trefoil, some already with laments round-angled; probably more than a week; the tall, naked flowering stems, sometimes more than two feet high, appearing like separate plants, at some distance from the rest, which are much lower, about ten inches high, with a bunch of oval leaves. *Lespedeza hirta* out. I find also a trefoil plant with long, wand-like (?) panicled racemes, rising a foot or more above the leaves, with flowers turned a bluish or verdigris green, apparently wilted, and leaves below, about the simple stem, on short petioles, oblongish, one to two inches. May be *Desmodium Canadense* (?) or *laevigatum* (?) or — ? Somewhat downy-stemmed. Some time



— a week — out. Also in J. Hosmer's pines beyond Clamshell hill. Also the *Gadolinium recurrences*, to the eye much like the fragrant one near by, but a lighter green and very sticky. Pennyroyal well out for some days at least there, in large bushy hefts. White goldenrod. Bushy Gerardia, showing no radical leaves yet. I see some galls on under side of hickory leaves, red like currants, hollow with a grub within. *Solidago nemoralis*. These desmodiums, etc., etc., on the south side of Heywood Peak, a warm dry sprout-land, where I suspect they were not to be found before the wood was cut. They are very forward there. *Goodyera repens* well out at Corallorhiza Hillside; some time out. Put it close after the *gracilis*.

I calculate that less than forty species of flowers known to me remain to blossom this year.

AUGUST 1853




August: Friend [William Henry Harvey](#) began a 3-year round-the-globe voyage on which he would visit [Egypt](#), Aden, Ceylon, Singapore, [Australia](#), New Zealand, Tonga, the Fiji Islands, and Valparaiso.

[Parker Pillsbury](#) traveled to Michigan with [Abby Kelley Foster](#) and [Stephen Symonds Foster](#).



1853-1854

1853-1854

 August: [Harper's New Monthly Magazine](#) published an article "A Ride with [Kit Carson](#) through the Great American Desert and the Rocky Mountains" by [George Douglas Brewerton](#). The trip described is something that had happened in 1848. In 1854 [Henry Thoreau](#) would copy from this article into his Indian Notebook #8.⁷



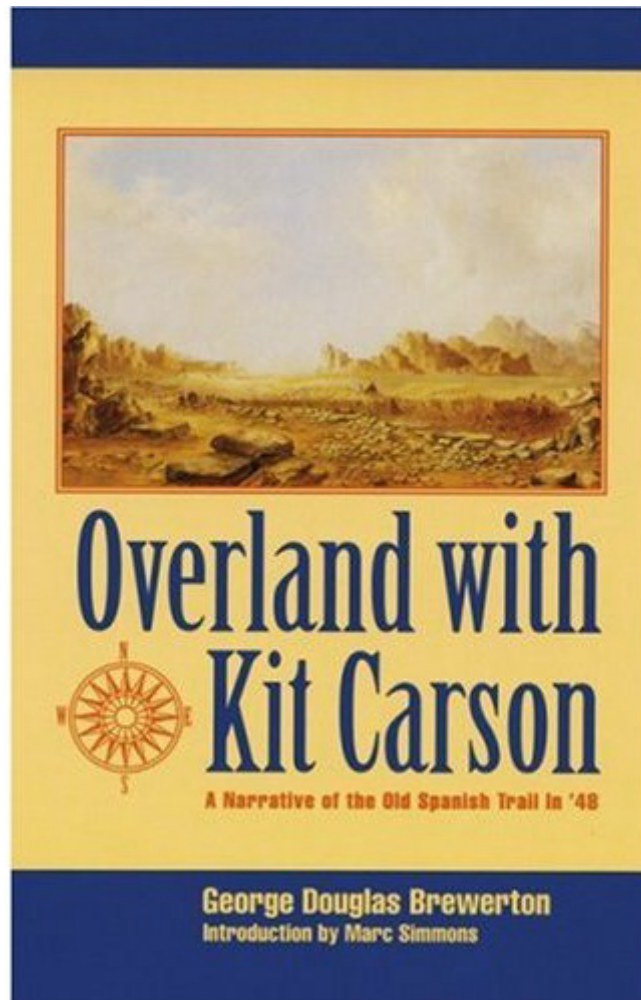
A RIDE WITH KIT CARSON

7. It is presumably safe to infer from such a reference, and from the fact that we also know that [Thoreau](#) read an article in the November issue, that an omnivorous reader such as himself would have been familiar with the contents of all the issues of [Harper's Magazine](#) from June to November of this year at least — and therefore all the contents of this particular series of issues of this particular monthly magazine that have come to be bound together as "Volume VII" will be included in this Kouroo Contexture.

- HARPER'S FOR JUNE '53**
- HARPER'S FOR JULY '53**
- HARPER'S FOR AUG '53**
- HARPER'S FOR SEP '53**
- HARPER'S FOR OCT '53**
- HARPER'S FOR NOV '53**

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**1853-1854****1853-1854**

This magazine article would become a book, *OVERLAND WITH KIT CARSON. A NARRATIVE OF THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL IN '48*.



➡ August: A letter from [Lydia Maria Child](#) to [Ellis Gray Loring](#) rejected Jewett's offer to republish.

LETTERS FROM NEW YORK

➡ August: [William Cooper Nell](#) signed a petition to revise and amend the Massachusetts Constitution to strike "white" from the General Militia Law. Rufus Choate and other Democrats would defeat this agenda by pointing out that the Massachusetts militias might on occasion need to serve outside the boundaries of the state, and that under such circumstances the appearance of black men "with weapons in their hands" would be conspicuously intolerable. Did we want the militias of other states to begin to fire upon the Massachusetts troops? –For that is what would happen.

➡ August: The [Reverend Samuel Ringgold Ward](#) continued on his lecture tour in England:

I will venture upon a few points to which I have had the honour of calling public attention in a lecture ... at Cheltenham,



1853-1854

1853-1854

Liverpool, Glasgow, Ulverstone, and Dundee, and before two metropolitan literary societies.

In the sacred Scriptures, no mention is made of the son of Ham which in any respect represents him as at all inferior to the sons of Shem or Japhet. I know that "cursed be Canaan"⁸ is sometimes quoted as if it came from the lips of God; although, as the Rev. H.W. Beecher says, and as the record reads, these are but the words of a newly awakened drunken man. There was about as much inspiration in these words, as there might have been in anything said by Lot on two very disgraceful nights in his existence. I admit, of course, that the descendants of Canaan have since been the "servants of servants"; but I do deny that God is responsible for the words of Noah at that time, and I also deny that there is any sort of connection between his prediction and the enslavement of the Negro. The Scriptures nowhere allude to it in that sense: indeed, I see no more sanction to that prediction than I see approval of his debauch, in the Scriptures. Besides, how many other than Africans have been enslaved, oppressed, and made "servants of servants," since the time of that prediction!

Aside from this one point, however, is the fact that the first person made a slave, of whom we read in the Bible, was sold to Egyptians. Joseph was sold into Egypt. The Israelites were oppressed by Egyptians. Moses was called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and was thus heir apparent to the Egyptians, the most powerful throne in the world. After the exodus, and the establishment of the Jewish empire, frequent mention of an honourable kind is made of the Egyptians, with whom Solomon was on the most friendly terms. He took the daughter of the Egyptian monarch as a wife; he received the Queen of the South as a distinguished guest, and treated her so, during her royal visit to the Jewish capital.

The Assyrians, with their great city Nineveh, were descendants of Ham; and surely they are not spoken of in the Bible disrespectfully. In 1 Chron. iv. 4 it is written, "And they found fat pasture and good; and the land was wide, and quiet, and peaceable; for they of Ham had dwelt there of old." This, I think, is very important testimony to the peaceable, quiet, industrious character of "them of Ham." A "wide," well tilled land, having "fat pasture and good," speaks well of their energy, industry, skill, and success, as agriculturists, as well as of their wealth. They had an ancient, honourable name - "they had dwelt there of old;" and that "they had dwelt there of old" seemed to be abundant reason, in the opinion of the sacred writer, for the respectability of the country, and its prosperous, wealthy appearance. The "quietness and peaceableness" of the country - the reason given for which was, that "they of Ham had dwelt there of old" - is sufficient testimony to the high character of that people; and it agrees exactly with what all know, who know anything, of the race: they are aware that Negroes exhibit most prominently those characteristics which accord with quietness and peaceableness. I set a very high value upon this piece of sacred testimony, and am very grateful that it is in the Bible. "Cursed be Canaan" did

8. Genesis ix. 25.

1853-1854

1853-1854

not hinder this!

I am not at all forgetful of the wickedness of the ancient Negroes. In this, as in other things, they showed their likeness to, their oneness with, the human race generally. They committed just such sins as did other people, and the impartial Jehovah treated them accordingly. Hence the overthrow of Egypt and the destruction of Assyria.

To come down to New Testament times, we find (Acts xiii. 1) among the teachers, Simeon, who "was called Niger" – I presume, because he was black. Dr. Patten thinks it was because of his black hair: there is nothing to designate that the adjective "niger" relates to hair. But it is put in the masculine gender, while "coma," hair, is feminine; and it is so put as to indicate a surname, which in those days was significant of some such peculiarity as the term naturally implies. Queen Candace is spoken of in no mean terms, nor is her minister – Prime Minister, I believe – to whose chariot Philip had especial directions from heaven to "join himself."

I will not again allude to the great theologians of early days, of whom I have frequently spoken; but it is perhaps admissible to step aside to profane history for a few passages of testimony concerning the ancient Negro. Diodorus Siculus says nothing discreditable of the Negro of his times. Carthage was not the meanest of countries, though Hannibal, like his subjects, was black. No doubt there was a good deal going on in Carthage, while Hannibal was besieging Rome, which one could not but be reminded of last winter; but that was not (so the [Crimean](#) campaign shows) peculiar to blacks. But I will fortify this part of the subject by a single quotation, and that quotation shall come from an American, a distinguished American, the Honourable Alexander H. Everett. Speaking on this point, he says – "Trace this very civilization, of which we are so proud, to its origin, and where do you find it? We received it from our European ancestry; they from the Greeks and the Romans; those from the Jews; but whence did the Jews receive it? From Egypt and Ethiopia – in one word, from Africa!" He then adverts to the fact, that "Moses, the great Jewish legislator, was a graduate of an Egyptian college." Speaking of their progress and great proficiency in some of the most useful arts, Mr. Everett holds the following language: – "The ruins of Egypt will be, what they are now, the wonder and the admiration of the civilized world, when St. Peter's and St. Paul's, the present pride of London and of Rome, shall have crumbled into dust." I do not agree with Mr. Everett, touching the "crumbling of St. Peter's and St. Paul's"; but the reader will recollect that Macaulay holds like opinions, combated by Lord John Russell. It is not strange, then, that Mr. Everett should hold them. The belief is very common, that nations "ripe and rot," and go away into a decline, of necessity. Mr. Everett maintains that belief: I do not. But his idea is, that Egyptian architecture and masonry will, as ruins, remain permanent when those of London and Rome shall be sought for in vain. Such is this learned gentleman's idea of the superiority of the former. In the same speech Mr. Everett says, when alluding to the superior learning of ancient Africans, "Those stirring spirits, Homer, Pythagoras, and others, travelled among those Africans, as did the sons of the wealthy Greeks and Romans, to acquire the



1853-1854

1853-1854

completion of their education, and to give the finishing touch to their verses, just as our sons and poets now travel in Germany and Italy for a like purpose."

Knowing that his countrymen are exceedingly unwilling to believe that anything good or great ever emanated from one wearing a black skin, and knowing that those who cannot dispute the honourable history of ancient Africans frequently deny that they were blacks, Mr. Everett remarks - "Sir, some persons say that, although the Egyptians and Ethiopians were Africans, they were not black. [Herodotus](#), the father of history, travelled among them, and he tells you they were black men, with crisped woolly hair; and I cannot bring myself to believe that Herodotus could not distinguish black from white, when he saw it. Moreover, the same testimony is borne by Greeks and Romans of undoubted veracity, who knew them as well as we know our Canadian neighbours." Mr. Everett was a citizen of Massachusetts, and he made the speech with which I have made so free before the Massachusetts Colonization Society, in 1839. This gentleman was American Minister Plenipotentiary to China, during the presidency of Mr. Tyler. Another of the Everett family, the Honourable Edward Everett (who, during the administration of the same President, was Minister to the Court of St. James'), bears like testimony concerning the Negro, before the American Colonization Society, at a later date. I regret having no copy of that speech at hand.

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

1853-1854

1853-1854

At some point between this month and March 1854, the Reverend [Daniel Foster](#) and [Mrs. Dora Foster](#) would move to East Princeton, Massachusetts, where they would attempt to farm without any great success, and where the Reverend Foster would preach.

The roof complete, the Manns were able to move into their new home near [Antioch College](#). Alpheus Marshall Merrifield had for one reason or another, however, neglected to drill a well, so for the first year the President he was opposing, [Horace Mann, Sr.](#), and his three sons, would be needing to lug all their water home from the cistern in North Hall.



1853-1854

1853-1854



August/September: [Lt. Matthew Fontaine Maury](#) had early become convinced that adequate scientific knowledge of the sea could be obtained only through international cooperation.



He proposed that the United States invite the maritime nations of the world to a conference to establish a “universal system” of meteorology, and he was the leading spirit of that pioneer scientific conference when it met in Brussels. Soon after this “First International Maritime Conference held at Brussels in 1853 for devising an Uniform System of Meteorological Observations at Sea,” Prussia, Spain, Sardinia, the free city of Hamburg, the republic of Bremen, Chile, Austria, Brazil, and other nations would enroll themselves in the enterprise. The Pope would offer flags of distinction to the ships of the papal states that submitted abstracts of their ships’ logs to Lt. Maury in [Washington DC](#). Within a few years, nations possessing 3/4ths of the shipping of the world would be sending oceanographic observations to Maury at the [US Naval Observatory](#), where the information could be evaluated and given worldwide distribution.

THE SHORTHAND REPORT

Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for August 1853 \(æf. 36\)](#)



August 1, Monday: The Central Bank of Brooklyn, [New-York](#) opened for business.

[Francis Galton](#) got married with Louisa Jane Butler (1822-1897).

Pepita-Polka op.138 by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#) was performed for the initial time, in the Sperl Ballroom of Vienna.

[Henri-Frédéric Amiel](#), who would be referred to as the “Swiss [Thoreau](#),” wrote in his *JOURNAL INTIME*: “I have just finished Pelletan’s book, “Profession de foi du dix-neuvième Siècle.” It is a fine book Only one thing is wanting to it — the idea of evil. It is a kind of supplement to the theory of Condorcet — indefinite perfectibility, man essentially good, life, which is a physiological notion, dominating virtue, duty, and holiness,

1853-1854

1853-1854

in short, a non-ethical conception of history, liberty identified with nature, the natural man taken for the whole man. The aspirations which such a book represents are generous and poetical, but in the first place dangerous, since they lead to an absolute confidence in instinct; and in the second, credulous and unpractical, for they set before us a mere dream man, and throw a veil over both present and past reality. The book is at once the plea justificatory of progress, conceived as fatal and irresistible, and an enthusiastic hymn to the triumph of humanity. It is earnest, but morally superficial; poetical, but fanciful and untrue. It confounds the progress of the race with the progress of the individual, the progress of civilization with the advance of the inner life. Why? Because its criterion is quantitative, that is to say, purely exterior (having regard to the wealth of life), and not qualitative (the goodness of life). Always the same tendency to take the appearance for the thing, the form for the substance, the law for the essence, always the same absence of moral personality, the same obtuseness of conscience, which has never recognized sin present in the will, which places evil outside of man, moralizes from outside, and transforms to its own liking the whole lesson of history! What is at fault is the philosophic superficiality of France, which she owes to her fatal notion of religion, itself due to a life fashioned by Catholicism and by absolute monarchy.

Catholic thought cannot conceive of personality as supreme and conscious of itself. Its boldness and its weakness come from one and the same cause — from an absence of the sense of responsibility, from that vassal state of conscience which knows only slavery or anarchy, which proclaims but does not obey the law, because the law is outside it, not within it. Another illusion is that of Quinet and Michelet, who imagine it possible to come out of Catholicism without entering into any other positive form of religion, and whose idea is to fight Catholicism by philosophy, a philosophy which is, after all, Catholic at bottom, since it springs from anti-Catholic reaction. The mind and the conscience, which have been formed by Catholicism, are powerless to rise to any other form of religion. From Catholicism, as from Epicureanism there is no return.”

A [railroad](#) broadside announced the coming of standard time.

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Drove 7 miles this morning and came to Snake River again. No feed again here, nothing but sage covers the face of this Broad Plain. We watered here and started again and of all the rock roads, this day's travel is the worst and dust too dense to speak of, for our stock and ourselves are choked almost to suffocation. We followed down the river for 12 miles and came to Rock creek, where we found some good spring water (a luxury) and camped, grass very scarce. Drove 19 miles.



August 1: I think that that universal crowing of the chip-bird [[Chipping Sparrow](#) [Spizella passerina](#)] in the morning is no longer heard. Is it the *Galium circæzans* [licorice bedstraw, of the madder family] which I have seen so long on Heywood Peak and elsewhere, with four broad leaves, low and branched? Put it early in June.

1853-1854

1853-1854



→ August 2, Tuesday: [Henry Thoreau](#)'s "Slavery in Massachusetts" was reprinted in the [New-York Daily Tribune](#).

A play entitled "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was being advertised:

BROADWAY THEATRE.—E. A. MARSHALL, sole lessee. Time altered.—Doors open at 7 o'clock, and the overture will commence precisely at 7½.—Boxes and Parquet, 50 cents; Family and Upper Circles, 25 cents; Private Boxes \$5 and \$6.—THIS EVENING, Aug. 1, will be performed
IRELAND AS IT IS.
 Ragged Pat. B Williams | Judy O'Flaherty. Mrs. Williams
IT'S THE CUSTOM OF THE COUNTRY.
 Melisse..... Mrs. Barney Williams

NATIONAL THEATRE.—A. B. PURDY, sole Lessee, Proprietor and Manager. Dress Circle and Boxes, 25 cents; Orchestra Tickets, 50 cents; Pit, 12½ cents; Private Box Tickets, \$1. Doors open at 7½ o'clock. THIS EVENING, August 1, will be performed the new Dramatic Version of
UNCLE TOM'S CABIN.
 Uncle Tom, the faithful slave..... G. C. German.
 St. Claire, the Southern Gentleman..... G. C. Howard.
 Gumpton Cuts, the Yankee..... C. K. Fox.

WASHINGTON CIRCUS.—Corner of Thirty-Ninth-st. and Sixth-av.
MANN, MOORE and THOMSON.... Proprietors.
COL. ALVAH MANN..... Manager.
 Grand Performances every afternoon and evening by a
STAR COMPANY OF EQUESTRIANS AND GYMNASTS.
 Admission to all parts of the house, 25 cents.

BARNUM'S MUSEUM.—The grand reopening of the dramatic season to-day, MONDAY, Aug. 1, with the comedy of **MONEY**. THIS EVENING, at 8 o'clock, by the new company of brilliant talent. A troupe of **INDIAN ACTORS AND ACTRESSES** will perform THIS AFTERNOON, at 3 o'clock, in their beautiful pieces. **SWISS BEARDED LADY**, and all other curiosities, to be seen as usual. Admittance 25 cents; children under ten, 12½ cents; first balcony and parquet, 12½ cents extra.

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Have had a very good road for about 7 miles, to another creek, found good grass here and stopped for the day to our stock get well filled.



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

1853-1854

1853-1854



August 2: Heavy, long-continued, but warm rain in the night, raising the river already eight or nine inches and disturbing the meadow haymaking. John Legross brought me a quantity of red huckleberries yesterday. The less ripe are whitish. I suspect that these are the white huckleberries.

Sundown. — To Nawshawtuct.

The waxwork berries are yellowing. I am not sure but the bunches of the smooth sumach berries are handsomest when but partly turned, the crimson contrasting with the green, the green berries showing a velvety crimson check. *Gcum Virginianum*, white avens (June to August, Gray), still in bloom by the sassafras hedge, south side of hill, looks as if it might be a white cinquefoil, with small hook-prickled burs. Put it in June. *Mulgedium* [varieties of dandelion] out. The green fruit of the carrion-flower forms dense, firm, spherical umbels (?) at the end of stems five or six inches long; umbels two inches in diameter, formed, one of them, of eighty-four berries, size of peas, three to six sided, closely wedged together on peduncles three quarters of an inch long. The whole feels hard and solid in the hand.



August 3, Wednesday: Ernst I replaced Georg as Duke of Saxe-Altenburg.

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:



1853-1854

1853-1854

Followed down the river for 15 miles and struck another creek over the worst road that ever a white man traveled, rocks as large as a flour barrel are nothing to get over along here and what is worse no grass about here. Camped again. Drove 15 miles today.

[Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed Sarah Stacy's woodlot in [Framingham, Massachusetts](#).

View [Henry Thoreau](#)'s personal working drafts of his surveys courtesy of AT&T and the Concord Free Public Library:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/Thoreau_Surveys.htm

(The official copy of this survey of course had become the property of the person or persons who had hired this Concord town surveyor to do their surveying work during the 19th Century. Such materials have yet to be recovered.)

View this particular personal working draft of a survey in fine detail:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_surveys/117.htm



August 3: To north part of Framingham, surveying near Hopestill Brown's (in Sudbury). He said there was a tame deer in the wood, which he saw in his field the day before. Told me of an otter killing a dog and partly killing another. He sold lately a white pine tree about four feet [in] diameter at butt, which brought twenty-three dollars, not including what was used for fuel, and they sawed eighty feet in length of it. Saw the *Solidago odora* in the woods there, but not in bloom nearly; leaves full of pellucid dots and yielding, after being in my pocket all day, a very pleasant fragrance. Many farmers are now troubled to get their meadow-hay since the rise of the river. Sand cherries, probably a good while.



August 4, Thursday: [Thomas Jonathan Jackson](#) got married with Elinor "Ellie" Junkin in Lexington, Virginia. Officiating at this ceremony was the bride's father, the Reverend George Junkin, president of the college at which the bridegroom was a professor. The newlyweds would be housed in an addition built onto the president's residence.

There was a fire at the Steam Bakery on Chesnut Street near Stockton Street, at which the loss would be estimated as \$20,000.

The Ladies' Protection and Relief Society was founded in [San Francisco](#).

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Drove 5 miles this morning and we came to the forks of the road, and the river one half a mile our right, but the bluffs are so high, steep and rocky we cannot get to the water. We took the left hand road for 12 miles and came to the river again, turned down to the river and had to drive our stock down a bluff about 300 ft high and carry our water up it.



1853-18



1853-1854

August 4: Rain last night and to-day again. Groundnut. The low fields which have been mown now look very green again in consequence of the rain, as if it were a second spring. Aaron's-rod, not yet. A sicyos [[burr cucumber](#)] in front of the Vose house, not quite, but probably somewhere now. *Symphytum officinale* still in bloom in front of C. Stow's, over the fence. *Polygonum Carey*, four feet high, gigantesque, bristly-glandular, with swollen joints (*poly-gonum*), many branches from near ground.



August 5, Friday: Tsar Nikolai accepted the "Vienna Note" of July 28th but Sultan Abdul-Mejid did not.

Back at safe anchor off [Hong Kong](#) and [Macao](#), the far-eastern fleet of [Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) prepared to wait out the winter season. Never mind, next year we're going to impress the shit right out of those [Japanese](#)!

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Drive 3 miles this morning down a long, steep hill, came to the river again, no grass here. We watered and drove around through a valley about 3 miles and came to a small dry branch, followed up it and found two good springs. One mile farther we came to a small branch, rather bad to cross. This is close to the river. Three miles farther is Salmon Creek. One mile up this we found some grass. Camped here. Drove 10 miles today.

[Karl Marx](#) appeared in the pages of the New-York Daily Tribune, writing on India from London as of July 19th:

The progress of the India bill through the Committee has little interest. It is significant, that all amendments are thrown out now by the Coalition coalescing with the Tories against their own allies of the Manchester School.

The actual state of India may be illustrated by a few facts. The Home Establishment absorbs 3 per cent. of the net revenue, and the annual interest for Home Debt and Dividends 14 per cent-together 17 per cent. If we deduct these annual remittances from India to England, the military charges amount to about two-thirds of the whole expenditure available for India, or to 66 per cent., while the charges for Public Works do not amount to more than 2 3/4 per cent. of the general revenue, or for Bengal 1 per cent., Agra 7 3/4, Punjab 1/8, Madras 1/2, and Bombay 1 per cent. of their respective revenues. These figures are the official ones of the Company itself.

On the other hand nearly three-fifths of the whole net revenue are derived from the land, about one-seventh from opium, and upward of one-ninth from salt. These resources together yield 85 per cent. of the whole receipts.

As to minor items of receipts and charges, it may suffice to state that the Moturpha revenue maintained in the Presidency of Madras, and levied on shops, looms, sheep, cattle, sundry professions, &c., yields somewhat about £50,000, while the yearly dinners of the East India House cost about the same sum. The great bulk of the revenue is derived from the land. As the various kinds of Indian land-tenure have recently been described in so many places, and in popular style, too, I propose to limit



1853-1854

1853-1854

my observations on the subject to a few general remarks on the Zemindari and Ryotwar systems.

The Zemindari and the Ryotwar were both of them agrarian revolutions, effected by British ukases, and opposed to each other, the one aristocratic, the other democratic; the one a caricature of English landlordism, the other of French peasant-proprietorship; but pernicious, both combining the most contradictory character – both made not for the people, who cultivate the soil, nor for the holder, who owns it, but for the Government that taxes it.

By the Zemindari system, the people of the Presidency of Bengal were depossessed at once of their hereditary claims to the soil, in favor of the native tax gatherers called Zemindars. By the Ryotwar system introduced into the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay, the native nobility, with their territorial claims, *meras sees*, *jagheers*, &c., were reduced with the common people to the holding of minute fields, cultivated by themselves in favor of the Collector of the East India Company. But a curious sort of English landlord was the Zemindar, receiving only one-tenth of the rent, while he had to make over nine-tenths of it to the Government. A curious sort of French peasant was the Ryot, without any permanent title in the soil, and with the taxation changing every year in proportion to his harvest. The original class of Zemindars, notwithstanding their unmitigated and uncontrolled rapacity against the depossessed mass of the ex-hereditary landholders, soon melted away under the pressure of the Company, in order to be replaced by mercantile speculators who now hold all the land of Bengal, with exception of the estates returned under the direct management of the Government. These speculators have introduced a variety of the Zemindari tenure called *patnee*. Not content to be placed with regard to the British Government in the situation of middlemen, they have created in their turn a class of "hereditary" middlemen called *patnetas*, who created again their sub-*patnetas*, &c., so that a perfect scale of hierarchy of middlemen has sprung up, which presses with its entire weight on the unfortunate cultivator. As to the Ryots in Madras and Bombay, the system soon degenerated into one of forced cultivation, and the land lost all its value. "The land," says Mr. Campbell, "would be sold for balances by the Collector, as in Bengal, but generally is not, for a very good reason, viz.: that nobody will buy it."

Thus, in Bengal, we have a combination of English landlordism, of the Irish middlemen system, of the Austrian system, transforming the landlord into the tax-gatherer, and of the Asiatic system making the State the real landlord. In Madras and Bombay we have a French peasant proprietor who is at the same time a serf, and a *métayer* of the State. The drawbacks of all these various systems accumulate upon him without his enjoying any of their redeeming features. The Ryot is subject, like the French peasant, to the extortion of the private usurer; but he has no hereditary, no permanent title in his land, like the French peasant. Like the serf he is forced to cultivation, but he is not secured against want like the serf. Like the *métayer* he has to divide his produce with the State, but the State is not obliged, with regard to him, to advance the funds and the stock, as it is obliged to do with regard to the *métayer*. In

1853-1854

1853-1854

Bengal, as in Madras and Bombay, under the Zemindari as under the Ryotwar, the Ryots—and they form 11-12ths of the whole Indian population — have been wretchedly pauperized; and if they are, morally speaking, not sunk as low as the Irish cottiers, they owe it to their climate, the men of the South being possessed of less wants, and of more imagination than the men of the North.

Conjointly with the land-tax we have to consider the salt-tax. Notoriously the Company retain the monopoly of that article which they sell at three times its mercantile value — and this in a country where it is furnished by the sea, by the lakes, by the mountains and the earth itself. The practical working of this monopoly was described by the Earl of Albemarle in the following words:

“A great proportion of the salt for inland consumption throughout the country is purchased from the Company by large wholesale merchants at less than 4 rupees per maund; these mix a fixed proportion of sand, chiefly got a few miles to the south-east of Dacca, and send the mixture to a second, or, counting the Government as the first, to a third monopolist at about 5 or 6 rupees. This dealer adds more earth or ashes, and thus passing through more bands, from the large towns to villages, the price is still raised from 8 to 10 rupees and the proportion of adulteration from 25 to 40 per cent. [...] It appears then that the people [...] pay from £21, 17s. 2d. to £27, 6s. 2d. for their salt, or in other words, from 30 to 36 times as much as the wealthy people of Great Britain.”

As an instance of English bourgeois morals, I may allege, that Mr. Campbell defends the Opium monopoly because it prevents the Chinese from consuming too much of the drug, and that he defends the Brandy monopoly (licenses for spirit-selling in India) because it has wonderfully increased the consumption of Brandy in India.

The Zemindar tenure, the Ryotwar, and the salt tax, combined with the Indian climate, were the hotbeds of the cholera — India's ravages upon the Western World — a striking and severe example of the solidarity of human woes and wrongs.

[Karl Marx](#)



August 5: Perfect dog-days. To-day is sultry, *i.e.* hot and cloudy, the air full of mist and here and there misty clouds; and you find yourself perspiring much before you are aware of it. Farmers complain that they cannot make hay this weather. I cannot dry my red huckleberries. The sun does not shine unobstructedly.

A man mowing in the Great Meadows killed a great water adder (?) the other day, said to be four feet long and as big as a man's wrist. It ran at him. They find them sometimes when they go to open their hay. I tried to see it this morning, but some boys had chopped it up and buried it. They said that they found a *great many* young ones in it. That probably accounts for its being so large round. The clintonia berries keep a long tune without wrinkling in a tumbler of water. The mower on the river meadows, when [he] comes to open his hay these days, encounters some overgrown water adder full of young (?) and bold in defense of its progeny, and tells a tale when he comes home at night which causes a shudder to run through the village, — how it came at him, and he ran, and it pursued and overtook him, and he transfixed it with a pitchfork and laid it on a cock of hay, but it revived and came at him again. This is the story he tells in the shops at evening. The big snake is a sort of fabulous animal. It is always as big as a man's arm and of indefinite length Nobody knows exactly how deadly its bite, but nobody is known to have been bitten and recovered. Irishmen introduced into these meadows for the first time, on seeing a snake, a creature which they have seen only in pictures before, lay down their scythes



1853-1854

1853-1854

and run as if it were the evil one himself, and cannot be induced to return to their work. They sigh for Ireland, where they say there is no venomous thing that can hurt you.

[Inula](#) out (how long?), roadside just beyond Garfield's. Spikenard berries near Corner Spring just begin to turn. *Collinsonia*, not yet. Cohush berries not quite ripe. Pennyroyal in prime on Conantum. *Aster corymbosus* pretty plainly (a day or two) in the Miles Swamp or arboretum, — *Aster dumosus*, as I have called it also elsewhere.



August 6, Saturday: The Cambridge [Chronicle](#) listed [Henry Thoreau](#) as among 161 elected to membership in the American Association for the Advancement of Society.

The [Illustrated News](#) printed a woodcut of the disembarkation of two giraffes from the steamship *Washington* in New-York harbor. The camelopards "Colossus" and "Cleopatra" would be exhibited by [Phineas Taylor Barnum](#).

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Drove to Snake River ferry this morning 6 miles and found we could not cross till sometime next week. Concluded to ferry ourselves again, drove to our place to ferry and camped and laid still till Monday afternoon. Commenced late and worked nearly all night.



August 6: More dog-days. The sun, now at 9 A.M., has not yet burst through the mists. It has been warmer weather for a week than for at least three weeks before, — nights when all windows were left open, though not so warm as in June. This morning a very heavy fog. The sun has not risen clear or even handsomely for some time, nor have we had a good sunset.

P.M. — To J. Farmer's Cliff.

I see the sunflower's broad disk now in gardens, probably a few days, — a true sun among flowers, monarch of August. Do not the flowers of August and September generally resemble suns and stars? — sunflowers and asters and the single flowers of the goldenrod. I once saw one as big as a milk-pan, in which a mouse had its nest. It is remarkable how many plants turn lake — some of their leaves I mean — in the fall. Already I notice that the lower leaves of some catnep and a white vervain (2d) have so turned. They are in fact matured, and high-colored or wine-colored like the fruits. It suggests that the whole plant tends toward an equal richness and maturity and to become one flower. It is the blush of its evening sky. Its juices are no longer crude. I have seen some red leaves on the low choke-berry. Now begins the vintage of their juices. Nature is now a Bacchanal, drunk with the wines of a thousand plants and berries.

The rudbeckia must have been out at least a week or more; half the buds have opened. Cranberries show red cheeks, and some are wholly red, like varnished cherry wood. Yesterday I ate early summer apples. The huckleberries were many of them burst open in consequence of the copious rains. And now it begins to rain again and compels us to return.


1853-1854

1853-1854



August 7, Sunday: [Bronson Alcott](#) visited [Waldo Emerson](#) in Concord. Emerson presented his suggestion that Alcott should make a “conversational tour ... along the great [Canal](#) towns, west, Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, perhaps Cleveland ... and so on to [Cincinnati](#)” that fall. They would have prospectuses printed and, on Alcott’s way West, he would drop them off in each city, and then he would hold his conversations on the way back home along his route. Emerson proposed to purchase the \$18.⁰⁰ train ticket that would get Alcott started.

[Henry Thoreau](#) made an entry in his journal that he was later to copy into his early lecture “[WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT](#)” It would be combined with an entry made on May 27, 1851 and an entry made on July 24, 1852 to form the following:






[Paragraph 34] The ways by which you may get money almost without exception lead downward. To have done anything by which you earned money **merely** is to have been truly idle or worse. If the laborer gets no more than the wages which his employer pays him, he is cheated, he cheats himself. If you would get money as a writer or lecturer, you must be popular, which is to go down perpendicularly. Those services which the community will most readily pay for it is most disagreeable to render. You are paid for being something less than a man. The State does not commonly reward a genius any more wisely. Even the poet-laureate would rather not have to celebrate the accidents of royalty. He must be bribed with a pipe of wine; and perhaps another poet is called away from his muse to gauge that very pipe. As for my own business, even that kind of surveying which I could do with most satisfaction my employers do not want. They would prefer that I should do my work coarsely and not too well, ay, not well enough. When I observe that there are different ways of surveying, my employer commonly asks which will give him the most land, not which is the most correct.

Brad Dean's
Commentary



August 7: *Sunday*. P.M. — To Fair Haven Hill via Hubbard’s Grove.


The krigia has bloomed again. The purple gerardia now fairly out, which I found almost out last Sunday in another place. Elder-berries begin to be ripe, bending their stems. I also see *Viburnum dentatum*, berries just beginning to turn on one side. Their turning or ripening looks like decay, — a dark spot, — and so does the rarely ripe state of the naked viburnum and the sweet, but we truly regard it as a ripening still, and not falsely a decaying as when we describe the tints of the autumnal foliage.

I think that within a week I have heard the alder cricket, — a clearer and shriller sound from the leaves in low grounds, a clear shrilling out of a cool moist shade, an autumnal sound. The year is in the grasp of the crickets, and they are hurling it round swiftly on its axle. Some wasps (I am not sure there’s more than one) are building a nest in my room, of mud, these days, buzzing loudly while at work, but at no other time. Often and often I hear the cool twitter of the goldfinch [[American Goldfinch](#)  *Carduelis tristis*] passing over, — a sound one with that of the alder cricket, — and the bobolink’s *link link* [[Bobolink](#)  *Dolichonyx oryzivorus* Rice-bird]. How much of spring there is brought back in a young bluebird’s [[Eastern Bluebird](#)  *Sialia sialis*] plaintive peep!

The tall buttercup lingers still and the houstonia, not to mention the marsh speedwell and the slender bellflower. Now for the herbs, — the various mints. The pennyroyal is out abundantly on the hills. I do not scent these things enough. Would it not be worth the while to devote a day to collecting the mountain mint, and another to the peppermint?

How trivial and uninteresting and wearisome and unsatisfactory are all employments for which men will pay you money! The ways by which you may get money all lead downward. To have done anything by which you earned money merely is to have been truly idle. If the laborer gets no more than the wages his employer pays him, he is cheated, he cheats himself. Those services which the world will most readily pay for, it is most disagreeable to render. You are paid for being something less than a man. The state will pay a genius only for some service which it is offensive to him to render. Even the poet-laureate would rather not have to celebrate the accidents of royalty.

Dangle-berries have begun. Wormwood perhaps here and not before.

It is worth the while to walk in wet weather; the earth and leaves are strewn with pearls. When I came forth it was cloudy but from time to time drizzling weather, but remarkably still (and warm enough), soothing and inducing reflection. The river is dark and smooth these days, reflecting no brightness but dark clouds, and the goldfinch [[American Goldfinch](#)  *Carduelis tristis*] is heard twittering over; though presently a thicker mist

1853-1854

1853-1854

or mizzle falls, and you are prepared for rain. The river and brooks have somewhat overflowed their banks, and water inundates the grass and weeds, making it look late and cool. The stillness and the shade enable you to collect and concentrate your thoughts.

I see the leaves of the two smallest johnswort reddening. The common johnswort is quite abundant this year and still yellows the fields. I see everywhere in sandy fields the blue-curls, knocked off by the rain, strewing the ground. As I was walking along a hillside the other day, I smelled pennyroyal, but it was only after a considerable search that I discovered a single minute plant, which I had trodden on, the only one near. When, yesterday, a boy spilled his huckleberries in the pasture, I saw that Nature was making use of him to disperse her berries, and I might have advised him to pick another dishful.⁹ The three kinds of epilobium grow rankly where Hubbard burned his swamp this year, also erechthites. I think that I have observed that this last is a true fireweed.

Is it not as language that all natural objects affect the poet? He sees a flower or other object, and it is beautiful or affecting to him because it is a symbol of his thought, and what he indistinctly feels or perceives is matured in some other organization. The objects I behold correspond to my mood.

The past has been a remarkably wet week, and now the earth is strewn with fungi. The earth itself is mouldy. I see a white mould in the path. Great toadstools stand in the woods, but the mushroom growth of a night is already attacked by many worms and insects. I see in the pasture grass in many places small white roundish fungi, like eggs. Methinks the mosquitoes are not a very serious evil till the somewhat cool muggy dog-day nights, such as we have had of late.

I was struck by the perfect neatness, as well as elaborateness and delicacy, of a lady's dress the other day. She wore some worked lace or gauze over her bosom, and I thought it was beautiful, if it indicated an equal inward purity and delicacy, — if it was the soul she dressed and treated thus delicately.

Before I came out, I saw a bee at work in a flower again in spite of mist and cloud. And here again, far in the fields by the river-bank under Fair Haven, I heard a faint but all-pervading music, while passing with care amid the dripping bushes, but did not know whether it was a distant horn or some bee about a flower near at hand. It is so still that the bees' hum is now surely heard, for they still persist in making honey. I see the tall anemone abundant and fresh yet, — both its flower and teasel-shaped bur. Mists, but not driving.

Here is the barber sailing tip the still, dark, cloud-reflecting river in the long boat which he built so elaborately himself, with two large sails set. He is quite alone thus far from town, and so quiet and so sensibly employed, — bound to Fair Haven Bay, instead of meeting comrades in a shop on the Mill-Dam or sleeping away his Sabbath in a chamber, — that I think of him as leaving experienced religion. I know so much good of him, at least, that one dark, still Sunday he sailed alone from the village to Fair Haven Bay. What chance was there to serve the devil by that excursion? If he had had a companion I should have had some doubts, — but being alone, it seemed communion day with him.

When I see, as now climbing Fair Haven, the hills covered with huckleberry and blueberry bushes bent to the ground with fruit, — so innocent and palatable fruit, — I think of them as fruits fit to grow on Olympus, the Ambrosia of the gods, and am reminded of *Vaccinium Vitis-Idæa*. It does not occur to me at first that where such a thought is suggested is Mt. Olympus and that I who taste these berries am a god. Why, in his only royal moments, should man abdicate his throne?

Lespedeza capitata at Lupine Bank, maybe a day or two, but I should say later than the *polystachya*. Its leaves longer and more pointed. The birds for some weeks have not sung as in the spring. Do I not already hear the jays [**Blue Jay** **Cyanocitta cristata**] with more distinctness, as in the fall and winter? I hear the che-wink [**Rufous-sided Towhee** **Pipilo erythrophthalmus** **Ground-bird**, **Ground-robin**, **Che-wink**] still. The narrow-leaved violet *lespedeza*, not yet.

In the open oak wood beneath the Cliff, in the steep path and by its side, the *Gerardia quercifolia* and also *flava*. The former is glaucous and all the leaves much cut, rather pinnate, as I remember, somewhat like Roman wormwood, but the calyx-lobes triangular and not more than a third or a fourth the length of the calyx-tube. The peduncles longer than the calyx. It differs from Gray's *G. quercifolia* in the calyx-lobes not being long and linear. I will put it with *G. flava*. These are both among the most remarkable flowers at present, so large and butter-yellow. Very rich they look, with their great trumpets. A bee has eaten a round hole in the side of an unopened flower. How few flowers and fruits blossom and ripen without being deformed by worms and insects! You must search long for perfect specimens. The panicked hieracium is abundant there, and has been open probably a few days, — two or three.

I find the *Solidago odora* out by the path to foot of cliffs beyond Hayden's, maybe twenty or thirty rods into

9. ["Then there were huckleberry parties. These were under the guidance of Thoreau, because he alone knew the precise locality of every variety of the berry. I recall an occasion when little Edward Emerson, carrying a basket of fine huckleberries, had a fall and spilt them all. Real was his distress, and our offers of berries could not console him for the loss of those gathered by himself. But Thoreau came, put his arm around the troubled child, and explained to him that if the crop of huckleberries was to continue it was necessary that some should be scattered. Nature had provided that little boys should now and then stumble and sow the berries. We shall have a grand lot of bushes and berries in this spot, and we shall owe them to you. Edward began to smile." — Moncure Daniel Conway, *Autobiography*, Boston, 1904, vol. i, p. 148.]



1853-1854

1853-1854

woods about the summit level. It is said to have the odor of anise. It is somewhat like that of sassafras bark. It must be somewhat dried and then bruised. The rough goldenrod (*Solidago altissima*), a day or two. I will call that sharply serrate narrow or linear(?) lanceolate leafed, smooth-stemmed, very tall goldenrod, with a large, broad, dense pyramidal head or panicle drooping every way, which grows under the railroad bank against Ebby Hubbard's land, the *S. arguta* for the present. It has been out, say one week or more.



August 8, Monday: [Karl Marx](#) wrote in the [New-York Daily Tribune](#) that "England has to fulfill a double mission in [India](#): one destructive, the other regenerating the annihilation of old Asiatic society, and the laying the material foundations of Western society in Asia."

A Russian fleet appeared at [Nagasaki, Japan](#).

"The first water-melon."

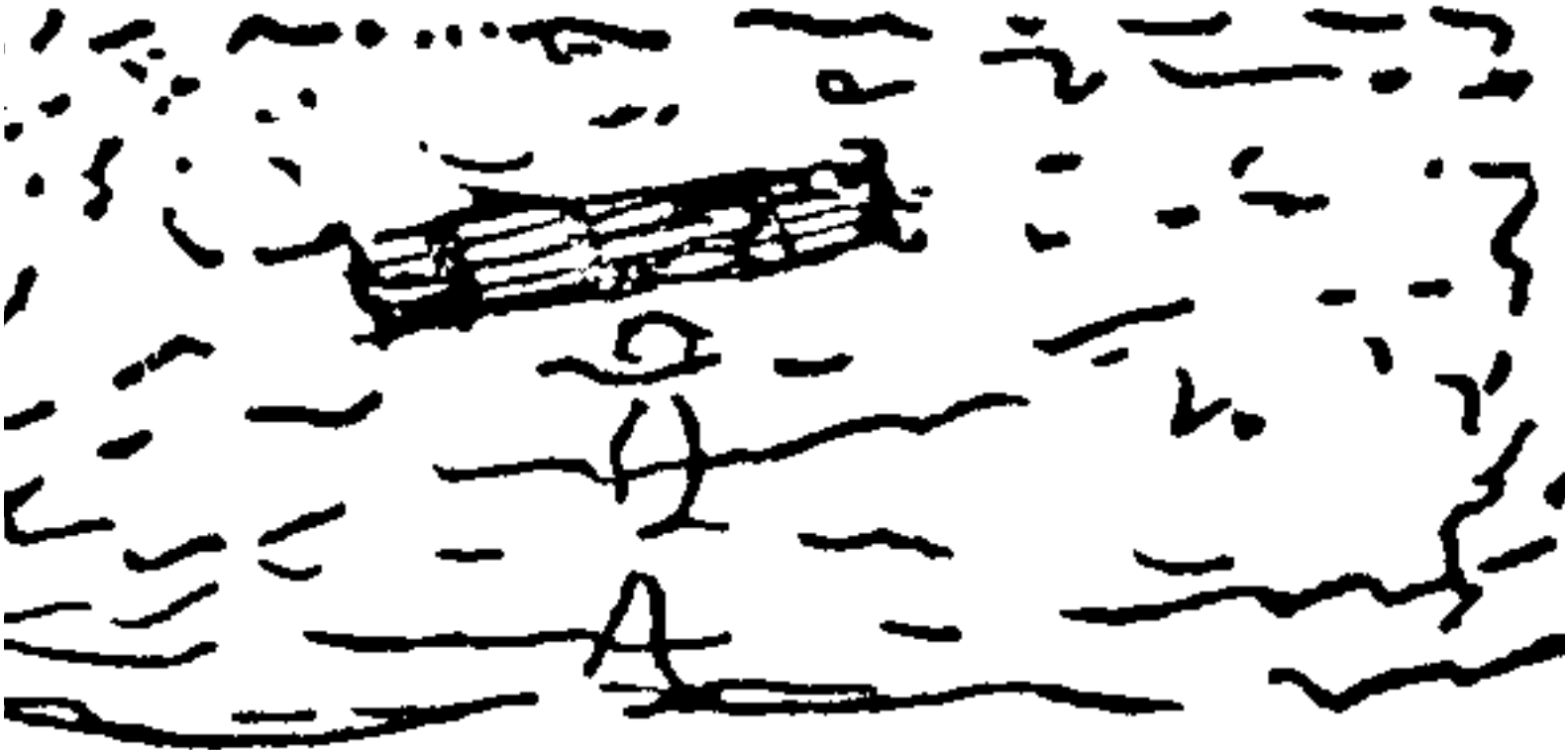


August 8 to [H.G.O. Blake](#): The other evening I was determined that I would silence this shallow din; that I would walk in various directions and see if there was not to be found any depth of silence around. As Bonaparte sent out his horsemen in the Red Sea on all sides to find shallow water, so I sent forth my mounted thoughts to find deep water. I left the village and paddled up the river to Fair Haven Pond. As the sun went down, I saw a solitary boatman disporting on the smooth lake. The falling dews seemed to strain and purify the air, and I was soothed with an infinite stillness. I got the world, as it were, by the nape of the neck, and held it under in the tide of its own events, till it was drowned, and then I let it go down stream like a dead dog. Vast hollow chambers of silence stretched away on every side and my being expanded in proportion, and filled them. Then

1853-1854

1853-1854

first could I appreciate sound, and find it musical.



Is Thoreau the dead dog in the stream or “Indra in the sky looking down on it”?



August 8: 5 A.M. — Up railroad.

The nabalus, which may have been out one week elsewhere. Also rough hawkweed, and that large aster-like flower *Diplopappus umbellatus*, a day or two. Smooth speedwell again. Erechthites. Columbine again. The first watermelon. *Aster patens* and *Aster laevis*, both a day or two.



August 9, Tuesday: The Reverend [Samuel J. May, Jr.](#) wrote from Syracuse, New York acknowledging receipt of a letter [Peter Still](#) had posted to him from New Bedford, Massachusetts, and conveying the sad news that the price of slaves had recently become such that it was probably going to require \$5,000, rather than \$3,000, to purchase the freedom of Still’s family. Nevertheless, he encouraged Still to continue fundraising efforts. He conveyed also that he has not yet heard anything from Alabama, through either Mr. Birney in Philadelphia, or Mrs. Pickard. Via his son John Edward May who was making a trip to Boston, he would return Dr. Furness’s Seth Conklin narrative.

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Got all across safe and without any accidents, drove out about 1 mile and one of our oxen laid down and died. Saw a great many dead cattle along the road to-day. Some attribute it to their swimming the river. Three miles after leaving the river we

1853-1854

1853-1854

crossed a fine creek, 7 miles farther and we came to Shoot creek. Here we camped again, grass not very good. 10 miles farther on our journey.



August 9: *Sedum Telephium*, garden orpine or live-for-ever, in my pitcher.

P.M. — To hibiscus and liatris and Beck Stow's.

The hibiscus which has escaped the mowers shows a little color. I am rather surprised that it escapes the mowers at all. The river is still much swollen by the rains and cooled, and the current is swifter; though it is quite hot this afternoon, with a close, melting heat. I see an empty hay-team slowly crossing the river in the shallowest place. The oxen are half concealed, but the driver rides high and dry. The cattle must enjoy the coolness of the water. They have not got more than half the hay out of the meadows yet, and now they are so wet I see but one team there. Much grass will be lost. If you carelessly grasp and let slip through your hand a blade of this cut-grass as you walk, it will often cut your fingers seriously. I forded the river and, for the experiment, tried swimming with one hand while I held up all my clothes with the other, for a short distance.

The *Hieracium Canadense* is out and is abundant at Peter's well. I also find one or two heads of the liatris. Perhaps I should have seen it a few days earlier, if it had not been for the mower. It has the aspect of a Canada thistle at a little distance. How fatally the season is advanced toward the fall! I am not surprised now to see the small rough sunflower. There is much yellow beside now in the fields. How beautiful now the early goldenrods (*Solidago stricta*), rising above the wiry grass of the Great Fields in front of Peter's where I sit (which is not worth cutting), not solid yellow like the sunflower, but little pyramidal or sheaf-like golden clouds or mists, supported by almost invisible leafy columns, which wave in the wind, like those elms which run up very tall and slender without a branch and fall over like a sheaf on every side! They give a very indefinite but rich, mellow, and golden aspect to the field. They are the more agreeable for the indistinctness of their outline, — these pillars of fire, clouds which glow only on one side. The *nemoralis*, just opening, with its one-sided, curved, and dense panicle, is more concealed by the grass. The field is ripe.

Next into Heywood's blueberry swamp. I spend the forenoon in my chamber, writing or arranging my papers, and in the afternoon I walk forth into the fields and woods. I turn aside, perchance, into some withdrawn, untrodden swamp, and find these bilberries, large and fair, awaiting me in inexhaustible abundance, for I have no tame garden. They embody for me the essence and flavor of the swamp, — cool and refreshing, of various colors and flavors. I prefer the large blue, with a bloom on them, and slightly acid ones. I taste and am strengthened. This is the season of small fruits. I trust, too, that I am maturing some small fruit as palatable in these months, which will communicate my flavor to my kind. Here they hang for many weeks unchanged, in dense clusters, half a dozen touching each other, — black, blue, and intermediate colors. Our appreciation of their flavor commonly prevents our observing their beauty, though we admire the color of the holly berries which are their neighbors. If they were poisonous, we should hear more of their beauty to the eye.

You hear the peculiar scream of young hawks nowadays, — the marsh hawks , reddish beneath, which have not their perfect plumage. I plucked a great toadstool to-day, nine inches in diameter and five high, with a stem like the bole of an oak, swelling — above and below, and at the smallest one and a half inches in diameter; its top slightly curving like a great election cake. Saw pigeons [American Passenger Pigeons *Ectopistes migratorius*] the other day (August 5).



1853-1854

1853-1854



August 10, Wednesday: The American far-eastern fleet was wintering ignominiously at anchor in Blenheim Reach, near [Canton](#). Nothing much was going on. A whole lot of waiting, a whole lot.

Preparations of the *Madagascar* to sail from the harbor of Melbourne, [Australia](#) in the direction of London were dramatically interrupted when police arrived to search the frigate and Captain Fortescue William Harris was ordered to delay its departure. The police arrested John Francis, a bushranger, on an accusation of robbery.

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

A few Indians about our camp this morning trading moccasins etc. for shirts, powder and balls. Drove 13 miles without water, came to another creek, where we camped again. Oh! we are getting so tired of this business. Found very good grass. The Indians are very hostile in this vicinity. Emigrants should be always on their guard, a man was killed here a few days ago in the act of drinking out of the branch when an Indian shot an arrow through his heart. He left a wife and two little children to mourn his loss here on the dreary plains. It is not safe for any person to leave camp alone for they lay in ambush and watch their opportunity, and as their weapons make no report they only wait for one to get out of sight of camp and they are sure of him for they seldom miss their mark.

[Henry Thoreau](#) made a notation about a visit from [Bronson Alcott](#) on this day, a notation that tells us so very much about what actually was **going down** in the abolition movement back then, so **very much**, that we now tend determinedly to ignore this telltale passage in its entirety. It is as if he had written this day's entry with a dry quill! Today's Thoreau scholars are determinedly PC about that era's abolitionists because they were antislavery — and antislavery has by now come to constitute total righteousness. Today's Thoreau scholars are determinedly PC about Unitarianism, for analogous reasons, and about Harvard University, for analogous reasons. However, this day's journal entry by Thoreau in evaluation of the situation as he was experiencing it in regard to the actual abolitionists he was actually encountering, warts and all, and the actual Unitarians he was actually encountering, warts and all, and the actual Harvard people he was actually dealing with, warts and all, definitively warns us most precisely **that we cannot afford to be so worshipful**. They were the sort of small men who could raise up only small men, they were the sort of trainers who could raise up only trainers. —But today's Thoreau scholars must lower Thoreau by a head so that he cannot so tower above them:

[Alcott](#) spent the day with me yesterday. He spent the day before with [Emerson](#). He observed that he had got his wine and now he had come after his venison. Such was the compliment he paid me. The question of livelihood was troubling him. He knew of nothing which he could do for which men would pay him. He could not compete with the Irish in cradling grain. His early education had not fitted him for a clerkship. He had offered his services to the Abolition Society, to go about the country and speak for freedom as their agent, but they declined him. This is very much to their discredit; they should have been forward to secure him. Such a connection with him would confer unexpected dignity on their enterprise. But they cannot tolerate a man who stands by a head above them. They are as bad —[Garrison](#) and [Phillips](#), etc.— as the overseers and faculty of [Harvard College](#). They require a man who will train well under them. Consequently they have not in their employ any but small men, — trainers.



1853-18



1853-1854

Aug. 10. 5 A.M. —I hear a warbling vireo [Warbling Vireo Vireo gilvus], golden robin [Northern Oriole Icterus galbula (Fiery Hangbird or Hangbird or Gold Robin or Golden Robin)], red-eye [Red-eyed Vireo Vireo olivaceus (red-eye)], and peawais [Wood-Pewee, Eastern Contopus virens (Wood-Pewee or Peawee)].

August, royal and rich. Green corn now. and melons have begun. That month, surely, is distinguished when melons ripen. July could not do it. What a moist, fertile heat now! I see naked viburnum berries beginning to turn. Their whiteness faintly blushing.

Alcott spent the day with me yesterday. He spent the day before with Emerson. He observed that he had got his wine and now he had come after his venison. Such was the compliment he paid me. The question of livelihood was troubling him. He knew of nothing which he could do for which men would pay him. He could not compete with the Irish in cradling grain. His early education had not fitted him for a clerkship. He had offered his services to the Abolition Society, to go about the country and speak for freedom as their agent, but they declined him. This is very much to their discredit; they should have been forward to secure him. Such a connection with him would confer unexpected dignity on their enterprise. But they cannot tolerate a man who stands by a head above them. They are as bad —Garrison and Phillips, etc— as the overseers and faculty of Harvard College. They require a man who will train well under them. Consequently they have not in their employ any but small men, — trainers.

P.M. —To Walden and Saw Mill Brook.

These days are very warm, though not so warm as it was in June. The heat is furnace-like while I am climbing the steep bills covered with shrubs on the north of Walden, through sweet-fern as high as one's head. The goldfinch [American Goldfinch Carduelis tristis] sings er, twe, twotter twotter. I see again the Aster patens (amplexicaulis of Bigelow), though this has no branches nor minute leaves atop. Yet it differs from the A. undulatus, not yet out plainly, in that the latter's lower leaves are petioled and hearted, with petioles winged at base. Find the Arabis Canadensis, or sickle-pod, on Heywood Peak, nearly out of bloom. Never saw it before. New plants spring up where old woods are cut off, having formerly grown here, perchance. Many such rarer plants flourish for a few years in such places before they are smothered. I have also found here, for example, round-leaved and naked-flowered desmodium and Desmodium laevigatum [smooth ticktrefoil]. (??) and Guaphalium decurrens [cudweed, of the sunflower family] and quercia [a genus of 6 flowering plants]. Toadstools, which are now very abundant in the woods since the rain, are of various colors, — some red and shining, some polished white, some regularly brown-spotted, some pink, some light-blue, — buttons. The Ranunculus Repens numerously out about Briton's Spring. A small red maple there, seven or eight feet high, all turned scarlet. It is glorious to see those great shining high blackberries, now partly ripe there, bending the bushes in moist, rocky sprout-lands, down amid the strong, bracing scented, tender ferns, which you crush with your feet. The whorled polygala in the Saw Mill Brook Path, beyond the Desmodium Paniculatum, may have been out as long as the caducous. Is not that small narrow fern I find on Conantum about rocks cherry spleenwort? Now in fruit. The trillium fruit (varnished and stained cherry wood) now ripe. Bochmeria in prime, for long time. Cohush berries ripe. By Everett's wall beyond Cheney's, small rough sunflowers, six feet high, with many branches and flowers. Saw an alder locust this morning. Hear a quail [Northern Bobwhite Colinus virginianus] now. Of late, and for long time, only the link, link of bobolink [Bobolink Dolichonyx oryzivorus Rice-bird].



August 11, Thursday: Captain Fortescue William Harris was forced to again delay the sailing of the frigate Madagascar from the harbor of Melbourne, Australia in the direction of London, as another 2 of its passengers were being taken into custody on related accusations of robbery.

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra, her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

This morning some of our cattle are sick and we hardly know what is the matter. They are not poisoned. Many have died around us during the night and this morning. It is the prevailing opinion that swimming the river so choked up with dust caused irritation of the lungs as they bleed very freely at the nose and mouth just before they die. Traveled down this creek about 5 miles to where we leave it again and camped again to let our stock recruit

a little.

[Henry Thoreau](#) made an entry in his journal that he was later to copy into his early lecture "[WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT](#)" as:

Brad Dean's
Commentary








[Paragraph 21] One summer afternoon I met with another old farmer [Ebenezer Conant] in a garrulous mood, getting his hay alone. His breath smelled of rum. He was complaining that his sons did not get married—told me his age—when he married—how many children he had, and so on. He was a man of average worth, and spoke with the downrightness and frankness of age—not exaggerating aught—dwelling on the ills which flesh is heir to. I may do him injustice, but I felt that it was as impossible to speak of marriage to him, as of poetry. Marriage was to him prose or worse. It would be just as fit for such a man to discourse to you on flowers—thinking of them only as hay for his oxen.



Aug. 11: 5 A.M. — Up North Branch.

A considerable fog. The weeds still covered by the flood, so that we have no *Bidens Beckii*. *B. chrysanthemoides* just out. The small, dull, lead-colored berries of the *Viburnum dentatum* now hang over the water. The *Amphicarpæa monoica* appears not to have bloomed. Chickweed (*Stellaria media*) appears the most constant flower and most regardless of seasons. Cerastium blooms still. Button-bush and mikania now in prime, and cardinals. Lilies rather scarce (?), but methinks less infested with insects. The river sprinkled with meadow-hay afloat.

P.M. — To Conantum.

This is by some considered the warmest day of the year thus far; but, though the weather is melting hot, yet the river having been deepened and cooled by the rains, we have none of those bathing days of July, '52. Yesterday or day before, I heard a strange note, methought from somebody's poultry, and looking out saw, I think a bittern [**American Bittern**  *Botaurus lentiginosus*], go squawking over the yard — from the river southwestward. A bittern, flying over, mingles its squawk with the cackling of poultry. Did I not hear a willet [**Spotted Sandpiper**  *Actitis macularia*] yesterday? At the Swamp Bridge Brook, flocks of cow troopials [**Brown-headed Cowbird**  *Molothrus ater*] now about the cows. These and other blackbirds , flying in flocks now, make a great chattering, and also the bobolinks [**Bobolink**  *Dolichonyx oryzivorus* ~~Rice-bird~~]. What a humming of insects about the sweet-scented clethra blossoms, — honey-bees and others, and flies and various kinds of wasps!

I see some naked viburnum berries red and some purple now. There are berries which men do not use, like choke-berries, which here in Hubbard's Swamp grow in great profusion and blacken the bushes. How much richer we feel for this unused abundance and superfluity! Nature would not appear so rich, the profusion so rich, if we knew a use for everything.

Plums and grapes, about which gardeners make such an ado, are in my opinion poor fruits compared with melons.

The great rains have caused those masses of small green high blueberries, which commonly do not get ripe, to swell and ripen, so that their harvest fulfills the promise of their spring. I never saw so many, — even in swamps where a fortnight ago there was no promise.



What a helpless creature a horse is out of his element or off his true ground! Saw John Potter's horse mired in his meadow, which has been softened by the rains. His small hoofs afford no support. He is furious, as if mad, and is liable to sprain himself seriously. His hoofs go through the crust like stakes, into the soft batter beneath, though the wheels go well enough. Woodbine is reddening, in some places, and ivy too. Collinsonia, just begun. Found — [Ebenezer Conant] rather garrulous (his breath smelled of rum). Was complaining that his sons did not get married. He told me his age when he married (thirty-odd years ago), how his wife bore him eight children and then died, and in what respect she proved herself a true woman, etc., etc. I saw that it was as impossible to speak of marriage to such a man — to the mass of men — as of poetry. Its advantages and disadvantages are not such as they have dreamed of. Their marriage is prose or worse. To be married at least should be the one poetical act of a man's life. If you fail in this respect, in what respect will you succeed? The marriage which the mass of men comprehend is but little better than the marriage of the beasts. It would be just as fit for such a man to discourse to you on the love of flowers, thinking of them as hay for his oxen.

The difference between men affects every phase of their lives, so that at last they cannot communicate with each

1853-1854

1853-1854

other. An old man of average worth, who spoke with the downrightness and frankness of age, not exaggerating aught, said he was troubled about his water, etc., — altogether of the earth.

Evening draws on while I am gathering bundles of pennyroyal on the further Conantum height. I find it amid the stubble mixed with blue-curls and, as fast as I get my hand full, tie it into a fragrant bundle. Evening draws on, smoothing the waters and lengthening the shadows, now half an hour or more before sundown. What constitutes the charm of this hour of the day? Is it the condensing of dews in the air just beginning, or the grateful increase of shadows in the landscape? Some fiat has gone forth and stilled the ripples of the lake; each sound and sight has acquired ineffable beauty. How agreeable, when the sun shines at this angle, to stand on one side and look down on flourishing sprout-lands or copses, where the cool shade is mingled in greater proportion than before with the light! Broad, shallow lakes of shadow stretch over the lower portions of the top of the woods. A thousand little cavities are filling with coolness. Hills and the least inequalities in the ground begin to cast an obvious shadow. The shadow of an elm stretches quite across the meadow. I see pigeons [**American Passenger Pigeons**  *Ectopistes migratorius*] (?) in numbers fly up from the stubble. I hear some young **bluebird**'s plaintive warble near me and some young hawks  uttering a puling scream from time to time across the pond, to whom life is yet so novel. From far over the bond and woods I hear also a farmer calling loudly to his cows, in the clear still air, "Ker, ker, ker, ker."

What shall we name this season? — this very late afternoon, or very early evening, this severe and placid season of the day, most favorable for reflection, after the insufferable heats and the bustle of the day are over and before the dampness and twilight of evening! The serene hour, the Muses' hour, the season of reflection! It is commonly desecrated by being made teatime. It begins perhaps with the very earliest condensation of moisture in the air, then the shadows of hills are first observed, and the breeze begins to go down, and birds begin again to sing. The pensive season. It is earlier than the "chaste eve" of the poet. Bats have now come forth. It is not twilight. There is no dew yet on the grass, and still less any early star in the heavens. It is the turning-point between afternoon and evening. The few sounds now heard, far or near, are delicious. It is not more dusky and obscure, but clearer than before. The clearing of the air by condensation of mists more than balances the increase of shadows. Chaste eve is merely *preparing* with "dewy finger" to draw o'er all "the gradual dusky veil." Not yet "the ploughman homeward plods his weary way," nor owls nor beetles are abroad. It is a season somewhat earlier than is celebrated by the poets. There is not such a sense of lateness and approaching night as they describe. I mean when the first emissaries of Evening come to smooth the lakes and streams. The poet arouses himself and collects his thoughts. He postpones tea indefinitely. Thought has taken her siesta. Each sound has a broad and deep relief of silence.



August 12, Friday: An **Egyptian** fleet arrived to support the Ottomans against Russia.

When the wreck of the barque *Rebecca* was auctioned by Mr. Weedon at Launceston, **Van Diemen's Land**, the high bid was merely £5, submitted by Dr. Grant, lessee of the Van Diemen's Land Co.'s Woolnorth estate. There was no particular salvage carried out, and casks of beer would be found by passers-by for decades afterwards. The scene of the wreck was clearly locatable by the presence of one of the ship's anchors on the beach (most of the bottles of a case of beer were still drinkable when found in 1899).

When the frigate *Madagascar* — a British merchant vessel constructed in 1837 to carry soldiers plus a few passengers on exotic holiday to India — had arrived in the harbor of Melbourne, **Australia** crammed with would-be pan-handlers and rock-pickers, Victoria being in the grip of a gold rush, 14 members of its crew had abandoned the vessel and would remain in Australia. On this day, when it sailed out of Melbourne harbor, it was conveying more than 150 passengers and crew toward London, and in addition, a large weight of flour, rice, wool, and timber, plus nearly 3 tons of Australian gold. Captain Fortescue William Harris had been able to obtain only 3 crew replacements for the vessel's return journey. This skeleton crew was facing a dangerous journey with in their hold this box of specie, 8 boxes of silver, 9 boxes of sovereigns (about 60,000 gold coins),

1853-1854

1853-1854

86 boxes of gold dust and nuggets, for a total treasure weight of 68,390 ounces (nearly 3 tons valued at about £250,000). The fact that this vessel would never again be heard of has caused much speculation. Did the wool in its cargo spontaneously combust? –Such things do happen. Could the vessel have been wrecked by a freak wave? Could it have collided with an iceberg? Could a gang of criminals have seized control? Could it have been boarded by pirates? In 1997 artifacts would be discovered on Anuanuaro, an atoll of French Polynesia 1,500 kilometers southeast of Tahiti. It is clear that there had been a wreck there, but nothing indicated that these the remains of the *Madagascar*.

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Lost 2 oxen belonging to our train last night and they are dying off all around us. Destruction stares us in the face. Drove 3 miles this morning and came to a dry creek, 8 miles farther is another creek. Not much feed, 6 miles more and we came to a creek with very good feed. Camped here. Drove 18 miles.



Aug. 12. 9 A.M. — To Conantum by boat, berrying, with three ladies.

You now see and hear no red-wings [[Red-winged Blackbird](#) [Agelaius phoeniceus](#)] along the river as in spring. See the blue herons [[Great Blue Heron](#) [Ardea herodias](#)] opposite Fair Haven Hill, as if they had bred here. This and the last day or two *very* hot. Now at last, methinks, the most melting season of this year, though I think it is hardly last year's *bathing* time, because the water is higher. There is very little air over the water, and when I dip my head in it for coolness, I do not feel any coolness. The *Eupatorium sessilifolium* has been out a day or two on the side-hill grove at Bittern Cliff; very similar its leaves and form to the small sunflower. *Desinodinium Canadense* (?), apparently a good while; perhaps with the earliest. Never saw it before. Has dense racemes of large flowers and pods. In the same place, I find, on the Cliff there, a *Gerardia quercifolia* which answers to the book (Gray), though I have not perhaps the *lowest* leaves. It has the linear-lanceolate segments of calyx. My last had not, though it was glaucous and was much more cut-leaved. There are varieties of the glaucous, then. They are both less densely spiked than the *flava*. Panicked cornet berries begin. The river cornel berries just beginning in this sunny place. *Chelone glabra* also. The round-leaved desmodium, a good while, and still on the hillside beyond the elm: perhaps ten days. Was that a thistle-down over the river, without the seed?¹⁰ Carried watermelons for drink. What more refreshing and convenient! This richest wine in a convenient cask, and so easily kept cool! No foreign wines could be so grateful. The first muskmelon to-day. If you would cool a watermelon, do not put it in water, which keeps the heat in, but cut it open and set it in a cellar or in the shade.¹¹ If you have carriage, carry these great bottles of wine. A good many lilies yet rested in the shade under the bridges.



August 13, Saturday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

We had a long hill to climb this morning and a very rocky one. It is almost useless to attempt to describe the road on this part of the trip. For several days we have had little else but rocks to travel over and it looks no better ahead. Mountains and hills rise up before us and when we get on the top of one we see another ahead still higher. Seven miles from camp we come to another creek, not much grass, 8 miles farther are 3 fine springs branches. Here we camped again having good feed. Drove 15 miles today.

10. Yes.

11. Or in a draught.

1853-1854

1853-1854

The Placer, [California Herald](#) reported that the flow of water in the North Fork of Middle Fork of the American River had been entirely flumed nearly the entire distance from the junction to El Dorado Canyon, and the gold miners had just begun to wash in the bed of the stream. Hopes were high. So far so good! There was a slide above Oak Flat from which Dr. Ketchum and 2 others had been able to wash 2 wheelbarrows of dirt yielding the sum of \$750 in gold — and many other locations on this slide were yielding even more than that. Not much work had as yet been accomplished at Stoney Bar, but the workers there were already retrieving 1 to 3 ounces per day per person. In some places on this bar, there were 8 feet of pay dirt to be washed that had been paying as high as a dollar to the bucketfull. At Volcano Bar and Canyon the miners were all doing well, making an ounce to \$750 per day. A company of 3 men took out just above the bar and in the slide, \$2,200 in one day, and their claim had been averaging within \$200 of that amount for some days past. From Volcano down to Spanish Bar Bridge there were a great many flumes under construction. From the bridge to Yankee Bar, there was one entire string of flumes a distance of nearly 5 miles. Not less than 1,000 persons were laboring on these flumes. Then there was the well-known slide at Poverty Bar at which they were expecting many “big strikes” just as soon as the water could be drained off. In addition, the gazette printed a letter it had received from Robbs Ranch in Nevada County about a location known as Lowell Hill:

Lowell Hill is a new place perhaps to most of your readers, and the diggings here were first discovered, but a few months since, and the name indicates, by a Massachusetts Yankee. The hills have not as yet been thoroughly prospected, but the few claims that have been worked have proved of sufficient richness to authorize the laying out of stakes for a village. The gold is very bright and handsome and mostly of coarse quality. The Little York Canal running close by furnishes a supply of water for sluicing purposes; the miners, however, at the present time are mostly engaged in sinking shafts and I learned that one recently dug to the depth of 86 feet was quite rich upon the bottom. One half of a mile down the ridge runs the waters of Steep Hollow and at this point the clearness is first disturbed often leaving their sources, which is some miles above. The bed of the creek is here flumed and being worked for the second time, and I saw one company of four members with 9 ounces in their pan. The banks of the creek for about 3 miles below are worked by Chinese.



August 13: The last was a melting night, and a carnival for mosquitoes. Could I not write meditations under a bridge at midsummer? The last three or four days less dogdayish. We paused under each bridge yesterday, — we who had been sheltering on the quiet waves, — for the salve of a little shade and coolness, holding on by the piers with our hands. Now and then a muskrat made the water boil, which dove or came up near by. They will move so suddenly in the water when alarmed as to make quite a report.

P.M. — To hibiscus by boat.

Hibiscus just beginning to open, its large cylindrical buds, as long as your finger, fast unrolling. They look like loosely rolled pink cigars. Bowed home in haste before a black approaching storm from the northeast, which was slightly cooling the air. How grateful when, as I backed through the bridges, the breeze of the storm blew through the piers, rippling the water and slightly cooling the sultry air! How fast the black cloud came up, and passed over my head, proving all wind! Gardeners complain that their fruit is fast rotting. We have had such wet and then moist, sultry weather that apples and plums ripen and decay very fast. Sicyos well out, and probably began when I saw it before.

1853-1854

1853-1854



August 14, Sunday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Some of our neighbor's cattle died last night, but we lost none. They seem to be well when they turn them out and in the morning find them dead. Drove 5 miles and came to another creek, 7 miles farther and we came to another creek, one half a mile from which are hot spring branches. Water not good. One mile farther and to the right of the road are the hot springs. These springs are very hot, almost boiling. Cannot hold my hand in the water 10 seconds. Four miles farther is Barrel creek. Good grass here. Camped again. Drove 17 1/2 miles to-day.






Aug. 14. Sunday. 5 A.M. — To Cliffs.

The toads probably ceased about the time I last spoke of them. Bullfrogs, also, I have not heard for a long time. I perceive the scent of the *earliest* ripe apples in my walk. How it surpasses all their flavors! *Lespedeza violacea* var. *angustifolia* at Cliffs, *a day or two*. The bushy gerardia makes a. show there now. When I came out on to the wet rock by the juniper, all green with moss and with the driving mists beneath me, — for the sun did not come out till seven, — it reminded me of mountain-tops which I have visited.

P.M. — To Walden, Saw Mill Brook, Flint's Pond.

Locust days, — sultry and sweltering. I hear them even till sunset. The usually invisible but far-heard locust. In Thrush Alley a *lespedeza* out of bloom, with downy stem two feet high, and oblanceolate leaves one half by one and three quarters inches, and dry pods the whole length in the axils, as if between *L. capitata* and *violacea*. I find on Heywood Peak two similar *desmodiums* of apparently the same date, — one that of July 31st, which I will call for the present *D. Dillenii*, two or three feet high, curving upward, many stems from a centre, with oval-lanceolate leaves, one to two inches long, and a long, loose, open panicle of flowers, which turn blue-green in drying, stem somewhat downy and upper sides of leaves smooth and silky to the lips; the other, which I will call *D. Marylandicum*, of similar habit (and date), but a little smaller and the leaves rhombic ovate and blunt, and some of the lower round, about three quarters of an inch long, and *stem quite smooth*, or some a little roughened; also by Woodside Path to White Pond: flowers turn blue-green in drying.

In the low woodland paths full of rank weeds, there are countless great fungi of various forms and colors, the produce of the warm rains and muggy weather of a week ago, now rapidly dissolving. One great one, more than a foot in diameter, with a stem 2½+ inches through and 5 inches high, and which has sprung up since I passed here on the 10th, is already sinking like lead into that portion already melted. The ground is covered with foul spots where they have been dissolved, and for *most* of my *walk* the air is tainted with a musty, carrion-like odor in some places very offensive, so that I at first suspected a dead horse or cow. They impress me like humors or pimples on the face of the earth, toddy-blossoms, by which it gets rid of its corrupt blood. A sort of excrement they are. It never occurred to me before to-day that those different forms belong to one species. Some I see just pushing up in the form of blunt cones, thrusting the leaves aside, and, further along, some which are perfectly flat on top, probably the same in full bloom, and others decaying and curved up into a basin at the edges. This misty and musty dog-day weather has lasted now nearly a month, as I remember, beginning gradually from the middle of July.

The *Desmodium paniculatum*¹² which was not out on the 10th, now, say the 12th, by Saw Mill Brook Path. The *Aster acuminatus* in the copse near by. I found it last year, but where?¹³ I find no grass balls yet. The dangle-berry found now, on tall glaucous-leaved bushes in low ground, is the handsomest of our gaylussacias, — smooth, round, and blue, larger than most, but with a tough skin and perhaps a slight astringency. Altogether a very handsome bush and berry. I hear no wood thrushes [**Wood Thrush**  *Catharus mustelina*] for a week. The peawai [**Wood-Pewee**, **Eastern**  *Contopus virens* (~~Wood-Pewee~~ or ~~Peawai~~)] still, and sometimes the golden robin [**Northern Oriole**  *Icterus galbula* (~~Fiery Hangbird~~ or ~~Hangbird~~ or ~~Gold Robin~~ or ~~Golden Robin~~)]. Methinks the reign of the milkweeds is over.

12. *Vide* August 16th.

13. On Pack Monadnock; also near *Aster Radula* in Potter's Swamp, three feet high,



1853-1854

1853-1854

 Mid-August: There is an entry in [Waldo Emerson](#)'s journal that dates to approximately this period:

H.T. sturdily pushes his economy into houses & thinks it the false mark of the gentleman that he is to pay much for his food. He ought to pay little for his food. Ice – he must have ice! And it is true, that, for each artificial want that can be invented & added to the ponderous expense, there is new clapping of hands of newspaper editors, & the donkey public. To put one more rock to be lifted betwixt a man & his true ends. If Socrates were here, we could go & talk with him; but Longfellow, we cannot go & talk with; there is a palace, & servants, & a row of bottles of different coloured wines, & wine glasses, & fine coats.



A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Again some of our neighbor's cattle died during the night. We find them lying along the road sometimes within a few feet of each other and two or three together. Twelve miles farther is another creek. Some grass and a very rough sort of a road. Camped here.

1853-1854

1853-1854



Mid-August: In rural Missouri, when [Jack Burton](#) reached “the age of manhood” his owner Moses Burton sold him for \$1,000 to the McDonald who owned his wife Maria Tomlin Burton. However, Mr. McDonald happened to reside at some 30 miles distance from the farm where the wife labored and as it turned out, he would refuse permission for the slave husband to travel that distance to visit his wife and infant child. Burton was told he could instead pick out a new woman for himself from amongst the local [slaves](#) of his present owner, and start himself a new family. –No big deal, right?



JOHN ANDERSON

[New-York](#) was, as usual in August, just miserable. A gazette reported that “During the three hot days in June last (22d, 23d, 24th), about sixty persons died in this city and vicinity from the effects of what is usually denominated sun stroke. The malady consists essentially in an extreme relaxation of the capillary vessels, by which the circulation of the blood is more or less impeded, and sometimes entirely arrested.... There are cases where blood-letting is not only necessary, but the only thing the physician can employ that offers any hope of a favorable result.... The patient wants rest and quiet, abundant ventilation, all the pure, fresh air, possible, cold wet cloths to the head, and if the surface or extremities are cold, bottles of hot water to the feet.” Wet-bulb readings during August were at 80° to 84° from the 12th to the 14th, the air at 90° to 94°, “and the mortality frightful from this joint effect; over two hundred persons losing their lives in the two days in that city alone.”



Aug. 15. Rain again in the night, but now clear. Though the last week has been remarkably warm, the warmest in the year, the river, owing to the rains, has not been warm enough for perfect bathing, as in July, '52. It was lowest (thus far) in July this year, before these rains. It has been melting weather; hundreds sunstruck in New York. Sultry, mosquitoey nights, with both windows and door open, and scarcely a sheet to be endured. But now it is cooler at last.

P.M. — To White Pond *via* Dugan's.

The air is somewhat cooler and beautifully clear at last after all these rains. Instead of the late bluish mistiness, I see a distinct, dark shade under the edge of the woods, the effect of the luxuriant foliage seen through the clear air. The vision goes bounding buoyantly far over the plains. It is a pleasure to look at the washed woods far away. You see every feature of the white pine grove with distinctness, — the stems of the trees, then the dark shade, then their fresh sunlit outsides. The mists are washed and cleared away, and behind them is seen the offspring of the rank vegetation which they nourished, an inky darkness as of night under the edges of the woods and the hedges, now at noonday heralding the evening of the year. The fields are remarkably green with a short, firm sward, and the crickets chirp with a still more autumnal sound.

Bathed at Clamshell Hill. There are perhaps four clams there under each foot. It will be long before the native clam will be extinct, like the Wellfleet oysters. That long, crinkled red gall on shrub oak stems. *Bidens frondosa*.



1853-1854

1853-1854

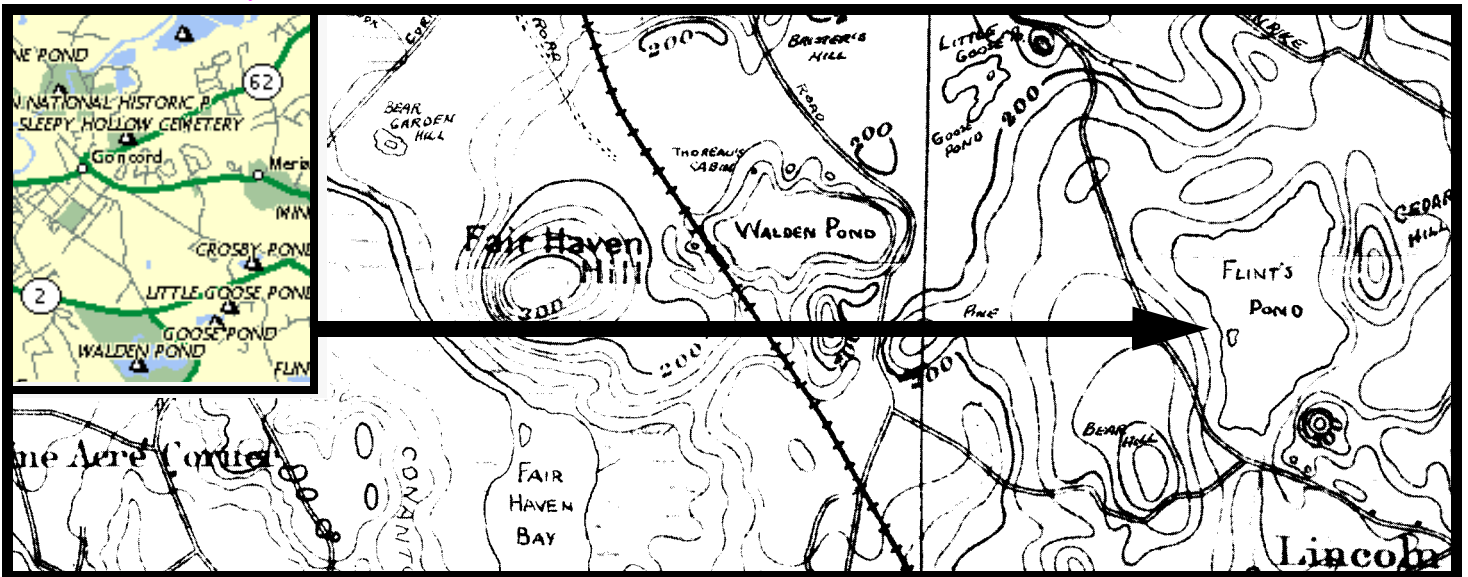
More of the *Desmodium Marylandicum* (it is pretty plainly this) in the wood-side path to White Pond. The leaves of a rubus scored by some worm or insect, i.e. eaten half through, leaving whitish, serpentine, ribbon-like lines, doubling on themselves. Some have looked [to] find some mystic alphabet in such things. Hips are reddening.



August 16, Tuesday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

This morning we had a very rough road for 6 or 7 miles. Five miles from camp is White Sulphur Springs. Good grass here. Drove on about 10 miles and came to a branch which was dry where we crossed it, but down a few rods in a large grove of willows, we found some springs, good grass along here. The country now begins to change its appearance, the road is smooth but over rolling country. Camped at willow grove.

In the afternoon [Henry David Thoreau](#) and the Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) walked to [Flint's Pond](#), or [Sandy Pond](#), where some [Nashobah](#) once resided:



Thoreau made an entry in his journal that he was later to copy into his early lecture ["WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT"](#) as:

[Paragraph 22] Indeed, how earthy old people generally become! Mouldy as the grave. Their wisdom commonly smacks of the earth. There is no foretaste of immortality in it. They remind us of earthworms and mole crickets.

**Brad Dean's
Commentary**

Certainly Thoreau was not referring to the Reverend, who was considerably younger than himself.






Aug. 16. P.M. — To Flint's Pond with Mr. Conway.



1853-1854

1853-1854



Started a woodcock [**Woodcock, American**  ***Scolopax minor***] in the woods. Also saw a large telltale, I think yellow-shanks [~~Tell-tale~~ (**Greater Yellowlegs**  ***Tringa melanoleuca***; **Lesser Yellowlegs**  ***Tringa flavipes***), whose note I at first mistook for a jay's, giving the alarm to some partridges. The *Polygonum orientale*, probably some days, by Turnpike Bridge, a very rich rose-color large flowers, distinguished by its salver-shaped upper sheaths. It is a color as rich, I think, as that of the cardinal-flower. *Desmodium paniculatum* in the wood-path northeast of Flint's Pond. Its flowers turn blue-green in drying. Yesterday also in the Marlborough woods, perceived everywhere that offensive mustiness of decaying fungi. How earthy old people become, — mouldy as the grave! Their wisdom smacks of the earth. There is no foretaste of immortality in it. They remind me of earthworms and mole crickets.



August 17, Wednesday: The *Anna Watson*, voyaging from Liverpool to the west coast of Africa, ran aground and needed to be abandoned.

Harry Watkins spent the evening at Bowery & St Charles Theatres, and then mentioned in his diary that the Bowery was doing, as usual, a good business, but he feared that Thorne's management of the St Charles was going to be a brief one. "He has not shown himself a good manager in this case, for if the Theatre could be made profitable Thorne has not pursued the right course to make it so: yet if he can get through the warm season without loss he may eventually succeed."

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old **Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra**, her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

5 miles from camp is a beautiful branch and good grass. Watered our stock and rolled on 3 miles farther when we reached another fine branch and plenty of grass, and another 3 miles farther. After crossing this branch a short distance, we strike over the hills and found a more level country for about 7 miles, when we found some springs and a dry branch. Camped here again. Drove 18 miles to-day.



Aug. 17. Rain in forenoon.

The high blackberries are now in their prime; the richest berry we have. That wild black currant by Union Turnpike ripe (in gardens some time). The knapweed now conspicuous, like a small thistle. Did I set it down too early? Rain, rain, rain again! Good for grass and apples; said to be bad for potatoes, making them rot; makes the fruit now ripening decay, — apples, etc.



1853-1854

1853-1854



August 18, Thursday: [James Gillespie Birney](#) wrote to [Lysander Spooner](#) from [Cincinnati, Ohio](#), soliciting legal advice on how to answer a circuit court ruling by [Judge John McLean](#), upholding the [Fugitive Slave Act](#).

[General John A. Quitman](#) of Mississippi signed a formal agreement with the *Junta Cubana* of the filibuster Narciso López, that appointed him the “civil and military chief of the revolution, with all the powers and attributes of dictatorship as recognized by civilized nations, to be used and exercised by him for the purpose of overthrowing the Spanish government in the island of [Cuba](#) and its dependencies, and substituting in the place thereof a free and independent government.” Article II of this signed formal agreement stipulated that General Quitman, as dictator, was to exercise the freedom and independence of his island government through the protection of the institution of human slavery (of course, General Quitman, a Mississippi politician and a true believer in freedom and slavery, had no problem whatever with any of this).

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Nelson dreads the road this morning being compelled to ride over the mountains owing to a severe attack of cholera morbus last night. The road after leaving camp strikes over the mountains to Boise River about 5 miles to where we had the first view of it. Followed down it for some 7 or 6 miles when we camped. The road has been quite rough today and dust so dense we could not see the oxen at times. I sympathize with any one who is unable to walk such a day as this has been for dust.



Aug. 18. Rain again.

P.M. — To Great Fields.

Many leaves of the cultivated cherry are turned yellow, and a very *few* leaves of the elm have fallen, — the dead or prematurely ripe. The abundant and repeated rains since this month came in have made the last fortnight and more seem like a rainy season in the tropics, — warm, still copious rains falling straight down, contrasting with the cold, driving spring rains. Now again I am caught in a heavy shower in Moore’s pitch pines on edge of Great Fields, and am obliged to stand crouching under my umbrella till the drops turn to streams, which find their way through my umbrella, and the path up the hillside is all afloat, a succession of puddles at different levels, each bounded by a ridge of dead pine-needles. An Irishman, getting out stumps and roots in Moore’s Swamp, at first squatted behind a wood-pile, but, being wet to his skin, now stands up and moves about for warmth. Melons crack open before they are sweet. Is not that variety of the ambrosia going to seed by Brown’s bars in Sleepy Hollow the *heterophylla*?¹⁴ with short, pyramidal purplish spikes and dark-green entire lanceolate leaves above. What means this sense of lateness that so comes over one now, — as if the rest of the year were down-hill, and if we had not performed anything before, we should not now? The season of flowers or of promise may be said to be over, and now is the season of fruits; — but where is our fruit, The night of the year is approaching. What have we done with our talent? All nature prompts and reproves us. How early in the year it begins to be late! The sound of the crickets, even in the spring, makes our hearts beat with its awful reproof, while it encourages with its seasonable warning. It matters not by how little we have fallen behind; it seems irretrievably late. The year is full of warnings of its shortness, as is life. The sound of so many insects and the sight of so many flowers affect us so, — the creak of the cricket and the sight of the prunella and autumnal dandelion. They say, “For the night cometh in which no man may work.”

14. No; one form of the common.



August 19, Friday: The US federal government purchased a site on [Wall Street](#) for \$553,000, for its [New-York Assay Office](#).

When a severed human head asserted to be that of the bandit "[Joaquin Murieta](#)" ([Joaquin Murrieta or Murieta or Murietta Carrillo](#)) was displayed in a jar of whiskey at a [San Francisco](#) saloon, well, as you can imagine, any number of people paid \$1 for an opportunity for a glimpse (whiskey does that sort of thing to people's powers of judgment).

The white men who had gunned down this person, whoever he had been, when they had followed smoke to a campfire in the San Joaquin Valley, had asserted that his last words had been "No tire mass. Yo soy muerto." When no further escapades would be attributed to this bandit they would collect a state reward of \$5,000 despite the fact that his sister had said "No, that's not him — it doesn't have his face scar" (incidentally, the jar of whiskey containing this human head may or may not have been lost during the great San Francisco fire of 1907 but does not at the present time seem to be locatable — so go figure).

THE MARKET FOR HUMAN BODY PARTS

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Down Boise River all day to-day, dust not very plenty on this bottom, good feed all along. Drove 15 miles today.

[Henry Thoreau](#) and [Ellery Channing](#) went by boat to Sudbury:



Aug. 19. Friday. 9 A.M. — To Sudbury by boat with [W.E.C.](#)

Cooler weather. Last Sunday we were sweltering here and one hundred died of the heat in New York; to-day they have fires in this village. After more rain, with wind in the night, it is now clearing up cool. There is a broad, clear crescent of blue in the west, slowly increasing, and an agreeable autumnal coolness, both under the high, withdrawn clouds and the edges of the woods, and a considerable wind wafts us along with our one sail and two umbrellas, sitting in thick coats. I was going to sit and write or mope all day in the house, but it seems wise to cultivate animal spirits, to embark in enterprises which employ and recreate the whole body. Let the divine spirits like the huntsman with his bugle accompany the animal spirit that would fain range the forest and meadow. Even the gods and goddesses, Apollo and Diana, are found in the field, though they are superior to the dog and the deer.

The river is full and overflowing, though there are still a few lilies and pontederias left. The wind comes from the northwest and is bracing and encouraging, send we can now sail up the stream. Flocks of bobolinks [[Bobolink](#) █ [Dolichonyx oryzivorus](#) ~~Rice-bird~~] go tinkling along about the low willows, and swallows █ twitter, and a kingbird [[Eastern Kingbird](#) █ [Tyrannus tyrannus](#)] hovers almost stationary in the air, a foot above the water. The weeds which rise above the water now bend up-stream. The rich red *Polygonum amphibium* var. *terrestre* (?), — I suppose, for it rises sometimes two feet erect and is slightly hairy and leaves not commonly heart-shaped. Also probably the variety *aquaticum* just appearing above water in midstream, where it floats.¹⁵ Both of these probably two or three days at most: but all weeds are wholly or partially drowned. Start up three blue herons [[Great Blue Heron](#) █ [Ardea herodias](#)] in the meadow under Fair Haven, which fly heavily like bitterns, with their breast-bones projecting like a broad keel, — or was it their necks curled up?

Mowing in Conant's meadow by Fair Haven. These mowers must often find the bittern's [[American Bittern](#) █ [Botaurus lentiginosus](#)] eggs. On entering Fair Haven with a fair wind, scare up two ducks █ behind the point of the Island. Saw three or four more in the afternoon. Also I hear from over the pond the clear metallic scream of young hawks, so common at this season, probably marsh hawks █. Buttercups¹⁶ are now abundant in Lee's meadow. Is it the *repens*? The pads are mostly eaten through and through and covered with water, and I see many of their wrecks drifting down the stream, and the pontederia leaves are already half of them turned brown and shrivelled dry, before any frosts! Why should they decay so soon. like skunk-cabbage leaves? The fall has come to them. 'Thistledown is seen in the air sometimes. Epilobium down has been flying

15. Doubtful if I have yet distinguished them.

16. Were they not fall dandelions?

1853-1854

1853-1854

some time also.

The sun comes out now about noon, when we are at Rice's, and the water sparkles in the clear air, and the pads reflect the sun. The dog-days seem now fairly past. The lower rank of polygonums is nearly drowned, but the higher, the *hydropiperoides*, rises still a foot or two, with its white spike and its broader leaves bending south before the wind and reflecting the light. There is much trumpet-weed along the shore.

We have passed men at work in the water a foot or more deep, saving the brass they had cut, and now we enter the broader Sudbury meadows. How clear and bright the air! The stems of trees at a distance are absolutely black and the densest shades [sic]. We scare up blue herons here also. As many as half a dozen different blue herons in our voyage. They are the most common large bird we see. They have got the grass from not more than a third of the meadows here, for there is much more water on them than in Concord. We left men mowing in Conant's meadow, which is as wet as the average of ours, but here we sail across the meadow, cutting off the bends in the river. Many tons stand cocked up, blackened and lost, in the water, and probably (?) they will not get the grass now standing. Either their meadows are lower referred to the river, or the river has risen higher there, — I think the former.

There are broad fields of sium with its umbels now going to seed, exactly like carrots, half a dozen rods in NN width along the stream, all through this meadow. The bulrushes are turning brown and falling. I see floating or just beneath the surface, along the side of the river, masses of the *Ranunculus Purshii*,¹⁷ four or five feet through and many rods long, as if rolled together, washed up and off. The great *Arundo* is now green with a reddish top and blades one inch wide. Methinks it is not long out of bloom.

We landed at the first cedar hills above the causeway and ate our dinner and Watermelon on them. A great reddish-brown marsh hawk circling over the meadow there. How freshly, beautifully green the landscape after all these rains! The choke-berry ripe. Hear the incessant cricket of the fall now. Found a swamp full of high blueberries there, and from the hill near by looked to Nobscot, three or four miles distant. It was seen to advantage, rising(; green or with a glaucous tint above the slope of a near pasture which concealed all the intervening country. The great Sudbury meadows, looking north, appear elevated. Every blade and leaf has been washed by the rains, and the landscape is indescribably bright. It is light without heat, Septemberish, as if reflected from the earth, such as is common in the fall. The surface of the meadows and the whole earth is like that of a great reflector to the sun, but reflecting its light more than its heat.

It is a glorious and ever-memorable day. We observe attentively, — the first beautiful days in the spring, but not so much in the autumn. We might expect that the first fair days after so much rain would be remarkable. It is a day affecting the spirits of men, but there is nobody to enjoy it but ourselves. What do the laborer ox and the laborer man care for the beautiful days? Will the haymaker when he comes home to-night know that this has been such a beautiful day? This day itself has been the great phenomenon, but will it be reported in any journal, as the storm is, and the heat? It is like a great and beautiful flower unnamed. I see a man trimming willows on the Sudbury causeway and others raking hay out of the water in the midst of all this clarity and brightness, but are they aware of the splendor of this day? The mass of mankind, who live in houses or shops, or are bent upon their labor out of doors, know nothing of the beautiful days which are passing about and around them. Is not such a day worthy of a hymn? It is such a day as mankind might spend in praising and glorifying nature. It might be spent as a natural Sabbath, if only all men would accept the hint, devoted to unworldly thoughts. The first bright day of the fall, the earth reflector. The dog-day mists are gone; the washed earth shines; the cooler air braces man. No summer day is so beautiful as the fairest spring and fall days.

Went through a potato-field overrun and concealed by Roman wormwood as high as our heads. Returning, we row all the way. On the narrow meadow in Sudbury between Sherman's Bridge and the Jenkins Bend, opposite the oaks, found a new flower, the *Coreopsis rosea*, a small purplish or pale-red flower, somewhat like a mayweed at a distance, but with linear leaves; maybe a fortnight since, for some were gone to seed. It was now nearly covered Math the water. The only coreopsis I have found; rose-flowered coreopsis. It interests me not a little from its resemblance to the coreopsis of the gardens.

Entered Fair haven at sunset. A large hawk sat on the very top of a tall white pine in Lee's good, looking down at us. He looked like an eagle with his full breast, or like a great cone belonging to the tree. It is their habit thus to perch on the top of the pines, and they are not readily detected. I could see him nearly half a mile off.

As the rays of the sun fell horizontally across the placid pond, they lit up the side of Baker's Pleasant Meadow Wood, which covers a hill. The different shades of green of different and the same trees, — alders, pines, birch, maple, oak, etc., — melting into one another on their rounded bosky edges, made a most glorious soft and harmonious picture, only to be seen at this season of the day and perhaps of the year. It was a beautiful green rug with lighter shadings and rounded figures like the outlines of trees and shrubs of different shades of green. In the case of a single tree there was the dark glossy green of the lower, older leaves, — the spring growth, — which hang down, fading on every side into the silvery hoariness of the younger and more downy leaves on the edges, — the fall growth, — whose under sides are seen, — which stand up, and more perhaps at this hour. This was also the case with every bush along the river, — the larger glossy dark-green watery leaves beneath and in

17. is it not *Bidens Beckii*?



1853-1854

1853-1854

the recesses, etc. upright hoary leaves whose under sides were seen on the shoots which rose above. I never saw a forest side look more luxuriantly and at the same time freshly beautiful. These lighter shades in the rug had the effect of watered silks, — the edges lit, the breasts dark green, almost the cast on green crops seen by moonlight.

As toward the evening of the day the lakes and streams are smooth, so in the fall, the evening of the year, the waters are smoothed more perfectly than at any other season. The day is an epitome of the year. The smaller, or green, bittern goes over. Now, while off Conantum, we have a cool, white, autumnal twilight, and as we pass the Hubbard Bridge, see the first stars.

I have already seen the cores of white pine cones stripped by the squirrels (?).



August 20, Saturday: [Harry Watkins](#) confided to his diary that it was “almost time that I had an engagement made for the coming season — and it is also very certain that I shall not be able to make one in New York — something must be depended decided on, and that shortly, too, or rent-day will come around and find me unprepared to meet it in an agreeable manner. I shall try to make an engagement at Washington.”

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Today we were forced a part of the time from the bottom of the bluff on account of the river running so close to it. Camped again in grass and wild clover up to the cattle's backs. Drove 15 miles to-day.



Aug. 20 P.M. — To Great Meadows.

Bidens connata (?) by pond-hole beyond Agricultural Ground; no rays yet at least. No traces of fringed gentian can I find. The liatris now in prime, — purple with a bluish reflection. A *Desmodium Canadense* (?) with large flowers spreading ascendant in the liatris hollow. Was that *Neottia* or *Spiranthes gracilis*, fifteen inches high there, without apparent leaf?

They have got nearly all the grass from the meadow. I walk down the firm bank of the river, that broad, flat firm strip between the meadow with its poor cut-grass and the stream, on which a better but wiry kind of grass grows. There is not nearly so much water here as in Sudbury. The river is higher than it has been since spring.

This day, too, has that autumnal character. I am struck by the clearness and stillness of the air, the brightness of the landscape, or, as it were, the reflection of light from the washed earth, the darkness and heaviness of the shade, as I look now up the river at the white maples and bushes, and the smoothness of the stream. If they are between you and the sun, the trees are more black than green. It must be owing to the clearness of the air since the rains, together with the multiplication of the leaves, whose effect has not been perceived during the mists of the dog-days. But I cannot account for this peculiar smoothness of the dimpled stream unless the air is stiller than before — nor for the peculiar brightness of the sun's reflection from its surface. I stand on the south bank, opposite the black willows, looking up the full stream, which, with a smooth, almost oily and sheeny surface, comes welling and dimpling onward, peculiarly smooth and bright now at 4 P.M., while the numerous trees seen up the stream — white maples, oaks, etc. — and the bushes look absolutely black in the clear, bright light.



August 21, Sunday: [Harry Watkins](#) confided to his diary that “Osmer paid a visit and took supper with us, after which, at his invitation, I took a long walk down town and, on our return, we stopped in at Taylor's Saloon on Broadway and partook of some ice-cream. Time brings about some strange events and, this walk, with the ice creaming, is one of the strangest. I never expected that such a thing would come to pass but then I have a position in the world now—society regards me as somebody—that makes a great difference.”

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

1853-1854

1853-1854

Laid by all day to-day. Plenty of Indians about our camp with fish and ponies for trade. Lost one ox and one cow last night.



Aug. 21. 6 A.M. — To Island by boat.




Aster maerophyllus. Appear not to blossom generally this year.

P.M. — To Jenny Dugan's and Conantum.

Saw one of those light-green locusts about three quarters of an inch long on a currant leaf in the garden. It kept up a steady shrilling (unlike the interrupted creak of the cricket), with its wings upright on its shoulders, all indistinct, they moved so fast. Near at hand it made my ears ache, it was so piercing, and was accompanied by a hum like that of a factory. The wings are transparent, with marks somewhat like a letter.



That which I had mistaken for *Mentha Canadensis* at Mrs. Hosmer's brook is apparently *M. piperita*, or peppermint, naturalized. It *may* have been in bloom a fortnight. It is higher-scented, with dark leaves and dark-purplish stems, and a short spike of flowers above, and not in the axils of the leaves. What I take to be *Aster patens* is a handsome light-blue aster, now abundant on the hillside by J. Hosmer's pines. The choke-cherries, which are now, and have been for some time, as ripe as they will be, actually fur the mouth, and the juice of these taken into the mouth, mixed with the saliva, is feathered like tea into which sour cream has been poured. They are a rich, fatty-looking fruit. That must be the *Aster puniceus* (which I have falsely called *longifolius*), four or five feet high and coarse and rough, commonly with a reddish stem, filling the brook behind Dugan's; out two or three days, very *pale* purplish. I see aphides like a white mildew on the alders. The *Polygonum articulatum* not yet. The *Aster laevis* is one of the most beautiful I have seen yet, especially when there are ten or twelve in a panicle, making a small rounded bunch. The *Viburnum Lentago* berries are but just beginning to redden on one cheek. The *Cornus paniculata* are fairly white in some places. The polygonatum berries have been a bluish-green some time. Do they turn still?

Methinks I have not heard a robin [**American Robin**  **Turdus migratorius**] sing morning or evening of late, but the peawai [**Wood-Pewee**, **Eastern**  **Contopus virens** (~~Wood-Pewee~~ or ~~Peawai~~)] still, and occasionally a short note from the gold robin [**Northern Oriole**  **Icterus galbula** (~~Fiery Hangbird~~ or ~~Hangbird~~ or ~~Gold Robin~~ or ~~Golden Robin~~)].

The river was as low as in July, last year at this time. It is now perhaps two feet higher than then. The river plants are thus subject to unusual accidents. I think it was lowest this year the latter part of July before the rains.

An aster beyond Hubbard's Grove which I should call *A. Radula*, but the calyx-scales not appressed.



August 22, Monday: [Pietro Bachi](#) died in Boston.

[Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) wrote to [Waldo Emerson](#) from Hampton Falls, New Hampshire, proposing that he and some of his Harvard friends meet with Emerson in [Concord](#).

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

We crossed the point of the bluff this morning and 9 miles from this bluff is the ford. In crossing this ford our cattle were somewhat obstinate and got in rather deep water which came in our wagon box and wet all our things.

1853-18



1853-1854

August 22: I hear but a few notes of birds these days: no singing, but merely a few hurried notes or screams or twittering or peeping. I will enumerate such as I hear or see this still luring and showery afternoon. A hurried anxious note from a robin [**American Robin** *Turdus migratorius*]. Heard perhaps a dozen afterward. They flit now, accompanied by their young. A sharp, loud *che-wink* from a ground-robin [**Rufous-sided Towhee** *Pipilo erythrophthalmus* ~~Ground-bird, Ground-robin¹⁸, Chewink~~]. A goldfinch [**American Goldfinch** *Carduelis tristis*] twitters over; several more heard afterward. A blue jay [**Blue Jay** *Cyanocitta cristata*] screams, and one or two fly over, showing to advantage their handsome forms, especially their regular tails, wedge-formed. Surprised to hear a very faint *bobolink* [**Bobolink** *Dolichonyx oryzivorus* ~~Rice-bird~~] in the air; the *link, link*, once or twice later. A yellow-bird [**Yellow Warbler** *Dendroica petechia* ~~Yellow-bird or Summer Yellow-bird~~] flew over the river. Swallows twittering, but flying high, —the chimney swallows [**Chimney Swift** *Chaetura pelagica* (~~Chimney Swallow~~)] and what I take to be the bank [**Bank Swallow** *Riparia riparia*] ditto. Scared up a green bittern [**American Bittern** *Botaurus lentiginosus* ~~Stake-driver~~] from an oak by the riverside. Hear a peawai [**Wood-Pewee, Eastern** *Contopus virens* (~~Wood-Pewee or Peawai~~)] whose note is more like singing — as if it were still incubating — than any other. Some of the warble of the golden robin [**Northern Oriole** *Icterus galbula* (~~Fiery Hangbird or Hangbird or Gold-Robin or Golden-Robin~~)]. A kingfisher [**Belted Kingfisher** *Ceryle alcyon*], with his white collar, darted across the river and alighted on an oak. A peewee [**Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularia*] flew along the shore and uttered its peculiar note. Their wings appear double as they fly by you, while their bill is cumbrously carried downward in front. The chipping of a song sparrow [**Song Sparrow** *Melospiza melodia*] occasionally heard amid the bushes. A single duck scared up. And two nighthawks [**Common Nighthawk** *Chordeiles minor* (~~Booming Nighthawk~~)] flying high over the river. At twilight many bats after the showers. These birds were heard or seen in the course of three or four hours on the river, but there were not sounds enough to disturb the general stillness.

THOREAU AS ORNITHOLOGIST



August 23, Tuesday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Down the river all day. Sixteen miles from camp is Snake River Ferry. Arrived here about camping time and put our wagon boxes in the water as they charge eight dollars for each wagon.

Below I have taken the liberty to insert [William M. White](#)'s "found poetry" version of [Henry Thoreau](#)'s journal entry:



Aug. 23. 6 A.M. — To Nawshawtuct.
A very clear but cool morning, all white light. The feverwort berries are yellowing and yellowed; barberries have begun to redden, and the prinors, — some of the last quite red. The *Spiranthes gracilis*, with its leafless stalk, is very common now on grassy hillsides.
August has been thus far dog-days, rain, oppressive sultry heat, and now beginning fall weather.





P.M. — Clematis Brook *via* Conantum.
Neollia or rather *Spiranthes cernua*, a few days, bank by [Hubbard](#)'s meadow, by oak beyond ivy pass. This low, with long lanceolate leaves, and in low ground compared with the taller *gracilis*. More and larger by meadow path beyond swimming-place. Have we the *latifolia*? The *gracilis* has its crystalline white flowers arranged in a dense spiral cone like the thread of a screw, standing out nearly at right angles with the stem, curved downward a little.

18. Thoreau occasionally used this term for such ground-feeding birds as **Savannah Sparrow** *Passerculus sandwichensis*, **Song Sparrow** *Melospiza melodia*, and **Vesper Sparrow** *Pooecetes gramineus*.

1853-1854

1853-1854

Squirrels have commenced on hazelnuts.

Observing the blackness of the foliage, especially between me and the light, I am reminded that it begins in the spring, the dewy dawn of the year, with a silvery hoary downiness, changing to a yellowish or light green, — the saffron-robed morn, — then to a pure, spotless, glossy green with light under sides reflecting the light, — the forenoon, — and now the dark green, or early afternoon, when shadows begin to increase, and next it will turn yellow or red, — the sunset sky, — and finally sere brown and black, when the night of the year sets in. Carrion-berries just begin to be ripe. Potato-fields are full of Roman wormwood now. I am braced and encouraged by the rank growth of this aromatic plant, concealing the potato vines which are already nearly half decayed. By path from meadow through Hubbard's rear wood and sprout-lands. The now purple naked viburnum berries — numerous drooping cymes of purple berries — are now very handsome seen against the green leaves in sprout-lands. I see to-day — and may add to yesterday's list — the blue heron [**Great Blue Heron**  *Ardea herodias*] launch off from an oak by the river and flap or sail away with lumbering flight; also kingbirds [**Eastern Kingbird**  *Tyrannus tyrannus*] and crows [**American Crow**  *Corvus brachyrhynchos*]. The redbird [**Red-eyed Vireo**  *Vireo olivaceus* (~~red-eye~~)] may be heard faintly in the morning.

The *Solidago nemoralis* now yellows the dry fields with its recurved standard a little more than a foot high, — marching to the Holy Land, a countless host of crusaders. That field in the woods near Well Meadow, where I once thought of squatting, is full of them. The patches of rhexia or meadow-beauty which have escaped the mowers in the low grounds, where rowen is now coming forward apace, look like a little bright purple on one side of Nature's pallet, giving place to some fresh green which Nature has ground. The traveller leaves his dog to worry the woodchuck, though he himself passes on, so little advanced has man from the savage state. Anon he will go back to save him, and legislatures perchance will pass laws for his protection. Arum berries. *Smilacina racemosa* [berries] now are reddish and minutely red speckled; its leaves are commonly eaten or decayed. The *Smilacina bifolia* in some places red. Of late I notice that saw-like grass gone to seed, — a flattened row of seeds two or three inches long under a flat, leaf-like stalk, — an autumnal sight.

Pickering, in his "Races," suggests that savages, going naked, do not disperse seeds so much as civilized men. Beggar-ticks and burs (I say) do not adhere to the bare skin. Weeds especially accompany civilization. I hesitated to collect some desmodium seeds because they looked green and the plant was still in flower, but before I had gone far I found [I] had brought away many on my clothes, which suggested to me that probably as soon as the hooked hairs were stiff enough, clinging to foreign surfaces, to overcome the adherence of the pods to their stems, it will do to pluck them for seed.

I am again struck by the perfect correspondence of a day — say an August day — and the year. I think that a perfect parallel may be drawn between the seasons of the day and of the year. Perhaps after middle age man ceases to be interested in the morning and in the spring.

I see the late flowers of the cistus again!

Poke stems are now ripe. I walked through a beautiful grove of them, six or seven feet high, on the side of Lee's Cliff, where they have ripened early. Their stems are a deep, rich purple with a bloom, contrasting with the clear green leaves. Every part but the leaves is a brilliant purple (lake (?) -purple); or, more strictly speaking, the racemes without the berries are a brilliant lake-red with crimson flame-like reflections. Hence the *lacca*. Its cylindrical racemes of berries of various hues from green to dark purple, six or seven inches long, are drooping on all sides, beautiful both with and without berries, all afire with ripeness. Its stalks, thus full of purple wine, are one of the fruits of autumn. It excites me to behold it. What a success is its! What maturity it arrives [at], ripening from leaf to root! May I mature as perfectly, root and branch, as the poke! Its stems are more beautiful than most flowers. It is the emblem of a successful life, a not premature death, — whose death is an ornament to nature. To walk amid these upright branching casks of purple wine, which retain and diffuse a sunset glow, for nature's vintage is not confined to the vine! I drink it with my eyes. Our poets have sung wine, the product of a foreign plant which they never saw, as if our own plants had no juice in them more than our poets. Here are berries enough to paint the western sky with and play the Bacchanal if you will. What flutes its ensanguined stems would make, to be used in the dance! It is a royal plant. I could spend the evening of the year musing amid the poke stems.

Live in each season as it passes; breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit, and resign yourself to the influences of each. Let them be your only diet drink and botanical medicines. In August live on berries, not dried meats and pemmican, as if you were on shipboard making your way through a waste ocean, or in a northern

1853-1854

1853-1854

desert. Be blown on by all the winds. Open all your pores and bathe in all the tides of Nature, in all her streams

*Live in each season as it passes;
Breathe the air,
Drink the drink,
Taste the fruit,
And resign yourself to the influences of each.
Let them be your only diet drink
And botanical medicines.*

*In August live on berries,
Not dried meats and pemmican,
As if you were on shipboard
Making your way through a waste ocean,
Or in a northern desert.*

Be blown on by all the winds.

and oceans, at all seasons. Miasma and infection are from within, not without. The invalid, brought to the brink of the grave by an unnatural life, instead of imbibing only the great influence that Nature is, drinks only the tea made of a particular herb, while he still continues his unnatural life, — saves at the spile and wastes at the bung. He does not love Nature or his life, and so sickens and dies, and no doctor can cure him. Grow green with spring, yellow and ripe with autumn. Drink of each season's influence as a vial, a true panacea of all remedies mixed

1853-1854

1853-1854

for your especial use. The vials of summer never made a man sick, but those which he stored in his cellar.

*Open all your pores
And bathe in all the tides of Nature,
In all her streams and oceans,
At all seasons.*

*Miasma and infection are from within,
Not without.
The invalid,
Brought to the brink of the grave by an unnatural life,
Instead of imbibing only the great influence that Nature is,
Drinks only the tea made of a particular herb,
While he still continues his unnatural life, —
Saves at the spile and wastes at the bung.
He does not love Nature or his life,
And so sickens and dies,
And no doctor can cure him.*

*Grow green with spring,
Yellow and ripe with autumn.
Drink of each season's influence as a vial,
A true panacea of all remedies
Mixed for your especial use.*

Drink the wines, not of your bottling, but Nature's bottling; not kept in goat-skins or pig-skins, but the skins of a myriad fair berries. Let Nature do your bottling and your pickling and preserving. For all Nature is doing her best each moment to make us well. She exists for no other end. Do not resist her. With the least inclination to be well, we should not be sick. Men have discovered — or think they have discovered — the salutariness of a few wild things only, and not of all nature. Why, "nature" is but another name for health, and the seasons are but different states of health. Some men think that they are not well in spring, or summer, or autumn, or winter; it is only because they are not *well in* them,

How handsome now the cymes of *Viburnum Lentago* berries, flattish with red cheeks! The great bidens is only partially out, by the side of the brook that comes out of Deacon Farrar's Swamp and runs under the causeway east of the Corner Bridge. The flowers are all turned toward the westering sun and are two to two and a half or more inches in diameter, like sunflowers, hieroglyphics of the seasons, only to be read by the priests of Nature. I go there as to one of autumn's favorite haunts. Most poems, like the fruits, are sweetest toward the blossom end. The milkweed leaves are already yellowing. The clematis is most interesting in its present feathery state, — light, silvery, shining green. A solidago sometime out, say a week, on side of Mt. Misery, like the *S. alta*, but smooth-stemmed and commonly dark-purplish. Call it *ulmifolia* for the present, though the leaves are not so broad as the elm nearly and it is not there in low ground. Looking down the river valley now from Mt. Misery, an hour before sundown, I am struck with nothing so much as the autumnal coolness of the landscape and the predominance of shade. The pale yellowish-green sidesaddle-flower, probably the var. *heterophylla*, is common enough in our meadows. A sweet-william pink at bottom of Wheildon's field. I find the pods of the amphicarpæa at last. It may have blossomed three weeks ago.



1853-1854

1853-1854



August 24, Wednesday: Chef George Crum invented the potato chip at Moon's Lake House near Saratoga Springs, New York (according to popular legend: there are, however, still in existence, earlier recipes for some such item).

There was no potato-chip solace for young William Speiden, Jr. He left ship in a fast boat heading for [Canton](#) and stopped on board the American clipper *Star of the Union* to witness a trial of members of its crew on a charge of mutiny. —Maybe that will be amusing. —Maybe they'll get flogged and sentenced to life imprisonment on bread and water. There's such a huge amount of nothing going down here.

The Reverend [Theodore Parker](#) wrote to [Professor Pierre Jean Édouard Desor](#), mentioning how tolerant he was of Spiritualism and Swedenborgianism.

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

This morning bright and early we commenced ferrying ourselves across and by sunset had everything across without an accident. Gave a man six dollars to drive our stock across.

In [Henry Thoreau's](#) journal entry below, what might "[R.W.E.'s heater piece](#)" have amounted to? The answer is to be found in an entry Thoreau would make on June 20th, 1855 in which he would refer to "a catbird's nest eight feet high on a pitch pine in Emerson's heater piece, partly of paper" — clearly, when Thoreau referred to Emerson's "heater piece," the reference must have been to a woodlot that supplied the Emerson family home's winter fuel.



Aug. 24. Another cool, autumn-like morning, also quite foggy. Rains a little in the forenoon and cloudy the rest of the day.

P.M. — To Saw Mill Brook *via* Trillium Woods.

A cool breeze blows this cloudy afternoon, and I wear a thicker coat.

The mulgedium by railroad is seven feet high, with great panicles of a regular, somewhat elliptic-lanceolate (?) form, two and a half feet long by ten inches. The *Prinos lavigatus* berries begin to redden. The farmers are beginning to clear out their ditches now.

Blue-stemmed goldenrod, apparently a few days in some places. The goldenrod which I have observed in bloom this year are (I do not remember the order exactly) (1) *stricta*, (2) *lanceolata*, (3) *arguta* (?), (4) *nemoralis*, (5) *bicolor*, (6) *odora*, (7) *altiasima*, (8) *ulmifolia* (?), (9) *casia*. The 4th is the prevailing one and much the most abundant now. The 1st perhaps next, though it may be getting old. The *altissima* (7th) certainly next. It is just beginning to be abundant. Its tops a foot or more broad, with numerous recurved racemes on every side, with yellow and yellowing triangular points. It is the most conspicuous of all. The *bicolor* (5th) next, though not conspicuous. The 3d, 8th, 2d, and 6th perhaps never abundant. The *caesia* (9th) just begun.

The asters and diplopappi are about in this order: (1) *Radula*, (2) *D. cornifolius* (?), (3) *A. corymbosus*,¹⁹ (4) *patens*, (5) *laevis*, (6) *dumosus* (?), (7) *miser*, (8) *macrophyllus*, (9) *D. umbellatus*, (10) *A. acuminatus*, (11) *puniceus*. The *patens* (4), of various forms, *some* lilac, is the prevailing blue or bluish one now, middle-sized and very abundant on dry hillsides and by woodpaths; the *laevis* next. The 1st, or *Radula*, is not abundant. (These three are all the distinctly blue ones yet.) The *dumosus* is the prevailing white one, very abundant; *miser* mixed with it. *D. umbellatus* is conspicuous enough in some places (low grounds), and *A. puniceus* beginning to be so. But *D. cornifolius*, *A. corymbosus*, *macrophyllus*, and *acuminatus* are confined to particular localities. *Dumosus* and *patens* (and perhaps *laevis*, not common enough) are the prevailing asters now.

The common large osmunda (?) is already considerably imbrowned, but the odorous dicksonia (?), which, like most ferns, blossoms later, is quite fresh. This thin, flat, beautiful fern it is which I see green under the snow.²⁰ I am inclined to call it the lace fern. (Peaches fairly begun.) It is a triangular web of fine lace-work surpassing all the works of art.

Solidago latifolia not yet. I see roundish silvery slate-colored spots, surrounded by a light ring, near the base of the leaves of an aster (*miser*?), one beneath another like the dropping of a bird, or as if some tincture had fallen


19. Or *cordilolius*.

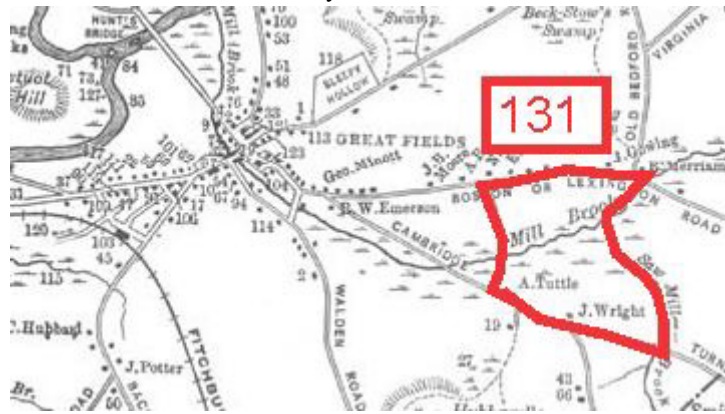
20. [A mistake. See *postea*.]

1853-1854

1853-1854

from above. Some of the leaves of the *A. patens* are red. The alternate cornel berries, which are particularly apt to drop off early, are a dark, dull blue, not china-like. I see those of maple-leaned viburnum merely yellowish now. There grows by Saw Mill Brook a long, firmer, thimble-shaped high blackberry with small grains, with more green ones still on it, which I think like the New Hampshire kind. I see some black and some greenish light slate-colored fungi. This certainly is the season for fungi. I see on the shrub oaks now caterpillars an inch and a half or more long, black with yellowish stripes, lying along the petioles, — thick living petioles. They have stripped off the leaves, leaving the acorns bare. The *Ambrina* (*Chenopodium*, Bigelow) *Botrys*, Jerusalem-oak, a worm-seed, by [R.W.E.](#)'s heater piece. The whole plant is densely branched — branches, spike-like-and appears full of seed. Has a pleasant, more distinct wormwood-like odor. In a dry sprout-land (Ministerial Lot), what I will call *Solidago puberula*²¹ will open in a day or two, — upright and similar to *stricta* in leaves, with a purple stem and smooth leaves, entire above, and a regular oblong appressed panicle. *Bidens chrysanthemoides*, of a small size and earlier, by Turnpike, now in prime there. I see cattle coming down from up-country. Why? Yellow Bethlehem-star still. *A. miser* (?) disk and elliptic-lanceolate leaves serrate in middle, may be as early as *dumosus*.

 August 25, Thursday, 26, Friday, 29, Monday: [Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed [Augustus Tuttle](#)'s 92-acre farm on Cambridge Turnpike at Hawthorne Lane. The farm was difficult to survey because it lay along the zigzag south-west bank of Mill Brook and its tributary:



James Wright was the neighbor to the east. The farm was bought by Orlando E. Patch and used as a dairy, and later Wilmot R. Jones would run the Mill Brook School there.

View [Henry Thoreau](#)'s personal working drafts of his surveys courtesy of AT&T and the Concord Free Public Library:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/Thoreau_Surveys.htm

(The official copy of this survey of course had become the property of the person or persons who had hired this Concord town surveyor to do their surveying work during the 19th Century. Such materials have yet to be recovered.)

View this particular personal working draft of a survey in fine detail:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/131.htm



A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

21. *Vide* Sept. 1st.



1853-1854

1853-1854

Starting this morning for Malheur River 16 miles from here, met Mr. Foster about noon. He came out from Oregon to meet his brothers and sisters who belong to our train. We get some valuable information from him. Reached Malheur about 6 o'clock and camped.

The Marysville, [California Herald](#) passed along information out of the Downieville [Echo](#), to the effect that at Goodyear's Bar, the North Yuba Tunnel Company was preparing to work the bed of the North Yuba River to the distance of its bend. They had cut a tunnel of about 300 yards to carry the current of the river, 50 feet underground, and above the town were putting in a wing dam by which they would dry out the riverbed in a few days. For the 7 miles between this place and Rantedoller Bar there was a continued chain of flumes. There were also rich diggings at Breyfogle Flat on the South Fork of the Yuba River, where the Gold Slug Company had been taking out for the past week from 20 to 60 ounces per day. "Our young friend Pat Lehyler showed us a lump a few day since weighing 8 ounces taken out at this flat."



Aug. 25. Warmer to-day. Surveying Tuttle's farm. From the extreme eastern side of his faun, looking up the valley of the Mill Brook, in which direction it is about two miles to anything that can be called high ground (say at E. Wood's), I was surprised to see the whole outline and greater part of the base of Wachusett, though you stand in a low meadow. It is because of the great distance of the hills westward. It is a fuller view of this mountain than many of our hills afford. Seen through this lower stratum, the mountain is a very dark blue.

I am struck by the rank growth of weeds at this season. Passing over Tuttle's farm, only one field removed from the Turnpike, where various kinds of tall, rank weeds are rampant, half concealing the lusty crops, — low ground which has only been cultivated twice before, where turnips and algæ (?) contend for places, fire-weeds (senecio), thoroughwort, *Eupatorium purpureum*, and giant asters, etc., suggest a vigor in the soil, an Ohio fertility, which I was not prepared for, which on the sandy turnpike I had not suspected, — it seemed to me that I had not enough frequented and considered the products, perchance, of these fertile grounds which the farmers have enriched. He is continually selecting a virgin soil and adding the contents of his barn-yards to it.



August 26, Friday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Laid by all day today for a 22 mile drive tomorrow.

That evening [Henry Thoreau](#) sighted a [comet](#) in the west and thought thoughts we would presume to be unlikely to come into the mind of anyone, other than our Henry:

SKY EVENT



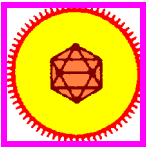
Aug. 26. The fall dandelion is as conspicuous and abundant now in Tuttle's meadow as buttercups in the spring. It takes their place. Saw the [comet](#) in the west to-night. It made me think of those imperfect white seeds in a watermelon, — an immature, ineffectual meteor.



1853-1854

1853-1854

 August 27, Saturday: [Alice Foster](#) died at the age of 2.



Eventually we would be able to recognize this week as the peak of the “[black vomit](#)” in [New Orleans](#) — the most severe epidemic the United States of America has experienced to date. In the span of 7 days almost another 1,400 had succumbed.

An opulent hotel, the Cataract House erected in 1825 and then enlarged, at what is now Heritage Park at Buffalo Avenue and Old Main Street in Buffalo, New York within sight of the rapids of the Upper Niagara churning toward the [Niagara Falls](#), possessed the most elegant furnishings, a sweeping veranda, a highly touted cuisine, and a skilled black staff. Operated by the Whitney family, it was popular among wealthy plantation owners from the South who could vacation there over the summer, typically bringing with them their own “servants.” It had been host to President Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln would visit during July 1857 before becoming President. Something like 80% of the hotel’s waiters were people who had themselves escaped from slavery. Patrick Sneed, alias Joseph Watson, employed as a waiter there, was taken into custody on this day when a couple of police officers showed up with a warrant for his arrest, ostensibly for the July 6th, 1849 murder of a man in Savannah, Georgia named James E. Jones. Dozens of Sneed’s, or Watson’s, fellow waiters rushed to his defense, tearing him from the officers and rushing him onto a ferryboat. Sneed, or Watson, actually made it to within 50 feet of Canada before the ferryman learned he was carrying an accused murderer and returned him to the American side of the river. When the accused would be brought under a writ of *habeas corpus* before the local court, however, Judge James Sheldon would order that Sneed, or Watson, be “fully discharged” — it appearing to this judge that this accusation of being a murderer was more than likely a pretense, the actuality being merely to transport Sneed on a “[reverse underground railroad](#)” that had been enabled by the Fugitive Slave Law, to there offer to sell him as a black slave.



A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Started early this morning and reached Sulphur Springs about noon, no place to camp; thence to Birch Creek, reached this about sundown. To-day we have used a cart, having cut our wagon in two pieces to make it lighter. Not much grass on this creek.

The Marysville, [California Herald](#) reported having just been shown a lump taken from near the source of Nelson Creek last month by Mr. Smith & Sultzer, weighing 108 ounces and a quarter (a little over 9 pounds troy weight), and had been unable to discern, inside that lump, any materials other than gold and multicolor quartz. The Placerville, [California Herald](#) carefully compared the gold mania they had experienced during 1849 with the gold mania currently being experienced:

FORTY-NINE AND FIFTY-THREE. — If I’d only been here in “forty-nine” is an exclamation frequently heard from the lips of those who have not as yet turned the lucky corner on the road to fortune. They have toiled on in weary hope from day to day, and apparently are no nearer their goal of sought for happiness than when they left their eastern homes to tarry and to labor in bettering their condition. How they sigh when they are told of the big strikes and large piles made by John Smith in ’49. How easily the gold was found and in what quantities. If it had only been his lot to have come then. Poor fellows, as they think of what report tells them of that year of golden grace how sad they look, their chest feels as tight as a bale of hay in a pork barrel, and if they hear of one, two, three, four or five hundred dollars being made in one day, their eyes stand out nearly as large as an eastern warming pan, whereas report telleth not of the many who made nothing, nor of the many who ran in debt for their present



1853-1854

1853-1854

wants.

How often in the evening after a hard day's work, of exposure to the sun above and the water beneath, when the miner sits by his fire in the "old log cabin" and as he dries his gold, casts a sorrowful look into his pan, and guesses "how much is there," four, perhaps five dollars, a few words of regret escape his lips, they are these, "if I'd only been here in '49." Presently his flap jacks are fried and eaten, and the sand blown out of his gold, he takes down his pipe and after, drawing a dirty covered letter from the pocket of his pantaloons, just see him sitting, and by the light of a pine chip see him poring over that simple sheet of closely written letter paper. What causes that heavy hearted sadness? Courage comrade. He looks round, there's something stops his utterance, his heart is well nigh bursting, his cheeks are wet, there's something in his eye, an exclamation escapes him "Gold bless her," "If I'd only been here in forty-nine."

And there he sits, poor, disconsolate and discouraged man, he thinks of the golden phantom of that year, of the little ones, God bless them, who used to climb his knee, or rode upon his cane for a horse, or with their little arms around his neck, kissed him and said "good night, dear pa."

And again he thinks how patient and lonely waits his dearest earthly joy, could she but welcome him, "when? O when will that time come?" and the imagination draws pictures more flattering than the fictions of fabled wealth in the "Arabian Nights," of love to be enjoyed, of comforts to be possessed, of good to be accomplished, if he'd only had the luck to be here in '49.

Don't give way to the ghost of the past, a phantom that ought to haunt thee no longer, it is a "will o'the wisp" that arises from the bogs of one-sided parlance, and has no existence in reality. - Forty-nine had its advantages and its disadvantages. Four of us wintered together, two made money, the other two made none, all worked hard; on wet days we made up a statistical report for our own amusement, of the daily earnings of our acquaintances, and took that a fair sample of what others were doing, and the average was a *fraction under three dollars per day*. Think of that. And this was in '49.

Claims were only fifteen feet square, and nearly, all the money made from one was expended in search after another, and not more than two-fifths were engaged in working claims. Then again, look at the very imperfect machinery used, the old cradle and pan. How small an amount of dirt was washed compared with the sluice and ground-sluice of the present day. You hear the old miners conversing who came and worked together in '49. - "If we had only known a thing or two about washing gold when you and I first came here." "What simpletons we were to run prospecting all over the country, spending our time and money." and both see where they missed it. It is true that some made money, but *not the mass*, and the following table will show the way in which much money was spent, and how so many happened to have none to spend.

	1849		1853
Flour	30c to 1.00	Flour	.12
Pork, salt	40c to 1.10	Pork, fresh	.50



1853-1854

1853-1854

Molasses	6.00 to 12.00	Syrup,	1.50
Corn meal	1.00	Corn meal	.10
Rice	.75	Rice	.15
Potatoes	1.00	Potatoes	.06
Sugar	.90	Sugar	.18
Green Coffee	.60	Green Coffee	.20
Tea	3.00	Tea	1.00
Fresh beef	2.00	Fresh beef	.25
Butter	2.00	Butter	.62
Boots	6.00 to 45.00	Boots	\$3 to 12.00

Then sickness was very prevalent, especially diarrhoea, scurvy, and fever, and many who were sick had no other shelter than a tent, and any one who has wintered in a tent knows that it is but an indifferent shelter against the cold, wind, and rain, with a buffalo robe for a bed; no wonder that so many who arrived here full of life and hope found premature graves. No kind sister's hand or beloved wife to prepare any comfort needed by the sufferer. I have known five deaths in one day, in sight of our cabin. Those who come amongst us now, know but little of the exposure and privations undergone by the early miners in Hangtown — "We dwelt in tents" or "beneath the stars" would be the true version of the experience of '49.

I am decidedly of the opinion that not only are our comforts incomparably greater, and more numerous, our general health better, and our social relations improved, but to take the masses, they are making more money now, in proportion, than they were in '49, and that more money will be taken out, in proportion, in the next four years, than was taken out that year. Whenever you are inclined to grow discouraged read over the above and patience and labor, or as Bulwer expresses it in "Time, Faith, and Energy" those three friends that God has given to the poor will may you succeed.



Aug. 27. *Saturday*. P.M. — To Walden.

Topping corn now reveals the yellowing pumpkins. Dangle-berries very large in shady copses now; seem to love wet weather; have lost their bloom. *Aster undulatus*. The decurrent gnaphalium has not long shown yellow. Perhaps I made it blossom a little too early.

September is at hand; the first month (after the summer heat) with a *burr* to it, month of early frosts; but December will be tenfold rougher. January relents for a season at the time of its thaw, and hence that liquid *r* in its name.



August 28, Sunday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Four miles from camp we touch a branch of Snake River and 5 miles farther is Burnt River. Camped here for the day. Some grass.



1853-1854

1853-1854

Joseph Joachim showed up on the doorstep of [Robert Schumann](#) in Düsseldorf, precipitating 48 hours of chamber music.

In his journal for this day [Henry Thoreau](#) was describing meandering:

The Hill-Lake reach of the [Sudbury River](#) – [Clamshell Bank](#), [Nut Meadow Brook](#), [Conantum](#), and Fairhaven Bay – was rendered more lakelike because its outlet over the boat-place bar had been raised. In consequence, channel obstructions were submerged more deeply. A pulse of ecological change affected the shorelines. Meadows became broader and more variable, attracting Thoreau's botanical interests. Its principal tributary, [Nut Meadow Brook](#), carried more water during storms, making it more interesting than it had been in earlier times. It became Henry's best laboratory for observing hydraulic processes, and the place where he first understood the physics of the meandering process.

– [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 238

In his diary Charles Greville, Clerk of the Privy Council, described [Queen Victoria](#)'s relationship with Lord Palmerston:

Nothing will induce Her Majesty to have Palmerston as Prime Minister. There are old offences, when he was at the Foreign Office, which sunk deep into her mind, and besides this the recollection of his conduct before her marriage, when in her own palace he made an attempt on the person of one of her ladies, which she very justly resented as an outrage to herself. Palmerston, always enterprising and audacious with women, took a fancy to Lady Dacre and at Windsor Castle, where she was in waiting and he a guest, he marched into her room one night. His tender temerity met with an invincible resistance. The lady did not conceal his attempt and it came to the Queen's ears. Her indignation was somehow pacified by Melbourne, then all-powerful. Palmerston got out of the scrape with his luck, but the Queen has never forgotten and will never forgive it.



Aug. 28. Sunday. P.M. — To Cliffs.

See many sparrows [[Vesper Sparrow](#) [Poocetes gramineus](#)] in flocks with a white feather in tail! The smooth sumach leaves are fast reddening. The berries of the dwarf sumach are not a brilliant crimson, but as yet, at least, a *dull* sort of dusty or mealy crimson. As they are later, so their leaves are more fresh and green than those of the smooth species. The acorns show now on the shrub oaks. A cool, white, autumnal evening.



August 29, Monday: General Sir Charles James Napier, Order of the Bath, a general of the British Empire and the British Army's Commander-in-Chief in India notable for conquering the Sindh Province in what is now Pakistan, died and went to his reward.

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Up Burnt River all day, except this afternoon, we left it for 4 miles. Camped again on Snake River.



Aug. 29. The 25th and 26th I was surveying Tuttle's farm. The northeast side bounds on the Mill Brook and its tributary and is very irregular. I find, after surveying accurately the windings of several brooks and of the river, that their meanders are not such regular serpentine curves as is commonly supposed, or at least represented. They flow as much in a zigzag as serpentine manner. The eye is very much deceived when standing on the brink, and one who had only surveyed a brook so would be inclined to draw a succession of pretty regular serpentine curves. But, accurately plotted, the regularity disappears, and there are found to be many straight lines and sharp turns. I want no better proof of the inaccuracy of some maps than the regular curving meanders of the streams, made evidently by a sweep of the pen. No, the Meander no doubt flowed in a very crooked channel, but depend upon it, it was as much zigzag as serpentine. This last brook I observed was doubly zigzag, or compoundly zigzag; *i.e.*, there was a zigzag on a large scale including the lesser. To the eye this meadow is perfectly level. Probably all streams are (generally speaking) far more meandering in low and level and soft ground near their mouths, where they flow slowly, than in high and rugged ground which offers more obstacles. The meadow being so level for long distances, no doubt as high in one direction as another, how, I asked myself, did the feeble brook, with all its meandering, ever find its way to the distant lower end? What kind of instinct conducted it: forward in the right direction? How unless it is the relict of a lake which once stood high over all these banks, and knew the different levels of its distant shores? How unless a flow which commenced above its level first wore its channel for it? Thus, in regard to most rivers, did not lakes first find their mouths for them, just as the tide now keeps open the mouths of sluggish rivers? And who knows to what extent the sea originally channelled the submerged globe?

Walking down the street in the evening, I detect my neighbor's ripening grapes by the scent twenty rods off; though they are concealed behind his house, every passer knows of them. So, too, ever and anon I pass through a little region possessed by the fragrance of ripe apples.

1853-1854**1853-1854**

August 30, Tuesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed a woodlot in Framingham for John Stacy.



On the Oregon Trail journey of 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins), they made their way “Up the river or a branch of Burnt all day again winding our way through canyons and deep gorges, after about 12 miles we struck the main stream again and camped. Plenty of good grass and we were once more greeted with a fine shower which wet some of us pretty well.”

[María Rafols Bruna](#) died at the age of 71 in Zaragoza, Spain (having performed at least one miracle she eventually would be beatified by Catholic Church, under Pope John Paul II).

[Queen Victoria](#) arrived in Dublin, Ireland to open the Exhibition of Irish Industry.



1853-1854

1853-1854

The New-York Times reprised the story of Patrick Sneed, or Joseph Watson, without mentioning that this attempt to kidnap him had been an attempt that failed:

Great Excitement at Niagara Falls, consequent on the Arrest of a Negro.

NIAGARA FALLS, Monday, Aug. 29.

Great excitement was occasioned at the Cataract House yesterday, by the arrest by Deputy-Marshal TYLER, of PATRICK SNEED, *alias* Joseph Watson, a colored waiter at that house, who is accused of being the murderer of JAMES E. JONES, of Savannah, on 6th July, 1849. The waiters, believing him to be arrested as a fugitive slave, rescued him from the officers and barricaded the door of the dining-room. One of the officers drew a revolver and snapped it at a man, but the cap missed fire.

The door was then forced, the man again seized, and again rescued by the negroes, who hurried him down to the ferry, where he jumped into a boat and was rowed half-way across the river by the ferryman, who left the boat in the middle of the stream and returned on another boat to the shore to ascertain the particulars of the case from the officers.

Finding the crime to be murder, the ferryman agreed to row down to the landing at the bridge, and there deliver the criminal to the officers. The latter then started for the lower landing, but were preceded by the negroes, who, to the number of about 200 reached the landing before the officers.

The officers claimed assistance from a party of some 300 Irish laborers employed on the railroad, and a regular pitched battle ensued, the negroes being put to flight and pursued by the laborers. Several of the former were knocked down with stones, and severely injured.

SNEED, or WATSON, was then taken from the boat, placed in a carriage by the officers, and brought safely to Buffalo.

Fifteen hundred dollars reward had been offered for the arrest of SNEED, who will be conveyed to Baltimore as soon as the necessary papers are received.



Aug. 30. *Tuesday*. In low ground by Turnpike, a tall aster, *A. longifolius* (?), a day or two perhaps (*salicifolius* of [Bigelow](#)). [Abundant in Moore's Swamp, Aug. 31st.] Saw some by river in the afternoon with sharply serrate leaves. I think that the very small and dense-flowered — white or whitish aster by roadsides and riversides, with pointed scales and disk turning purplish-brown, with very many flowers on the sides of the branches or branchlets, must be *A. Tradescanti*, sometimes quite high. I have thus far it with what I have called the *dumosus*, sure which is the earliest. The latter has larger flowers, not so crowded, one at the end of each branchlet, and the scales more abruptly pointed.

1853-1854

1853-1854

11 A.M. — Up river to Fair Haven.

"Upriver," "To Fairhaven," and "To Clamshell" were other common opening phrases. This signified a southward trip up the lakelike Sudbury River, which zigzagged between rocky cliffs and lush meadows. Its current could be detected only at narrows and shallows. Parallel lines of sweet-scented lily pads, aquatic flowers rooted in shoreline mud, and buttonbush swamps flanked the river for much of its length. With a breeze from the north or east, he would usually sail. Otherwise he would row.

— Professor Robert M. Thorson, THE BOATMAN, page 11

River one or two feet higher than in July. A very little wind from the south or southwest, but the water quite smooth at first. The river foliage is slightly crisped and imbrowned; mean the black willows, button-bushes, and polygonums. The pads are for the most part eaten, decayed, and wasted away, — the white last the longest, — and the pontederias are already mostly dry and blackened. Only three or four white lilies and pontederia blossoms left. The *Polygonum hydropiperoides* and the narrow-leaved and mikania are the prevailing conspicuous flowers. Others are the trumpet-weed, yellow lilies (*Kalmiana* drowned), cardinals (rather scarce), whorled utricularia, one purple one, *Polygonum amphibium*, etc. Bathed at Hubbard's Bend. The water now cold and bracing, for it has contrived to rain more or less all the month. Men raking cranberries in the meadows. Ivy berries are crisped and whitish on the rock at Bittern Cliff. The *Polygonatum* berries are green with a bluish bloom. *Polygonum dumetorum*, apparently not long, very abundant in Tarbell's cleared swamp by roadside, also by Peter's Path, running up a tree eight or nine feet at this Cliff. Some of the river cornel berries are almost clear white on one side, the other china-blue. These and the *Viburnum Lentago* berries are now common and handsome.

The *Solidago odora* grows abundantly behind the Minott house in Lincoln. I collected a large bundle of it. Its flower is stale for the most part and imbrowned. It grows in such thick tufts that you can easily gather it. Some haws are now edible. Grapes are already ripe; I smelled them first. As I went along from the Minott house to the Bidens Brook, I was quite bewildered by the beauty and variety of the asters, now in their prime there, — *A. laevis* (large and handsome with various leaves), *patens*, *linariifolius*, etc. The bidens has not yet reached its greatest profusion. Why so many asters and goldenrods now? The sun has shone on the earth, and the goldenrod is his fruit. The stars, too, have shone on it, and the asters are their fruit.

The purple balls of the carrion-flower, now open a little beneath, standing out on all sides six or eight inches from the twining stem, are very handsome. They are covered with a blue bloom, and when this is rubbed off by leaves, are a shining blackish.

Set sail homeward about an hour before sundown. The breeze blows me glibly across Fair Haven, the last dying gale of the day. No wonder men love to be sailors, to be blown about the world sitting at the helm, to shave the capes and see the islands disappear under their sterns, — gubernators to a piece of wood. It disposes to contemplation, and is to me instead of smoking.

Saw an *Aster undulatus* (?) with a very densely [?] flowered and branched top, small, pale purple. What is the *Solidago* like an *altissima* but a simple raceme and leaves much less cut? [Probably a variety of same?] It is as early as *S. altissima*. *Gallium circzans*, the broad-leaved, is now in fruit. Nature made a highway from southwest to northeast through this town (not to say county), broad and beautiful, which attracted Indians to dwell upon it and settlers from England at last, ten rods wide and bordered by the most fertile soil in the town, a tract most abounding in vegetable and in animal life; yet, though it passes through the centre of the town. I have been upon it the livelong day and have not met a traveller. Out of twenty-odd hundred dwellers near its banks, not one has used this highway to-day for a distance of four miles at least.

I find at this time in fruit: (1) *Polypodium vulgare*, (?) *Struthiopteris Germanica* (ostrich fern), (3) *Pieris aquilina* (common brake) (have not looked for fruit), (4) *Adiantum pedatum* (have not looked



1853-1854

1853-1854

for fruit), (5) *Asplenium Trichomanes* (dwarf spleenwort), also (6) *A. ebeneum* (ebony spleenwort), (7) *Dicksonia punctilobula*, (8) *Dryopteris marginalis* (marginal shield fern), (9) *Polystichum acrostichoides* (terminal shield fern), (10) *Onoclea sensibilis* (?) (sensitive fern) (think I saw the fruit August 12th at Bittern Cliff), (11) *Lygodium palmatum* (probably still in fruit, was when I last saw it), (12) *Osmunda spectabilis* (flowering fern) (out of fruit), (13) *Osmunda cinnamomea* (?) (tall osmunda) (also out of fruit). Nos. 1, 5, 6, and 8 common at Lee's Cliff. No. 2 behind Trillium Woods, 4 at Miles Swamp, 9 at Brister's Hill. The dwarf spleenwort grows in the sharp angles of the rocks in the side of Lee's Cliff, its small fronds spreading in curved rays, its matted roots coming away in triangular masses, moulded by the rock. The ebony spleenwort stands upright against the rocks.



August 31, Wednesday: [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) became engaged to Ariana Smith Walker, his friend since childhood.

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

After about 2 miles we left the river and struck across more to the right of a branch of Burnt River which we followed for about six miles to where we leave it and camped, some grass and plenty of water. Drove 10 miles.

In [Henry Thoreau's](#) journal we find a reference to a book that would be a permanent part of his personal library, [Spencer Fullerton Baird's](#) [AMERICAN RUMINANTS. ON THE RUMINATING ANIMALS OF NORTH AMERICA AND THEIR SUSCEPTIBILITY OF DOMESTICATION](#) (US Patent Office. Report. Part 2. Agriculture. 1851, pages 104-128. Washington, 1852).




Aug. 31. P.M. — To Moore's Swamp.

Bidens cernua well out, the flowering one. The asters and goldenrods are now in their prime, I think. The rank growth of flowers (commonly called weeds) in this swamp now impresses me like a harvest of flowers. I am surprised at their luxuriance and profusion. The *Solidago altissima* is now the prevailing one, *i.e.* goldenrod, in low grounds where the swamp has been cleared. It occupies acres, densely rising as high as your head, with the great white umbel-like tops of the *Diplopappus umbellatus* rising above it. There are also intermixed *Solidago stricta*, crechthites (fire-weed), *Aster puniceus* and *longifolius*, *Galium asprellum* in great beds, thoroughwort, trumpet-weed, *Polygonum Hydropiper*, *Epilobium molle*, etc., etc. There has been no such rank flowering up to this. One would think that all the poison that is in the earth and air must be extracted out of them by this rank vegetation. The ground is quite mildewy, it is so shaded by them, cellar-like.

Raspberries still fresh. I see the first dogwood turned scarlet in the swamp. Great black cymes of elderberries now bend down the bushes. Saw a great black spider an inch long, with each of his legs an inch and three quarters long, on the outside of a balloon-shaped web, within which were young and a great bag. *Viola pedata* out again. Leaves of *Hypericum mutilum* red about water. *Cirsium muticum*, in Moore's Swamp behind Indian field, going out of flower; perhaps out three weeks. Is that very dense-flowered small white aster with short branched racemes *A. Tradescanti*? — now begin to be conspicuous. A low aster by Brown's Ditch north of Sleepy hollow like a *Radula*, but with narrower leaves and more numerous, and scales without herbaceous tips. An orange-colored fungus.

[Baird](#), in Patent Office Report, says, "In all deer, except, perhaps, the reindeer, if the male be castrated when the horns are in a state of perfection, these will never be shed; if the operation be performed when the head is bare, they will never be reproduced; and if done when the secretion is going on, a stunted, ill-formed, permanent horn is the result."

SEPTEMBER 1853


 September: In the Table Rock Treaty, native tribes of southwestern Oregon surrendered their lands in exchange for a reservation and annuities.

The [Manns](#) arrived in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Their residence was not ready for them.

[Lola Montez](#)'s "marriage" with San Francisco newspaperman [Patrick Purdy Hull](#) was over and done with. He sued for [divorce](#) naming a German doctor as co-respondent, and a few days later the corpse of that doctor was found in near-by [California](#) hills, shot to death.

SPLITSVILLE		
1849	Fanny Kemble Butler	Pierce Mease Butler
1851	Edwin Forrest	Catherine Sinclair
1853	Lola Montez	Patrick Purdy Hull

**ESSENCES ARE FUZZY, GENERIC, CONCEPTUAL;
 ARISTOTLE WAS RIGHT WHEN HE INSISTED THAT ALL TRUTH IS
 SPECIFIC AND PARTICULAR (AND WRONG WHEN HE CHARACTERIZED
 TRUTH AS A GENERALIZATION).**

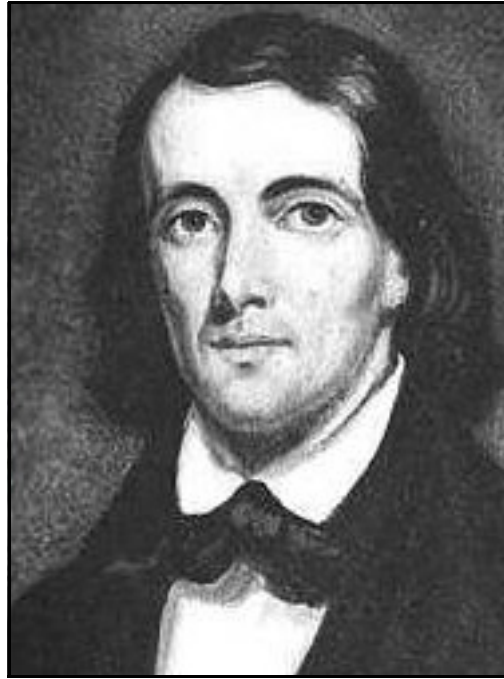
 September: This month's issue of [Harper's New Monthly Magazine](#).

CONSULT THIS ISSUE

1853-1854

1853-1854

➡ September: [Ellery Channing](#) of Concord was completing the COUNTRY WALKING project that had been suggested to him by [Waldo Emerson](#).



"What a gump!...On the whole, he is but little better than an idiot. He should have been whipt often and soundly in his boyhood; and as he escaped such wholesome discipline then, it might be well to bestow it now."


— [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#), about [Ellery Channing](#)



➡ September: [Pierre-Joseph Proudhon](#)'s *PHILOSOPHIE DU PROGRÈS*.

1853-1854

1853-1854

 September: There was the 1st display of [Ephraim Wales Bull](#)'s purple Concord grape, in the hall of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society at 300 Massachusetts Avenue in [Boston](#) (536-9280):

The grape is large, frequently an inch in diameter, and the bunches handsomely shouldered, and sometimes weigh a pound. In color it is a ruddy black, covered with a dense blue bloom, the skin very thin, the juice abundant, with a sweet, aromatic flavor. It has very little pulp. The wood is strong, the foliage large, thick, strongly nerved, with a wooly under surface, and does not mildew or rust. It ripens the 10th of September.

PLANTS



1853-1854

1853-1854



[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**1853-1854****1853-1854**

September: Before the Supreme Court of [Rhode Island](#), the case of [Perry Davis](#) vs. George Kendall (as reported in THE AMERICAN LAW REGISTER for 1852-1891, Volume 2, Number 11, pages 681-685). Evidently a drug dealer named Kendall had been manufacturing and vending a compound similar to the [Providence](#) drug dealer Davis's "Pain-Killer" "Manufactured by Perry Davis" "The original inventor, No. 74 High St." under the name "J.A. Perry's Vegetable Pain-Killer," in bottles of similar size though of somewhat different shape, thus pirating Mr. Davis's trade-mark under which said compound had become extensively and favorably known. The attorney for the defendant drug dealer Kendall pointed out to the court that there was no copy-right on words of the English language such as "Pain-Killer." The Supreme Court held that the whole question in this case was, whether the defendant drug dealer's label was liable to deceive the public, and to lead them to suppose they are purchasing an article manufactured by the plaintiff drug dealer Davis instead of by the defendant drug dealer Kendall. The majority of the court ruled for the plaintiff drug dealer, agreeing that his copy-right had in fact illicitly been infringed and that he would therefore be entitled to legal redress.

[ETHANOL](#)
[OPIATES](#)

(The past is a foreign country — you will instantly notice that our courts no longer proactively protect the entitlements of drug dealers in any such manner.)



1853-1854

1853-1854



September: During this period [Henry Thoreau](#) was reading in [Charles Pickering](#)'s THE RACES OF MAN, that had been published in 1848 in the US and in 1851 in England, and commenting on its page 394, created the remarkable assertion which would be positioned in the concluding chapter of [WALDEN](#), "It is not worth the while to go round the world to count the cats in [Zanzibar](#):"



WALDEN: It is not worth the while to go round the world to count the cats in Zanzibar. Yet do this even till you can do better, and you may perhaps find some "Symmes' Hole" by which to get at the inside at last. England and France, Spain and Portugal, Gold Coast and Slave Coast, all front on this private sea; but no bark from them has ventured out of sight of land, though it is without doubt the direct way to India. If you would learn to speak all tongues and conform to the customs of all nations, if you would travel farther than all travellers, be naturalized in all climes, and cause the Sphinx to dash her head against a stone, even obey the precept of the old philosopher, and Explore thyself. Herein are demanded the eye and the nerve. Only the defeated and deserters go to the wars, cowards that run away and enlist. Start now on that farthest western way, which does not pause at the Mississippi or the Pacific, nor conduct toward a worn-out China or Japan, but leads on direct a tangent to this sphere, summer and winter, day and night, sun down, moon down, and at last earth down too.

CAT

SYMMES HOLE

"THE OLD PHILOSOPHER"



1853-1854

1853-1854

However, According to [Lawrence Buell](#), [Thoreau](#) was but just another of those genre-ridden, predictable antiemigrationists, like the Reverend [Timothy Dwight](#). He wasn't striving to fill in the blank of the unexplored terrain of the human soul, but merely trying to stay within hearing distance of his mama's dinner bell!

Dwight's defense of emotional bonding to place as a means of social control would have seemed small-minded to Thoreau, yet Thoreau actually follows Dwight closely in prescribing a closer rapport with one's immediate surroundings as a better antidote to the spirit of restlessness than indulgence of wanderlust. Why pan gold in California, why "count the cats in Zanzibar" ([WALDEN](#)), when so much richer a journey is possible near at hand? On this level, both Dwight and Thoreau belong to a tradition of antiemigration propaganda literature that deserves a chapter as a New England genre in itself.

How pitiful to read a book as fine as this one and be able to derive so little from the experience!

According to Bradley P. Dean, contextual evidence in [Thoreau](#)'s Indian Notebook #8 indicates that most likely it was during this month that he perused the Western Australia captivity narrative of the English sailor [William Jackman](#). Dr. Dean was unable to determine precisely how Thoreau came across THE AUSTRALIAN CAPTIVE; OR, AN AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE OF 15 YEARS IN THE LIFE OF WILLIAM JACKMAN. IN WHICH, AMONG VARIOUS OTHER ADVENTURES, IS INCLUDED A FORCED RESIDENCE OF A YEAR AND A HALF AMONG THE CANNIBALS OF NUYTS' LAND, ON THE COAST OF THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN BIGHT.

THE AUSTRALIAN CAPTIVE

ALSO INCLUDING, WITH OTHER APPENDICES, [AUSTRALIA](#) AND ITS GOLD, FROM THE LATEST AND BEST AUTHORITIES. WITH VARIOUS ILLUSTRATIONS. EDITED BY REV. I. CHAMBERLAYNE (Auburn: Derby & Miller.

HDT

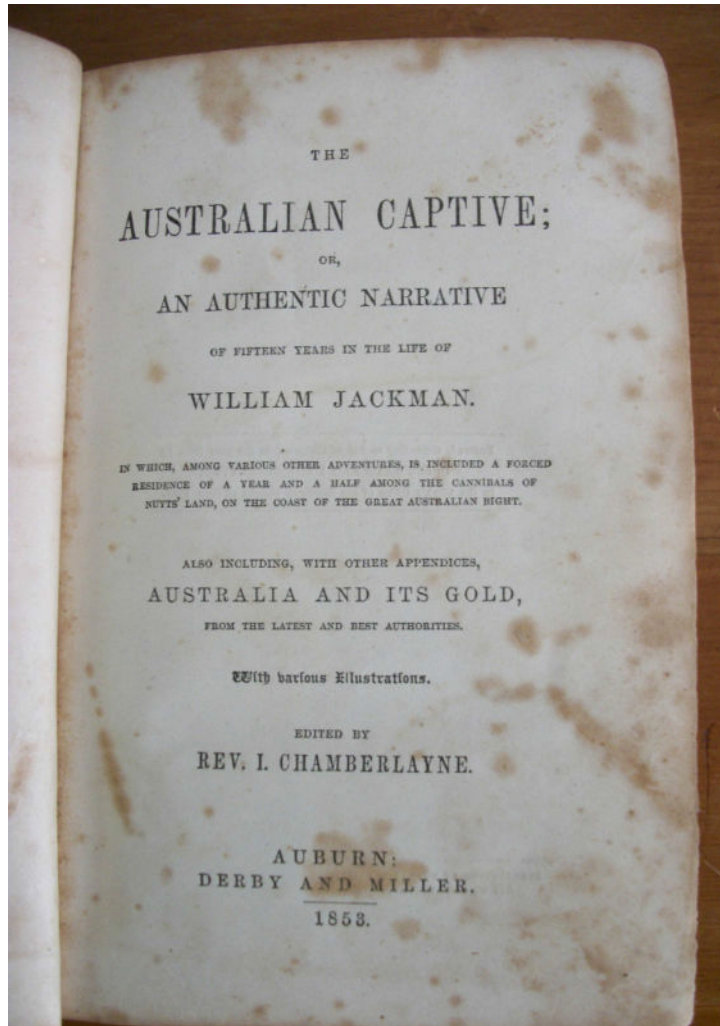
WHAT?

INDEX

1853-1854

1853-1854

Buffalo: Derby, Orton & Mulligan).



[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**1853-1854****1853-1854**

September: In Boston, Ticknor, Reed, and Fields published [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#)'s TANGLEWOOD TALES, FOR GIRLS AND BOYS; BEING A SECOND WONDER-BOOK.



[Emily Dickinson](#) and her sister [Lavinia Dickinson](#) visited [Josiah Gilbert Holland](#) and [Elizabeth Luna Chapin Holland](#) in Springfield, Massachusetts.



Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for September 1853 \(æf. 36\)](#)



September 1, Thursday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Having obtained a good light wagon we started out again in a team of our own as we had joined teams with another man and threw our wagon away until we could get a lighter one. We had a very hard hill to climb this morning. In about one mile we struck a dry branch followed up it 4 miles, watered our stock and left it. From this it is 15 miles to water, the first part of the road very hilly. At night we reached the Powder River valley, a valley of fine grass. Here we once more had some fresh beef at 25¢ per pound. Drove 20 miles to-day.



1853-1854

1853-1854

In [San Francisco](#), William Cornell Jewett purchased a South Beach water property bounded generally by the bay, by Harris Street, by Harrison Street, and by Spear Street.

Le nabab, an opéra comique by Fromental Halévy to words of Scribe and Saint-Georges, was performed for the initial time, at the Théâtre Favart of Paris. It enjoyed a moderate success (this was to be the last collaboration of Halévy with Eugène Scribe).

The mother of [Samuel Ringgold Ward](#) died while he was in England:

Like my father, she was converted in early life, and was a member of the Methodist denomination (though a lover of all Christian denominations) until her death. This event, one of the most afflictive of my life, occurred on the first day of September, 1853, at New York. Since my father's demise I had not seen her for nearly a year; when, being about to sail for England, at the risk of being apprehended by the United States' authorities for a breach of their execrable republican Fugitive Slave Law, I sought my mother, found her, and told her I was about to sail at three p.m., that day (April 20th, 1853), for England. With a calmness and composure which she could always command when emergencies required it, she simply said, in a quiet tone, "To England, my son!" embraced me, commended me to God, and suffered me to depart without a murmur. It was our last meeting. May it be our last parting! For the kind sympathy shown me, upon my reception of the melancholy news of my mother's decease, by many English friends, I shall ever be grateful: the recollection of that event, and the kindness of which it was the occasion, will dwell together in my heart while reason and memory shall endure. In the midst of that peculiarly bereaved feeling inseparable from realizing the thought that one is both fatherless and motherless, it was a sort of melancholy satisfaction to know that my dear parents were gone beyond the reach of slavery and the Fugitive Law. Endangered as their liberty always was, in the free Northern States of New York and New Jersey – doubly so after the law of 1851 – I could but feel a great deal of anxiety concerning them. I knew that there was no living claimant of my parents' bodies and souls; I knew, too, that neither of them would tamely submit to re-enslavement: but I also knew that it was quite possible there should be creditors, or heirs at law; and that there is no State in the American Union wherein there were not free and independent democratic republicans, and soi-disant Christians, "ready, aye ready" to aid in overpowering and capturing a runaway, for pay. But when God was pleased to take my father in 1851, and my mother in 1853, I felt relief from my greatest earthly anxiety. Slavery had denied them education, property, caste, rights, liberty; but it could not deny them the application of Christ's blood, nor an admittance to the rest prepared for the righteous. They could not be buried in the same part of a common graveyard, with whites, in their native country; but they can rise at the sound of the first trump, in the day of resurrection. Yes, reader: we who are slaveborn derive a comfort and solace from the death of those dearest to us, if they have the sad misfortune to be BLACKS and AMERICANS, that you know not. God forbid that you or yours should ever have occasion to know it!

1853-1854

1853-1854

[Henry Thoreau](#) made an entry in his journal, referencing page 89 of Charles Pickering's THE RACES OF MAN AND THEIR GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION (London: John Chapman, 1849) silently omitting the beginning of the 2d sentence, the whole of which reads: "By adopting the use of coin, they had placed themselves in many respects in the condition of indigence; and in conformity with the new standard of value, a native, I was assured, 'could be supported for less than two cents a day.'" Bradley P. Dean has emended the manuscript copy-text by restoring the commas after 'improvement' and 'poi' in the first sentence, and by restoring and regularizing the quotation marks in Thoreau's rendering of the 2d sentence. that he was later to copy into his early lecture "[WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT](#)" as:

**Brad Dean's
Commentary**



[Paragraph 53] Pickering, in his work on Races, says that "The missionaries [at the Sandwich Islands] regarded as one main obstacle to improvement, the extremely limited views of the natives in respect to style of living; 'a little fish, and a little poi, and they were content.' A native, I was assured," says he, "'could be supported for less than two cents a day.'"

[Paragraph 54] But this is putting the cart before the horse, the real obstacle being their limited views in respect, not to the skill, but to the object of living. There are two kinds of simplicity; that of the simpleton and that of the wise man. A philosopher has equally limited views in their sense, but he is not content with material comforts, nor is it quite necessary that he first be glutted with them in order to become wise. Wisdom is not the fruit of a surfeit of nuts and raisins.



Sept. 1. Thursday. P.M. — To Dugan Desert and Ministerial Swamp.

The character of the past month, as I remember, has been, at first, very thick and sultry, dogdayish, the height of summer, and throughout very rainy, followed by crops of toadstools, and latterly, after the dogdays and most copious of the rains, autumnal, somewhat cooler, with signs of decaying or ripening foliage. The month of green corn and melons and plums and the earliest apples, — and now peaches, — of rank weeds. As July, perchance, has its spring side, so August has its autumnal side.

Was that the cackling of hens I heard, or the clicking of a very distant hand-organ?

Methinks the silvery cinquefoil is of late much more abundant. Is there any cessation to it? The green-briar berries begin to turn. Some large maples along the river are beginning to redden. I observe the stillness of the air and the smoothness of the water of late. The *Hieracium Canadense* is, methinks, the largest and handsomest flower of its genus, large as the fall dandelion; the *paniculatum* the most delicate. To-day and yesterday quite warm, or hot, again.

I am struck again and again by the richness of the meadow-beauty lingering, though it will last some time, in little dense purple patches by the sides of the meadows. It is so low it escapes the scythe. It is not so much distinct flowers (it is so low and dense), but a colored patch on the meadow. Yet how few observe it! How, in one sense, it is wasted! How little thought the mower or the cranberry-raker bestows on it! How few girls or boys come to see it!

That small aster which I call *A. Tradescanti*, with crowded racemes, somewhat rolled or cylindrical to appearance, of small white flowers a third of an inch in diameter, with yellow disks turning reddish or purplish, is very pretty by the low roadsides, resounding with the hum of honey-bees; which is commonly despised for its smallness and commonness, — with crowded systems of little suns. The *Polygonum articulatum*, apparently not for some time yet. The large epilobium still plenty in flower in Tarbell's cleared swamp. Hazel bushes are now browned or yellowed along wall-sides in pastures; blackberry vines also are reddening. The *Solidago nemoralis* has commonly a long, sharply triangular head of small crowded flowers, evenly convex and often, if not commonly, recurved through a quarter of a circle, very handsome, solid-looking, recurved golden spear-heads. But frequently it is more erect and branched. What is that alga-like plant covering the ground in Tarbell's Swamp where lately burnt over, with close mats a rod in diameter, with fruit now two or three inches high, star-like, and little cups on the green thallus? [*Marchantia polymorpha*] I see now puffballs, now four inches through, turned dark from white, and ripe, fill the air with dust four or five feet high when I kick them. Saw a red squirrel cutting off white pine cones. He had strewn the ground with them, as yet untouched, under the tree. He has a *chirrup* exactly like a partridge. Have made out *Aster multiflorus* by roadside beyond Badger house; probably not long out. It is distinguished by its hoariness, and its large herbaceous spreading calyx-tips and its crowded, somewhat rigid linear leaves, not tapering at base, low with a stout stem. A solidago by Marlborough road (*S. puberula?* or *neglecta?*), *stricta*-like, but panicle upright with short erectish racemes and lower leaves serrate, and five or six inches long; not long out. Should think it *stricta* if not for form of head; more like

1853-1854

1853-1854

puberula, though this an imperfect one, in press. I think my white daisy, which is still quite fresh in some places, must be *Erigeron strigosus*, for the hairs are minute and appressed, though the rays are not twice as long as the calyx-scales. I have seen no purplish ones since spring. *Aster undulatus* begins to be common. Johnswort, the large and common, is about done. That is the common polypody whose single fronds, six or eight inches long, stand thick in moss on the shelving rock at the Island.

The river nowadays is a permanent mirror stretching without end through the meadows, and unfailingly when I look out my window across the dusty road, I see it at a distance with the herbage of its brink reflected in it. There it lies, a mirror untracked, unsoiled.

Plants or weeds very widely dispersed over the globe command a certain respect, like *Sonchus oleraceus*, Oregon, New Zealand, Peru, Patagonia, etc.; *Sicyos angulatus*, New Zealand, [Australia](#), Hawaiian Islands, etc.; *Polygonum aviculare*, *Chenopodium album*, and *Polygonum Persicaria*, Oregon and Egypt; also many others, according to Pickering.

Pickering says that "the missionaries [at the [Hawaiian Islands](#)] regarded as one main obstacle to improvement the extremely limited views of the natives in respect to style of living; 'a little fish and a little poi, and they were content.'" But this is putting the cart before the horse, the real obstacle being their limited views in respect to the object of living. A philosopher has equally limited views in their sense, but then he is not content with material comforts, nor is it, perhaps, quite necessary that he first be glugged with them in order to become wise. "A native, I was assured, 'could be supported for less than two cents a day.'" (They had adopted the use of coin.) The savage lives simply through ignorance and idleness or laziness, but the philosopher lives simply through wisdom. In the case of the savage, the accompaniment of simplicity is idleness with its attendant vices, but in the case of the philosopher, it is the highest employment and development. The fact for the savage, and for the mass of mankind, is that it is better to plant, weave, and build than do nothing or worse; but the fact for the philosopher, or a nation loving wisdom, is that it is most important to cultivate the highest faculties and spend as little time as possible in planting, weaving, building, etc. It depends upon the height of your standard, and no doubt through manual labor as a police men are educated up to a certain level. The simple style is bad for the savage because he does worse than to obtain the luxuries of life; it is good for the philosopher because he does better than to work for them. The question is whether you can bear freedom. At present the vast majority of men, whether black or white, require the discipline of labor which enslaves them for their good. If the Irishman did not shovel all day, he would get drunk and quarrel. But the philosopher does not require the same discipline; if he shovelled all day, we should receive no elevating suggestions from him.

What a literary fame is that of *Æsop*, — an *Æsopian* fame! Pickering says: "A little to the west of Celebes, the literature of the Malay nation contains a translation of the Fables of *Æsop*; who, according to the unsatisfactory accounts we have of him, was one of the earliest of the Greek writers. And further, the fact may be noted, that the *Æsopian* style of composition is still in vogue at Madagascar. (See [Ellis](#)'s Madagascar.)" A fame on its way round eastward with the Malay race to this western continent! A fame that travels round the world from west to east. P. gives California to the Malay race!

There are two kinds of simplicity, — one that is akin to foolishness, the other to wisdom. The philosopher's style of living is only outwardly simple, but inwardly complex. The savage's style is both outwardly and inwardly simple. A simpleton can perform many mechanical labors, but is not capable of profound thought. It was their limited view, not in respect to *style*, but to the *object* of living. A man who has equally limited views with respect to the end of living will not be helped by the most complex and refined style of living. It is not the tub that makes [Diogenes](#), the Jove-born, but [Diogenes](#) the tub.

ÆSOP

MADAGASCAR



September 1: ... It is not the tub that makes [Diogenes](#), the Jove-born, but [Diogenes](#) the tub.





1853-1854

1853-1854



September 2, Friday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

A beautiful road to-day for 10 miles when we struck a ford of Powder River then crossed a rough point of bluff and down the valley and crossed the first fork, drove on to the last fork and camped. There are 3 forks about 2 miles apart. Came 15 miles today. Tonight some Nez Perces Indians came along with some potatoes, and peas which is a welcome vegetable to emigrants.

A circular was printed announcing a 2d edition of [William Cooper Nell](#)'s SERVICES OF COLORED AMERICAN IN THE WARS OF 1776 AND 1812.

The following appeared in [Frederick Douglass' Paper](#):

Literary Notices.

PICTURES AND STORIES FROM UNCLE TOM'S CABIN. Boston: John P. Jewett & Co.

The Editor of this little book thus introduces it to the public: He says his "purpose has been to adopt it for the juvenile circle. The verses have, accordingly, been written by the authoress for the capacity of the youngest readers, and have been printed in large, bold type. The prose parts of the book which are well suited for being read aloud in the family circle, are printed in a smaller type, and it is presumed that in these our younger friends will claim the assistance of their older brothers or sisters, or appeal to the ready aid of mamma."

This little volume entirely fulfils the design of the authoress. It is just *the* book for little children; and we hope that thousands among them will learn the verses by heart: and then we can foresee that a goodly band of youthful abolitionists will, ere long, arise, who will ask, with tears, *why* little boys like "Harry" are sold, and *why* little girls like "Topsey" are slaves?

We give, with much pleasure, the first little poem of the series. We are sure it will find favor in the eyes of our young readers; and we hope their papas and mammas will buy the book for them. It has a great many pretty pictures in it, and may be purchased at *D.M. Dewey's*.

THE SALE OF LITTLE HARRY.

Come read my book good boys and girls
That live on freedom's ground,
With pleasant homes, and parents dear,
And blithesome playmates round;
And you will learn a woeful tale,
Which a good woman told,
About the poor black negro race,
How they are bought and sold.

Within our own America
Where these bad deeds are done,
A father and a mother lived
Who had a little son;
As slaves, they worked for two rich men,
Whose fields were fair and wide—

1853-1854

1853-1854

But Harry was their only joy,
They had no child beside.

Now Harry's hair was thick with curls
And softly bright his eyes,
And he could play such funny tricks
And look so wondrous wise,
Oh children dear, 'twas sad to hear,
That for the trader's gold,
To that hard-hearted evil man
Her own sweet boy was sold.
That all about the rich man's house
Were pleased to see him play,
Till a wicked trader buying slaves
Came there one winter day.

The trader and the rich man sat
Together, at their wine,
When in poor simple Harry slipped
In hopes of something fine.
He shewed them how the dandy danced,
And how old Cudjoe walked,
Till loud they laughed and gave him grapes,
And then in whispers talked.

The young child knew not what they said,
But at the open door
Eliza, his poor mother, stood,
With heart all sick and sore.
Oh children dear, 'twas sad to hear,
That for the trader's gold,
To that hard-hearted evil man
Her own sweet boy was sold.

And he would take him far away,
To where the cotton grew,
And sell him for a slave to men
More hard and wicked too.
She knew that none would heed his woe,
His want, or sickness there,
Nor ever would she see his face,
Or hear his evening prayer.

And when the house was all asleep,
And when the stars were bright,
She took her Harry in her arms,
And fled through that cold night:—
Away through bitter frost and snow
Did that poor mother flee;
And how she fared, and what befell.
Read on, and you shall see.



Sept. 2. P.M. — Collected and brought home in a pail of water this afternoon the following asters and diplopappi, going by Turnpike and Hubbard's Close to Saw Mill Brook, and returning by Goose Pond: (1) *A. Tradescanti*, now well under way, most densely flowered, by low roadsides; (2) *dumosus*, perhaps the most prevalent of the small whitish ones, especially in wood-paths; (3) *Diplopappus linariifolius*, quite common; (4) *A. patens*, at present by far the most common of the decidedly purple asters, in dry ground; (5) *undulatus*, just begun to be common; (6) *acuminatus*, low whorl, leafy, under a shady copse, where it appears to have been rayless, scarce; (7) *longifolius*, within a few days quite common in low ground; and (8) *puniceus*, very common in like places for a good while; (9) *Radula*, now rather pale and stale in low grounds; (10) *miser*, not as yet widely dispersed, but common in Saw Mill Brook Path; (11) *Diplopappus umbellatus*, abundant in low grounds, (12) *laevis*, I did not chance to see in this walk, but found it common the next morning, on hillside by Moore's Swamp. These twelve are all I know excepting *corymbosus*²² in Miles Swamp

1853-1854

1853-1854

and elsewhere, long time, not common; also *macrophyllus*, long since, not blooming this year; *multiflorus*, in dry roadsides, not yet (at least) common; and *Diplopappus cornifolius*, Bittern Cliff woods, probably out of bloom.

These twelve placed side by side, Sophia and I decided that, regarding only individual flowers, the handsomest was —

1st, *A. patens*, deep bluish-purple (“deep blue-purple” are Gray’s very words), large!

2d, *laevis*, bright lilac-purple, large.

3d, perhaps *Radula*, pale bluish-purple, turning white, large!

4th, 5th, 6th. We could not easily decide between the next three, viz.:—

D. linariifolius, pale bluish-purple²³

A. puniceus, purplish-pink } some large.

and *A. longifolius*, pale purple

But we thought afterward that perhaps the *puniceus* should take precedence of the other two.

7th, *undulatus*, pale pinkish-purple, middle size.

8th, 9th, and 10th,

dumosus, white or bluish, small;

Tradescanti, white, very small;

miser, white, very small;

and I may add *multiflorus*, white (which we had not).

11th, *Diplopappus umbellatus*, white, middle size,

12th. The *A. aeuminatus* was without rays, rather large when present.

The first (*patens*) has broader rays than the second, paler within toward the large handsome yellow disk. Its rough leaves are not so handsome.

The *laevis* is more open and slender-rayed than the last, with a rather smaller disk, but, including its stem and leaves, it is altogether the most delicate and graceful, and I should incline to put it before the last.

The *Radula* has a large, coarse disk, turning brown, and at present is inclined to turn a dirty white. Its leaves are not handsome; sometimes double-rayed. Perhaps I should put this after the next two.

The *puniccus* is a very large hush full of flowers, great rounded masses, two or more feet in diameter, the very pretty pink flowers well relieved by the background of its dark-green leaves. A branch of it will, perhaps, make the greatest show of any of there at present. It has slender, rather open rays and grows upon me. It is peculiar for its color. Perhaps commonly more purplish and larger.

The *longifolius* is very densely rayed; rays too short in proportion to disk, and too pale. Some are very large bushes with a great profusion of buds now. Some are paler and have longer linear rays, split once or twice.

The *D. linariifolius* is interesting, with its commonly single flower, with very broad rays turned backward, or handsomer still when it has fifteen or twenty heads crowded together.

The *undulatus* has a very bushy spreading panicle of a great many middle-sized flowers of not many commonly slender and open rays. Often paler and broader than these.

The *Tradescanti* attracts attention in a vase, and carries off the palm with many, for its often perfect hollow pyramids of flowers with yellow or purplish disks.

The *dumosus*, too, is clearest white and neat. The *D. umbellatus*, a small sprig with its convex top, is a great ornament to the collection. The *miser* is like a broad-leaved and more spreading *Tradescanti* with still broader and more purplish disks, the rays turned back.

A strawberry blossoms again in meadow.

For three weeks the woods have had a strong musty smell from decaying fungi. The maple-leaved viburnum


berries are a dark purple or black now. They are scarce. The red pyrus berries are ripe. The dense oval bunches of arum berries now startle the walker in swamps. They are a brilliant vermilion on a rich ground, seen where they have fallen off, which ground turns dark-purple. Saw an orange, and also a very bright yellow, slender fungus. *Solidago latifolia*, only a few out. The medeola berries are now dull glossy and almost blue-black; about three, on slender threads one inch long, arising in the midst of the cup formed by the purple bases of the whorl of three upper leaves.

22. *Cordifolius*?

23. Some, outdoors, have a lilac or violet tint.

1853-1854

1853-1854

Hear the sharp *quivet* of pigeons [**Passenger Pigeon**  *Ectopistes migratorius*] at the Thrush Alley clearing. Mistook it for a jay at first, but saw the narrow, swift flying bird soon. That low, thin, flat



fern, already whitening, at Saw Mill Brook cannot be the dicksonia, for the segments of its pinnae are entire. *Solidago puberula* (?) just fairly begun on northwest (?) corner of Ministerial Clearing, behind Everett's; but it is not hoary and has a red stem; very neat and handsome. Found in Hubbard's Close Swamp and at Saw Mill Brook what is perhaps *Aspidium Filixfemina*, in fruit, and I think four other kinds which I could not make out, three in fruit. Also *Lycopodium lucidulum*, shining club-moss.



September 3, Saturday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old **Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra**, her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Have had a very hard drive today. We crossed the main ridge of the Blue Mountains, over a very rough road and a very cold one. When once on the top we can look down in the valley beneath and see again a level road for a few miles. At night we camped in "Grand Round" valley after a hard drive of 16 miles.

The 15th anniversary of **Frederick Douglass**'s freedom, which we may well elect to celebrate in lieu of an **unknown slave birthday**.



"It has been a source of great annoyance to me, never to have a birthday."

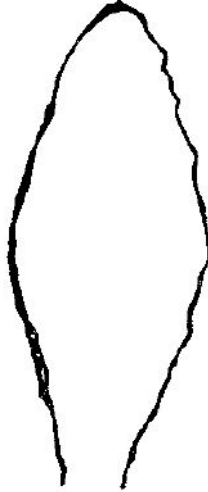


Sept. 3. Saturday. I saw this afternoon, on the chimney of the old Hunt house, in mortar filling an oblong square cavity apparently made when the chimney was, the date 1703. The rafters in the garret are for the most part of oak hewn, and more slender (though sufficiently strong and quite sound) than any sawed ones I ever saw. Oak in the old houses, pine in the new. The soapwort gentian out abundantly in Flint's Bridge Lane, apparently for a week; a surprisingly deep, faintly purplish blue. Crowded bunches of ten or a dozen sessile and closed narrow or oblong diamond or sharp dome shape flowers. The whole bunch like many sharp domes of an

1853-1854

1853-1854

Oriental city crowded together. I have here actually drawn my pen round one. It is the flowering of the sky.



The sky has descended and kissed the earth. In (at top) a whorl of clear, smooth, rich green leaves. Why come these blue flowers thus year? A dome-like crowd of domelets.

Sophia saw last Monday morning (August 29th), going to Boston in the cars, the dew-like frost on the meadows. The hips of the sweet-briar begin to redden. Saw *Polygonum dumetorum* climbing to the top of birches and willows twelve feet high by the path to Peter's along river. It is a rampant climber.

Now is the season for those comparatively rare but beautiful wild berries which are not food for man. If we so industriously collect those berries which are sweet to the palate, it is strange that we do not devote an hour in the year to gathering those which are beautiful to the eye. It behooves me to go a-berrying in this sense once a year at least. Berries which are as beautiful as flowers, but far less known, the fruit of the flower. To fill my basket with the neglected but beautiful fruit of the various species of cornels and viburnums, poke, arum, medeola, thorns, etc.

Saw at the floral show this afternoon some splendid specimens of the sunflower, king of asters, with the disk filled with ligulate flowers.



September 4, Sunday: William Gorham was elected Sheriff of San Francisco, [California](#), and would serve in that capacity until September 5th, 1855.

In Boston harbor, the *Great Republic* (largest wooden ship in the world, and the largest full-rigged ship ever built in the United States of America, so named in honor of a poem of that title by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow), had been scheduled to be launched on this day, because this day was the birthday of its builder Donald McKay. The launch had, however, needed to be delayed until October 4th due to problems with timber supplies.

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Laid by till after dinner, then drove 8 miles and camped.


The [California Mountain Echo](#) reported that on the Sailor claim, on which 8 men had put in 4 days labor during the previous week, the result had been a total of 615 ounces: on Monday they had retrieved 323 ounces, on Tuesday 74 ounces, on Friday 114 ounces, and on Saturday 104 ounces. This was over and above the fact that within a few weeks a nugget had been found there weighing 9½ ounces, another nugget had been found weighing 3 pounds 5 ounces — and yet another nugget has been found weighing fully 5 pounds.

1853-18



1853-1854



Sept. 4. 5.30 A.M. — To Nawshawtuct by river.

Roman wormwood's yellow dust on my clothes. Hear a warbling vireo [**Warbling Vireo**  *Vireo gilvus*], — something rare. I do not succeed in making two varieties of *Polygonum amphibium*. All mine, from three inches above water and floating to three feet high on dry land, are apparently one. The first, at any rate, must be *aquaticum*, — floating, *nearly* smooth, and leaves more heart-shaped. It appears by insensible gradations to pass into the other. See one or two lilies yet. The fragrance of a grape-vine branch, with ripe grapes on it, which I have brought home, fills the whole house. This fragrance is exceedingly rich, surpassing the flavor of any grape.

P. M. — To Cliffs via Hubbard's Swamp.

The skunk-cabbage fruit lies flat and black now in the meadow. The *Aster miser* is a pretty flower, with its commonly wide and loose branches, variegated or parti-colored with its white rays and broad purplish (and yellow) disks giving it a modestly parti-colored look, with green leaves of sufficient breadth to relieve the flowers.

Would it not be worth the while to devote one day each year to collecting with pains the different kinds of asters, — perhaps about this time, — and another to the goldenrods?

In Potter's dry pasture I saw the ground black with black-birds (troopials?) [**Brown-headed Cowbird**  *Molothrus ater*]. As I approach the front rank rises and flits a little further back into the midst of the flock, —it rolls up on the edges, —and, being then alarmed, they soon take flight, with a loud rippling rustle, but soon alight again, the rear wheeling swiftly into place like well-drilled soldiers. Instead of being an irregular and disorderly crowd, they appear to know and keep their places and wheel with the precision of drilled troops. The lycopodium now sheds its pollen commonly. The hawks  are soaring at the Cliffs. I think I never hear this peculiar, more musical scream, such as the jay appears to imitate, in the spring, only at and after midsummer when the young begin to fly. In Hubbard's Swamp Path. Probably *Solidago speciosa*, though not yet in blossom there, very broad leaves, the radical-like plantain, covering the ground, and for the most part no more.

Carried a pail this afternoon to collect goldenrods and berries. The skunk-cabbage common. Hazels high time to gather; bushes browned. After handling some beaked hazelnuts the other day, observed my hand covered with extremely fine, shining, glass-like bristles. Arum in prime. The crowded clusters of shrub oak acorns are very handsome now, the rich, wholesome brown of the cups contrasting with the now clear green acorns, sometimes twenty-four with a breadth of three inches. China-like berries of cornel along the river now abundant, some cymes wholly white; also the paniced there and in swamps, though its little red (?) fingery stems are oftenest bare, but are pretty enough, perhaps, to take the place of the berries. The black choke-berries, as also choke-cherries, are stale. The two-leaved Solomon's-seal has just begun to redden; so the largest one. The creeping juniper berries are now a hoary green but full-grown. The scarlet thorn is in many places quite edible and now a deep scarlet. Polygonum and medcola now. Greenbriar only begins to turn. *Viburnum nudum* rather stale. Clintonia probably about gone. Carrion-flower in prime. Maple viburnum fully ripe, like the *dentatum*. *Aralia hispida* getting old. Feverwort now. Rose hips generally beginning; and the two primroses beginning. Elder in prime, and cranberry. Smooth sumach stale. Celtis green. There are, perhaps, four kinds of goldenrod in C. Hubbard's Swamp Path²⁴ which I am not certain about: one, which I have called *S. puberula*, with reddish stem; another, tall and slender, smooth, with a pyramidal panicle with four to six broad rays, leaves lanceolate, dwindling to mere bracts, appressed and entire above, *virgata*-like, which I will call *S. virgata*, — though its leaves are not entire, — till I examine the *stricta* again;²⁵ also another, with thin lanceolate leaves, symmetrically

24. *Stricta* and *puberula*, etc., are there, August, 1859.

25. This my early low-ground *stricta*-like.

1853-1854

1853-1854

tapering at each end, rough on the edges and serrate, with, I believe, six or seven rays (specimen now



withered), and this I have already named for convenience *ulmifolia*, but the leaves are not elm-like.²⁶ Also another, with eight to twelve (?) rays and much narrower leaves than the above three, very taper-pointed, sessile, and with margined petiole and wavy upper, entire lower, lanceolate-spatulate, and toothed slightly near end. Has the *stricta* leaflets in the arils?²⁷



September 5, Monday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Started this morning up a long hill and down hill and over hills and a rough road to Grand Round River 12 miles camped here in a beautiful grove of pine and fir timber.

While visiting [La Spezia](#) near [Genoa, Italy](#), Richard Wagner (or so he would claim) in half-sleep, half-waking state, dreamed that he was sinking into a current of water (in Eb). On waking he realized that what he had dreamed was the prelude to "Das Rheingold."

[Henry Thoreau](#) went to [Framingham, Massachusetts](#) via Wayland.



Sept. 5. To Framingham.

Saw, in a Meadow in Wayland, at a little distance, what I have no doubt was an island of *Aster puniceus*, one rod in diameter, — one mass of flowers five feet high.

26. Probably form of *S. altissima*.

27. [*Vide* [p. 422].]

1853-1854

1853-1854



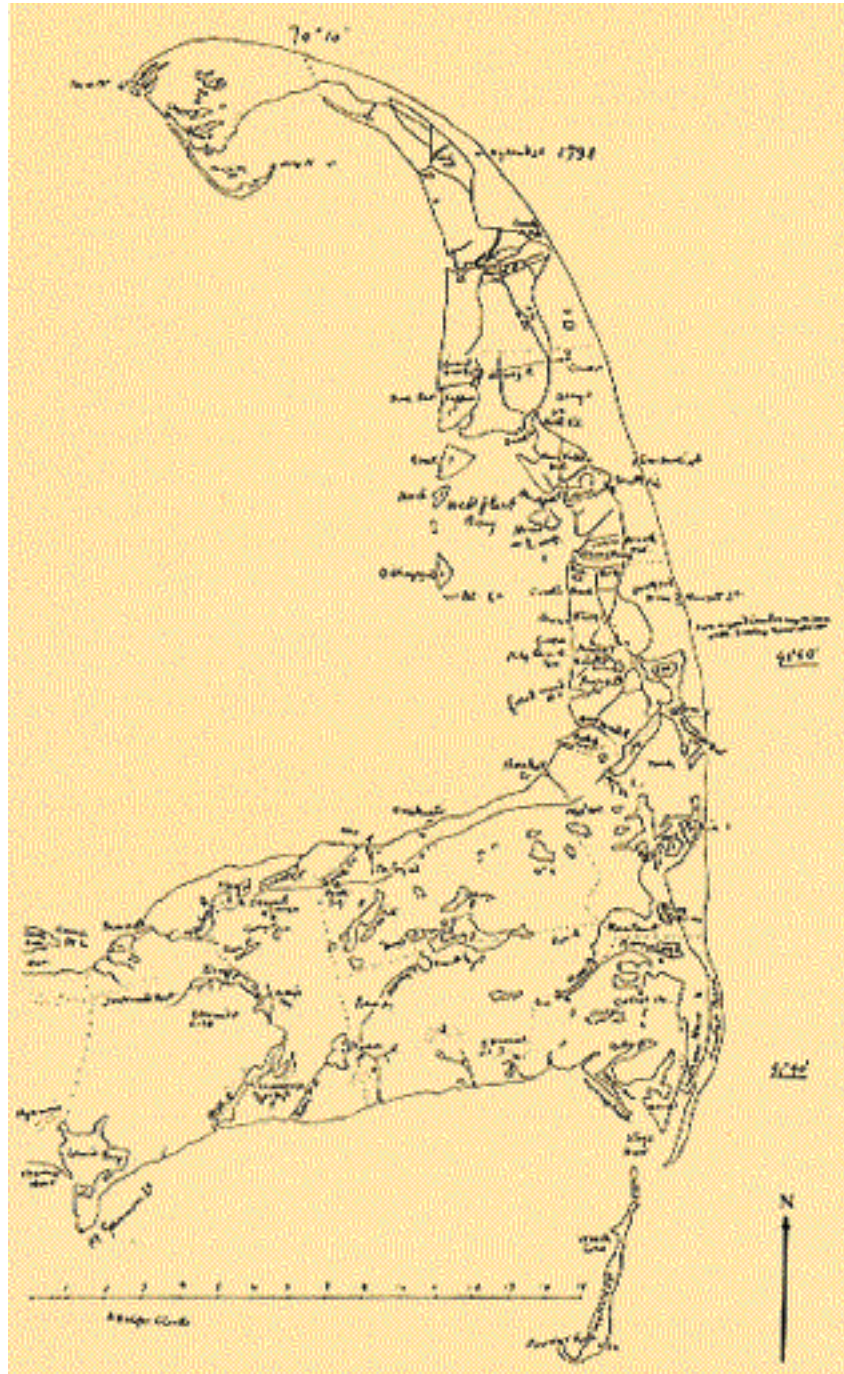
September 5, Monday: [Waldo Emerson](#) to his journal, on [Cape Cod](#):

Went to Yarmouth Sunday 5; to Orleans Monday, 6th; to [Nauset Light](#) on the back side of Cape Cod. Collins, the keeper, told us he found obstinate resistance on Cape Cod to the project of building a light house on this coast, as it would injure the wrecking business. He had to go to Boston, & obtain the strong recommendation of the Port Society. From the high hill in the rear of Higgins's, in Orleans, I had a good view of the whole cape & the sea on both sides. The Cape looks like one of the [Newfoundland](#) banks just emerged, a huge tract of sand half-covered with poverty grass, & beach grass & for trees abele & locust & plantations of pitchpine. Some good oak, & in Dennis & Brewster were lately good trees for shiptimber & still are well wooded on the east side. But the view I speak of looked like emaciated orkneys - Mull, Islay, & so forth, made of salt dust, gravel, & fishbones. They say the Wind makes the roads, & as far as [Nantucket](#), a large part of the real estate was freely moving back & forth in the air. I heard much of the coming railroad which is about to reach Yarmouth & Hyannis, & they hope, will come to [Provincetown](#). I fancied the people were only waiting for the railroad to reach them in order to evacuate the country. For the starknakedness of the country could not be exaggerated. But no, nothing was less true. They are all attached to what they call **the soil**. Mr Collins had been as far as Indiana; but, he said, hill on hill - he felt stifled, & longed for the Cape, "where he could see out." And whilst I was fancying that they would gladly give away land to anybody that would come & live there, & be a neighbor: no, they said, all real estate had risen, all over the Cape, & you could not buy land at less than 50 dollars per acre. And, in Provincetown, a lot on the Front street of forty feet square would cost 5 or 600 dollars.

Still I saw at the Cape, as at Nantucket, they are a little tender about your good opinion: for if a gentleman at breakfast, says, he don't like Yarmouth, all real estate seems to them at once depreciated 2 or 3 per cent.

1853-1854

1853-1854



It would appear that this was traced by Thoreau himself.



September 6, Tuesday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:



1853-1854

1853-1854

Left camp early this morning for a hard days drive to Lees Encampment 21 miles over a rough road through heavy timber. This is the first drive through timber all day since we left the states. Reached Lees Encampment at dark, turned the cattle out in thickets again.

Hannah Tucker Shearman Taber died in [New Bedford](#), Massachusetts at the age of 52 (the widower [William Congdon Taber](#) would remarry, with Rhonda or Rhoda Howland).

Captain William T. Sherman resigned his US Army commission to take up banking in [San Francisco](#).

On this day and the following one a gang from an athletic club in the pay of the Democratic organization in New-York (Tammany Hall²⁸), dressed in uniform white panama hats, pantaloons, polished boots, and heavy gold chains, twice totally disrupted a woman's rights convention at the Tabernacle building that was being presided over by Friend [Lucretia Mott](#). [Sojourner Truth](#) spoke:

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages or over mud puddles or gives me the best place, and ain't I a woman? ... I know it feels kind of hissin' and ticklin' like to see a colored woman get up and tell you about things, and woman's rights. We have all been thrown down so low that nobody thought we'd ever get up again, but we have been down long enough now; we will come up again, and here I am.

Legend has it that Friend Lucretia simply took the arm of the ringleader of the gang and asked him to escort them safely from the building and that –unable to cope with this unexpected reaction to the situation– he did so.

[Now here is something I believe that you and I should pay careful attention to, since you probably first learned of this period of our nation's history in about the same manner in which I first learned about it, and in all probability the scars this has left on your consciousness of race and gender issues are similar to the scars this has left on my own. What I am suggesting that you and I should pay careful attention to, is succinctly

28. It had two names at the same time. It was named Columbia Hall in honor of that mass-murdering founding father Christopher Columbus, but also, wouldn't you know, named after the late 17th Century Delaware chief Tamanend, the idea being that American tribalists are stereotypically generous in their care for needy members of their same tribe, and that such kindness translates, in civilized public life, into benevolent public associations of graft and mutual backscratching. This was well before "Boss Tweed" became the Grand Sachem of the Tammany Society in 1868, but the benevolent fraternity had already clearly degenerated into something of a *cosa nostra*. Nevertheless, the Tammany Society had lost all patience with real American tribalists when most of us sided with Great Britain during the [War of 1812](#). The society finally sold all the collections of Native American artifacts it had been keeping in its central "Wigwam" building, to [Phineas Taylor Barnum](#) for use in his "Greatest Show on Earth." –In the latest episode of such racial and ethnic stereotyping, just the other day when Mafia *don* John Gotti was convicted on 13 counts of murder and racketeering, his daughter commented proudly "My father is the last of the Mohicans."

1853-1854

1853-1854



She was evidently a full-blooded African, and though now aged and worn with many hardships, still gave the impression of a physical development which in early youth must have been as fine a specimen of the torrid zone as Cumberworth's celebrated statuette of the Negro Woman at the Fountain.

-Harriet Beecher Stowe

encapsulated in the fact that the historian Alan Nevins, writing for us in 1947, described the above incident only briefly. The sum total of what Nevins had to offer us was:

At the Tabernacle a colored woman stirred up a tempest by making a speech.

“At the Tabernacle a colored woman stirred up a tempest by making a speech.” We may usefully contrast this history-writing by Nevins, on which you and I cut our teeth, with other forms of description such as “In a red brick building, Sojourner Truth stirred up a tempest by making a speech” in which **the place** is allowed to remain categorical rather than **the person**, and such as “At the Tabernacle, a vivid oration stirred the delegates” in which the event is described as Nevins might easily have described that stirring speech, had it issued from the mouth of **some white male running for political office** rather than originating with some generic citizen who, because **not white and not male**, is obviously nothing but a troublemaker who has “stirred up a tempest” in a teapot.]



1853-1854

1853-1854

According to a report entitled “Address by a Slave Mother” in the New-York Tribune in the following day’s issue, the evening discourse delivered by Sojourner Truth at the First Congregational Church on 6th Street between 3rd and 4th Avenues had been of considerable interest:

Mrs. Truth, in consequence of her unhappy situation in early life, is totally uneducated, but speaks very fluently in tolerably correct and certainly very forcible style, and the latter quality of her address is rather enhanced by her occasional homely and therefore natural expressions. The audience was not so numerous as was expected, owing probably to a misdescription of the locality in the announcement, but those present (principally colored, with a sprinkling of white folks,) made a decent display in the body of the church, and listened with attention to the address and the proceedings. These were opened by a Hymn well sung to the accompaniment of the organ, after which the Pastor of the Church, Rev. Mr. Tillon, offered a very excellent and appropriate Prayer. Mrs. Truth being introduced to the meeting expressed some disappointment at the thinness of the meeting, but hoped a blessing would be extended to it by Him who had promised where two or three were gathered together in His name He would be in the midst. She felt thankful that she had lived to see the day she stood before her own people. She had held a great many meetings, and it seemed to her that the spirit of God had come upon her and enabled her to plead to her race, and not only to her race but to the slave owners. She had always felt this difficulty: What was she to say to her own race on the subject of Slavery? They were the sufferers, and as strangers in the land, who had had little of God’s footstool under their control. She had been robbed of education – her rights, robbed of her children, her father, mother, sister and brother; yet she lived; and not only lived, but God lived in her. [Applause] Why was her race despised? What had they done that they should be hated? She had frequently asked this question, but never had received any answer. Was it because they were black? They had not made themselves black, and if they had done anything wrong why not let them know, that they might repent of that wrong. It had been said that the colored people were careless, and regardless of their rights and liberties; and this was partly true, though she hoped for better things in future. And why had they been careless and unheard? It was indeed hard that their oppressors should bind them hand and foot, and ask they why did they not run. She was about 24 [i.e. 32?] years of age when she came to New-York, ignorant, and could not speak English very well; but she would not bow to the filth of the City. As a slave she had never been allowed to go anywhere, but then she went round with the lady who brought her here, and she was determined if she was despised she would go among the white people and learn all she could. She had known nothing of religion

1853-1854

1853-1854

a few months before – not even that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. She found her religion as she was at her work, as she washed her dishes, and all she could say or think was Jesus. She wanted to get among her own colored people and teach them this, but they repulsed and shoved her off, yet she felt she wanted to be doing. She used to go and hold prayer meetings at the houses of the people in the Five Points, then Chapel st, but she found they were always more inclined to hear great people, and she instanced the case of one colored woman who declined her prayers, said she had two or three ministers about. She (the Speaker) went off weeping while her dying sister was looked upon as a “glory of Zion.” She had learnt of Jesus and had become strengthened, and if they all had learned religion of Jesus and had were of one mind, what would become of the slave-holder? How stood the case between them? The colored people had given to the whites all their labor, their children, husbands, and all. She used to say, “why was I black, when if I was white I could have plenty of food and clothes?” But now she gloried in her color. She rejoiced in the color that God had been pleased to give her, and she was well satisfied with it. She used to say she wished God would kill all the white people and not leave one for seed. Her mother had taught her to pray to make her master good, and she did so, but she was tied up and whipped till the blood trickled down her back and she used to think if she was God she would made them good, and if God were she, she would not allow it. Such were her ideas, and how could she, or how could slaves be good while masters and mistresses were so bad? What she said to the whites she said to her own people. She had been tied up and flogged; her husband’s blood had flowed till it could be traced for a mile on the snow; and her father had been allowed to freeze to death. What could they say on the Day of Judgment in reply to the question “why do they hate us?” She did not wish unduly to ridicule the whites, but the blood and sweat and tears drawn from the black people were sufficient to cover the earth all over the United States. Still she desired to advocate their cause in a Christian spirit and in one of forgiveness, and had high hopes of their success; but she exhorted the people to stir and not let the white people have it all to themselves in their World’s Conventions. She deprecated the people who were satisfied with their enslaved lot, and as a colored woman, she wanted **all** the rights she was entitled to. Her address occupied a considerable time, and at its conclusion an interesting narrative of hers was handed round, and several copies sold for her benefit. She intended to hold other meetings in New-York, and bids fair to excite considerable interest and

1853-1854

1853-1854

popularity.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR SEPTEMBER 6TH]



September 7, Wednesday: In North Africa, [Heinrich Barth](#) reached Timbuktu.



In [San Francisco](#), Thomas W. Freelon was elected as the County Judge.

When members of the Small Sword Society won the approval of the populace and took over [Shanghai](#), they immediately halted the trade in [opium](#).

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

This morning could not find all our cattle, concluded to lay by to-day, found them about 10 o'clock, after dinner drove about half a mile to better water and camped for the night.



Sept. 7. [R.W.E.](#) brought from Yarmouth this week *Chrysopsis falcata* in bloom and *Vaccinium stamineum*, deerberry, or squaw huckleberry, — the last with green berries, some as large as cranberries, globular (not pear-shaped), on slender peduncles, not edible, in low ground.

Yesterday and to-day and day before yesterday, some hours of very warm weather, as oppressive as any in the year, one's thermometer at 93°.

1853-1854

1853-1854



September 8, Thursday: The First Chamber in Holland adopted, by a majority of 22 over 16, a much-disputed Law on Religious Liberty.

New Bedford, Massachusetts felt the shock of an earthquake.

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra, her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Another hard drive over mountains and through timber again, found a good spring 4 miles from camp. Late afternoon brought us to some springs at the foot of the mountains where we camped. Drove 15 miles to-day.

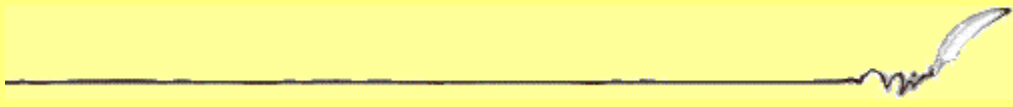
For 3 days Henry Thoreau would be surveying a new Bedford Road.



Before a woodlot can be sold, its acreage must be measured so that its commodity value as a fuel can be accurately estimated. He did this dozens of times, especially for his townsmen thereby contributing to local deforestation. Before a farm can be subdivided for housing, a survey was legally required. Before an upland swamp can be redeemed for tillage, it must be drained. And with large drainage projects, accurate surveys were needed to determine the best pathways and gradients for flow. Thoreau helped kill several of the swamps he otherwise claimed to cherish.

In short, Thoreau personally and significantly contributed to the intensification of private capital development throughout the valley. Additionally, he surveyed for roads, cemeteries, and public buildings, which required the cutting away of hills and the filling of wetlands. Like the bankers, lawyers, builders, farmers, and elected officials who were his clients, Thoreau was an instrument of change. He knew it, and it make him uncomfortable. But he kept doing it anyway, because he needed the money.

- Professor Robert M. Thorson, THE BOATMAN, pages 116-117



A "Convention of the Editors and Publishers of Western and Southern New York" met at Elmira and founded the New York Press Association.



Sept. 8. Roses, apparently R. lucida, abundantly out on a warm bank on Great Fields by Moore's Swamp, with Viola pedata.



September 9, Friday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra, her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Traveled 7 or 8 miles when we struck the river, down it 8 miles

to where the road finally leaves the Umatilla River, where we camped for the night.

In [San Francisco](#), Pacific Fire Engine Co. No. 8 was organized because Monumental Engine 8 withdrew. This company would be quartered on Front Street between Jackson and Pacific.



Sept. 9. Half a bushel of handsome pears on the ground under the wild pear tree on Pedrick's land; some ripe, many more on tree. J. Wesson, who is helping me survey to-day, says that, when they dug the cellar of Stacy's shop, he saw where they cut through (with the spade) birches six inches in diameter, on which the Mill-Dam had been built; also that Nathan Hosmer, Sr., since dead, told him that he had cut meadow-grass between the bakehouse and the Middlesex Hotel. I find myself covered with green and winged lice from the birches.



September 10, Saturday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Drove 15 miles today and camped on the Umatilla again.

The Placerville, [California Herald](#) reported that almost the entire bed rock of El Dorado County amounted to one vast gold field in which thousands of miners had already made, and thousands more would make, their fortunes. As a case in point, Mr. J.E. & G.L. Cole, architects and builders from Monroe, Michigan had emigrated to this region in 1852, paying \$105 for a lot on Main Street adjoining the Cedar Ravine Hotel on which to erect a shop, with a street frontage of 25 feet and, like all lots in that vicinity, extending back into the creek some 30 or 40 feet as far as convenient for use since that rear flooded with water during each rainy season. Since their initial \$105 land expenditure, however, John Peters, who had also come west from Monroe County, Michigan, had for 6 months been successfully working a claim on the adjoining lot, the one beneath the Cedar Ravine Hotel, and had been following gold traces, and had recovered from the corner of the Cole lot something more than \$100 worth of ore. The Coles therefore changed their plan and determined to work out the gold on their \$105 lot, down to the bed rock. Commencing immediately, in connection with John Peters and Charles Ellis, another immigrant from Monroe County, Michigan, they worked 14 feet in width of their lot, piling their stock of lumber upon the 11 feet remaining. The 1st day the company of 4 men took out \$54, the 2d half day \$24, the 3d day \$65, the 4th half day \$26, the 5th day \$110, and on the 6th day \$40.50 — and there was good prospect for some hundred more. In addition to this, a man who was permitted to wash over the *tailings* made \$10.30 during part of a day, before 2 o'clock P.M. ("tailings" are cemented lumps of clay, gravel, and sand that escape the dissolving action of the "tom").



Sept. 10. The pontederia and pads have already their fall look by river. It is not the work of frost. The *Aster corymbosus* with its corymbed flowers, with seven or eight long slender white rays pointed at both ends, ready to curl, shaving-like, and purplish disks, — one of the more interesting asters. The *Smilacina racemosa* berries are well red now; probably with the two-leaved.

It occurred to me when I awoke this morning, feeling regret for intemperance of the day before in eating fruit, which had dulled my sensibilities, that man was to be treated as a musical instrument, and if any viol was to be made of sound timber and kept well tuned always, it was he, so that when the bow of events is drawn across him he may vibrate and resound in perfect harmony. A sensitive soul will be continually trying its strings to see if they are in tune. A man's body must be rasped down exactly to a shaving. It is of far more importance than the wood of a Cremona violin.

[Here follows an account of Thoreau's second excursion to the Maine woods, which began September 13th. As the story is told elsewhere, virtually in the language of the Journal, it is here omitted with the



1853-1854

1853-1854

exception of a few scattered sentences and paragraphs which for one reason or another were not used in the paper entitled "Chesuncook."]



September 11, Sunday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Got a late start this morning on account of one of our cattle straying off. Followed the river for six miles then crossed. Here we found the Indian Agency, the first frame house we have seen since we left the States. Here also we left the Umatilla and struck across to Butter Creek 10 miles which we made by sundown and found good grass and water. Drove 16 miles.

In [California](#), the 1st electric telegraph came into use, between Merchant's Exchange and Point Lobos.

An earthquake was experienced at Biloxi and several other vacation spots on the Gulf coast.

The captain of a Siamese man-of-war came aboard an American vessel anchored near [Canton](#) "complaining of his men being in state of mutiny & that his life was in danger and asked for assistance." Despite the obvious fact that this really wasn't any of our business, things had gotten so boring that the American vessel dispatched 10 of its [US Marines](#) to inspect this crew. —Maybe this would grant them an opportunity to relieve their boredom by that Heaven-sent opportunity, of killing somebody they didn't know.

[US MILITARY INTERVENTIONS](#)



Sept. 11. Sunday. Cool weather. Sit with windows shut, and many by fires. A great change since the 6th, when the heat was so oppressive. The air has got an autumnal coolness which it will not get rid of again.

P.M. — To Dugan's.

I think I can correct somewhat my account of the goldenrods of September 4th, [two] pages back. No. 2 may be *S. stricta*, after all. (*Vide* the one at Hosmer's ditch.) Is not the *puberula* of September 4th same with No. 2? Is not No. 3 one form of *S. altissima*? Doubt if I have seen *S. ulmifolia*. Is not No. 4 the true *S. puberula*? It is the same with that by Marlborough road, September 1st. The *speciosa* may not open for a week yet.

The present appearance of the solidago in Hosmer's ditch which may be *S. stricta* [*Vide* November 3d and 4th.] is a stout erect red stem with entire, lanceolate, thick, fleshy, smooth sessile leaves above, gradually increasing in length downward till ten inches long and becoming toothed. [Not sharply.] All parts very smooth. Not yet out. This apparently same with No. 2.

The *S. nemoralis* is not as fresh as a week ago. Perhaps that was the date for the goldenrods generally. Perhaps this is the time for asters. The conspicuous and handsome bluish masses of *A. puniceus*, erect or fallen, stretch in endless rows along the brook, often as high as your head; sometimes make islands in the meadow. *Polygonum articulatum* out, many of them, at the Desert. None out September 1st. Say, then, September 5th. *A. undulatus* is now in prime, very abundant along path-sides. The branches of its panicle are commonly of about equal length on different sides the stem, and as the flowers are crowded and stand vertically on the sides as well as horizontally above, they form one (or sometimes more) conical or pyramidal or cylindrical hollow panicles of middle-sized purplish flowers, roundly bunched.

Signs of frost last night in M. Miles's cleared swamp. Potato vines black. How much farther it is back to frost from the greatest heat of summer, *i.e.* from the 6th [of this month] back to the 1st of June, three months, than forward to it, four days!

Checkerberries are full-grown, but green. They must have been new mitchella berries, then, that I saw some time ago. River cornel berries have begun to disappear. In a stubble-field, I go through a very fine, diffusely branching grass now going to seed, which is like a reddish mist to my eyes, two feet deep, and trembling around me.

There is an aster in Hosmer's ditch, like *longifolius*, with linear leaves remotely toothed, red stem, smooth, three

or four feet high, but scales not recurved and flowers much smaller, with many purplish disks.



September 12, Monday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra, her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Left quite early this morning to get to Well's Spring in time to water our stock as water is scarce and first come fares best. Camped at the lower spring which is the best. We find it by taking the right hand road 3 or 4 miles back. Drove 15 miles. It is 18 miles to the upper springs and not much water.

Henry Thoreau made an entry in his journal that he was later to copy into his early lecture "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" as:

[Paragraph 98] It occurred to me when I awoke the other morning—feeling regret for some intemperance of the day before which had dulled my sensibilities—that man was to be treated as a musical instrument, and if any viol was to be made of sound timber, and kept tuned always, it was he—so that when the bow of events is drawn across him, he may vibrate and resound in perfect harmony. A sensitive soul will be continually trying its strings to see if they are in tune. A man's body must be rasped down exactly to a shaving. It is of far more importance than the wood of a Cremona violin.

Brad Dean's Commentary



Sept. 12. I was struck this afternoon with the beauty of the Aster corymbosus with its corymbed flowers, with seven or eight long slender white rays pointed at both ends, ready to curl, shaving-like, and purplish disks, — one of the more interesting asters. The Smilacina racemosa berries are well red now; probably with the two-leaved.

It occurred to me when I awoke this morning, feeling regret for intemperance of the day before in eating fruit, which had dulled my sensibilities, that man was to be treated as a musical instrument, and if any viol was to be made of sound timber and kept well tuned always, it was he, so that when the bow of events is drawn across him he may vibrate and resound in perfect harmony. A sensitive soul will be continually trying its strings to see if they are in tune. A man's body must be rasped down exactly to a shaving. It is of far more importance than the wood of a Cremona violin.

[Here follows an account of Thoreau's second excursion to the Maine woods, which began September 13th. As the story is told elsewhere, virtually in the language of the Journal, it is here omitted, with the exception of a few scattered sentences and paragraphs which for one reason or another were not used in the paper entitled "Chesuncook."]



September 13, Tuesday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra, her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Got a late start this morning as we had to water our stock one by one again. Arrived at Willow Creek at dark, good spring water

1853-1854

1853-1854

and good grass 1 mile down the creek. Drove 20 miles and camped.

Extradition convention between the United States of America and Bavaria.

READ THE FULL TEXT

Henry Thoreau began his 2d visit to the Maine woods.



[THOREAU'S ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR SEPTEMBER 13TH IS ALMOST IDENTICALLY TRANSCRIBED INTO HIS ACCOUNT OF HIS 2D EXPEDITION INTO THE MAINE WOODS, "CHESUNCOOK," AN EXPEDITION THAT BEGAN ON THIS DAY.]



September 13, Tuesday-27, Tuesday: Henry Thoreau went on his 2d trip to Maine (Moosehead Lake, Chesuncook Lake, and the Penobscot River), by steamer on the outside route to and from Bangor, then by stagecoach to the town of Greenville on the shore of Moosehead Lake, then by steamer across the lake, then by ox cart to the Penobscot River, probably at the end of work on the E draft of WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS. He went with his cousin George A. Thatcher, and had Joseph Aitteon (or Atteon) as guide.

CRUICKSHANK COMMENTARY



TIMELINE OF THE MAINE WOODS

Supplies included a tent, hard-bread, pork, smoked beef, tea, and sugar. When Thoreau reached the mouth of the Ragmuff, a small stream flowing into the Penobscot between Moosehead and Chesuncook, several birds attracted his attention. Purple finches and myrtle warblers can be seen there. Canada jays, now called gray jays, often visit camps for food. Ruffed grouse and spruce grouse may be flushed by hikers. A male spruce grouse (Thoreau's pinnated or black grouse) has been known to become so immobile when approached that you may make five-second exposures. Thoreau's observations about the familiarity between lumbermen and wilderness birds are similar to those made of the birds on the Galápagos Islands, where humans have made a very recent appearance. On those islands visitors have sometimes lifted a hawk from its perch in a tree. Charles Darwin noted that to collect such species as finches, wrens, flycatchers, doves, and carrion buzzards, he did not need a gun but could use a switch or even his hat.



[From CHESUNCOOK] I asked Neptune if they had any of the old breed of dogs yet. He answered, "Yes." "But that," said I, pointing to one that had just come in, "is a Yankee dog." He assented. I said that he did not look like a good one. "O yes!" he said, and he told, with much gusto, how, the year before, he had caught and held by the throat a wolf. A very small black puppy rushed into the room and made at the Governor's feet, as he sat in his stockings with his legs dangling from the bedside. The Governor rubbed his hands and dared

DOG

1853-1854

1853-1854

him to come on, entering into the sport with spirit. Nothing more that was significant transpired, to my knowledge, during this interview. This was the first time that I ever called on a governor, but, as I did not ask for an office, I can speak of it with the more freedom.



[From THE MAINE WOODS] While we were trying for trout, Joe, Indian-like, wandered off up the Ragmuff on his own errands, and when we were ready to start was far beyond call. So we were compelled to make a fire and get our dinner here, not to lose time. Some dark reddish birds with grayer females (perhaps purple finches [**Purple Finch** *Carpodacus purpureus*]), and myrtle-birds in their summer dress, hopped within six or eight feet of us and our smoke. Perhaps they smelled the frying pork. The latter bird, or both, made the lisping notes which I had heard in the forest. They suggested that the few small birds found in the wilderness are on more familiar terms with the lumbermen and hunter than those of the orchard and clearing with the farmer. I have since found the Canada jay, and partridges, [**Ruffed Grouse** *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] both the black [**Spruce Grouse** *Dendragapus canadensis* (Black Grouse)] and common, equally tame there, as if they had not yet learned to mistrust man entirely. The chickadee, which is at home alike in the primitive woods and in our wood-lots, still retains its confidence in the towns to a remarkable degree.... We saw a few wood ducks, sheldrakes, and black ducks, but they were not so numerous there at that season as on our river at home. We scared the same family of wood ducks before us, going and returning. We also heard the note of one fish hawk, somewhat like that of a pigeon woodpecker, and soon after saw him perched near the top of a dead white pine against the island where we had first camped, while a company of peewees were twittering and teetering about over the carcass of a moose on a low sandy spit just beneath. We drove the fish hawk from perch to perch, each time eliciting a scream or whistle, for many miles before us.



THE MAINE WOODS: There was the usual long-handled axe of the primitive woods by the door, three and a half feet long, – for my new black-ash rule was in constant use, – and a large, shaggy dog, whose nose, report said, was full of porcupine quills. I can testify that he looked very sober. This is the usual fortune of pioneer dogs, for they have to face the brunt of the battle for their race, and act the part of Arnold Winkelried without intending it. If he should invite one of his town friends up this way, suggesting moose-meat and unlimited freedom, the latter might pertinently inquire, “What is that sticking in your nose?” When a generation or two have used up all the enemies’ darts, their successors lead a comparatively easy life. We owe to our fathers analogous blessings. Many old people receive pensions for no other reason, it seems to me, but as a compensation for having lived a long [Page 690] time ago. No doubt our town dogs still talk, in a snuffling way, about the days that tried dogs’ noses. How they got a cat up there I do not know, for they are as shy as my aunt about entering a canoe. I wondered that she did not run up a tree on the way; but perhaps she was bewildered by the very crowd of opportunities.



DOG

CAT


FIGURING OUT WHAT AMOUNTS TO A “HISTORICAL CONTEXT” IS WHAT THE CRAFT OF HISTORICIZING AMOUNTS TO, AND THIS NECESSITATES DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN THE SET OF EVENTS THAT MUST HAVE TAKEN PLACE BEFORE EVENT E COULD BECOME POSSIBLE, AND MOST



1853-1854

1853-1854

CAREFULLY DISTINGUISHING THEM FROM ANOTHER SET OF EVENTS THAT COULD NOT POSSIBLY OCCUR UNTIL SUBSEQUENT TO EVENT E.

 September 14, Wednesday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Laid by till noon, bought some flour at 30¢ per pound, met Mr. Ritchie as we started out. He was a native of Jacksonville, Ill. looking for his brother who is about a day behind. He was direct from Oregon City and gave us some valuable information. Drove 12 miles and camped. No water but what we carried, except a fine shower we had during the night.


Brand Sequine was appointed as the City Marshal of [San Francisco](#).

When the locomotive of a freight train on the Ohio and Pennsylvania Railroad blew up while underway about 65 miles from Pittsburg, the force of the explosion lifted the locomotive from the tracks and hurled it some 50 feet.

[Henry Thoreau](#) continued on his 2d visit to the Maine woods.



[THOREAU'S ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR SEPTEMBER 14TH IS ALMOST IDENTICALLY TRANSCRIBED INTO HIS ACCOUNT OF HIS 2D EXPEDITION INTO THE MAINE WOODS, "CHESUNCOOK."]

 Mid-September: [Thomas Carlyle](#) had become exasperated at the Irish workmen he had hired to soundproof the room on his upper floor, they having fallen through the ceiling 5 times. He moved to separate lodgings for the duration of the renovations.²⁹

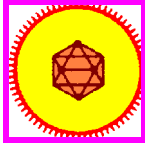
1853

"Stack of the Artist of Kouroo" Project

29. What a time a modern safety engineer would have with an employer who provides such inherently dangerous tasks and work conditions, that his workmen fall through a ceiling not once but repeatedly!

1853-1854

1853-1854



 September 15, Thursday: In Mobile, Alabama, [Sarah Alice Nott](#), 3-year-old daughter of [Dr. Josiah Clark Nott](#) and [Sarah \(Sally\) Deas Nott](#), succumbed to the [yellow fever](#).

Mily Balakirev applied to the University of Kazan for admission as an external student (he would be accepted).


A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

This morning is as cool as a November morning and the cloaks and overcoats are not uncomfortable. Nine miles and we come to the forks of the road and Cedar Spring, the left leading to Rock Creek, the other to John Days River. About 5 miles distant we took the right hand it being the nearest, and reached the river about 3 o'clock, crossed and drove up a long rocky and sandy canyon one and one-half miles long and 1 1/2 miles on the left hand road and camped. The road forks at the top of this canyon the left hand leading to Oregon City over the Cascade Mountains, the right to the Dalles the head of Steamboat Navigation, 46 miles.

[Henry Thoreau](#) continued on his 2d visit to the Maine woods.



[THOREAU'S ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR SEPTEMBER 15TH IS ALMOST IDENTICALLY TRANSCRIBED INTO HIS ACCOUNT OF HIS 2D EXPEDITION INTO THE MAINE WOODS, "CHESUNCOOK."]

 September 16, Friday: Money was appropriated in [San Francisco](#) to erect a fence around the cemetery at Yerba Buena.

When a passenger train and a freight train collided on the New York Central Railroad at Oneida, the passenger cars were badly damaged and several passengers were killed or injured.

[Henry Thoreau](#) continued on his 2d visit to the Maine woods.



Sept. 16. [This material in Thoreau's Journal is almost identically transcribed into his account of his 2d expedition into The Maine Woods, "Chesuncook." In the Journal the name of his guide is given as "Atean," and Thoreau was supposing that it might be the French "Étienne," though Joe was pronouncing it "Ateon." In The Maine Woods the name is transcribed as "Aitton."]



Sept. 16. Friday. He [Joe Ateon or Aitton]³⁰ said the stone-heaps (though we saw none) were made

30. [In the Journal the name of the guide appears as Atean, and Thoreau "thought it might be the French Étienne, though Joe pronounced it At, etc." This is probably a more correct spelling than the Aitton of the book. Mrs. Fannie Hardy Eckstorm in The Penobscot Man (Boston, 1904) gives a considerable account of this man and his exploits and spells his name "Attien."].



1853-1854

by chub.

1853-1854

1853-1854

1853-1854

 September 17, Saturday: [Henry Thoreau](#) continued on his 2d visit to the Maine woods.

The great monument to George Washington in the national capital, conceived in 1833 and begun in 1848, had by this year risen about a hundred or a hundred fifty feet into the heavens (this wasn't being accomplished by rocket science, but by slaves). [William James Hubard](#) put out a circular "Relative to Houdon's Statue of Washington."



GEORGE WASHINGTON

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Over a rough road to-day through a long canyon. When we came out

1853-1854

1853-1854

of this we had a fine view of the Cascade Mountains, the snow capped peaks of Mt. Hood and Mt. St. Helens. The highest is Mt. Hood which is 14,400 ft high. It looks quite cool up there. Camped again without wood or water, except what we picked up along the road.



Sept. 17. Saturday.

The head [of the moose], measuring from the root of the ears to the end of the nose or upper lip	2 feet 2 1/3 inches
Head and neck (from nose to breast (?) direct)	4 " 3 1/2 "
Fore leg below level of body	4 " 9 1/3 "
Height behind (from the tips of the hoofs to top of back)	6 " 11 "
Height from tips of hoofs to level with back above shoulders ³¹	7 " 5 "
Extreme length (from nose to tail)	8 " 2 "

The ears 10 inches long.



September 18, Sunday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

A beautiful morning, warmer than it was yesterday, Des Chutes River 10 miles from camp. Before reaching the river we had a long hill to descend and a worse one to climb after crossing. Reached the river about noon. It is a wide and bad stream to cross. Drove our cattle 1/2 mile up stream and crossed them without any accident, got across and drove out to top of hill and camped. Grass and wood scarce.

In Mobile, Alabama, a 2d child of [Dr. Josiah Clark Nott](#) and [Sarah \(Sally\) Deas Nott](#), [Emma Nott](#), succumbed to the [yellow fever](#) at the age of 10 or 11.

Wiedersehens-Polka op.142 by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#) was performed for the initial time, at the Ungers Casino of Vienna.

[Andrews Norton](#) died at the age of 66 in [Newport, Rhode Island](#).

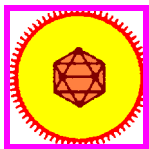
[Henry Thoreau](#) continued on his 2d visit to the Maine woods.



Sept. 18. Sunday. One end of the log hut [Ansell Smith's] was a camp, with the usual fir floor and log benches and a clerk's office. I measured one of the many batteaux lying about, with my two-foot ash rule made here. It was not peculiar in any respect that I noticed.

Extreme length	31	feet
Extreme width	5 1/2	feet
Width of bottom	2 2/12	feet

31. [See *ibid.*, where Thoreau says this measurement was incorrect.]





1853-1854

1853-1854

Length of bottom	20 9/12	feet
Length of bow	6 10/12	feet
Length of stern	3 1/2	feet
Depth within	17	inches



September 19, Monday: Luis José Sartorius, conde de San Luis replaced Francisco de Lersundi y Hormaechea as prime minister of Spain.

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Another fine morning. The hills look quite grand around us. Our road lies over a rolling country. Nine miles from camp is Indian Creek. Some potatoes for sale here by the Indians, also a trading-post kept by a Frenchman. We are now out of all kinds of provisions, except a little dried fruit and what is worse out of money. Harder times than ever now stare us in the face. Nelson offered his American mare for sale, but could get not more than 30 dollars. No flour to be had and they say no more provisions till we get through. Dont know what we will do. Just before we left Indian Creek a man came along and offered 70 dollars for the horse. We sold her, bought some potatoes, and started for the next creek. Just after leaving Indian Creek is a long and steep hill to climb, then level ground to the next creek. Camped here where we found plenty of beef and other good things to feast on, plenty of grass, wood and water.

There was a fire on Pine Street near Clay Street in [San Francisco](#) that resulted in a loss of approximately \$7,000.


[Henry Thoreau](#) continued on his 2d visit to the Maine woods.



Sept. 19. Monday. I looked very narrowly at the vegetation as we glided along close to the shore, and now and then made Joe turn aside for me to pluck a plant, that I might see what was primitive about our Concord River.

1853-1854

1853-1854

 September 20, Tuesday: Theodore Lovett Sewall was born to [Edmund Quincy Sewall, Jr.](#) and [Louisa "Louise" Kilham Lovett Sewall](#) (he would die on December 23, 1895).



On this day [Elisha Graves Otis](#) sold his 1st "hoist machine," or elevator, featuring the automatic safety brake he would only belatedly patent ([Patent #31,128 of January 15, 1861](#)). Otis would open a small enterprise on the bank of the Hudson River in Yonkers, New York, in a space in a bedstead factory of which he would remain the foreman. It would take awhile for the full implications to sink in, of the tiny little fact that if the ropes were to break his platform would not fall and you wouldn't get killed, so at 1st business would be quite slow.

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:


Two of our horses are missing this morning. Can't be found, the owner stayed behind to look for them. Bought 30 pounds of beef and some other eatables and started to Barlow's Gate 9 miles ahead, got there about noon, found plenty of wood and water and grass one mile south. We are now at the foot of the Cascades, in amongst heavy timber with now and then a small opening. Bought 80 pounds of flour of an emigrant at 10¢ per pound. We now have plenty of provisions to last us through. We guard our cattle very closely or we would lose them in the timber. Laid by the remainder of the day to let the cattle get plenty for feed is scarce in the mountains.

[Henry Thoreau](#) continued on his 2d visit to the Maine woods.



Sept. 20. Tuesday. About Hinckley's camp I saw the *Fringilla hyemalis* [**Dark-eyed Junco**  *Junco hyemalis*]; also a bird a little smaller, maybe, brownish and yellowish, with some white tail-feathers, which I think makes the *tull-lull* sound, hopping on the wood-pile. Is not this the myrtle-bird [**Yellow-rumped Warbler**  *Dendroica coronata*]? Their note interested me because I formerly had many a chase in a spring morning in the direction of this sound, in vain, to identify the bird. The lumberers said it came round the camps, and they gave it a vulgar name. Also, about the carry, a chubby sparrow with dark-brown or black stripes on the head. Saw a large and new woodpecker, probably the red-headed, making a noise like the pigeon woodpecker.

There was one woman on board, who got in at the Kineo House, who looked oddly in the one saloon for gentlemen and ladies, amid the red shirts of the lumbermen. It rained very hard while we were aboard the steamer. We had a small sloop in tow, and another stopped to speak with us, to inquire after a man who was missing. A fortnight before, he had left his horse and carriage at Sawyer's, saying that he was going to get a moose and should be back in two day. He set out in a birch alone from the south end of the lake. At length they had sent the horse home, which brought on his friends, who were now looking for him and feared that he was lost in the lake. It was not very wise to set out in a canoe from the south end of the lake to kill a moose in two days. They thought that if he had fallen in with one Whitton, a hunter, he was safe enough.

 September 21, Wednesday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Started early this morning, a weeks travel ahead and no feed for



1853-1854

1853-1854

the stock. Not a bad road the fore part of the day. This afternoon we came down a very steep hill to Chute Creek, camped up this creek about six miles after crossing it several times. Drove 18 miles today.

The Marysville, [California Herald](#) reported a novel method being innovated at Downieville:

Amongst the many scientific appliance to facilitate mining operations, we have to mention the successful use of hydraulics at Camptonville and Gold Hill. A race has been cut to lead the water from Oregon Creek to the top of Camptonville Hill, where there is a large reservoir constructed; from this there is a canvass duck or hose, some hundred yards in length, at its apex, it measures some 3 feet in diameter, there tapering down till it is small enough at the end to screw on a brass metal nozzle, similar to the nozzle of a fire hose. The water having a considerable fall from the hill top gains great force and is allowed to play upon the earth, which washes it down to the sluices, thereby superseding the use of pick and shovel. The supply of water not only washes the earth down, but is afterwards used to run the "tom."

Sighting a practice [gallows](#) erected at an educational institution in the Maine woods, [Henry Thoreau](#) referred to it as a "degeneracy."

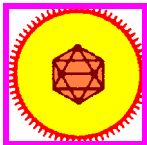
TIMELINE OF THE MAINE WOODS



Sept. 21. Started at 7 A.M., Wednesday. In Guilford I went into a clapboard-mill on the Piscataquis. In this town we took a new route, keeping the north side of the Piscataquis at first, through Foxcroft, Dover (quite a town), Garland, Charleston, East Corinth, Levant, Glenburn, and Hermon, to Bangor. Saw robins in flocks going south. Rode in the rain again. A few oaks near Bangor. Rained all day, which prevented the view of Ktaadn, otherwise to be seen in very many places. Stumps cut high, showing the depth of the snows. Straight roads and long hills. The country was level to the eye for twenty or thirty miles toward the Penobscot Valley. Most towns have an academy. Even away up toward the lake we saw a sort of [gallows](#) erected near one for the pupils to exercise upon. I had not dreamed of such degeneracy so hard upon the primitive wilderness. The white pines near Bangor perfectly parti-colored and falling to-day. Reached Bangor at dark.



September 22, Thursday: In Mobile, Alabama, a 3d child of [Dr. Josiah Clark Nott](#) and [Sarah \(Sally\) Deas Nott](#), [Allen Huger Nott](#), a year or two old, succumbed to the [yellow fever](#).



In Grass Valley, [California](#), the [Grass Valley Telegraph](#) put out its initial issue — gold would be very much on its mind.

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

This morning 8 of our cattle were gone, one of ours and 7 of Mr. Swick's. Found all except one, started on and found him about noon. The road is very rough to-day over roots and rocks winding its way through the dense timber. Passed the summit of the mountains today. Drove within 3 miles of Summit Prairie and camped on a fine creek, cut browse for our cattle, no grass.

[Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed some property J.B. Moore was transferring to [Bronson Alcott](#).



Sept. 22. Thursday. He [Governor Neptune of the Penobscot tribe] had made speeches at the Legislature. He and a companion were once put into the bootblacks' room at the hotel in Portland, when attending the Legislature. In the morning they walked off in disgust to see the Governor of the State. He asked what was the matter. They said they could not stay there; there was too much boot there; Indians did not like boot any more than white man. The Governor saw the matter righted.

.....
 Behind one house, an Indian had nearly finished one canoe and was just beginning another, outdoors. I looked very narrowly at the process and had already carefully examined and measured our birch. We asked this Indian his name. He answered readily and pleasantly, "lily name is Old John Pennyweight." Said lie got his bark at the head of Passadumkeag, fifty miles off. Took him two days to find one tree that was suitable; had to look very sharp to be sure the bark was not imperfect. But once he made two birches out of one tree. Took the bark off with a shovel made of rock maple, three or four inches wide. It took him a fortnight or three weeks to complete a canoe after he had got the materials ready. They sometimes made them of spruce bark, and also of skins, but they were not so good as birch. Boats of three hides were quicker made. This was the best time to get the birch bark. It would not come off in the winter. (I had heard Joe say of a certain canoe that it was made of summer bark.) They scrape all the inner barn off, and in the canoe the bark is wrong side outward. He had the ribs of a canoe, all got out of cedar, — the first step in making a canoe, after materials [have been] brought together, — and each one shaped for the particular place it was to hold in the canoe. As both ends are alike, there will be two ribs alike. These two were placed close together, and the next in succession each way were placed net on each side, and thus tied up in bundles of fourteen to sixteen till all were made. In the bundle I examined, they were two and a half inches wide in the middle and narrowing to the ends. He would untie a bundle, take out the inmost, or longest, or several, and place them on their ends in a very large iron kettle of hot water over a fire, turning them from time to time. Then, taking one of the inmost or longest ones, he bent and shaped it with much labor over his knee, giving it, with his eyes the shape it was to have in the canoe. It was then tied firmly and held in that shape with the reddish cedar bark. Sometimes he was obliged to tie a straight piece of wood on tangewise to the rib, and, with a bark tie, draw out a side of the rib to that. Then



each succeeding smaller rib in one half the bundle is forced into this. The first bundles of fourteen or sixteen making two bundles of steamed and bent and tied-up ribs; and thus all are left to dry in that shape.

I was sorry that I could not be there to witness the next step in making a canoe, for I was much struck by the *method* of this work, and the process deserves to be minutely described, — as much, at least, as most of the white man's counterparts of which now fill the journals. I do not know how the bark is made to hug so tightly the ribs, unless they are driven into place somewhat like a hoop. One of the next things must be to make the long, thin sheathing of cedar, less than half an inch thick, of pieces half the length of the birch, reaching each way close together beneath the ribs, and quite thin toward the edges of the canoe. However, I examined the canoe that was nearly done with minuteness. The edge or taffrail is composed first of two long strips of cedar, rather stout, one on each side. Four narrow hardwood (rock maple) cross-bars, artfully shaped so that no strength may be wasted, keep these apart, give firmness to the whole, and answer for seats. The ends of the ribs come up behind or outside this taffrail and are nailed to it with a single nail. Pennyweight said they formerly used wooden pegs.³² The edge of the bark is brought up level with this, and a very slender triangular cleat

32. Polis canoe in '57 had them.

1853-1854

1853-1854

of cedar is nailed on over it and flush with the surface of the taffrail. Then there are ties of split white



spruce bark (looking like split bamboo) through the bark, between the ribs, and around these two strips of cedar, and over the two strips one flat and thin strip covering the ties, making smooth work and coming out flush with the under strips. Thus the edge of the canoe is completed. Owing to the



form of the canoe, there must be some seams near the edge on the sides about eighteen inches apart, and pieces of bark are put under them. The edges of the bark are carefully sewed together at the ends



with the same spruce roots, and, in our canoe, a strip of canvas covered with pitch was laid (doubled) over the edge. They use rosin now, but pitch formerly. Canoe is nearly straight on bottom — straight



in principle — and not so rounded the other way as is supposed. *Vide* this section in middle.



The sides bulge out an inch or so beyond the rail. There is an additional piece of bark, four or five inches wide, along each side in the middle for four or five feet, for protection, and a similar




protecting strip for eighteen inches on each side at the ends. The canoe rises about one foot in the last five or six feet. There is an oval piece of cedar for stiffness inside, within a foot of each end, and



near this the ribs are bent short to breaking. Beyond there are not ribs, but sheaths and a small keel-like piece, and the hollow is filled with shavings. Lightness, above all, is studied in the construction. Nails and rosin were all the modern things I noticed. The maker used one of those curved knives, and worked very hard at bending the knees.

.....
 Went into a batteau manufactory. Said they made knees of almost anything; that they were about worn out in one trip up river. Were worth fourteen or sixteen dollars, lumber being high. Weigh three hundred (?) [pounds], just made, though he did n't know exactly about it. Long spike poles, with a screw in the spike to make it hold.

 September 23, Friday: Spain appointed the Marquis Juan de la Pezuela as Captain General of [Cuba](#). This man was well known as an opponent of human [slavery](#), and was assigned the task of suppression of the slave trade.

THE TRAFFIC IN MAN-BODY

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Reached Summit Prairie about 9 o'clock and camped for the day.
Found good grass 1 1/2 miles from the road.



In Mobile, Alabama, a 4th child of [Dr. Josiah Clark Nott](#) and [Sarah \(Sally\) Deas Nott](#), [Edward Fisher Nott](#), succumbed to [yellow fever](#) at the age of 18 or 19.³³



Sept. 23. Friday. Walked down the riverside this forenoon to the hill where they were using a steam-shovel at the new railroad cut, and thence to a hill three quarters of a mile further. Saw *Aster undulatus*, *Solidago nemoralis*, fragrant everlasting, silvery cinquefoil, small white birch, *Lobelia inflata*, both kinds of primrose, low cudweed, lactuca, *Polygonum cilinode* (apparently out of bloom), yellow oxalis. I returned across the fields behind the town, and over the highest hill behind Bangor, and up the Kenduskieg, from which I saw the Ebeeme Mountains in the northwest and hills we had come by. The arbor-vitae is the prevailing shrub.

33. The Nott children who would survive would be [James Deas Nott II](#), then age 12, [Henry Nott](#), then age 11, and [Josiah Nott, Jr.](#), then age 7 or 8 (out of a total population in the city of Mobile of about 25,000, the final tally of this epidemic would be 1,331). Of the three boys who would not succumb during this epidemic, the two old enough to become soldiers would be killed, one at Shiloh in 1862 and the other at Chickamauga in 1863.



1853-1854

1853-1854



September 24, Saturday: [Henri Giffard](#) flew the 1st passenger-carrying steam-powered dirigible from Paris to a prearranged landing-field in the western suburbs of Paris, 27 kilometers distant.

Rear Admiral Febvrier Despointes annexed New Caledonia on behalf of France (not for the benefit of the New Caledonians, but in order to forestall any annexation by Britain).

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

This is a very rainy morning. The roads are very bad, but no time to be lost. Fearful of being caught in a snowstorm. Started early, cleared up a little about noon, got down Laurel Hill about dark. This is the roughest and steepest hill on the road. Got down all safe by cutting and chaining a tree behind the wagon 100 ft. long. Camped at the foot of this hill and tied our stock up without anything, except a little grass we carried along with us.

[“Commodore” Cornelius Vanderbilt](#) began a grand excursion with his family and friends aboard the 252-foot luxury steamship yacht *North Star*. In a dispute with [Joseph Livingston White](#), a partner, Vanderbilt had obliged the [Accessory Transit Company](#) to purchase steamships at inflated prices in order to convey would-be California Gold Rush prospectors by way of Nicaragua to San Francisco Bay. While the Vanderbilt family was off pleasure voyaging in the *North Star*, White conspired with Vanderbilt’s erstwhile ally [Charles Morgan](#) to refuse payment of these debts. After the *North Star* returned to New-York harbor from its voyage to England, Russia, Denmark, France, Spain, Malta, Turkey, Madeira, etc. (the trip would be written up magnificently by the [Reverend John Overton “Charley” Choules](#), who apparently had nothing better to do with his life at this point although he would become pastor of the 2d Baptist Church in [Newport, Rhode Island](#)), Vanderbilt would retaliate by developing a rival steamship line by way of the [Isthmus of Panama](#) to [California](#) and cutting prices until Morgan and White would be obliged to pay these debts.



*Sept. 24. Saturday. Saw Ktaadn from a hill about two miles northwest of Bangor on the road to Pushaw. It is about eighty miles from Bangor. This was the nearest point from which we made out to see it. In the afternoon, walked up the Kenduskieg. White goldenrod, fall dandelion, hog peanut, *Solidago arguta*³⁴ and *altissima*, *Aster macrophyllus* (?), and red maple (?). Witch-hazel well out. *Epilobium coloratum*, *Solidago squarrosa*, *S. latifolia*, *Aster cordifolius* (?).*



September 25, Sunday: The Divan unanimously decided that the Porte could not accept the Vienna note and agreed that a Grand Council needed to be convoked (on the following day this Grand Council, composed of 140 persons, assembled and came to the decision that the system of negotiations having been exhausted, it had come to be appropriate for the Sultan to issue a declaration of war).

The *USS Susquehanna* came to anchor in Whampoa Reach, near [Canton](#).

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Started out this morning after cutting some browse for our stock, drove 12 miles to a trading-post, where we found some

34. That is, probably *gigantea*.

1853-1854

1853-1854

feed of a coarse quality.

On a Sunday toward the end of September, which may have been this day or may have been the 18th, Mr. McDonald having been summoned to a church meeting in regard to another slaveowning member of the congregation (someone who allegedly was in need of extra spiritual guidance because allegedly he had just whipped one of his [slaves](#) to death), [Jack Burton](#) seized the opportunity and one of his master's mules and some rope, and well before dawn made his way toward the Missouri River. After several days of hiding and traveling he managed to reach Fayette and the home of his father-in-law, the free barber Lewis Tomlin. After one last visit to his wife and child, he would arm himself with a dirk, a couple of shirts, and about a dollar and a half — and make his dash toward Canada and life as a free man.

[JOHN ANDERSON](#)



Sept. 25. Sunday. Dined with Lowell. Said the largest pine Goddard's men cut last winter scaled in the woods forty-five hundred feet board measure, and was worth ninety dollars at the Bangor boom, Oldtown. They cut a road three miles and a half for this alone. They do not make much of a path, however. From L. I learned that the untouched white pine timber which comes down the Penobscot waters is to be found at the head of the East Branch and the head waters of the Allegash, about Eagle Lake and Chamberlain, etc., and Webster Stream. But Goddard had bought the stumpage in eight townships in New Brunswick. They are also buying up townships across the Canada line.



1853-1854

1853-1854



September 26, Monday: The Turkish Divan having unanimously decided that the Porte could not accept the Vienna note and a Grand Council composed of 140 persons having assembled and come to the decision that the system of negotiations having been exhausted, it had come to be appropriate for the Sultan to issue a declaration of war, the Tsar and the Austrian Emperor met in Olmütz (Olomouc) to attempt to diffuse this crisis.

Anchored for the winter on the far-away reaches of the far-eastern river, William Speiden, Jr. celebrated his 18th birthday. Finally he was old enough to drink! The officers gathered in the mess to toast this youngster's health with a glass or two of wine. He and his father thought of his younger brother Theodore Speiden (1845-1878), who back at home in Washington DC would be celebrating his 8th birthday on roughly this same day (give or take, of course, an international trans-Pacific dateline).

A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Started quite early this morning, drove until 4 o'clock and camped on Hog Back after doubling our way on very steep hills. Found some brush for our stock.

The Marysville, [California Herald](#) reported an allegation made that a party of 4 miners in the vicinity of Camptonville took out 400 ounces of coarse gold in a single week. The gold was reported to range from pieces worth \$2½ to nuggets weighing 5½ ounces. The reporter considered this claim to be dubious because gold was being gathered from "hill diggings" varying from about 20 to 75 feet deep in that region and was collected by quicksilver in sluices, and thus did not amount to "nuggets."



Sept. 26 and 27. Monday and Tuesday I was coming to Boston and Concord. Aboard the steamer Boston were several droves of sheep and oxen and a great crowd of passengers.



September 27, Tuesday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

Some hills to go up and some to go down. Reached Big Sandy about 3-o'clock, crossed and drove to the bank and camped again.

The Marysville, [California Herald](#) reported that last week Elder & Company realized from its claim on Hopkins Creek \$1,100 in a single day. Also, gold had been discovered in the bed of the East Fork of the Yuba River about 11 miles above Downieville and miners were making from \$8 to \$12 per day on a large flat next to that river.


1853-1854

1853-1854

According to Missouri law, any white man may intercept any Negro found more than 20 miles from the plantation of his master, and if the Negro cannot produce a pass, is entitled to a reward of five dollars (plus mileage at the rate of ten cents or fivepence per mile). About noon, [Jack Burton](#), heading North, passed a field in which some slaves were drying tobacco under the oversight of a white man, Seneca T.P. Diggs. Diggs demanded to see his pass and pursued, ax in hand, while calling his slaves: "Catch that runaway, and I will give you the reward." Diggs heaved his ax at Anderson but missed. Two or three hours into this pursuit, Diggs and about six slaves had armed themselves with clubs, and the fugitive had repeatedly threatened Diggs's slaves with his dirk, and so Diggs demanded that they take him either dead or alive. At this, the black man lunged at Diggs with his dirk and managed to stab him twice (Diggs would evidently die of these wounds). He then pointed out to the black men that it would go a bit better with them if they went back and said that they had been unable to take him — and they let him run off. After this episode the fugitive understood that he would need to travel mostly at night, and hide and rest during the hours of light.

[JOHN ANDERSON](#)




 September 28, Wednesday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:

This morning we started in good spirits landed at Mr. Fosters, the end of our journey through the mountains. Got some good hay and gave our stock all they could eat, then drove to City and camped. Do not like Oregon yet, so far.

When the brig *Annie Jane*, on its maiden voyage from Liverpool to Montréal, struck rocks off Vatersay in the Outer Hebrides, 360 of the 491 on board were lost.



Sept. 28. *Wednesday*. In Concord.
The elm leaves are falling. The fringed gentian was out before Sunday; was (some of it) withered then, says [Edith Emerson](#).

 September 29, Thursday: A wagon train was bringing 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America:



1853-1854

1853-1854

Drove out this morning quite early, this is a happy day to us. This day lands us where we can see once more a civilized community and once more enjoy the preached gospel and the society of Christians. Thanks be to the All Seeing Eye who has watched over us across the dreary plains and still more dreary mountains. Reached Oregon City about 3 o'clock. This the end of our journey of toil. We are landed safe in the "Willamette" Valley a point of great interest to all weary emigrants.

[Queen Victoria](#) assisted at Balmoral in the laying of the cornerstone of the great tower of a new royal palace.

When the vessel *Annie Jane*, out of Liverpool, was driven onto Barra Island in the Hebrides with 450 Irish emigrant passengers, 348 perished.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



LOST AT SEA



Sept. 29. Thursday. Cool and windy. Wind roars in the trees. *Viola cucullata*, *Aster puniceus* and *longifolius* still. *Solidago speciosa* out in Hubbard's Swamp since I went away, — say ten days ago. This must be a late one, then. *Diplopappus linariifolius*, *Aster undulatus*, and a few small ones. Red oak acorns fall. The witch-hazel at Lee's Cliff, in a fair situation, has but begun to blossom; has not been long out, so that I think it must be later than the gentian. Its leaves are yellowed. Barberry ripe. Sumachs and maples changed, but not trees generally. Bluets still. *Viburnum Lentago* berries yet. Lambkill blossoms again.



1853-1854

1853-1854



September 30, Friday: A wagon train, and true grit, had brought 19-year-old [Elizabeth Julia Ellison Goltra](#), her husband Nelson Goltra, and their 1-year-old Emily Marie Goltra (Wilkins) across the Great Plains of the United States of America, safely to the Willamette Valley of Oregon.

[Johannes Brahms](#) arrived at the door of [Robert Schumann](#) in Düsseldorf, but was informed by a young Schumann that her parents were not at home. She suggested that he return on the following day.

The following appeared in [Frederick Douglass' Paper](#):

Musical Notices

LITTLE TOPSEY'S SONG. Words by Miss Eliza Cook. Composed and affectionately dedicated to his Mother, by Asa B. Hutchinson, as sung at the concerts of the Hutchinson Family. Boston: Oliver Pitman.

We have just been favored with a copy of this song. The lines, by Miss E. Cook, have been copied into our paper more than once; and we have seen them in many other journals. They are peculiarly touching, and characteristic of poor Topsey; and give a portraiture of the misery, darkness and degradation of the poor negro-slave child, that cannot be contemplated, by the true Christian philanthropist, without deep emotion. The music is very appropriate; the harmony of the three voices in the chorus is fine; and we should greatly enjoy to hear the sweet voices of the Hutchinsons singing.

"This is Topsey's human song
Under love's endeavor
Hurrah, then, for the white child's work,
Humanity for ever!"

The song deserves a wide circulation: and it will have it.

BURLINGTON, Vt., 1853.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS, ESQ.: DEAR SIR:—I take the liberty of sending you a few lines, and, though a stranger to you, I trust I am not so to the noble cause you so faithfully and zealously advocate. I am greatly interested in reading your valuable paper, which comes to me as regularly as the week rolls by; and I am rejoiced to see it so well filled with good news from all parts of the country, in relation to the success and progress of the cause of freedom. I wish to express to you my belief that the great National Convention, held in August last, will accomplish more good through its influence upon the minds of all classes of the people, than anything else which has been done since the organization of the Liberty Party; yet, perhaps some may think I should make here two exceptions, one in favor of Uncle Tom's Cabin, the other in favor of the Fugitive Slave Law—these have done a mighty work towards liberating the oppressed from an ignoble and almost helpless bondage. Our thanks and our gratitude are due to Mrs. Stowe, for the great and good work, while the most commanding intellects of the age are merely exerting their talents to amuse the people; her's [sic] have been exerted to instruct them in the path of duty—to enlighten their moral reception—and to excite their sympathies in favor of a helpless and oppressive people. Uncle Tom has paid a visit to almost every family in the country; and his earnest and tearful appeal to all of the best, and purest, and noblest




1853-1854

1853-1854

feelings of human nature will never be forgotten by those who have given him a candid hearing. This leaven is silently, but surely working its way to the hearts of the great mass of the American people. The Fugitive Slave Law, intended, by its framers, to operate in favor of slavery, is doing much for universal liberty; it has lighted anew the torch of slavery agitation; and the severity of its enactments, and their execution, have raised up, in favor of the oppressed, a host of friends who are willing to sacrifice their lives and their fortunes to knock the fetters from their shackled limbs; it has driven many a victim to the land of freedom, where, on British soil, he enjoys the rights and immunities of a free-born citizen, which he cannot find in this great republic—it may well be considered a stepping-stone to liberty. In relation to the Convention, I will add, it seems to have imparted new action, and increased energy to the members of that body; and it is greatly to be hoped that a spirit of harmony will prevail through all the deliberations of the Council, and that they may be guided in their motives by disinterested benevolence. Before us lies a great and glorious work to be accomplished, and the time has fully come when energetic action seems to be indispensable. Resolutions are good, but right *action* is better. Let the spirit of reform be carried into action, and the good work will roll on to its consummation.—Friend J.W. Loguen has been recently laboring in our State, and, I hope, with good success. I am glad to find him a faithful and fearless champion of liberty. May the good spirit who guides and protects the faithful servant bless his labors. I hope to hear a good report of his doings in this section of the country.

Yours for the oppressed,
JAMES L. TAYLOR.



Sept. 30. Friday. Saw a large flock of black ducks  flying northwest in the form of a harrow.

FALL 1853

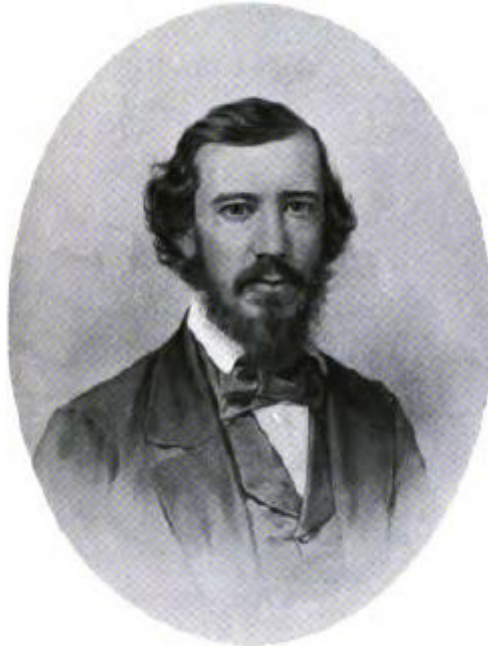
1853-1854

1853-1854

→ Fall: [Major George Alexander Hamilton Blake](#)'s demeanor, combined with the US Army's desire to create a new frontier fort during the previous harsh winter, had pushed the [1st US Regiment of Dragoons](#) to the breaking point. Company F was scheduled to move south to the slightly warmer climate of Cantonment Burgwin because it was anticipated that, due to a short growing season and the difficulty of shipping forage to Fort Massachusetts in the remote San Luis Valley of present-day southern Colorado northwest of Taos, New Mexico, there was going to be inadequate winter provender for the unit's mounts. "The prospect of abandoning the position soon after he has made it comparatively comfortable leaves [the soldier] without an adequate inducement for the sacrifice he is called on to make," Secretary of War [Jefferson Davis](#) would observe in 1856. "A laborer without pay or promise of improvement in his condition, a soldier without the forms and excitement of military life, it is hardly to be wondered that this state of things should lead to desertion." A few days before the unit was scheduled to move south, the smoldering fury of the enlisted men, fueled by whiskey, came to a head. They rioted on their parade ground while [Major Blake](#), discretion being the better part of valor, shut himself into his quarters and thus steered clear of their noise, drunkenness, and insubordination. –Did his troopers obtain a notion, from this, that they could get away with stuff?

[Moncure Daniel Conway](#) embarked on his final year at the [Harvard Divinity School](#), during which the students were allowed to fill pulpits for a fee:

I was getting fifteen or twenty dollars every Sunday, and was boarding at the best table in Cambridge.



AUTOBIOGRAPHY

VOLUME II



1853-1854

1853-1854

→ Fall: [Brownson's Quarterly Review](#), No. 3

CATHOLICISM

- I. *The Spiritual Order Supreme*
- II *Mother Seton and St. Joseph's*
- III. *Philosophical Studies on Christianity*
- IV. *Wallis's Spain*
- V. *The Fathers of the Desert*
- VI. *Literary Notices and Criticisms*

MAGAZINES

ORESTES AUGUSTUS BROWNSON

OCTOBER 1853

→ October: This month's issue of [Harper's New Monthly Magazine](#).

CONSULT THIS ISSUE

→ October: [Louisa May Alcott](#) left the employ of the family of James Richardson in Dedham, Massachusetts. Presumably she had earned her \$2.⁰⁰ a week fending off the sexual advances of Mr. Richardson, and presumably she had not found her way clear to inform her parents in Concord of the demands made of her, which offers us an interesting insight into 19th-Century sensitivities. Later, when she would write a story entitled "How I Went out to Service," she would imply that this elderly lawyer's reading his poetry to her amounted to a solicitation of sex. At any rate, as she left Richardson paid due wages of \$4.⁰⁰ and she sent that \$4.⁰⁰ back to him.

THE ALCOTT FAMILY

It was presumably during this month that [Ellery Channing](#) wrote to [Henry Thoreau](#), as follows:

Mr Thoreau
If you are not engaged to-day I should like to make an excursion with
you on the river. If you are [some] other day next week.
 WEC



the undersigned lend to Michael Flannery the following sums,
till the 1st of November, 1854. ~~se~~ ^amounting in all to 50- dollars
to enable his family him to transport to this county
 ^ viz—

(We see that [Thoreau](#) has subsequently utilized this scrap as scratchpaper for the subscription he was getting together among Concord folk, that would enable local [Irish](#) laborer [Michael Flannery](#) to bring his wife and children over from Ireland.)



1853-1854

1853-1854

The Reverend [Samuel Ringgold Ward](#), although ill, toured and spoke in Scotland.

Many of the most prominent members of the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada are natives of Scotland. Knowing the very active part some of the very best of their countrymen took in the emancipation struggle, and knowing as well how warmly the Scottish heart beats for liberty, especially upon its native soil, they kindly gave me letters of introduction to many persons of great eminence there. After I arrived in England, the Committee of the Glasgow New Abolition Society very cordially invited me to visit the North. What I knew of Scotchmen whom I had met, what I had read, and the natural desire to see such a country and such a people, made me but too happy to accept their kind invitation. Accordingly, in October, 1853, I paid my first visit to the land of Bruce and Burns, of Campbell, Gordon, and Scott. I was invited to attend a bazaar, and to speak. Though very ill, I made the attempt. The Rev. Dr. Lorimer was in the chair, sustained by some of the most learned of the Glasgow clergy, and gentlemen of high standing in other professions.

The kind and, I am sure, too partial manner, in which the excellent Dr. Robertson, of Manchester, had written and spoken of me, made me the welcome guest of Captain Hamilton,³⁵ of Rutherglen – a fit representative of the Scottish laird and the British officer. William P. Paton, Esq., and Hugh Brown, Esq., laid me under obligations by kindly receiving me at their homes, and by introducing me to some of the most eminent Scottish ministers. It was at the house of the former that I first had the gratification of meeting the Rev. Dr. Urwick, of Dublin, and the Rev. Noble Shepherd, of Sligo. At the house of Mr. Brown I had the pleasure of meeting the Rev. Dr. Arnot. At the hospitable board of the Rev. Dr. Lorimer I was honoured by an introduction to the Rev. Dr. Robson. Through the kindness of another friend, John Bain, Esq., I had the privilege of becoming acquainted with the Rev. Dr. Roxburgh.³⁶

John Smith, Esq., treated me like a brother, and Mrs. Smith sustained him in it. David Smith, Esq., the elder brother of Mr. John Smith, conferred upon me one of the highest favours a Scotchman could confer or a Negro could appreciate – he gave me a copy of Burns' poems, from his own library. That was almost equal to proffering me the freedom of Glasgow, or making me a Scotchman! Well did I use that volume, while sojourning in the country which gave birth to it and its immortal author! O that I liked oaten cakes, haggis, cockie-leekie, or BAGPIPES, as much as Burns! May my Scotch brethren forgive me for being so incorrigible a creature as to cling to old-fashioned likes and dislikes, acquired before I went to Scotland!

...It was a cold, damp, foggy winter – a winter of such "darkness as may be felt." I had before heard that "a Scotch mist will wet an Irishman to the skin." A Scotch fog went through my skin, and gave me a worse congestion of the lungs than I had before suffered from in twenty years. So severe was it, as to compel

35. Captain Hamilton did me the honour to introduce me to Rev. Mr. Monro, of Rutherglen, whose kind people contributed most liberally to our cause.

36. Dr. Roxburgh invited me to preach for him, and kindly allowed me to plead the cause of the Canadian Anti-Slavery Society in his pulpit. The collection was the largest I ever received, £50. 1s. 4d.

1853-1854

1853-1854

me to suspend labour, and return to England. I went to the coast of Kent, to recover; and while there, received an invitation from my honoured friend, William Crossfield, Esq., to spend some time at his very pleasant residence, near Liverpool. In the course of a month I was able to resume my labours. Thanks to my kind hostess, Miss Jurdison, of Ramsgate; to the very amiable family of Mr. Crossfield, and other numerous friends in Liverpool, including Rev. Dr. Raffles, J. Cropper, Esq., E. Cropper, Esq., Rev. Chas. Birrell, G. Wright, Esq., the Misses Wraith, and others! Their great kindness did more than medicine towards my restoration.

I saw a good deal of Scotland, however, that winter, and became acquainted with some of the very best classes of Scotch gentry. I met, and worshipped with, and preached for, some of the best congregations — as Rev. Mr. Munro's, of Rutherglen; Rev. Dr. Wardlaw's, Rev. Dr. Roxburgh and others, in Glasgow; Rev. Mr. Campbell's and Rev. Dr. Alexander's, in Edinburgh; Rev. Mr. Gilfillan's, Rev. Mr. Lang's, and Rev. Mr. Borwick's, of Dundee; Rev. Dr. Brown's, of Dalkeith; &c.

I was in Scotland, alas! too late to see the Rev. Dr. Wardlaw. I had received from him kind, loving messages of sympathy, fraternity, and encouragement. They came like the words of one just entering the world of love — were destitute of stiff formality, and fragrant with the spirit of heaven. On an appointed day, a party of us went to his residence, to see him. The carriage which conveyed me arrived just as others were leaving, and the fatigue of the interview could neither be prolonged nor repeated. Thus I lost the opportunity of seeing on earth one of the men to meet whom will be one of the attractions of heaven. I had been equally unsuccessful in seeing Dr. Collyer, the first day I preached in his chapel. Before I was there again, he and the sainted Wardlaw were with Jesus.

I had the melancholy pleasure of mingling my tears with the many who heard Rev. Dr. Alexander preach Dr. Wardlaw's funeral sermon. I never before heard such a discourse. It was a noble tribute to the learning, piety, attainments and character, of the deceased, by one who intimately knew him and dearly loved him. The oration spoke wonders both for the dead and the living. It showed that the living speaker knew how to appreciate the great and shining qualities of the deceased. The sermon was delivered in the earnest impressive style of Scotch divines, tempered and chastened by the superior refinement of the respected preacher, who is, I think, one of the most finished — if not, indeed, the most finished — pulpit orator I heard in Scotland.

The deep sensation felt all through the commercial metropolis of Scotland upon the death of Dr. Wardlaw, the words of praise which every lip gave him, the reverence with which his name was spoken, testified plainly, to the most casual observer, how deep and firm a hold he had upon all hearts while living. The same feeling pervaded all classes in the provinces. In his case was verified the scriptural expression, "The memory of the just is blessed."

Society in Scotland differs from that in England, as does the society of Boston and Massachusetts generally from that of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. I was struck with this while

1853-1854**1853-1854**

travelling northwards. The northern people are more familiar, more democratic. A Scotchman does not feel under the particular necessity of sitting next you all day in a railway carriage without saying a word, as an Englishman does. Betwixt different classes there is more familiarity, less distance, in Scotland, than in England. The different orders of society seem to approach more nearly to each other, without either losing or forgetting its place. There is less of the feeling, so prevalent in small towns in the South, that merchants and professional men must by all means avoid contact with shopkeepers. The chief order of nobility is the clergy, and all join to pay deference to them; but the general spread of religion, and the very upright and pious habits of the population – the familiarity of the ministers with people, join to produce a brotherly feeling of oneness, which is abundantly apparent in the national character and in the state of society.

Besides, I do not think that mere ceremony is half so much studied by the Scotch. They are great believers in realities; they are a substantial people; and what is merely formal, unless it be formal after the Scottish mode, is not commendable to them, and it costs them but little to say, "I canna be fashed wi sic clishmaclaver." Hence, you get at a Scotchman's heart at once. He will not profess to be what he is not. When you go to his house, and he extends his hand and says, "Come away," you may know you are welcome. I like this straightforward way of doing things: it is far more expressive of true generosity than the set courtly phrases of mere conventionalism.

A sort of independence of character is far more prevalent and observable in the Scotch peasantry than in either the English, the Irish, or the Welsh. Everybody expects to find it so; if not he will find himself much mistaken. Several anecdotes have been given me illustrative of this; but as I am not at home in telling Scotch tales, I dare not insert any of them. The fact, however, is most palpable. Doubtless the universal diffusion of education has much to do with it.

How readily, and how generously, did the Scottish people respond to the claims of the anti-slavery cause! Dr. Pennington found it so, when he was there; so did Mr. Garnet; so did Frederic Douglass. There is far more of active, organized, anti-slavery vitality, among the three millions of Scottish population, than among the seventeen millions of English people. There are classes in England which the anti-slavery cause never reaches – the classes who compose the multitude. It is not so in Scotland, because the whole population, high and low, attend divine service, and they naturally enough acquire the habit of attending the kirk on any subject for which it is open. In England, millions of the working classes (not to mention others) do not attend any place of worship, and therefore never hear, know, or care, about the moral movements of the age. The same result is seen in Ireland. There are multitudes there, to be seen in the streets, who never enter any other than a Roman Catholic place of worship, and who accordingly know literally nothing of what is going on in the great moral field. In Wales, on the other hand, religion is as universal as education is in Scotland. Hence the Welsh, like the Scotch, go en masse to the meetings for religious and benevolent purposes.



1853-1854

1853-1854

From the middle of this month through the 1st week of January of the following year, [Lucy Stone](#) would be lecturing on women's rights in more than 10 cities in 5 states, including [Cincinnati, Ohio](#), Louisville, Indianapolis, St. Louis, and Chicago. Newspaper reports describe her enthusiastic reception by the largest audiences ever assembled in some of the cities, as well as the deep influence she was having on those who heard her. During an intimate rendezvous before she returned east, Stone would express not only her deep gratitude to [Henry Browne Blackwell](#) for making her success possible, but also a genuine affection. Nevertheless, she remained resolute about never placing herself in the legal position occupied by a married woman.

FEMINISM

Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for October 1853 \(æf. 36\)](#)



October 1, Saturday: The [California](#) State Telegraph Co. line opened between San Francisco and San Jose. The line all the way to Marysville would be completed by November 1st.

San Francisco Fire Chief Engineer Hossefross resigned to return to the East.

San Francisco Sheriff T.P. Johnson attached the Mission College building at the head of Mission Spring to satisfy a debt of \$267.77 (a suit had been brought by George Scarpa against the Reverend Flavius Fontain for provisions supplied).

The Schumann family was visited in Düsseldorf by a young friend of Joseph Joachim, [Johannes Brahms](#). Brahms played extensively for them. [Robert Schumann](#) recorded this in his diary: "Visit from Brahms, a genius."

The Divan resolved on the most vigorous measures, and the Ottoman Sultan signed a declaration of war demanding that Russia evacuate its Romanian principalities. The ambassadors of England and France were requested to order the allied fleets to pass the Dardanelles. The Sultan signed and issued a spirited

1853-1854

1853-1854

proclamation to his people appealing to their loyalty and spirit of independence and asserting the justice of their cause.

In Syracuse, New York the 2d annual “Jerry Celebration” honoring the freeing of [Jerry McHenry](#) from federal marshals who had been seeking on October 1, 1851 to “return” him to his “owner.”



RESISTING THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW



In Missouri that night, the fugitive slave [Jack Burton](#) was stealing a boat and crossing the Mississippi to the free soil of [Illinois](#). Since he was still vulnerable to slavecatchers and bounty hunters, he would need to continue his difficult procedure of moving only during hours of darkness.

JOHN ANDERSON



[Henry Thoreau](#), 14-year-old [Ellen Emerson](#), 11-year-old [Edith Emerson](#), and 9-year-old [Eddie Emerson](#) went by boat for a sojourn of barberrying at Conantum.



Oct. 1. Saturday Went a-barberrying by boat to Conantum, carrying [Ellen](#), [Edith](#), and [Eddie](#). Grapevines, curled, crisped, and browned by the frosts, are now more conspicuous than ever. Some grapes still hang on the vines. Got three pecks of barberries. Huckleberries begin to redden. Robins [[American Robin](#)  [Turdus migratorius](#)] and [bluebirds](#) [[Eastern Bluebird](#)  [Sialia sialis](#)] collect and flit about. Flowers are scarce.



October 2, Sunday: In Austria, land possession came to be forbidden to [Jews](#).

When [Dominique François Jean Arago](#) had resigned his post as astronomer rather than take an oath of allegiance, the Emperor Napoleon III had advised that the old atheist be in no way disturbed. During Summer 1853 Arago had been advised by his physicians to try the effect of his native air and, accordingly, had set out for the eastern Pyrenees — but the air had been ineffective. On this day he died in Paris at the age of 67.




Oct. 2. Sunday. The gentian in Hubbard’s Close is frost-bitten extensively. As the [witch-]hazel is raised above frost and can afford to be later, for this reason also I think it is so. The white pines have scarcely begun at all to change here, though a week ago last Wednesday they were fully changed at Bangor. There is fully a fortnights difference, and methinks more. The [witch-]hazel, too,



1853-1854

1853-1854

was more forward there. There are but few and faint autumnal tints about Walden yet. The smooth sumach is but a dull red.

 October 3, Monday: An die Künstler for chorus and winds to words of Schiller was performed for the initial time, in Karlsruhe, and was directed by its composer Franz Liszt.

A bronze statue of Sir Robert Peel was put in position on a pedestal in front of the Royal Infirmary at Manchester.


The fugitive slave [Jack Burton](#) crossed a branch of the [Illinois](#) river and followed a railway track until just outside Bloomington. Meeting up with some teams, he got on one of the wagons and rode into Rock Island.

[JOHN ANDERSON](#)

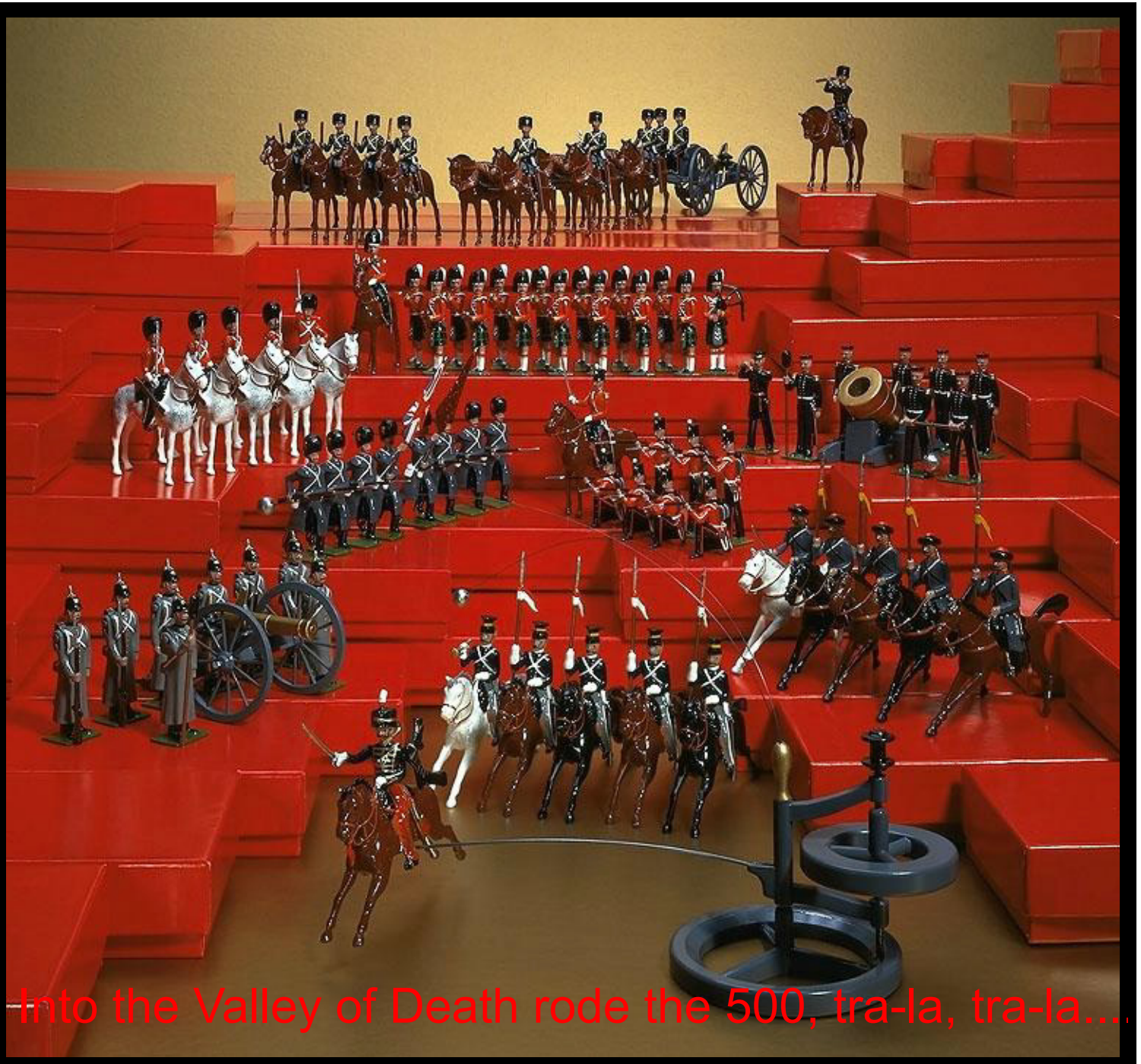


Oct. 3. *Viola lanceolata* in Moore's Swamp.

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**1853-1854****1853-1854**

 October 4, Tuesday: The Marysville, [California Herald](#) reported that on Saturday of the previous week the Perry Wing Dam Company had recovered from the Yuba River 103 ounces of gold. Also, the Mobile Company had taken out 156 ounces one day last week. The Native American 86 ounces. The Company at Rose's Bar and also the Columbia Company was doing remarkably well.

A manifesto of the Sultan of Turkey, declaring war on [Russia](#), beginning the [Crimean War](#), was read in all the mosques — this thingie would be going on into February 1856.



Into the Valley of Death rode the 500, tra-la, tra-la...




1853-1854

1853-1854

In East Boston before a crowd of 30,000, the launching from the shipyard of Mr. Donald McKay of the [Great Republic](#), at 4,555 tons the largest wooden ship in the world and the largest full-rigged clipper ever built in the United States of America. The vessel had been so named in honor of a poem of that title by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. At the time this was to be the largest ship on the ocean. (Before she would have a chance to leave port for [Australia](#), her intended destination, there would be a shipboard fire and this hull would have to be extensively modified. Finally, at 3,357 tons, she would sail out of [Boston Harbor](#) — and even after that delay and even in that cut-back configuration she would remain for the time being the largest ship on the ocean!)

1853-1854

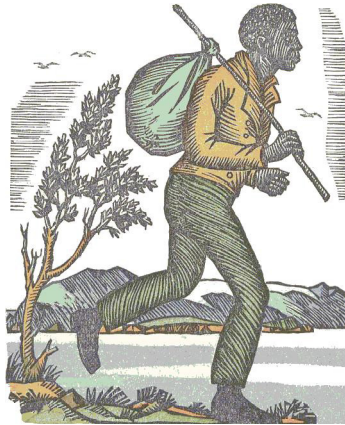
1853-1854

 October 4, Tuesday: The [Reverend John Lewis Russell](#) got married with Hannah Buckminster Ripley. The newlyweds would settle down in Salem, Massachusetts (he would continue to preach, but occasionally).

At Sumla, Ottoman commander Omer Pasha delivered an ultimatum to the Russian commander Prince Gorchakov: On threat of war, Russia needed to evacuate the Danube Principalities.

The side-wheel steam frigate *USS Mississippi* dropped her colors to half-mast to honor the death of Lieutenant Joseph Harrod Adams (1817-1853) of the sidewheel steam frigate *USS Powhatan*. ([Chief of Staff Henry Allen Adams](#) had the title "Captain of the Fleet." This Lieutenant Adams, a grandson of President John Adams and a nephew of President John Quincy Adams, by way of contrast, had entered the US Navy as a midshipman in 1831 and had been appointed as a naval lieutenant in 1843.)

In Rock Island, [Jack Burton](#), who had never shaved anyone but himself, managed to persuade a barber to hire him.



In this community, the fugitive slave would meet members of a society of abolitionists, who would pay his

1853-1854

way to [Chicago](#).

1853-1854

JOHN ANDERSON



Oct. 4. The maples are reddening, and birches yellowing. The mouse-ear in the shade in the middle of the day, so hoary, looks as if the frost still lay on it. Well it wears the frost. Bumblebees are on the *Aster undulatus*, and gnats are dancing in the air.



October 5, Wednesday: [Horace Mann, Sr.](#) was inaugurated as president of [Antioch College](#). The event drew 3,000 people from across the country. The town overflowed with so many visitors that many had been forced to spend the previous night sleeping in their carriages before they traipsed through the mud to the celebration. Mann announced a nonsectarian “Great Experiment”:

We mean to administer this college as a literary and Christian institution, where the mind is to be replenished with knowledge; where the affections are to be trained to duty; where all the faculties of the soul are to be devoted and urged on to the acquisition of truth.



1853-1854

1853-1854

During the event some \$600 in donations was collected. According to Mrs. Mary Mann, the assembly noisily appreciated this rhetoric:

I shall not soon forget the sea of eager upturned faces which met my view from that platform, or the drinking-in expression with which old and young listened to the Inaugural. They have a way here of groaning out "Amen" in a true Methodist style when they like anything. It issued from their lungs in various keys and with various gradations of fervor as he went on, and when we came out many persons accosted him and expressed their gratification.

Scaffolding still hugged the sides of Antioch Hall. A dorm, North Hall, was complete but a 2d dorm, and the president's residence, wouldn't be habitable for a year.

Twin female infants were stillborn to [Mrs. Ellen Devereux Sewall Osgood](#) and the [Reverend Joseph Osgood](#) in [Cohasset, Massachusetts](#).

Philologist George Adler, coping with bouts of insanity, suffered a violent outbreak, in [New-York](#).

There was a collision near Dublin, on the Great Southern and Western Railway of Ireland, between a cattle

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

1853-1854

1853-1854

train and a passenger train, killing 13 persons and badly injuring 50.

During the annual Middlesex County Cattle Show, 10 Irishmen and 2 non-Irishmen participated in an organized spading competition. One of these spaders was Concord's "industrious man of County Kerry,"



[Michael Flannery](#), a hired hand of [Abiel H. Wheeler](#), and while one of the 2 non-Irishmen, Enoch Garfield, carried off the 1st prize, the 2d prize of \$4.00 was won by Flannery. Wheeler would, outrageously, lay claim to Flannery's prize money on the grounds that since it he owned Flannery's labor, obviously anything and everything produced by Flannery's labor would rightly belong to him — this high-handedness would draw the attention of [Henry Thoreau](#), who would circulate a petition in opposition to such an abuse of a new guest in their community.

THOREAU ON THE IRISH



Oct. 5. The howling of the wind about the house just before a storm to-night sounds extremely like a loon on the pond. How fit!

1853-1854**1853-1854**

October 6, Thursday: [Antioch College](#) made itself the 1st public institution of higher education to admit both males and females as scholars.

Despite a frenzied pace of construction, which had even involved working on the Sabbath, the structures under Alpheus Marshall Merrifield's direction stood largely unfinished on this, the college's first Founder's Day — and work had hardly been begun on the President's House, which still existed just off campus primarily as a sketch in Merrifield's oversized drawing pad.



Alpheus Marshall Merrifield probably didn't like President [Horace Mann, Sr.](#) from the start. In the initial year of the college, when a feud would arise over college business, he would attempt to gain leverage in the feud by pulling his workmen away from the construction of the President's House.

1853-1854

1853-1854

[Friend Lucretia Mott](#) spoke in Cleveland, Ohio, at the National Woman's Rights Convention, on this day (or on one of the two following):



I look to that Source whence all the inspirations of the Bible comes.



At this convention something would happen to [William Lloyd Garrison](#), that was not exactly a high point in his life: a minister of the gospel became so exasperated that he reached out and — yanked Garrison's nose.

In Grass Valley, [California](#), the [Grass Valley Telegraph](#) reported that at the rich gold diggings on Randolph Hill it was not uncommon to take out \$500 or \$600 a day. In a single day's work a week or two ago, for instance, 6 men had washed out \$2,650 with the aid of a sluice. The Randolph Company had on the previous Thursday recovered a single lump of gold worth more than \$400.



October 7, Friday: Philologist George Adler was conveyed to [New York](#)'s Bloomingdale Insane Asylum.

Captain Inglefield of the *Phoenix*, arriving at the Admiralty from Arctic seas, brought the happy news that on October 26th, 1850 [Captain Robert McClure](#) of the *HMS Investigator* had discovered — a [Northwest Passage](#).

The funeral of Lieutenant Joseph Harrod Adams (1817-1853) at the American Burying Ground (the Old Protestant Cemetery) on shore in [Macao](#) was attended by American, French, and Portuguese officers (obviously, this would have included [Chief of Staff Henry Allen Adams](#)). William Speiden, Jr. made a record that when they returned to their vessel at its moorings in the river, they discovered that its entire [US Marine](#) guard was so drunk as to be out of commission.

[Jack Burton](#) started for [Chicago](#), his fare paid by Rock Island abolitionists. He would reside for 3 weeks with another barber of color there before heading on to Windsor in Upper Canada.

JOHN ANDERSON



Oct. 6 and 7. Windy. Elms bare.

1853-1854

1853-1854



October 8, Saturday: In Kingston, [Canada](#), [Jerry McHenry](#) had been a free man in exile for slightly more than two years, and died. I do not happen to know whether he died of the injuries sustained during the struggle of October 1, 1851 in Syracuse, New York, but at this point he was but 40 years of age and he had in fact during that struggle been badly injured — so this would seem rather likely.

A lawsuit had been filed on his behalf, attempting to test the constitutionality of the Fugitive Slave Law under which this American had been so egregiously attacked by his government, but as of the date of his death this lawsuit had met only with delay. The Reverend [Samuel Joseph May](#)'s annual "Jerry Celebrations" would of course continue undaunted, as they had to do with general freedom rather than with any particular person's wellbeing.



RESISTING THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

In Concord, [Henry Thoreau](#) began to write on what can be seen by moonlight: "I do not value any view of the universe into which man and his institutions enter at once and necessarily and absorb a great share of the attention." — "The Moon." During his lifetime there would be no audience for, and no response to, such an inhumanist stance.

Here was the moon on this night of October 8th in 1853:



Oct. 8. Found a bird's nest (?) converted into a mouse's nest in the prinos swamp, while surveying on the new Bedford road to-day, topped over with moss, and a hole on one side, like a squirrel-nest.



October 9, Sunday: Kron-Marsch op.139 by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#) was performed for the initial time, in Vienna's Volksgarten (also premiered was Strauss' Wellen und Wogen waltz op.141).

An order was signed for the immediate release of Miss Margaret Cunninghame from the penitentiary at Lucca in Tucany.

[Henry Thoreau](#) and [Ellery Channing](#) sailed down the Concord River to Grape Island near Billerica, only to find the weather such after their stay that they needed to row all the way back against both wind and current.



Oct. 9. Sunday. A high wind south of westerly. Set sail with [W.E.C.](#) down the river.

The red maples are now red and also yellow and reddening. The white maples are green and silvery, also yellowing and blushing. The birch is yellow; the black willow brown; the elms sere, brown, and thin; the bass bare. The button-bush, which was so late, is already mostly bare except the lower part, protected. The swamp white oak is green with a brownish tinge; the white ash turned mulberry. The white maples toward Ball's Hill have a burnt white appearance; the white oak a salmon-color and also red. Is that scarlet oak rosed? Huckleberries and blackberries are red. Leaves are falling; apples more distinctly seen on the trees; muskrat-houses not quite done.

This wind carried us along glibly, I think six miles an hour, till we stopped in Billerica, just below the first bridge beyond the Carlisle Bridge, — at the Hibiscus Shore. I collected some hibiscus seeds and swamp white oak acorns, and we walked on thence, a mile or more further, over scrubby hills which with a rocky core border the western shore, still in Billerica, at last not far above the mills. At

1853-1854

1853-1854

one place, opposite what I once called Grape Island (still unchanged), I smelled grapes, and though I saw no vines at first, they being bare of leaves, at last found the grapes quite plenty and ripe and fresh enough on the ground under my feet. Ah! their scent is very penetrating and memorable. Did we not see a fish hawk [~~Osprey~~ **Pandion haliaetus** (~~Fish Eagle or Fish Hawk~~)]? We found ourselves in an extensive wood there, which we did not get out of. It took the rest of the day to row back against the wind.

 October 10, Monday: Harriet Fredrica Hickling Webster, widow of the hanged Harvard [Professor John White Webster](#), died.


In the home of Madame Patersi de Fossombroni in Paris, Franz Liszt saw his 3 children for the 1st time in 9 years. He had come from Switzerland with [Richard Wagner](#), Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein, and her daughter Princess Marie. Also present were Hector Berlioz and Liszt's mother Anna. At the request of Princess Marie, Wagner continued the reading of his Nibelungen poem, that he had begun reading to them in Switzerland. This was the 1st Wagner had seen of 15-year-old [Francesca Gaetana Cosima Liszt](#). It was also the 1st time Wagner and Berlioz had gotten together since 1843.

Queen Isabella of Spain ordered that her birthday be celebrated by the construction of 3 screw-frigates of 31 guns, to be named the *Bereaguela*, the *Petronila*, and the *Blanca* in memory of the 3 queens from whom Her Majesty had derived the crowns respectively of Castile, of Aragon, and of Navarre.

In Marysville, [California](#), the [Herald](#) reported that on Saturday last the Perry Wing Dam Company at Park's Bar, undoubtedly the best mining claim on the Yuba River, had realized 203 ounces of gold dust. In the past week they had divided \$500 to the share. Mr. H. Haddon informed them that although nearly all the flumes' companies at Foster's Bar were unsuccessful, one company had been making more than decent wages: the French Company had been taking out from \$40 to \$60 to the man per day. At Winslow Bar, the miners were not doing so well. The Yuba Fluming Company situated about three fourths of a mile above Winslow Bar was making wages only. Last year their claim had been yielding several ounces of gold to a bucketful of earth, but this year they were unable to obtain over 50 cents to a bucketful if that much.



Oct. 10. This morning it is very pleasant and warm. There are many small birds in flocks on the elms in Cheney's field, faintly warbling, — robins **■** and purple finches [**Purple Finch** **■** *Carpodacus purpureus*] and especially large flocks of small sparrows **■**, which make a business of washing and pruning themselves in the puddles in the road, as if cleaning up after a long flight and the wind of yesterday. The faint suppressed warbling of the robins sounds like a reminiscence of the spring.
Cooler and windy at sunset, and the elm leaves come down again.

 October 11, Tuesday: At the home of [Hector Berlioz](#) in Paris, Franz Liszt and [Richard Wagner](#) came to breakfast. Liszt accompanied while Berlioz sang parts of Benvenuto Cellini. Wagner had not heard this before.

[Henry Thoreau](#)'s father [John Thoreau](#) found a piece of a bullet or a large buckshot inside a newly sawed stick of red oak in his wood-shed, showing this to his son.



Oct. 11. Sassafras leaves are a rich yellow now and falling fast. They come down in showers on the

1853-1854

1853-1854

least touching of the tree. I was obliged to cut a small one white surveying the Bedford road to-day. What singularly and variously formed leaves! For the most part three very regular long lobes, but also some simple leaves; but here is one shaped just like a hand or a mitten with a thumb. They next turn a dark cream-color.

[Father](#) saw to-day in the end of a red oak stick in his wood-shed, three and a half inches in diameter, which was sawed yesterday, something shining. It is lead, either the side of a bullet or a large buckshot just a quarter of an inch in diameter. It came from the Ministerial Lot in the southwest part of the town, and we bought the wood of [Martial Miles](#). It is completely and snugly buried under some twelve or fifteen layers of the wood, and it appears not to have penetrated originally more than its own thickness, for there is a very close fit all around it, and the wood has closed over it very snugly and soundly, while on every other side it is killed, though snug for an eighth of an inch around it.



October 12, Wednesday: [Hector Berlioz](#) and Marie Recio departed Paris for Brunswick.

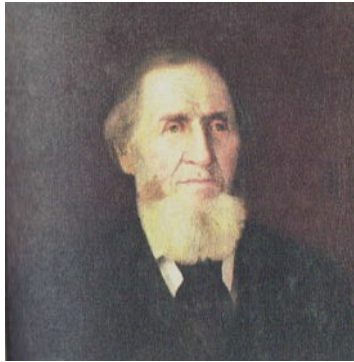
In [San Francisco](#), there was a testimonial dinner at Wilson's Exchange and Hotel in honor of General Hiram Walbridge, Congressman-elect of [New York](#).

John Mitchell arrived at [San Francisco, California](#) from Australia, by way of the Sandwich Islands.

The 1st regularly scheduled Bath Fair in [New York](#).

[Henry Thoreau](#) circulated a petition in Concord, in regard to abusive treatment [Michael Flannery](#) had received from the Concord citizen ([Abiel Heywood Wheeler](#)) for whom he was working as a hired hand:

*Concord Oct 12th '53
We, the Undersigned, contribute the following sums, in order to make up to Michael Flannery the sum of four dollars, being the amount of his premium for spading on the 5th ult., which was received and kept by his employer, Abiel H. Wheeler.*



Oct. 12. To-day I have had the experience of borrowing money for a poor [Irishman](#) who wishes to get his family to this country. One will never know his neighbors till he has carried a subscription paper among them. Ah! it reveals many and sad facts to stand in this relation to them. To hear the selfish and cowardly excuses some make, —that *if* they help any they must help the Irishman who lives with them, —and him they are sure never to help: others with whom public opinion weighs, will think of it, trusting you will never raise the sum and so they will not be called on again; who give stingily after all. What a satire in the fact that you are much more inclined to call on a certain slighted and so-called crazy woman in moderate circumstances rather than on the president of the bank: But some are generous and save the town from the distinction which threatened it, and *some* even who do not lend, plainly would if they could.

THOREAU ON THE IRISH

1853-1854

1853-1854




October 13, Thursday: [Emilie “Lillie” Charlotte Le Breton](#) was born in the Old Rectory at St. Saviour on the [Isle of Jersey](#), a daughter of the Very Reverend William Corbet Le Breton, Rector and Dean of Jersey, with Emilie Martin Davis Le Breton. Lillie, 6th of 7 children, was the sole girl (her mother, also, had been said to have been a good-looker). (After getting married with an Irish widower named Edward Langtry this bride would come to her reknown on the London stage as “Lillie Langtry” and, also, would become mistress to King Edward VII.)³⁷



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 13TH]

1853-1854

1853-1854

 October 14, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) had a mystery visitor, a [Quaker](#) schoolmaster. Since there does not seem to be any written record of the reasons for this, from either side, or of what was discussed, we are left to speculate. (Since the two men did have a friend in common, [Moncure Daniel Conway](#), and since Moncure was nearby at the time, attending the [Harvard Divinity School](#) to acquire new credentials as a [Unitarian](#), residing in [Concord](#), reshaping himself, obtaining spiritual counsel from Thoreau and from Emerson, and since this mystery visitor, the Hicksite [Friend William Henry Farquhar](#), had also previously attempted to offer in his school in [Maryland](#) spiritual advice to Moncure — in the absence of all evidence we may be forgiven if we hypothecate that the subject of the conversations between Henry and Friend William, since obviously they were something too sensitive to have been alluded to in any way in the journal, may well have been the guidance that was being offered collectively to this failed [Methodist circuit preacher](#) in his spiritual crisis.)



Oct. 14. Friday. A [Mr. Farquhar](#) of Maryland came to see me; spent the day and the night. Fine, clear Indian-summer weather.

37. The inhabitants of the island about a hundred miles from the coast of England and, on a clear day, within sight of the French mainland, speaking a native patois known as Jerriais which is a blend of Norman French and Norse, are known today as “Beans.” Refer to the recent movie about “Mr. Bean,” a contemporary comic character. Thoreau’s eponymous ancestors since they were Huguenot religious refugees from the area of Lyon in France, came to the New World only by way of the Isle of Jersey in the English Channel to which they had first fled. So, [knowing beans](#) in Thoreau’s case might have meant knowing who his relations were.



The British humor character “Bean” exemplifies behaviors associated with the personality type said to characterize the island of Jersey.



1853-1854

1853-1854

Why would such guidance have been of such importance? In order to comprehend this, you will need carefully to consider the times, and in particular the needs of the ongoing nonviolent national antislavery crusade. There wasn't anything more important going down, than this conversion of this genuine Southern aristocrat scion of plantation slavemasters to the cause.

How, in those years prior to our Civil War, might one have gone about creating an effective nonviolent abolitionist movement? The Bible itself implicitly accepted slavery as a normal human condition. Jesus had not so much as blinked at the human slavery that had been all around him in his life context. The churches of America, virtually all of them not only in the South but also in the North, were vehemently proslavery. Virtually every government entity outside of New England was at the very best neutral on this issue. Some of the prominent white men, such as Abraham Lincoln, were hoping to figure out a way that we could afford to dump our black people back onto the coast of Africa and be rid of them once and for all, at "[Liberia](#)" or wherever, and a vanishingly small percentage of Americans had any sympathy to waste on abolitionists. The antislavery sort of person was being considered a sort of freak — somebody who was willing to run the risk of a bloody race war, servile insurrection, black men running through the night with hatchets. John Brown did not have any key to unlock this door, for his key only fit in the door Make-All-This-Unbearably-Worse. Seizing weapons and starting something deadly was obviously the way only a crazed ideolog would want to go (either then at the federal arsenal in Harpers Ferry, or more recently in the Hollywood home of Sharon Tate where Charles Manson attempted to stage what he described as a "Helter Skelter" that would set us off into a national race war). No. The key to this in 1853 would be to suborn this young Southern white aristocrat, a goldplated hairball of impeccable credentials and background, and make him willing to step forward and state plainly, for all to hear loud and clear north and south "My own family owns slaves down South, hundreds of them, whom I would inherit, but slavery being wrong in the eyes of God, I am renouncing my inheritance and cannot be part of this exploitation." The three families of Virginia who had real pioneer credentials, the Moncures, the Daniels, and the Conways, were all present in this young gentleman who had eponymously been named "Moncure Daniel Conway." What authenticity! Not only that, but Moncure was a reverend, a man of the cloth. What credibility! —That's why this Quaker elder, Friend William of the Sandy Spring monthly meeting in Maryland, had come to Concord, and would spend all of October 14, 1853 and that night at the Thoreau boardinghouse scheming with Henry Thoreau. This man was the behind-the-scenes stage manager of this most important abolitionist event. It was his responsibility to make certain that nothing fell out of bed. This self-important, confused, shallow new convert needed constant handholding and it was his agenda to make certain that he received this in full measure. There was hot propaganda stuff brewing — and our Henry was in the very thick of it in his guise as a mere walking companion and casual confidant.

1853-1854

1853-1854



October 15, Saturday: After serving from 1836 into 1843 as governor of Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), Lord [Sir John Franklin](#) had in 1845 been sent in search of the Northwest Passage. His ships *Erebus* and *Terror* had last been sighted, in Baffin Bay, on July 25th or 26th, 1845. Nothing further having been heard from the party, no fewer than 40 expeditions had been sent to find them. In 1854 Dr. John Rae of the Hudson's Bay Company had found the 1st concrete evidence that Franklin's vessels had sunk. In 1859, Leopold McClintock, commanding *Fox*, a search vessel outfitted by [Lady Jane Franklin](#), would come across a cairn that revealed that Sir John had died on June 11th, 1847 in King William's Land after having, in fact, found the Northwest Passage. Further expeditions would be sent to the Arctic but would simply reconfirm these earlier discoveries. On this day the Tasmanian newspaper [Hobartton Guardian, or, True Friend of Tasmania](#) presented a version of a song "The Arctic Voyagers, Or Lady Franklin's Lament For Her Husband," that well preceeded the 1st conclusive evidence in 1854, that Franklin's vessels had sunk:

The Arctic Voyagers, Or Lady Franklin's Lament For Her Husband

As near the beach I one morn did roam,
I met a fair lady; who, all alone
In grief lamenting, cried pity me,
And send send my sailor safe o'er the sea.
And as in sorrow she did bewail!,
She said from England my love did sail,
In health and vigour, with heart alive.
In Eighteen hundred and forty five.

Chorus.

She cried what troubles I have gone through
For noble Franklin and all his crew.

From me my darling, alas! did stray,
To the frozen regions, in the month of May,
Three hearty cheers bid the ships adieu,
With noble Franklin, and his brave crew.
Through storms and tempests, through frost and snow,
What they encountered no one does know.
Tell me ye mermaids, if in the deep
Brave Franklin with his sailors sleep.

Oh, no! Oh, no! that never be
They are far away, o'ere the raging sea,
To ease my sorrow, my grief, and pain,
They must to England return again.
Oh! heavenly father, who dwells on high,
Who beholds the mother and the orphan cry,
Thou alone, only him can save,
The British tars from the briny wave.

Oh, God, all dangers protect them through,
Guide noble Franklin and all his crew,
Who for seven years through the ice did roam,
Bring them safe again to their native home.
Oft on my pillow I with grief am tossed,
I think poor Franklin and all are lost,
But angels whisper, and say—dont weep,
Your husband's safe on the briny deep.

Or, if Britannia could only view
The noble Franklin and his long-lost crew,
All safe and well to their homes arrive,
Happy and joyful, and all alive.
Return her thanks on her bended knees,
To Him who wafts them across the seas,
In glorious accents will raise her voice,
And all Great Britain will rejoice.

You pretty maidens come join with me,
And pray for them on the briny sea,

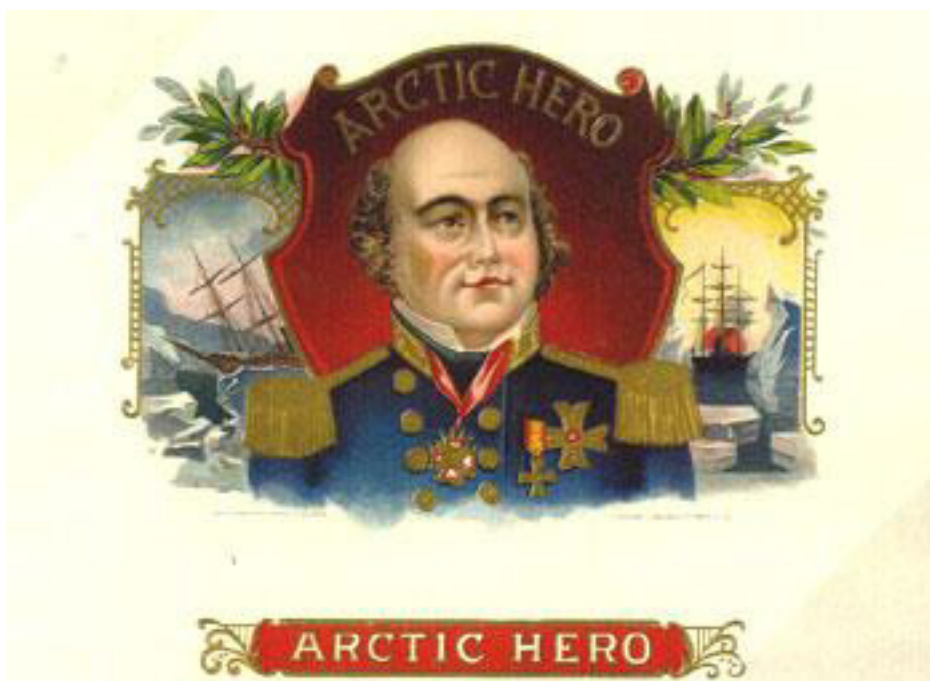
1853-1854

God will protect them while on the main,
 And safe to England bring them again,
 No pen can write, no tongue unfold,
 What they endured in the piercing cold,
 Oh, God on high listen to our prayers,
 Our troubles ease and dry up our tears.

Dry up our sorrows and ease our pain,
 And send brave Franklin back again.

"Is Franklin the only man who is lost, that his wife should be so earnest to find him? Does Mr. Grinnell know where he himself is?"

— [Henry Thoreau](#)



[THE FROZEN NORTH](#)



Oct. 15. Saturday. Last night the first smart frost that I have witnessed. Ice formed under the pump, and the ground was white long after sunrise. And now, when the morning wind rises, how the leaves come down in showers after this touch of the frost! They suddenly form thick beds or carpets on the ground in this gentle air, -or without wind, -just the size and form of the tree above. Silvery cinquefoil.



October 16, Sunday: In a performance of the Gesangverein in Düsseldorf, [Robert Schumann](#) continued conducting well after the performers had completed the music. Members of the Gesangverein announced that in the future they would refuse to be led by Schumann.

A party of 45 under the command of the adventurous five-foot-two [Colonel William Walker](#) sailed on the *Caroline* from [San Francisco](#) for Guaymas, Mexico for the purpose of establishing a "republic" in Lower California under their rule.

1853-1854

1853-18



1853-1854

Oct. 16. The third pleasant day. Hunter's Moon. Walked to White Pond. The *Polygonum dumetorum* in Tarbell's Swamp lies thick and twisted, rolled together, over the loose raised twigs on the ground, as if woven over basketwork, though it is now all sere. The *Marchantia polymorpha* is still erect there. *Viola ovata* out. The *Lysimachia stricta*, with its long bulblets in the axils, how green and fresh by the shore of the pond!



October 17, Monday: [Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed, for Thomas Ford Hunt, a house lot on Monument Street near Charles W. Goodnow and Lorenzo Eaton.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 17TH]



October 18, Tuesday: Incidental music to Aylic-Langlé's comédie en vers *Murillo ou la Corde du pendu* by Jacques Offenbach was performed for the initial time, at Paris's Comédie-Française.

Louis Moreau Gottschalk gave the 1st of 3 performances in Boston, at the Music Hall. The ticket price being exceedingly high, the audience was rather small. Reviews were mixed.

[Henry Thoreau](#) took [Sophia Thoreau](#) by boat to Fair Haven Bay, and she made a sketch.



Oct. 18. P.M. — With [Sophia](#) boated to Fair Haven, where she made a sketch. The red maples have been bare a good while. In the sun and this clear air, their bare ashy branches even sparkle like silver. The woods are losing their bright colors. The muskrat-houses are more sharpened now. I find my boat all covered — the bottom and seats — with the yellow leaves of the golden willow under which it is moored, and if I empty it, it is full again to-morrow. Some white oaks are salmon-red, some lighter and drier. The black oaks are a greenish yellow. Poplars (*grandidentata*) clear, rich yellow. How like some black rocks that stand in the river are these muskrat-houses! They are singularly conspicuous for the dwellings of animals. The river is quite low now, lower than for many weeks, and accordingly the white lily pads have their stems too long, and they rise above the water four or five inches and are looped over and downward to the sunken pad with its face down. They make a singular appearance. Returning late, we see a double shadow of ourselves and boat, one, the true, quite black, the other directly above it and very faint, on the willows and high bank.



1853-1854

1853-1854



October 19, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) paddled [Edward Sherman Hoar](#), with a Mrs. King, up the North Branch, and surveyed a woodlot for Beck (Rebecca?) Stow (his "Field Notes" book indicates that the woodlot was cut in 1854/55). In his journal for this date Thoreau writes "thinking to step upon a leafy shore from a rail, I got into water more than a foot deep and had to wring my stockings out." He was very fond of this swamp on Bedford Road, and on one of his surveys of Bedford Street locates it opposite Moore's Swamp.



The 1st flour mill in Hawaii began operations.

A great "National Horse Show" opened at Springfield, Massachusetts. This show would continue for 3 days and be quite successful.

The chairman of the Düsseldorf Allgemeiner Musikverein, Julius Illing, and another member, J.E. Heister, had an argument with [Robert Schumann](#) (most likely over Schumann's failing abilities as a conductor).



Oct. 19. Wednesday. Paddled [E. Hoar](#) and Mrs. King up the North Branch.

A seed of wild oat left on.

The leaves have fallen so plentifully that they quite conceal the water along the shore, and rustle pleasantly when the wave which the boat creates strikes them. On Sunday last, I could hardly find the Corner Spring, and suspected even it had dried up, for it was completely concealed by fresh-fallen leaves, and when I swept them aside and revealed it, it was like striking the earth for a new spring. At Beck Stow's, surveying, thinking to step upon a leafy shore from a rail, I got into water more than a foot deep and had to wring my stockings out; but this is anticipating.

1853-1854

1853-1854



October 20, Thursday: [William M. White](#)'s version of [Henry Thoreau](#)'s lovely, lovely journal entry is:

*How pleasant to walk over beds
Of these fresh, crisp, and rustling fallen leaves,—
Young hyson, green tea,
Clean, crisp, and wholesome!*

*How beautiful they go to their graves!
How gently lay themselves down and turn to mould!—
Painted of a thousand hues
And fit to make the beds of us living.*

*So they troop to their graves,
Light and frisky.
They put on no weeds.
Merrily they go scampering over the earth,
Selecting their graves,
Whispering all through the woods about it.*

Meanwhile, across the pond, Russia was declaring war on the Ottoman Empire — neither the Russian empire nor the Ottoman empire having any intention to go gently into that good night.

The Turkish fleet in the Bosphorus amounted to 22 ships of the line and 9 war-steamers, mounting a total of 1,116 cannons. The Egyptian contingent of this fleet consisted of 10 ships of war and 2 steamers, mounting a total of 614 cannons

Selim Pacha defeated a Russian corps of 15,000 soldiers on the frontiers of Georgia.

In Marysville, [California](#), the [Herald](#) copied a note from the Downieville [Echo](#), that the idea of working out river claims had become obsolete. Not until the bed of the Yuba becomes dry, not until the rains and snow and storms cease to wash from the hill above us the golden deposits into the stream beneath, can it be said that our river claims have “dried Up.”

In Kent, England, 30 hop pickers, many of them Gypsies, were killed when their wagon fell from a rotting bridge into the River Medway swollen by rains, near Hadlow. The tragedy, in which 16 members of a single Roma family died, would become known as the Hartlake Disaster.




Oct. 20. How pleasant to walk over beds of these fresh, crisp, and rustling fallen leaves, — young hyson, green tea, clean, crisp, and wholesome! How beautiful they go to their graves! how gently lay themselves down and turn to mould! — painted of a thousand hues and fit to make the beds of us living. So they troop to their graves, light and frisky. They put on no weeds. Merrily they go scampering over the earth, selecting their graves, whispering all through the woods about it. They that waved so loftily, how contentedly they return to dust again and are laid low, resigned to lie and decay at the foot of the tree and afford nourishment to new generations of their kind, as well as to flutter on high! How they are mixed up, all species, — oak and maple and chestnut and birch! They are about to add a leaf's breadth to the depth of the soil. We are all the richer for their decay. Nature is not cluttered with them. She is a perfect husbandman; she stores them all.

While I was wringing my wet stockings (*vide* last page), sitting by the side of Beck Stow's, I heard a rush of

1853-1854

1853-1854

wings, looked up, and saw three dusky ducks  swiftly circling over the small water. They rounded far away, but soon returned and settled within about four rods. They first survey the spot. Wonder they did not see me. At first they are suspicious, hold up their heads and sail about. Do they not see me through the thin border of leafless bushes? At last one dips his bill, and they begin to feed amid the pads. I suddenly rise, and [they] instantly dive as at a flash, then at once rise again and all go off, with a low wiry note.



October 21, Friday: The Boston newspaper The Liberator memorialized, on its page 3, the passing of Tristram Burges of Providence, Rhode Island, whose fervid eloquence and withering sarcasm had for a time positioned him in the front rank among the public men of the day — that is, until he came to be dead:

Death of Tristram Burges.—This distinguished man died in Providence, on the morning of the 13th inst., in the 84th year of his age.
Mr. Burges graduated at Brown University in 1796, with the first honors of his class. He entered public life in 1811, as a member of the Rhode Island Assembly, was soon after Professor of Oratory and Belles Lettres in the University, and in 1825 was elected Representative in Congress, where his first speech established his reputation at once, and where his fervid eloquence and his withering sarcasm soon placed him in the front rank among the public men of the day. The *Providence Journal* says, ‘with the exception of Nathaniel Greene and Olive Hazard Perry, no man, since the great founder of the State, has done more to make its name honored than Tristram Burges.’ ‘As an orator,’ the *Journal* adds, ‘Mr. Burges was one of the greatest our country has produced. His mind was early familiarized with the best models, and he thoroughly trained himself to the art which made him most known to the people. At the bar, he was a noble and effective advocate, and his sallies of wit and sarcasm, as well as his eloquent and pointed sentences, are daily repeated by his professional brethren who survive him.’

(During this year, in Providence, the United States Army Corps of Engineers was in the process of surveying prior to dredging a channel south of Fox Point to a depth of 10 feet and width of 100 feet.)



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 21TH]



1853-1854

1853-1854



October 22, Saturday: Naval forces of Great Britain and France entered the Dardanelles (Bosphorus).

The vessel of [Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry](#)'s far-eastern fleet carrying William Speiden, Jr. traveled from [Macao](#) to Cum Sing Moon, joining there the sidewheel steam frigate *USS Powhatan*.

On this night and on October 25th, [Hector Berlioz](#) conducted wildly successful performances before full houses in Brunswick.

[Waldo Emerson](#) entered "Sanborn & friends" in his journal, indicating that the meeting that [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) had proposed by letter for September 10th had actually taken place in [Concord](#) on or about this date.

The St. Francis Hotel at Clay Street and Dupont Street in [San Francisco](#) was destroyed by fire. James Coleman,



1853-1854

1853-1854

foreman of the [Herald](#), was killed and several firemen were injured.

In Kent, England, 30 hop pickers, many of them Gypsies, were killed when their wagon had fallen from a rotting bridge into the River Medway swollen by rains, near Hadlow. The tragedy, in which 16 members of a single Roma family died, would become known as the Hartlake Disaster. It was on this day that the inquest into that accident was held.

[Henry Thoreau](#) made an entry in his journal about how “One-eyed [John Goodwin](#), the fisherman, was loading into a hand-cart and conveying home the piles of driftwood which of late he had collected with his boat,”

1853-1854

1853-1854

that he was later to copy into his early lecture [“WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT”](#) as:

**Brad Dean's
Commentary**

[Paragraph 85] One afternoon late last fall I took my boat and dropt down the Concord River. One of my neighbors, a jolly fisherman,¹ was loading into a handcart and conveying home the piles of drift wood which he had collected with his skiff during the previous month. It was a beautiful evening, and a clear amber sunset lit up all the eastern shore, and that man's employment, though he is regarded by most as a vicious character—so simple and direct—whose whole motive was so easy to fathom—thus to obtain his winter's wood—charmed me unspeakably. So much do we love actions that are simple. They are all poetic.

[Paragraph 86] Consider how the broker collects his winter's wood—what sport he makes of it—what are his boat and hand-cart! Postponing instant life, he makes haste to Boston in the cars, and there deals in stocks, not quite relishing his employment, and so earns the money with which he buys his fuel; and when perchance I meet him about this indirect and complicated business, I am not struck with the beauty of his employment. It does not harmonize with the sunset.

[Paragraph 87] How much more the former consults his genius, or some genius! I should be glad to get my fuel so—indeed, have got some of it so. I know very well that if I buy one necessary of life, I cheat myself to some extent. I deprive myself of the inexpressible pleasure which is the unfailing reward of satisfying any want of our nature simply and truly. Consider how far this division of labor is a division of life,—so that you get only a fraction for your share!

[Paragraph 88] All trade goes fatally against the grain. It postpones life and substitutes death. If the first generation does not die of it, the third or fourth does. In face of all statistics, I will never believe that it is the descendants of tradesmen who keep the state alive, but of simple yeomen and laborers. Indeed statistics tell us that the city is continually reinforced by the country. The oldest and wisest trader or politician grows not more human so. He makes a habit of disregarding the moral right—the rights of his own nature—sacrificing them to the conventional or legal—commits a slow suicide, in short, and thinks to recover by retiring on to a farm one day—but he becomes merely a gray wharf-rat at last, and if he does go into the country—I put it to him—if it is not with the habits and aims of such vermin?

[Paragraph 89] It is the simple life of the other and the vigor it imparts—that enable him, vagabond as he is, though he does get drunk and is sent to the house of correction so often, to hold up his head still among men.

[Paragraph 90] The merchant says to himself—“If I go to Boston every day and sell tape from morning till night—which I will admit is not a beautiful action—I shall be able to buy the best of fuel without stint.” Yes, but not the pleasure of picking it up by the river side which I may say is of more value than the warmth it yields—for when on the fire it keeps the vital heat in us only that we may repeat such pleasing exercises. It warms us twice and the first warmth is the most wholesome² and memorable, compared with which the other is mere coke.

[Paragraph 91] That fisherman stood on the solid earth—it looked solid under him. For such as he, no political economies with their profit and loss, supply and demand, need ever be written, for he will not need to use any policy.³ There is no secret in his trade more than in the sun's. It is no mystery how he gets his living—no, not even when he steals it. But there is less double dealing in his thieving even than in the other's trade.

[Paragraph 92] As for these complex ways of living I love them not, however much I practise them, and in as many places as possible I will get my feet down to the earth.

1. The fisherman is identified in the journal source of this passage as “One-eyed John Goodwin.”

2. The manuscript copy-text reads ‘wholsome’.

3. This word is underscored twice in the manuscript copy-text.



Oct. 22. A week or more of fairest Indian summer ended last night, for to-day it rains. It was so warm day before yesterday, I worked in my shirt-sleeves in the woods.

1853-1854

1853-1854

I cannot easily dismiss the subject of the fallen leaves. How densely they cover and conceal the water for several feet in width, under and amid the alders and button-bushes and maples along the shore of the river, — still light, tight, and dry boats, dense cities of boats, their fibres not relaxed by the waters, undulating and rustling with every wave, of such various pure and delicate, though fading, tints, — of hues that might make the fame of teas, — dried on great Nature's coppers. And then see this great fleet of scattered leaf boats, still tight and dry, each one curled up on every side lay the sun's skill, like boats of hide, scarcely moving in the sluggish current, — like the great fleets with which You mingle on entering some great mart, some New York which we are all approaching together. Or else they are slowly moving round in some great eddy which the river makes, where the water is deep and the current is wearing into the bank. How gently each has been deposited on the water! No violence has been used toward them yet. But next the shore, as thick as foam they float, and when you turn your prow that way, list! what a rustling of the crisped waves! Wet grounds about the edges of swamps look dry with them, and many a wet foot you get in consequence.

Consider what a vast crop is thus annually shed upon the earth. This, more than any mere grain or seed, is the great harvest of the year. This annual decay and death, this dying by inches, before the whole tree at last lies down and turns to soil. As trees shed their leaves, so deer their horns, and men their hair or nails. The year's great crop. I am more interested in it than in the English grass alone or in the corn. It prepares the virgin mould for future cornfields on which the earth fattens. They teach us how to die. How many flutterings before they rest quietly in their graves! A myriad wrappers for germinating seeds. By what subtle chemistry they will mount up again, climbing by the sap in the trees. The ground is all parti-colored with them.

For beautiful variety can any crop be compared with them? The dogwood (poison sumach) blazing its sins as scarlet, the early-blushing maple, the rich chrome (?) yellow of the poplar, the mulberry ash, the brilliant red huckleberry with which the hills' backs are painted like sheep's, — not merely the plain flavidness of corn, but all the colors of the rainbow. The salmon-colored oaks, etc., etc. The frost touches them, and, with the slightest breath of day or jarring of earth's axle, see in what showers they come floating down, at the first earnest touch of autumn's wand. They stoop to rise, to mount higher in coming years by subtler chemistry, and the sapling's first fruits, thus shed, transmuted at last, may adorn its crown, when, in after years, it has become the monarch of the forest.


JOHN GOODWIN

Yesterday, toward night, gave [Sophia](#) and mother a sail as far as the Battle-Ground. One-eyed John Goodwin, the fisherman, was loading into a hand-cart and conveying home the piles of driftwood which of late he had collected with his boat. It was a beautiful evening, and a clear amber sunset lit up all the eastern shores; and that man's employment, so simple and direct, — though he is regarded by most as a vicious character, — whose whole motive was so easy to fathom, — thus to obtain his winter's wood, — charmed me unspeakably. So much do we love actions that are simple. They are all poetic. We, too, would fain be so employed. So unlike the pursuits of most men, so artificial or complicated. Consider how the broker collects his winter's wood, what sport he makes of it, what is his boat and hand-cart! Postponing instant life, he makes haste to Boston in the cars, and there deals in stocks, not quite relishing his employment, — and so earns the money with which he buys his fuel. And when, by chance, I meet him about this indirect and complicated business, I am not struck with the beauty of his employment. It does not harmonize with the sunset. How much more the former consults his genius, some genius at any rate! Now I should love to get my fuel so, — I have got some so, — but though I may be glad to have it, I do not love to get it in any other way less simple and direct. For if I buy one necessary of life, I cheat myself to some extent, I deprive myself of the pleasure, the inexpressible joy, which is the unailing reward of satisfying any want of our nature simply and truly.

No *trade* is simple, but artificial and complex. It postpones life and substitutes death. It goes against the grain. If the first generation does not die of it, the third or fourth does. In face of all statistics, I will never believe that it is the descendants of tradesmen who keep the state alive, but of simple yeomen or laborers. This, indeed, statistics say of the city reinforced by the country. The oldest, wisest politician grows not more human so, but is merely a gray wharf rat at last. He makes a habit of disregarding the moral right and wrong for the legal or political, commits a slow suicide, and thinks to recover by retiring on to a farm at last. This simplicity it is, and the vigor it imparts, that enables the simple vagabond, though he does get drunk and is sent to the house of correction so often, to hold up his head among men.

"If I go to Boston every day and sell tape from morning till night," says the merchant (which we will admit is not a beautiful action), "some time or other I shall be able to buy the best of fuel without stint." Yes, but not the pleasure of picking it up by the riverside, which, I may say, is of more value than the warmth it yields, for it but keeps the vital heat in us that we may repeat such pleasing exercises. It warms us twice, axed the first warmth is the most wholesome and memorable, compared with which the other is mere coke. It is to give no account of my employment to say that I cut wood to keep me from freezing, or cultivate beans to keep me from starving. Oh, no, the greatest value of these labors is received before the wood is teamed home, or the beans are harvested (or winnowed from it). Goodwin stands on the solid earth. The earth looks solid under him, and for such as he no *political* economies, with *their* profit and loss, supply and demand, need ever be written, for they will need to use no policy. As for the complex ways of living, I love them not, however much I practice them. In as many places as possible, I will get my feet down to the earth. There is no secret in his trade, more than in the sun's. It is no mystery how he gets his living; no, not even when he steals it. But there is less double-dealing in



his living than in your trade. Goodwin is a most constant fisherman. He must well know the taste of pickerel by this time. He will fish, I would not venture to say how many days in succession. When I can remember to have seen him fishing almost daily for some time, if it rains, I am surprised on looking out to see him slowly wending his way to the river in his oilcloth coat, with his basket and pole. I saw him the other day fishing in the middle of the stream, the day after I had seen him fishing on the shore, while by a kind of magic I sailed by him; and he said he was catching minnow for bait in the winter. When I was twenty rods off, lie held up a pickerel that weighed two and a half pounds, which he had forgot to show me before, and the next morning, as he afterward told me, he caught one that weighed three pounds. If it is ever necessary to appoint a committee on fish-ponds and pickerel, let him be one of them. Surely he is tenacious of life, hard to scale.

 October 23, Sunday: Fighting began as Turkish troops crossed the Danube at Tutrakhan, southeast of Bucharest. The Ottoman Empire declared war on Russia.

Edward Gottschalk died in New Orleans. His son Louis Moreau Gottschalk, in Boston on a concert tour, rushed toward home. The composer would assume all his father's debts and support his mother and siblings.



Oct. 23. Sunday. P.M. — Down railroad to chestnut wood on Pine Hill.

A pleasant day, but breezy. I see a downy woodpecker  tapping an apple tree, and hear, when I have passed, his sharp, metallic note. I notice these flowers still along the railroad causeway: fresh sprouts from the root of the *Solidago nemoralis* in bloom, one or two fall dandelions, red clover and white, yarrow, *Trifolium arvense* (perhaps not fresh), one small blue snapdragon, fresh tansy in bloom on the sunny sandbank. There are green leaves on the ends of elder twigs; blackberry vines still red; apple trees yellow and brown and partly bare; white ash bare (nearly); golden willows yellow and brown; white birches, exposed, are nearly bare; some pines still parti-colored. White, black, and red oaks still hold most of their leaves. What a peculiar red has the white! And some black have now a rich brown. The *Populus grandidentata* near railroad, bare; the *P. tremuloides*, half bare. The hickories are finely crisped, yellow, more or less browned. Several yellow butterflies in the meadow. And many birds flit before me along the railroad, with faint notes, too large for linarias. Can they be tree sparrows? [Vesper Sparrow  *Pooecetes gramineus*?] Some weeks.³⁸ Many phenomena remind me that now is to some extent a second spring, — not only the new-springing and blossoming of flowers, but the peeping of the hylodes for some time, and the faint warbling of their spring notes by many birds. Everywhere in the fields I see the white, hoary (ashy-colored) sceptres of the gray goldenrod. Others are slightly yellowish still. The yellow is gone out of them, as the last flake of sunshine disappears from a field when the clouds are gathering. But though their golden hue is gone, their reign is not over. Compact puffed masses of seeds ready to take wing. They will send out their ventures from hour to hour the winter through. The *Viola pedata* looking up from so low in the wood-path makes a singular impression. I go through Brooks's Hollow. The hazels bare, only here and there a few sere, curled leaves on them. The red cherry is bare. The blue flag seed-vessels at Walden are bursting, — six closely packed brown rows.

I find my clothes all bristling as with a *chevaux-de-frise* of beggar-ticks, which hold on for many days. A storm of arrows these weeds have showered on me, as I went through their moats. How irksome the task to rid one's self of them! We are fain to let some adhere. Through thick and thin I wear some; hold on many days. In an instant a thousand seeds of the bidens fastened themselves firmly to my clothes, and I carried them for miles, planting one here and smother there. They are as thick on my clothes as the teeth of a comb.

The prinosis is bare, leaving red berries. The pond has gone down suddenly and surprisingly since I was here last, and this pool is left, cut off at a higher level, stagnant and drying up. This is its first decided going down since its going up a year or two ago. The red-looking water purslane is left bare, and the water-target leaves are turned brown and drying up on the bare mud. The clethra partly bare, crisped, yellowish and brown, with its fruit with persistent styles (?) in long racemes. Here are dense fields of light-colored rattlesnake grass drooping with the weight of their seeds.

The high blueberries about the pond have still a few leaves left on, turned bright scarlet red. These it is adorn the shore so, seen at a distance, small but very bright. The panicked andromeda is thinly clad with yellow and brown leaves, not sere. Alders are green. Smooth sumach bare. Chestnuts commonly bare. I now notice the round red buds of the high blueberry. The blue-stemmed, and also the white, solidago on Walden bank. Small sassafras trees bare. The *Aster undulatus* is still quite abundant and fresh on this high, sunny bank, — far more

38. Probably the white-in-tail [Vesper Sparrow  *Pooecetes gramineus*] [*i.e.* vesper sparrow, or grass finch].

1853-1854

1853-1854

so than the *Solidago caesia*, — and methinks it is the latest of our asters and is besides the most common or conspicuous flower now. It is in large, dense masses, two or three feet high, pale purple or whitish, and covered with humble-bees. The radical leaves, now hearted and crenatish, are lake beneath. Also a hieracium quite freshly bloomed, but with white, bristly leaves and smooth stem, about twenty-flowered; peduncles and involucre glandular-hairy. Is it *Gronovii* or veiny-leaved? Almost as slender as the panicked. (In press.) No gerardias. Strawberries are red and green. It is the season of fuzzy seeds, — goldenrods, everlasting, senecio, asters, epilobium, etc., etc. *Viburnum Lentago*, with ripe berries and dull-glossy red leaves; young black cherry, fresh green or yellow; mayweed. The chestnuts have mostly fallen. One *Diplopappus linariifolius* in bloom, its leaves all yellow or red. This and *A. undulatus* the asters seen to-day.

The red oak now red, perhaps inclining to scarlet; the white, with that peculiar ingrained redness; the shrub oak, a clear thick leather-color; some dry black oak, darker brown; chestnut, light brown; hickory, yellow, turning brown. These the colors of some leaves I brought home.



October 24, Monday: [Waldo Emerson](#) made comments in his journal about the visit [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) and some of his Harvard friends had made to visit him in [Concord](#) on or about October 22d.

[Henry Watkins](#) recorded in his diary that on this day he sent \$60 to his mother to pay her rent, and — “After supper went with Birney to see Van Amburgh’s collection of animals, exhibiting here on what is called a floating palace — He has a very fine collection, and among them the best trained elephant I ever saw. Some twenty years since Van Amburgh had a menagerie in New York city, to which place my mother took me one afternoon to ‘see the wild beasts.’ — She had bought for me, the day previously, a beautiful white silk hat,— then very fashionable for boys, and of which I was exceedingly proud, and which, of course, had to be worn on this occasion — Having embarked three cents in the peanut line, and feeling charitably disposed, I thought of sharing my stock with the elephant. Being rather fearful of extending him my nuts in my bare hand I put a few into my hat and held it out to him to help himself. Introducing his trunk into the hat he gave a snuff which not only drew in the nuts but caught up the hat-lining; which somewhat excited the elephantine ire of the beast who, no doubt, thought that I was trying to deceived him. Feeling that he had rather a stro[ng] hold upon the hat, I let go in the vain hope that he would drop it instead of which he drew the hat into the cage, the bars of which were not sufficiently wide apart to admit the hat in its natural shape, but as the iron would not give wa[y] my poor hat was obliged to. I had read in story books of th[e] wonderful sagacity of the elephant, but feeling an inward conviction that, in this [unclear] under the circumstances, it would have been impossible to reason with an indignant elephan[t] I yelled most lustily for the keeper, who rushed to my assista[nce] though not in time to do any practical good, as the brut[e] had consummated his cruel and ungrateful deed by putting his foot in it—not the deed, but the hat—thereby giving it a more effective pressing than ever the maker did. When the keeper handed back that which I had so lately regarded with such pride, as being the crowning ornament of my budding manhood, it was but the “remains of beauty once admired.’ I was unable to exclaim with the poet—”the form alone was there.’ for even its best friend, myself, was unable to recognize it. I stood gazing for a moment on the sad wreck, when suddenly the sight whereof soon checked the flood-gates of sorrow and when I, in turn, became indignant and hurled back the ruins at the huge monsters head. If he was mad before, this act enraged him completely—an he roared and, roared again, and beat the bars with his trunk—that trunk into which he had tried to pack my hat. Knowing that he could not get at me, I had too much courage to be scared at noise. All the visitors crowded around us and, for the moment, the elephant and myself were the centre of attraction—, none of the beasts attracted more attention than we did. When, ‘what’s the matter?’ was found out everybody who saw the joke laughed, I didn’t see it and consequently did not even smile. Our pleasure being marred by this catastrophe my Mother and myself repaired to our home again, having paid somewhat dearly for ‘seeing the elephant.’ Since that I have left the feeding of elephants to those to whom the task rightfully belongs.”



Oct. 24. Early on Nawshawtuct.

Black willows bare. Golden willow with yellow leaves. Larch yellow. Most alders by river bare except at top.

1853-1854

1853-1854

Waxwork shows red. Celtis almost bare, with greenish-yellow leaves at top. Some hickories bare, some with rich golden-brown leaves. Locusts half bare, with greenish-yellow leaves. Catnip fresh and green and in bloom. Barberries green, reddish, or scarlet. Cranberry beds at distance in meadows (from hill) are red, for a week or more. Lombardy poplar yellow. Red maples and elms alone very conspicuously bare in our landscape. White thorns bare, and berries mostly fallen, reddening the ground. Hedge-mustard still fresh and in bloom. Buttonwoods half bare. The rock maple leaves a clear yellow; now and then [one] shows some blood in its veins, and blushes. People are busy raking the leaves before their houses; some put them over their strawberries. It has rained all day, filling the streams. Just after dark, high southerly winds arise, but very warm, blowing the rain against the windows and roof and shaking the house. It is very dark withal, so that I can hardly find my way to a neighbor's. We think of vessels on the coast, and shipwrecks, and how this will bring down the remaining leaves and to-morrow morning the street will be strewn with rotten limbs of the elms amid the leaves and puddles, and some loose chimney or crazy building will have fallen. Some fear to go to bed, lest the roof be blown off.



October 25, Tuesday: The local newspapers reported that in Kent, England, 30 hop pickers, many of them Gypsies, had been killed on October 20th when their wagon had fallen from a rotting bridge into the River Medway swollen by rains, near Hadlow. The tragedy, in which 16 members of a Roma family had died, would become known as the Hartlake Disaster. An inquest held on October 22d at the Bell Inn in Golden Green had concluded that the cause of the accident had been the "defective state of the wooden bridge." Witnesses at the inquest would say that they heard screams from as far away as East Peckham. As the wagon passed over the bridge its horses had shied and the wheels broke through the wooden boards of the side of the bridge. Among the dead was a 2-year-old girl whose first name would be unknown because her parents had died with her. The victims would be buried in one grave at St Mary's Church, Hadlow, where a memorial stone would be erected in December 1853. When the names would become illegible, the memorial would be refreshed. Eventually a memorial song would be created:

The Hartlake Bridge Disaster

Now seven and thirty strangers a hopping they had been
 They were 'ployed by Mr Cox's down by old Golden Green
 For it was in the parish of Hadlow, close by old Tonbridge Town
 That's where they laid those poor souls after they were drowned.

Now some were man and women, the others girls and boys
 They were a going across the bridge when the horses they took shy
 They were going across the bridge and everyone was drowned
 Just to hear the screams of those poor souls as they were going down.

Now people came from everywhere just to see what could be done
 But no one was saved that day, they were drowned everyone
 No one was saved that day, yes everyone was drowned
 To hear the screams of those poor souls when they were going down.


Now some were men and women, the others girls and boys
 They were a going across the bridge when the horses they took shy
 They were a going across the bridge and everyone was drowned
 Just hear the screams of those poor souls when they were going down.

[Henry Thoreau](#) was written to by [James Munroe & Co.](#): "We send by express this day a box & bundle containing 250 copies of Concord River & also 450. in sheets. All of which we trust you will find correct."

TIMELINE OF A WEEK



Oct. 25. 7 A.M. — To Hubbard's Grove.

The rain is over, the ground swept and washed. There is a high and cold west wind. Birds fly with difficulty against it (are they tree sparrows?) [**Vesper Sparrow**  *Poocetes gramineus*]. The brooks and the river are

1853-1854

1853-1854

unexpectedly swelled with yesterday's rain. The river is a very dark blue. The wind roars in the wood. A maple is blown down. *Aster longifolius* in low ground (a few). This and the *Diplopappus linariifolius*, and, above all, *A. undulatus*, the only flowers of the kind seen this week.³⁹

P.M. — Sailed down river to the pitch pine hill behind Abner Buttrick's, with a strong northwest wind, and cold. Saw a telltale [Telltale (Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*; Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*)] on Cheney's shore, close to the water's edge. I am not quite sure whether it is the greater or lesser, but am inclined to think that all I have seen are the lesser. It was all white below and dark above, with a pure white tail prettily displayed in flying. It kept raising its head with a jerk as if it had the St. Vitus's dance. It would alight in the water and swim like a little duck. Once, when I went ashore and started it, it flew so as to bring a willow between it and me, and alighted quite near, much nearer than before, to spy me. When it went off, it uttered a sharp *te-te-te-te-te*, flying with quivering wings, dashing about. I think that the storm of yesterday and last night brought it up.



The white maples are completely bare. The tall dry grass along the shore rustles in the cold wind. The shores are very naked now. I am surprised to see how much the river has risen. The swamp white oaks in front of N. Barrett's — their leafy tops — look quite silvery at a distance in the sun, very different from near to. In some places along the water's edge the *Aster Tradescanti* lingers still, some flowers purple, others white. The ground is strewn with pine-needles as sunlight. The iron-wood is nearly bare on the Flint Bridge Rock. I see one or two specimens of the *Polygonum hydropiperoides* and the smaller, nameless one in flower still. They last thus till the severe frosts. There are masses of the yellow water ranunculus washed up by the shore after this high wind. This is one of our river weeds. The shepherd's-purse in bloom.



October 26, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) made an entry in his journal that he was later to combine with an entry made on March 4, 1852 and copy into his early lecture "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" as:

[Paragraph 45] It is remarkable that among all the preachers there are so few moral teachers. The prophets are employed in excusing the ways of men.¹ Most reverend seniors, the illuminati of the age,² tell me, with a gracious, reminiscent smile, betwixt an aspiration and a shudder, not to be too tender about these things,—to lump all that, that is, make a lump of gold of it. The highest advice I have heard on these subjects was grovelling. The burden of it was,—It is not worth your while to undertake to reform the world in this particular. Do not ask how your bread is buttered; it will make you sick, if you do,—and the like. A man had better starve at once than lose his innocence in the process of getting his bread. If within the sophisticated man there is not an unsophisticated one, then he is but one of the Devil's angels.

1. An echo of John Milton's avowed attempt to "justify the ways of God to men" in PARADISE LOST, Book One, line 26.
 2. An echo of Othello, 1.3.78-79.

**Brad Dean's
Commentary**

[Captain John William Gunnison](#) of the Corps of Topographical Engineers and 7 other members of his party attempting to survey the lakes in Utah Territory were wiped out by native inhabitants of that region. Their remains would be found in a mutilated condition.



Oct. 26. I well remember the time this year when I first heard the dream of the toads. I was laying out house-lots on Little River in Haverhill. We had had some raw, cold and wet weather. But this day was remarkably warm and pleasant, and I had thrown off my outside coat. I was going home: to dinner, past

39. Afterwards *A. puniceus*, *Tradescanti*, and one *laevis*! Vide bottom of next page.

1853-1854

1853-1854

a shallow pool, which was green with springing grass, and where a new house was about being erected, when it occurred to me that I heard the dream of the toad. It rang through and filled all the air, though I had not heard it once. And I turned my companion's attention to it, but he did not appear to perceive it as a new sound in the air. Loud and prevailing as it is, most men do not notice it at all. It is to them, perchance, a sort of simmering or seething of all nature. That afternoon the dream of the toads rang through the elms by Little River and affected the thoughts of men, though they were not conscious that they heard it.

How watchful we must be to keep the crystal well that we were made, clear!— that it be not made turbid by our contact with the world, so that it will not reflect objects. What other liberty is there worth having, if we have not freedom and peace in our minds, — if our inmost and most private man is but a sour and turbid pool? Often we are so jarred by chagrins in dealing with the world, that we cannot reflect. Everything beautiful impresses us as sufficient to itself. Many men who have had much intercourse with the world and not borne the trial well affect me as all resistance, all bur and rind, without any gentleman, or tender and innocent core left. They have become hedgehogs.

Ah! the world is too much with us, and our whole soul is stained by what it works in, like the dyer's hand. A man had better starve at once than lose his innocence in the process of getting his bread. This is the pool of Bethsaida [*sic*] which must be stilled and become smooth before we can enter to be healed. If within the old man there is not a young man, — within the sophisticated, one unsophisticated, — then he is but one of the devil's angels.

It is surprising how any reminiscence of a different season of the year affects us. When I meet with any such in my Journal, it affects me as poetry, and I appreciate that other season and that particular phenomenon more than at the time. The world so seen is all one spring, and full of beauty. You only need to make a faithful record of an average summer day's experience and summer mood, and read it in the winter, and it will carry you back to more than that summer day alone could show. Only the rarest flower, the purest melody, of the season thus comes down to us.

P.M. — To Cliffs.

As I go up the back road, some fresh sprouts in bloom on a tall rough goldenrod. I hear a faint twittering of the sparrows in the grass, like crickets. Those flitting sparrows [**Vesper Sparrow** **Pooecetes gramineus**] which we have had for some weeks, are they not the sober snowbirds (tree sparrows?)? They fly in a great drifting flock, wheeling and dashing about, as if preluding or acting a snow-storm, with rapid *te te te*. They are as dry and rustling as the grass. The *Aster puniceus*, with the *longifolius*, — a few, — on the sheltered sides of ditches. Checkerberries have now a fine, clear, fresh tint, a peculiar pink (?). Now leaves are off, or chiefly off, I begin to notice the buds of various form and color and more or less conspicuous, prepared for another season, — partly, too, perhaps, for food for birds. The tupelo is bare. The smooth speedwell in bloom, the meek-eyed flower, low or flat in the sod.

Went through the dense maple swamp against Potter's pasture. It is completely bare, and the ground is very thickly strewn with leaves, which conceal the wet places. But still the high blueberry bushes in the midst and on the edge retain a few bright-red or scarlet red leaves. Red circles of the pitcher-plant, in the meadow beyond, are full of water to where cut evenly off by the scythe. Lambkill, being an evergreen, is now more conspicuous. The river has risen still higher than yesterday, and flooded the meadows yet more. How long it continues to rise, before we feel the full influence of the rain that fell on the Worcester hills! The green-briar is bare except a few yellow leaves. Butter-and-eggs just ending in a sheltered place. Some *Solidago nemoralis* show still bright-yellow masses of flowers on bare, dead-looking stalks, the leaves having fallen or being dried up, — a constant lover of the sun. A storm appears to be thickening. The sun has been shorn of his beams all the afternoon. The clouds are not distinct and handsome. It is cool, gray weather. But yet there is a little more adventure in a walk, and it better suits a pensive mood. I see the hole of the great black spider already galled about. Slate-colored snowbirds [**Dark-eyed Junco** **Junco hyemalis** (**Slate-colored Sparrow** or **Snow-bird** or *F. Hyemalis*)]. This has been the month for acorns, — and the last half of September, — though it is now too late. When, after feeling dissatisfied with my life, I aspire to something better, am more scrupulous, more reserved and continent, as if expecting somewhat, suddenly I find myself full of life as a nut of meat, — am overflowing with a quiet, genial mirthfulness. I think to myself, I must attend to my diet; I must get up earlier and take a morning walk; I must have done with luxuries and devote myself to my muse. So I dam up my stream, and my waters gather to a head. I am freighted with thought.

[At this point and scattered through the pages immediately succeeding, the Journal contains further matter relating to the Maine excursion of the previous month. Only the parts not included in "The Maine Woods" are here printed.]

Very small and narrow intervals on the Penobscot. Every lake and stream in the wilderness is soon made to feel the influence of the white man's dam.

At Oldtown I went on board the small river steamers which run to the Five Islands. Built propeller-fashion. They lay just opposite Orono Island; had been laid up during the low stage of water, and were to start the next day on

1853-1854

1853-1854

their first trip. One was properly named the Governor Neptune. A hand told me that they drew only fourteen inches of water and could run easily in two feet of water, though they did not like to. Why is [it] that we look upon the Indian as the man of the woods? There are races half civilized, and barbarous even, that dwell in towns, but the Indians we associate in our minds with the wilderness.



October 27, Thursday: [James Russell Lowell](#)'s wife [Maria White Lowell](#) died at the age of 32 in Cambridge. The widower would tour Europe, write travel sketches about his trip, and then lecture on English poetry.



The Düsseldorf Musikverein refused to sing under [Robert Schumann](#) owing to his “disastrous performance of a mass by Hauptmann at the Maximilian Church on October 16.”

[Henri-Frédéric Amiel](#), who would be referred to as the “Swiss [Thoreau](#),” wrote in his *JOURNAL INTIME*: “I thank Thee, my God, for the hour that I have just passed in Thy presence. Thy will was clear to me; I measured my faults, counted my griefs, and felt Thy goodness toward me. I realized my own nothingness, Thou gavest me Thy peace. In bitterness there is sweetness; in affliction, joy; in submission, strength; in the God who punishes, the God who loves. To lose one’s life that one may gain it, to offer it that one may receive it, to possess nothing that one may conquer all, to renounce self that God may give Himself to us, how impossible a problem, and how sublime a reality! No one truly knows happiness who has not suffered, and the redeemed are happier than the elect.

(Same day.) — The divine miracle par excellence consists surely in the apotheosis of grief, the transfiguration of evil by good. The work of creation finds its consummation, and the eternal will of the infinite mercy finds its fulfillment only in the restoration of the free creature to God and of an evil world to goodness, through love. Every soul in which conversion has taken place is a symbol of the history of the world. To be happy, to possess eternal life, to be in God, to be saved, all these are the same. All alike mean the solution of the problem, the aim of existence. And happiness is cumulative, as misery may be. An eternal growth is an unchangeable peace, an ever profounder depth of apprehension, a possession constantly more intense and more spiritual of the joy of heaven — this is happiness. Happiness has no limits, because God has neither bottom nor bounds, and because happiness is nothing but the conquest of God through love.

The center of life is neither in thought nor in feeling, nor in will, nor even in consciousness, so far as it thinks, feels, or wishes. For moral truth may have been penetrated and possessed in all these ways, and escape us still. Deeper even than consciousness there is our being itself, our very substance, our nature. Only those truths which have entered into this last region, which have become ourselves, become spontaneous and involuntary, instinctive and unconscious, are really our life — that is to say something more than our property. So long as we are able to distinguish any space whatever between the truth and us we remain outside it. The thought, the feeling, the desire, the consciousness of life, are not yet quite life. But peace and repose can nowhere be found except in life, and in eternal life and the eternal life is the divine life, is God. To become divine is then the aim of life: then only can truth be said to be ours beyond the possibility of loss, because it is no longer outside us,

1853-1854

1853-1854

nor even in us, but we are it, and it is we; we ourselves are a truth, a will, a work of God. Liberty has become nature; the creature is one with its creator — one through love. It is what it ought to be; its education is finished, and its final happiness begins. The sun of time declines and the light of eternal blessedness arises.

Our fleshly hearts may call this mysticism. It is the mysticism of Jesus: “I am one with my Father; ye shall be one with me. We will be one with you.”

Do not despise your situation; in it you must act, suffer, and conquer. From every point on earth we are equally near to heaven and to the infinite.

There are two states or conditions of pride. The first is one of self-approval, the second one of self-contempt. Pride is seen probably at its purest in the last.

It is by teaching that we teach ourselves, by relating that we observe, by affirming that we examine, by showing that we look, by writing that we think, by pumping that we draw water into the well.”



*Oct. 27. 6.30 A.M. — To Island by boat. The river still rises, — more than ever last night, owing to the rain of the 24th (which ceased in the night of the 24th). It is two feet higher than then. I hear a blackbird in the air; and these, methinks, are song sparrows [Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia* (*melodia*)] flitting about, with the three spots on breast. Now it is time to look out for walnuts, last and hardest crop of the year?*

I love to be reminded of that universal and eternal spring when the minute crimson-starred female flowers of the hazel are peeping forth on the hillsides, — when Nature revives in all her pores.

Some less obvious and commonly unobserved signs of the progress of the seasons interest me most, like the loose, dangling catkins of the hop-hornbeam or of the black or yellow birch. I can recall distinctly to my mind the image of these things, and that time in which they flourished is glorious as if it were before the fall of man. I see all nature for the time under this aspect. These features are particularly prominent; as if the first object I saw on approaching this planet in the spring was the catkins of the hop-hornbeam on the hillsides. As I sailed by, I saw the yellowish waving sprays.

See nowadays concave chocolate-colored fungi passing into dust on the edges, close on the ground in pastures.



October 28, Friday: [Robert Schumann](#)'s article “Neue Bahnen,” extolling the virtues of the unheralded [Johannes Brahms](#) appeared in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, offering Brahms as “one of the elect.”

At the Schumann home in Düsseldorf, Joseph Joachim and Clara Schumann performed the 1st movement of a violin sonata written by Albert Dietrich, a scherzo by [Johannes Brahms](#), and an intermezzo and finale by Robert Schumann.

Pépito, an opéra-comique by Jacques Offenbach to words of Monaux and Battu, was performed for the initial time, in Paris's Variétés.

The [Reverend William Ingraham Kip](#) had been nominated by his old friend Bishop Wainwright to be the Episcopal missionary bishop to [California](#). On this day he was consecrated by Bishops Jackson Kemper, Alfred Lee, and William Jones Boone.

[James Munroe & Company](#) returned the 706 unbound, unsold copies of [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#) from the printing of 1,000, providing [Henry Thoreau](#)'s attic chamber with an instant library.⁴⁰



Oct. 28. Rain in the night and this morning, preparing for winter.

We noticed in a great many places the narrow paths by which the moose came down to the river, and sometimes, where the bank was steep and somewhat clayey, they had slid down it. The holes made by their feet in the soft bottom in shallow water are visible for a long time. Joe told me that, though they shed their horns annually, each new pair has an additional prong. They are sometimes used as an ornament in front entries, for a hat-tree (to hang hats on). Cedar bark appeared to be their commonest string.

These first beginnings of commerce on a lake in the wilderness are very interesting, — these larger white birds that come to keep company with the gulls, — if they only carry a few cords of wood across the lake.

Just saw in the garden, in the drizzling rain, little sparrow-sized birds flitting about amid the dry cornstalks and the weeds, — one, quite slaty with black streaks and a bright-yellow crown and rump, which I think is the yellow-crowned warbler [Yellow Warbler █ *Dendroica petechia*], but most of the other, much more brown, with yellowish breasts and no yellow on crown to be observed, which I think the young of the same. One flew up fifteen feet and caught an insect. They uttered a faint *chip*. Some of the rest were sparrows. I did not get good sight of the last. I suspect the former may be my *tull-lulls* [Dark-eyed Junco █ *Junco hyemalis*] of the Moosehead Carry. (Annotation: “No, they were.”)

For a year or two past, my *publisher*, falsely so called, has been writing from time to time to ask what disposition should be made of the copies of “A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers” still on hand, and at last suggesting that he had use for the room they occupied in his cellar. So I had them all sent to me here, and they have arrived to-day by express, filling the man’s wagon, — 706 copies out of an edition of 1000 which I bought of Munroe four years ago and have been ever since paying for, and have not quite paid for yet. The wares are sent to me at last, and I have an opportunity to examine my purchase. They are something more substantial than fame, as my back knows, which has borne them up two flights of stairs to a place similar to that to which they trace their origin. Of the remaining two hundred and ninety and odd, seventy-five were given away, the rest sold. I have now a library of nearly nine hundred volumes, over seven hundred of which I wrote myself. Is it not well that the author should behold the fruits of his labor? My works are piled up on one side of my chamber half as high as my head, my *opera omnia*. This is authorship; these are the work of my brain. There was just one piece of good luck in the venture. The unbound were tied up by the printer four years ago in stout paper wrappers, and inscribed, —

H.D. Thoreau’s
Concord River
50 cops.

So Munroe had only to cross out “River” and write “Mass.” and deliver them to the expressman at once. I can see now what I write for, the result of my labors.

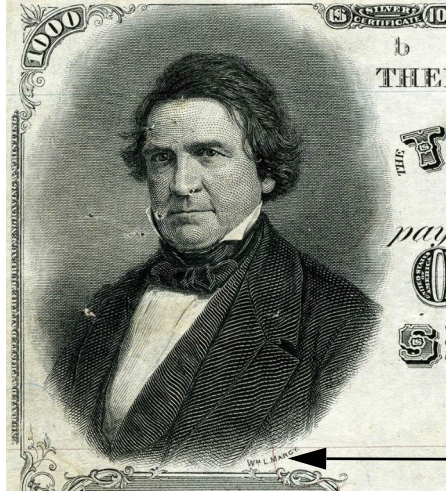
Nevertheless, in spite of this result, sitting beside the inert mass of my works, I take up my pen to-night to record what thought or experience I may have had, with as much satisfaction as ever. Indeed, I believe that this result is more inspiring and better for me than if a thousand had bought my wares. It affects my privacy less and leaves me freer.

40. “Of all the ways of acquiring books, writing them oneself is regarded as the most praiseworthy method.” —Walter Benjamin, “Unpacking My Library: A talk about Book Collecting,” page 61 in *ILLUMINATIONS* (NY: Schocken, 1969).

1853-1854

1853-1854

→ October 29, Saturday: Francis A. Myers had been convicted of the malicious beating of a seaman on the high seas. On this day a pardon document signed by [President Franklin Pierce](#) and [Secretary of State William Learned Marcy](#) was filed in the US District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.



ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 29TH]

→ October 30, Sunday: [Bronson Alcott](#) set out by train on his Western conversational tour, wearing a new \$28.⁰⁰ suit from Tolman & Co. in Boston (presumably paid for by [Waldo Emerson](#)) and carrying with him a box of printed prospectuses proclaiming his Conversations.



Oct. 30. Sunday. A white frost this morning, lasting late into the day. This has settled the accounts of many plants which lingered still.

P.M. — To Hubbard's Meadow Wood.

I see tree sparrows [[American Tree Sparrow](#) [Spizella arborea](#)] in loose flocks, chasing one another, on the alders and willows by the brook-side. They keep up a general low and incessant twittering warble, as if suppressed, very sweet at this season, but not heard far. It is, as Wilson says, like a chip-bird [[Chipping Sparrow](#) [Spizella passerina](#)], but this has a spot commonly on breast and a bright-chestnut crown. It is quite striped (bay and brown with dark) above and has a forked tail. I am not quite *sure* that I have seen there before. They are a chubby little bird, and have not the stripes on the breasts which the song sparrow [[Song Sparrow](#) [Melospiza melodia](#) (*melodia*)] has. The last, moreover, has not that striped bay and blackish and ash above. By the bathing-place, I see a song sparrow with his full striped breast. He drops stealthily behind the wall and skulks amid the bushes; now sits behind a post, and peeps round at me, ever restless and quirking his tail, and now and then uttering a faint *chip*. It is not so light beneath as the last.

The muskrat-houses are mostly covered with water now.

Saw a *Solidago nemoralis* in full flower yesterday. Here is the autumnal dandelion and fragrant everlasting [two exclamation marks are inserted in pencil at this point] to-day.

What with the rains and frosts and winds, the leaves have fairly fallen now. You may say the fall has ended. Those which still hang on the trees are withered and dry. I am surprised at the change since last Sunday. Looking at the distant woods, I perceive that there is no yellow nor scarlet there now. They are (except the evergreens) a mere dull, dry red. The autumnal tints are gone. What life remains is merely at the foot of the leaf-stalk. The woods have for the most part acquired their winter aspect,

1853-1854

1853-1854

and coarse, rustling, light-colored withered grasses skirt the river and the wood-side. This is November. The landscape prepared for winter, without snow. When the forest and fields put on their sober winter hue, we begin to look more to the sunset for color and variety.

Now, now is the time to look at the buds [of] the swamp-pink, — some yellowish, some, mixed with their oblong seed-vessels, red, etc. The larger red maple buds have now two sets of scales, three in each. The water andromeda is still green. Along the Depot Brook, the great heads of *Aster puniceus* stand dry and fuzzy and singularly white, — like the goldenrods and other asters, — but some quite low are still green and in flower.

The prevalence of this light, dry color perhaps characterizes November, — that of bleaching withered grass, of the fuzzy gray goldenrods, harmonizing with the cold sunlight, and that of the leaves which still hang on deciduous trees.

The dead-looking fruit of the alders is now conspicuous.



October 31, Monday: [Henry Thoreau](#) made reference to [William Kirby's](#) and [William Spence's](#) AN INTRODUCTION TO [ENTOMOLOGY](#): OR ELEMENTS OF THE NATURAL HISTORY OF INSECTS: WITH PLATES.

BIOLOGY



He and his sister [Sophia Thoreau](#) speculated freely about the mystery of what they were observing:



Oct. 31. 7 A.M. — By river to Nawshawtuot.

Owing to the rain of the 28th added to that of the 23d the river has risen now prob more than 3 feet above where it was a week ago — yet wider over the meadows. Just at the edge, where it is mixed with grass and leaves, it is stiffened slightly this morning. On the trill, I see flocks of robins, flitting from tree to tree and peeping. It is a clear, cool, Novemberish morning, reminding me of those peculiarly pleasant mornings in winter when there is a slight vapor in the atmosphere. The same without snow or ice. There is a fine vapor, twice as high as a house, over the flooded meadows, through which I see the whiter dense smoke columns or streaks from the chimneys of the village, a cheerful scene. Methinks I see, far away toward the woods, a frozen mist suspended against



their sides. What was that very heavy or thick, though not *very* large, hawk that sailed away from a hickory? The Hemlock seeds are apparently ready to drop from their cones. The cones are mostly open. Now appears to be the very time for walnuts. I knock down showers with a stick, but all do not come out of the shells. I believe I have not bathed since Cattle Show— It has been rather too cold— & I have had a cold withal.

P.M. — By boat with [Sophia](#) to my grapes laid down in front of Fair Haven.

It is a beautiful, warm and calm Indian-summer afternoon. The river is so high over the meadows, and the pads

1853-1854

1853-1854

and other low weeds so deeply buried, and the water is so smooth and glassy withal, that I am reminded of a calm April day during the freshets. The coarse withered grass, and the willows, and button-bushes with their myriad balls, and whatever else stands on the brink, are reflected with wonderful distinctness. This shore, thus seen from the boat, is like the ornamented frame of a mirror. The button-balls, etc., are more distinct in the reflection, if I remember, because they have there for background the reflected sky, but the actual ones are seen against the russet meadow. I even see houses a mile off, distinctly reflected in the meadow flood. The cocks crow in barn-yards as if with new lustiness. They seem to appreciate the day. The river is three feet and more above the summer level. I see many pickerel dart away, as I push my boat over the meadows. They lie up there now, and fishing is over, except spearing. You can no longer stand on the true banks to fish, and the fish are too widely dispersed over the grassy-bottomed and shallow meadow. The flood and wind have washed up great quantities of cranberries loosened by the rake, which now line the shore, mixed with the wrecked grass and weeds. We gathered five quarts, partly frost-bitten. There are already myriads of snow-fleas on the water next the shore, and on the cranberries we pick in the wreck, as if they were peppered. When we ripple the surface, the undulating light is reflected from the waves upon the bank and bushes and withered grass. Is not this already November, when the yellow and scarlet tints are gone from the forest?

It is very pleasant to float along over the smooth meadow, where every weed and each stem of coarse grass that rises above the surface has another, answering to it and even more distinct, in the water beneath, making a rhyme to it, so that the most irregular form appears regular. A few scattered dry and clean (very light straw-colored) grasses are so cheap and simple a beauty thus reflected. I see this especially on Potter's meadow. The bright hips of the meadow rose, which we brush against with our boat, — for with tallows & button-bushes it forms islands, — are handsomer thus seen than a closer inspection proves.

Tansy lingers still by [Hubbard's](#) Bridge. But methinks the flowers are disappearing earlier this season than last. I slowly discover that this is a gossamer day. I first see the fine lines stretching from one weed or grass stem or rush to another, sometimes seven or eight feet distant, horizontally and only four or five inches above the water. When I look further, I find that they are everywhere and on everything, sometimes forming conspicuous fine white gossamer webs on the heads of grasses, or suggesting an Indian bat. They are so abundant that they seem to have been suddenly produced in the atmosphere by some chemistry, — spun out of air, — I know not for what purpose. I remember that in Kirby and Spence it is not allowed that the spider can walk on the water to



carry his web across from rush to rush, but here I see myriads of spiders on the water, making some kind of progress, and one at least with a line attached to him. True they do not appear to walk well, but they stand up high and dry on the tips of their toes, and are blown along quite fast. They are of various sizes and colors, though mostly a greenish-brown or else black; some very small. These gossamer lines are not visible unless between you and the sun. We pass some black willows, now of course quite leafless, and when they are between us and the sun they are so completely covered with these fine cobwebs or lines, mainly parallel to one another, that they make one solid woof, a misty woof, against the sun. They are not drawn taut, but curved downward in the middle, like the rigging of vessels, — the ropes which stretch from mast to mast, — as if the fleets of a thousand Lilliputian nations were collected one behind another under bare poles. But when we have floated a few feet further, and thrown the willow out of the sun's range, not a thread can be seen on it.

I landed and walked up and down the causeway and found it the same there, the gossamer reaching across the causeway, though not necessarily supported on the other side. They streamed southward with the slight zephyr. As if the year were weaving her shroud out of light. It seemed only necessary that the insect have a *point d'appui*; and then, wherever you stood and brought the leeward side of its resting-place between you and the sun, this magic appeared. They were streaming in like manner southward from the railing of the bridge, parallel waving threads of light, producing a sort of flashing in the air. You saw five or six feet in length from one position, but when I moved one side I saw as much more, and found that a great many, at least, reached quite across the bridge from side to side, though it was mere accident whether they caught there, — though they were continually broken by unconscious travellers. Most, indeed, were slanted slightly upward, rising about one foot in going four, and, in like manner, they were streaming from the south rail over the water, I know not how far. And there were the spiders on the rail that produced them, similar to those on the water. Fifteen rods off, up the road, beyond the bridge, they looked like a shimmering in the air in the bare tree-tops, the finest, thinnest gossamer veil to the sun, a dim wall.


I am at a loss to say what purpose they serve, and am inclined to think that they are to some extent attached to objects as they float through the atmosphere; for I noticed, before I had gone far, that my grape-vines in a basket in the boat had got similar lines stretching from one twig to another, a foot or two, having undoubtedly caught them as we paddled along. It might well be an electric phenomenon. The air appeared crowded with them. It was a wonder they did not get into the mouth and nostrils, or that we did not feel them on our faces, or continually going and coming amid them did not whiten our clothes more. And yet one with his back to the sun,

1853-1854

1853-1854


walking the other way, would observe nothing of all this. Only stand so as to bring the south side of any tree, bush, fence, or other object between you and the sun. Methinks it is only on these very finest days late in autumn that this phenomenon is seen, as if that fine vapor of the morning were spun into these webs.

According to [Kirby and Spence](#), “in Germany these flights of gossamer appear so constantly in autumn that they are there metaphorically called ‘Der fliegender Sommer’ (the flying or departing summer).” What can possess these spiders thus to run all at once to every the least elevation, and let off this wonderful stream? [Harris](#) tells me he does not know what it means. [Sophia](#) thought that thus at last they emptied themselves and wound up, or, I suggested, unwound, themselves, — cast off their mortal coil. It looks like a mere frolic spending and wasting of themselves, of their vigor, now that there is no further use for it, their prey, perchance, being killed or banished by the frost.

 Late October: The [Chinese Christian](#) army of 70,000 directed at the “demon’s den” of the foreign *Qing* emperor became stalled at the outskirts of [Tianjin](#), and would be unable to proceed into beautiful downtown Beijing.



NOVEMBER 1853

 November: Rapid population growth was an experience that Plymouth, England shared with a great many other towns in the early years of Queen Victoria’s reign. It was one of Britain’s most unhealthy locales. The overcrowding there was as bad as that encountered in all but the most pernicious blackspots of London, Liverpool, or Manchester. Between 1841 and 1850 its rate of mortality had been averaging 25 per thousand, as high as the worst of that nation’s industrial cities. —And, the [cholera](#) of Plymouth and the other British pestholes was, it goes without saying, not refraining from making its way to the United States of America aboard emigrant vessels.

1853-1854

1853-1854

TO EMIGRANTS.

CHOLERA.



CHOLERA having made its appearance on board several Passenger Ships proceeding from the United Kingdom to the United States of America, and having, in some instances, been very fatal, Her Majesty's Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners feel it their duty to recommend to the Parents of Families in which there are many young children, and to all persons in weak health who may be contemplating Emigration, to postpone their departure until a milder season. There can be no doubt that the sea sickness consequent on the rough weather which Ships must encounter at this season, joined to the cold and damp of a sea voyage, will render persons who are not strong more susceptible to the attacks of this disease.

To those who may Emigrate at this season the Commissioners strongly recommend that they should provide themselves with as much warm clothing as they can, and especially with flannel, to be worn next the Skin; that they should have both their clothes and their persons quite clean before embarking, and should be careful to keep them so during the voyage,—and that they should provide themselves with as much solid and wholesome food as they can procure, in addition to the Ship's allowance to be used on the voyage. It would, of course, be desirable, if they can arrange it, that they should not go in a Ship that is much crowded, or that is not provided with a Medical Man.

By Order of the Board,

S. WALCOTT,
SECRETARY.



1853-1854

1853-1854



November: This month's issue of [Harper's New Monthly Magazine](#) featured "A Visit to the Land of the Cocoa and Palm" by [Thomas Ewbank](#).



CONSULT THIS ISSUE

This month's issue of [Putnam's Monthly Magazine](#) began [Herman Melville's](#) [BARTLEBY, THE SCRIVENER: A STORY OF WALL STREET](#).

CONSULT THIS ISSUE

According to page 333 of Laurie Robertson-Lorant's *MELVILLE: A BIOGRAPHY* (NY: Clarkson Potter, 1996), "I would prefer not to," when Bartleby the scrivener was asked by his boss to copy in Melville's story, "[b]y voicing a personal preference, ...throws a monkey wrench into the whole system; it is almost as though Melville created Bartleby to embody [Henry Thoreau's](#) idea that a person who resists oppression actas as 'a counter-friction to the machine' that crushes initiative and creativity." (She does acknowledge that she has been unable to come up with any evidence whatever, of Melville having come into contact with "[CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE](#)." However, she neglects to acknowledge that should this have been Melville's presentation of Thoreau's message –that one should refuse to obey a work supervisor who is interfering with one's initiative and creativity– it was an entire misunderstanding and a trivialization of the discourse.)

1853-1854**1853-1854**

November: [Jack Burton](#) reached Upper Canada and found a few weeks of work at about 7 shillings per day laying ties for a new Great Western rail line between Windsor and [Chatham](#). He began to use the name [John Anderson](#) and got a friend to write 2 letters to inform his wife that he had gotten safely to Detroit, one sent via Tomlin, his father-in-law the barber in Fayette, Missouri, and the other via a free shoemaker of color named Allen in that town. When the work was completed he returned to Windsor and bought some clothing and began to go to school at the establishment of William Bibb.



JACK BURTON AS THE CANADIAN “JOHN ANDERSON”

1853-1854


1853-1854

 November: A 1st child was born to the Reverend [Issachar J. Roberts](#) 罗孝全 and Mrs. [Virginia Young Roberts](#).

[Ellen Fuller Channing](#) took the Channing children and left the home of her husband [Ellery Channing](#) in [Concord](#). [Horace Rice Hosmer](#) was serving as a clerk in Walcott's Grocery Store in Concord. After Ellen left, the Reverend Barzillai Frost arranged for her personal effects to be shipped to her in Worcester, Massachusetts. Hosmer saw the personal effects in transit out of the Channing home on Main Street, and felt very angry with Ellery Channing for a number of reasons, including the fact that he considered Ellen to be "refined and ladylike" — and would have liked to have been married to her himself:

One day three rough cases or boxes were brought to the store containing her books, thrown in like so much rubbish. I looked them over when I had a chance, and ... [t]here were books in Spanish, German and Italian. French of course was well represented, and I think many of them had [Margaret Fuller](#)'s name in them. They remained in the upper room of the store some days till directions were received where to send them. A store keeper like a Doctor has to hold his tongue, but I should have enjoyed lynching Channing at that time.

SPLITSVILLE		
1851	Edwin Forrest	Catherine Sinclair
1852	Ellery Channing	Ellen Kilshaw Fuller Channing
1853	Lola Montez	Patrick Purdy Hull

 November: When [Mrs. Mary Tyler Peabody Mann](#) arrived in Ohio, construction of her house was still at the ground floor, so the Manns were forced into 3 rooms in the North Hall of [Antioch College](#), and then into the home of Judge William Mills, Yellow Springs' leading citizen, who had donated \$20,000 as well as the land on which the college stands. Alpheus Marshall Merrifield pledged to the Manns that he'd have a roof over their heads within 3 weeks, but apparently he had no intention of keeping such a promise as he was allying himself with the religious conservatives of the faculty who were beginning to oppose their new President [Horace Mann, Sr.](#) The roof would not be completed until the following summer. Even before they moved in Mrs. Mann was planting large gardens about her new home but, as it would turn out, the pigs and cattle that roamed freely about the village would render this pointless. Alpheus Marshall Merrifield would keep promising to build a fence to protect the expensive fruit and vegetable seeds Mary would obtain from the east but, as he was merely playing school politics with them (trying to induce them to give up and go away), no such fence was ever going to be forthcoming.

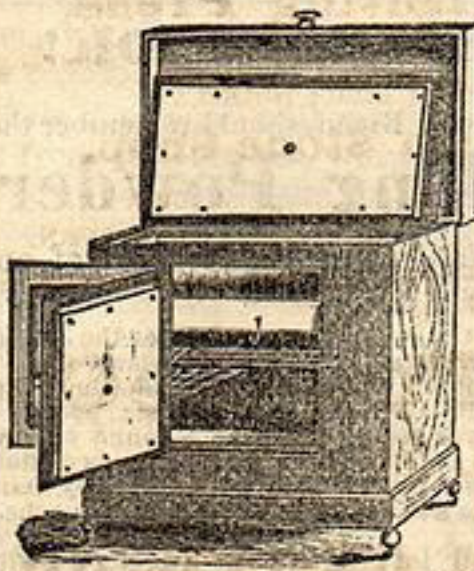
1853-1854

1853-1854



November: This was the sort of icebox being vended during this year, that had been in existence since about the turn of the century:

LYMAN DRURY,
 Manufacturer of and Wholesale and Retail Dealer in
Premium Refrigerators,
65 Front Street.



This REFRIGERATOR received the first Premium, of a Silver Medal, at the late Fair of the Worcester County Mechanics Association, and having now been in use three years, its merits as being superior to every other pattern in use are fully settled.

He is prepared to furnish them, put up in a thorough and substantial manner, with any style of finish and material desired, and warranted perfect and satisfactory.

US patent #10,222 was assigned to Alexander Catlin Twining for his refrigeration device using compressed ethyl ether. He would set up a manufacturing plant in Cleveland, Ohio to produce 2,000 pounds of artificial ice per 24-hour period — and he would find that in Ohio, with an abundance of lakes from which natural ice can economically be harvested in the winters, there would in this period be very little market for his product.

COOLNESS



November: Back in the English midlands for the winter season, from Scotland, the Reverend [Samuel Ringgold Ward](#) took an opportunity to visit the geographical origins of Quakerism — since this was a religious group for which he had always had a particular affection. The Reverend being ill, financial arrangements were made at that time for a retirement of him and his family to the island of [Jamaica](#), and so that his son and widow might not be destitute subsequent to his demise:

[T]here were two old buildings, near to Ulverstone, in Lancashire, which I visited with very peculiar interest, in company with the Rev. James Browne. They are historical buildings, and, to me, of great importance, because of their relation to an honoured branch of the Christian Church to which my people are very much indebted; those buildings are, the former residence and the chapel of George Fox.⁴¹



1853-1854

1853-1854

I saw the house which he frequently visited when a bachelor, and in which he lived after his marriage: also, the window from which he first preached his principles to the people of the neighbourhood. The chapel is a low place, of small size, but neat and substantial; it stands in a pretty, well kept enclosure, still used as a burying-place. The meetings of the Friends, in that locality, are holden in that venerable chapel. Here arose the "Society called Friends, or Quakers." From this humble meeting-house began that sect whose members are in all parts of England, some of them among the most wealthy of living men. In America, how many of their meeting-houses are very much larger than this, the birthplace of Quakerism! indeed, I know of none there so small as this. Here arose a sect despised, ridiculed, persecuted. They spread, however, all over Christendom; they preached the gospel of peace to almost all the families and tribes of living man; they purged their own sect of slaveholding; they have impressed their principles upon the generations among whom they have lived; they have been, in all times, the friends and helpers of the poor and the needy. No sect better than they deserves the distinct appellation of Friends.

They may not now be increasing in numbers; the very reverse of this is true, in some, many, places. In America there have been some sad divisions, and more lamentable heresies, among them; some, indeed, have quite forsaken and forsworn the anti-slavery principles of the sect. But the Society of Friends has accomplished a very important mission; and it may be that, principles and distinctive ideas are so well understood, and so many of the most useful and most catholic of these principles are impressed upon and promulgated by other sects, this pure and honoured denomination can afford the diminution of its members. The defections and heresies of which I have spoken seemed, to me, to be gently rebuked by the old Bible of George Fox, which was chained to a desk in the old meeting-house. It is a quaint old volume, of the date of 1541, and reads after the style of that day. It was the corner-stone of George Fox's faith, the armoury whence he drew his weapons, the directory of his spotless life. Nothing of the antique, nothing of a past age, gave me deeper interest, than the residence, the chapel, and the Bible, of George Fox. If not so antique as other places and things, it was the most ancient of Quaker things, the earliest of the interesting relics of that sect, which has done more for mankind than, perhaps, any other of like numbers, since the days of the apostles and the martyrs.

In connection with this part of the present chapter I beg to observe, that in the winter of 1853-54 I had the pleasure of holding a meeting in the Friends' meeting-house in Kendall. The chairman was the venerable Mr. Braithwaite. He had kindly invited several of the most distinguished personages, including his Worship the Mayor, to meet me. The next morning I met several members of the Braithwaite family, many of whom are married, at the old family mansion, at breakfast. Among the guests was a daughter of the Missionary Moffatt, from Africa. The Scriptures

41. Bunyan's Chapel, at Bedford — Baxter's, Oxendon Street, London — Doddridge's, Northampton — in each of which I have preached, were to me most interesting.

1853-1854**1853-1854**

were read, according to the good old custom of the Friends; and then Mrs. Braithwaite, who has been a minister for many years, preached a short sermon. I never heard any discourse more pointed, more benevolent, more touching. She began upon the fact that there were in the room persons from different and distant countries, representatives of different races and climes, professing love towards and faith in a common Saviour, and worshipping the same Heavenly Father. She dwelt with delight upon that scene, as one somewhat similar to the gathering of the redeemed around a common board in heaven, at a future day. I do not pretend to give her words, but shall never forget the Christian kindness which was breathed in every one of them. Upon leaving, Mrs. Braithwaite warmly shook my hand, and bade me "farewell," giving me advice as to my health, and commending me to the gracious protection of God. We never shall meet again on earth; but to have met such a disciple of Jesus once, was a privilege worthy of more than ordinary appreciation.

John Morland, Esq., a member of the Society of Friends, did me the honour, upon hearing me at Croydon, in February last, of coming to me after the meeting, to make arrangements for a lecture in the Friends' School, in Croydon, that the pupils might have an opportunity of hearing me plead in the slave's behalf. The meeting was arranged and held. Mr. Morland kindly made me his guest, and took me in his carriage to introduce me to the venerable Peter Bedford, Esq., the coadjutor of Clarkson. After the meeting, the boys of the school presented me with a generous donation, and a most kind and affectionate written address, which I shall preserve as a memento of those most interesting young gentlemen. "May the angel who redeemed Jacob from all evil, bless the lads!"

To another member of the Society of Friends – John Candler, Esq., of Chelmsford – I am under peculiar obligations, and must state them, though without his permission. I had read of that benevolent gentleman, before coming to Europe – had known of his travels in Brazil, the West Indies, and America, in prosecution of his zealous anti-slavery labours. I knew that, like Forster – the venerable and self-sacrificing Forster – he was ready, if God pleased, to lay down his life in a foreign country, rather than be disobedient to the dictates of duty, as impressed upon him by the Spirit of God. But it was not my pleasure and privilege to meet Mr. Candler until last November: indeed, when I was first at Chelmsford, Mrs. Candler, whom I had the pleasure of meeting, informed me that he had not returned from America, whither, at an advanced age, he had accompanied Mr. Forster on his last errand of mercy to the slave.

In December last, by an arrangement which Messrs. Wells and Perry had kindly made for me, I spoke in Chelmsford. The Rev. Mr. Wilkinson kindly occupied the chair. A vote of thanks was to be proposed, according to arrangement, and Mr. Candler generously consented to perform this part. In speaking, as his abundant experience and extensive travels fully qualified him to do, he entirely confirmed my statements; and publicly said that, if in going to Jamaica I should visit the parish of St. George, where he owned a parcel of land, I should be most welcome to fifty acres of it. Since that time Mr. Candler has confirmed his gift, and given instructions accordingly to his solicitor,

W.W. Anderson, Esq., of Jamaica. And, that I may do full justice to my benefactor, whose munificence commenced with me in a public meeting, on public grounds and for public purposes, I may venture to add, that Mr. Candler has sold me his entire interest in the tract referred to, at a price so nominal as to make it equivalent to a gift. He has also advised Mr. Anderson, who owns the remaining moiety, to treat me with like kindness. I have already arranged with Mr. Anderson for that moiety. Thus, if my family shall be relieved from a position of dependence, after my death — it will, under God, be owing more to Mr. John Candler, of Chelmsford, than to any other man. That I propose changing the name of the estate from Albany to Candler Park,⁴² will not appear strange.

The duty of spending a portion of every year in Jamaica, until my son shall be old enough to attend to that property, is thus made clear to me. It may be, that our Heavenly Father will permit me to be of some service to my people in that island.

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Read  **Henry Thoreau's Journal for November 1853 (æf. 36)**



November 1, Tuesday: The principal of the Louisville, Kentucky High School, [Professor William H.G. Butler](#), chastised a student Robert J. Ward, Jr., allegedly whipping him for allegedly telling a lie, and for that on the following day he would be pistoled down.⁴³ [I will replay this story step by step as it develops over subsequent months, since it is so relevant to a story we have all heard about [Henry Thoreau](#) having physically punished students in Concord, Massachusetts. There are many elements of this story about Thoreau's schoolteaching that remain exceedingly mysterious and as yet unconsidered. For instance, the standard story of this period in Henry's life fails to mention a distinction that were then vital, between punishment by means of the ferrule across the hand, and punishment by a leather strap, the "cowhide"; that standard story fails also to take account of the fact that students might well have often been bringing their loaded squirrel rifles into the school-building and storing them along with their coats and hats near the door, that some students may well have been obtaining entirely legal penny drops of opium at the grocery store on their way to class in the morning in order to make the drudgery of the student experience bearable — and that none of this ready availability of guns in the period and none of this ready availability of hard drugs in the period seems to have had any impact whatever on the school experience.]

On this day [Thoreau](#) wrote about a pine tree that:



... is as immortal as I am, and will go to as high a heaven, there to tower above me still...

and amplified this by writing about a hypothetical animal that was so much more capable than the human species that it could kill us and make buttons of our bones. Such a species could:



... prate of the usefulness of man.

His moral:

42. There is another estate called Albany, in the county of Cornwall. This is in the county of Surrey, on the Great Spanish River.

43. This pistoling was **almost without precedent** in American experience, but there had been one previous event of which we are presently aware. On November 12th, 1820 in Charlottesville, Virginia a law professor at the University of Virginia, [John Anthony Gardner Davis](#), had attempted to intercede in a student riot and had been pistoled down by one of the rioting students, Joseph Green Semmes — and 3 days later had died.

1853-18



Every creature is better alive than dead.

1853-1854



Nov. 1. 6.30 A.M. — To Hubbard's Bridge; to see the gossamer.

As I go up the back road (the sun rises about this hour), I am struck with [the] general stillness as far as birds are concerned. There is now no loud, cheerful effervescing with song as in the spring. Most are gone. I only hear some crows [**American Crow** *Corvus brachyrhynchos*] toward the woods. The road and ruts are all frosted and stiff, and the grass and clover leaves. At Swamp Bridge, I see crystals of ice six feet long, like very narrow and sharp spears, or like great window-sashes without glass between them, floating on the water. I see yarrow, autumnal dandelion, and I suppose that is turnip so freshly in flower in Hubbard's field. Now that the sun is fairly risen, I see and hear a flock of larks [**Eastern Meadowlark** *Sturnella magna* (~~Lark~~)] in Wheeler's meadow on left of the Corner road, singing exactly as in spring and twittering also, but rather faintly or suppressedly, as if their throats had grown up or their courage were less. The white birch seeds *begin* to fall and leave the core bare. I now hear a robin [**American Robin** *Turdus migratorius*], and see him, Hear some noisy and restless jays [**Blue Jay** *Cyanocitta cristata*], and a song sparrow [**Song Sparrow** *Melospiza melodia* (*melodia*)] chips faintly: and here on the willows is a little warbler (?), with a narrow, sharp bill and a forked tail, uttering a dry chip from time to time, and, I suspect, picking up those little spiders which I saw yesterday, which spin this gossamer.

The gossamer does not show well against this sun. There is none now streaming from the bridge or across the causeway after this frosty night; only that which was firmly fastened and comparatively short remains still on the trees and bushes. The railing is covered with frost, and I see no spiders out. Plainly the best hour to observe this phenomenon is mid-afternoon or later, when the spiders are full of activity and the sun is in the most favorable position.

But yesterday, on the willows, it was a woof, without warp, of the finest conceivable texture, as it were made to strain the air and light, — catch all the grossness of the declining year and leave us the clear, strained November air, — fall-strained. I saw no insects caught in it. As if every prominence in every twig were connected with corresponding ones in every other by a fine line, entangling the rays of light, really catching and reflecting the light alone for all prey that I could see. Or is it a despairing effort? Now that the air is so cool and clear and free of insects, what possesses these little creatures to toil and spin so? Thus Nature gathers up her trail, and finely concludes. One six feet long, and invisible but in one position, in that was seen to stream or wave and flap a foot up and down while the light flashed along it, like a ribbon blown by the wind. You could even take hold of the end and hold it still. And the number of them was beyond conception. No industry is vain, and this must have a reason. It must be a perfect day that allows of so fine a display. Any rain or a high wind and, I suspect, whatever makes a disagreeable day, would hinder it. As I return, I notice crows [**American Crow** *Corvus brachyrhynchos*] flying southwesterly in a very long straggling flock, of which I see probably neither end. A small flock of red-wings [**Red-winged Blackbird** *Agelaius phoeniceus*] singing as in spring.

P.M. — Went after pink azaleas and walnuts by boat.

Saw three of those birds (of which I saw one first on the 30th October) on the water's edge on the meadow, like the telltale [~~Tell-tale~~ (**Greater Yellowlegs** *Tringa melanoleuca*; **Lesser Yellowlegs** *Tringa flavipes*)]. They must be either sandpipers [**Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularia*], tell tales (not the greater or lesser), or plovers [**Upland Sandpiper** *Bartramia longicauda*] (?). Or may they be the turnstone [**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*]? They went off each time with a chuckling, not whistling, note. A rise of the river like this brings us new birds at once, apparently from the seaside. This locality is somewhat peculiar in thus respect, that when our broad meadows are flooded, several new species of birds are added to our ordinary list. They are not so large as the other tattler [**Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularia*] I see, nor as a woodcock [**Woodcock**, **American** *Scolopax minor*], quite.

It is a pleasant day but breezy, and now I can hardly detect any gossamer left on the willows. This wind, perchance, shaking the willows and the reeds, — shaking and bending their masts, — strains and breaks this fine cordage, and, moreover, the spiders cannot well walk on the surface of the water now. So, it would seem, it must not only be a perfectly fair Indian-summer day, but quite calm and the water smooth, to permit of this wonderful display, and, perchance, after one of those remarkable



1853-1854

1853-1854

and memorable mornings when the air is peculiarly clear and resonant and that white vapor as of frost-steam hangs over the earth,— after a clear, cool, calm Indian-summer morning in November. And must it not always follow the fall of the leaf, when there is least motion to the twigs? The short time in which it must be produced, and for which it endures, is remarkable.

As I paddle under the Leaning Hemlocks, the breeze rustles the boughs, and showers of their fresh winged seeds come wafted down to the water and are carried round and onward in the great eddy there.

Gathered five or six quarts of walnuts, — pignuts, — partly by clubbing the trees, thinking they might furnish entertainment some evening the coming winter. Not more than half are out of the shells, but it is pleasant shelling them to have one's fingers scented with their fine aroma. The red squirrel reproves the while. It is not true, as I noticed to-day, that squirrels never gnaw an imperfect and worthless nut. Many years ago I came here nutting with some boys who came to school to me; one of them climbed daringly to the top of a tall walnut to shake. He had got the nickname of Buster for similar exploits, so that some thought he was christened so. It was a true Indian name, earned for once.

A striped squirrel out yet.

While getting the azaleas, I notice the shad-bush conspicuously leafing out. Those long, narrow, pointed buds, prepared for next spring, have anticipated their time. I noticed something similar when



surveying the Hunt woodlot last winter. Remember in this connection that at one period last spring this bud appeared the most forward.

About three weeks ago my indignation was roused by hearing that one of my townsmen, notorious for meanness, was endeavoring to get and keep a premium of four dollars which a poor Irish laborer whom he hired had gained by fifteen minutes' spading at our Agricultural Fair. To-night a free colored woman is lodging at our house, whose errand to the North is to get money to buy her husband, who is a slave to one Moore in Norfolk, Virginia. She persuaded Moore, though not a kind master, to buy him that he might not be sold further South. Moore paid six hundred dollars for him, but asks her eight hundred. My most natural reflection was that he was even meaner than my townsman. As mean as a slaveholder!⁴⁴

44. Clearly, at the time Henry believed this free colored woman. However, since nobody has been able to establish her name —or the name of her alleged slave husband —or the full name and address of this alleged mean Norfolk slaveholder, the possibility remains that her narrative was a fabrication.



1853-1854

1853-1854



November 2, Wednesday: The [Dred Scott](#) declaration was filed asserting that on January 1st, 1853 he, his wife, and their 2 children had been assaulted and wrongfully imprisoned by Sanford, causing damages of \$9,000.

[Johannes Brahms](#) departed from Düsseldorf with recommendations from Robert Schumann, heading toward Leipzig.




[Henry Thoreau](#) was elected curator of the Concord Lyceum, a position that he would feel he needed to decline because –he would later explain for the benefit of his journal– he couldn't figure out “where to find good lecturers enough to make a course for the winter.”



[Matthew Flourney Ward](#), who was in his 20s and a son of the richest man in Kentucky, Robert J. Ward, shot and killed the principal of the Louisville High School, Professor William H.G. Butler, who on the previous day had chastised a younger brother, 15-year-old Robert J. Ward, Jr. He had taken two pistols to the school to confront this teacher after on the previous day the teacher allegedly had whipped his younger brother, allegedly for telling a lie. The father would spare no expense, providing a team of 18 defense attorneys. The case would be brought by Alfred Allen, the commonwealth's attorney, before Circuit Judge Jesse W. Kincheloe in Hardin Circuit Court. The jurors would be Greene Walker, James Crutcher, T.M. Yates, George Stump, R. McIntire, John Young, Thomas Thurston, J.C. Chenowith, Asa Buckles, W. Eidson, Abraham Neighbors, and Richard Pierce. The prosecution would introduce 21 witnesses, the defense more than 70.



Nov. 2. What is Nature unless there is an eventful human life passing within her? Many joys and many sorrows are the lights and shadows in which she shows most beautiful.

P.M. — To Walden and Flint's.

What are those sparrows in loose flocks which I have seen two or three weeks — some this afternoon on the railroad causeway, — with small heads and rather long necks in proportion to body, which is longish and slender, yellowish-white or olivaceous breast, striped with dark, ashy sides of neck, whitish over and beneath the eye; and some white observed in tail when they fly? [**Vesper Sparrow**  *Pooecetes gramineus*?] I think a dark bill and legs. They utter a peculiar note, not heard here at other seasons, somewhat like the linarias [**Common Redpoll**  *Carduelis flammea*) (or ~~Lesser Redpoll or Red-crown~~), a sort of shuffling or chuckling *tche-tche-tche-tche*, quickly uttered. Can they be the grass-bird [**Vesper Sparrow**  *Pooecetes gramineus*]? They resemble it in marking. They are much larger than the tree sparrows. Methinks it [is] a very common fall bird.


C. says he saw succory yesterday, and a loon  on the pond the 30th ult. The prinus berries are almost gone. I am somewhat surprised to find that the *Aster undulatus* at Walden is killed by the frost; only one low and obscure one has any flowers left. Therefore, though it is the latest aster that is abundant, I am not sure that it lasts absolutely longer than the *A. puniceus*, or even *Tradescanti*. I see no other flowers on the Peak. Poke berries there are still partly green, partly ripe, as usual. The leaves of the umbelled pyrola are as glossy as in the spring, which proves that they do not owe their glossiness in the spring to the influence of that season. Two ducks  on Walden. The Canada snapdragon is still fresh and in flower by roadside near pond, and a sprig from root of *Solidago nemoralis*.

I gather some fine large pignuts by the wall (near the beech trees) on Baker's land. It is just the time to get these, and this seems to be quite early enough for most pignuts. I find that there have been plenty of beechnuts, and there are still some empty burs on the trees and many nuts on the ground, but I cannot find one with meat in it. The beech leaves have all fallen except some about the lower part of the trees, and they make a fine thick bed on the ground. They are very beautiful, firm, and perfect leaves, unspotted and not eaten by insects, of a handsome, clear leather-color, like a book bound in calf. Crisp and elastic; no wonder they make beds of them. Of a clear [space left in manuscript] or leather-color, more or less dark and remarkably free from stains and imperfections. They cover the ground so perfectly and cleanly as to tempt you to recline on it and admire the beauty of their smooth boles from that position, covered with lichens of various colors-green, etc. — which

1853-1854

1853-1854

you think you never see elsewhere. They impress you as full of health and vigor, so that their bark can hardly contain their spirits but lies in folds or wrinkles about their ankles like a sock, with the embonpoint of infancy, wrinkles of fat.

The pollen [*sic*] of the *Lycopodium dendroideum* falls in showers or in clouds when my foot strikes it. How long? The witch-hazel appears to be nearly out of bloom, most of the flowers withering or frost-bitten. The shrub oak cups which I notice to-day have lost their acorns. I examined a squirrel's nest in a tree which suggested to me (it having a foundation of twigs, coarse basketwork above, shreds or fibres of bark and a few leaves) that perchance the squirrel, like the mouse, sometimes used a deserted bird's nest, — a crow's or Hawk's. A red-tailed hawk **Red-tailed Hawk**  **Buteo jamaicensis** (~~Hen Hawk~~).

Among the buds, etc., etc., to be noticed now, remember the alder and birch catkins, so large and conspicuous — on the alder, pretty red catkins dangling in bunches of three or four, — the minute red buds of the paniced andromeda, the roundish plump ones of the common hazel, the longish sharp ones of the witch-hazel, etc.

The sun sets. We come home in the autumn twilight, which lasts long and is remarkably light, the air being purer, — clear white light, which penetrates the woods, — is seen through the woods, — the leaves being gone. When the sun is set, there is no sudden contrast, no deep darkening, but a clear, strong white light still prevails, and the west finally glows with a generally diffused and moderate saffron-golden (?). Coming home by boat the other evening, I smelled a traveller's pipe very strongly a third of a mile distant. He was crossing Wood's Bridge. The evening star is now very bright; and is that Jupiter near it?

I might put by themselves the November flowers, —flowers which survive severe frosts and the fall of the leaf. I see hedge-mustard very fresh.

Those plants which are earliest in the spring have already made the most conspicuous preparation for that season. The skunk-cabbage spathes have started, the alder catkins, as I have said, hazel, etc.; and is there anything in the double scales of the maples, the prominent scales of willow and other catkins, sometimes burst (?). A part of the lambkill is turned dull-reddish.

The last two, this and yesterday, fine days, but not. gossamer ones.



November 3, Thursday: When lawyer-publisher-adventurer William Walker arrived in La Paz, Baja California with 45 followers from [San Francisco](#), he proclaimed Baja California as the “Republic of Lower California” and immediately relocated its capital to Ensenada.

[Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed, for Amos and Noah Wheeler, some property near the north part of Nut Meadow Brook on Sudbury and Old Marlborough Roads.







When [Bronson Alcott](#) departed from Concord for his 1st lecture tour in the great West, namely the great canal towns of Syracuse, Rochester, and Buffalo, then Cleveland, and Medina where the Alcotts had relatives, and [Cincinnati, Ohio](#), he had a travel fund of \$18 from [Waldo Emerson](#) in his pocket and an intent to offer conversations on “The Leading Representative Minds of New England.”



Nov. 3. 6.30 A.M. — To Swamp Bridge Brook by river.

Considerable thin mist, high as two houses.

Just as the sun is rising, many undoubtedly of the same white-in-tail sparrows [**Vesper Sparrow**  **Pooecetes gramineus**] described four pages back are flying high over my head west and northwest, above the thin mist, perchance to where they see the sun on the wood-side; with that peculiar shelly note. I think it was the 27th October I saw a goldfinch [**American Goldfinch**  **Carduelis tristis**]. There are two or three tree sparrows [**American Tree Sparrow**  **Spizella arborea**] flitting and hopping along amid the alders and willows, with their fine silvery *tchip*, unlike the dry loud chip of the song sparrow [**Song Sparrow**  **Melospiza melodia**].


The *Aster puniceus* by brook is still common, though the worse for the wear, — low and more recent ones, — so that this, though a week ago it was less prevalent, must be set down as later than the *A. undulatus*. It bears

1853-1854

1853-1854

the frosts much better, though it has been exposed to more severe ones from its position. And with this must be included that smooth and narrower-leaved kind, in other respects the same, one of which, at least, I think I have called *A. longifolius*. They seem to run into each other. I am inclined to think it a smoother *A. longifolius*. Now is the time to observe the radical leaves of many plants, which put forth with springlike vigor and are so unlike the others with which we are familiar that it is sometimes difficult to identify them. What is that huge circular green and reddish one, flat in the grass of upland which I have seen for a fortnight? [It is the great primrose. There are none (but by chance) about the base of this year's stalks, *i.e.* perhaps unless there is an offshoot.]



I love to see a man occasionally from whom the usnea will hang as naturally as from a spruce. Cultivation exterminates the pine, but preserves the elm. Our front-yard evergreens are puny and trimmed up. Heard a bluebird [**Eastern Bluebird**  *Sialia sialis*] about a week ago. There are very few phenomena which can be described indifferently as occurring at different seasons of the year, for they will occur with some essential difference.

P.M. — To Ministerial Swamp.

A warm westerly wind, the sky concealed and a storm gathering. A sober, cloudy afternoon. To-day I see yarrow, very bright; red clover; autumnal dandelion; the silvery potentilla, and one *Canadensis* and the *Norvegica*; and a dandelion; *Veronica arvensis*; and gnawel; one *Aster laevis* (!) by the Hosmer Ditch; and, to my surprise, that solidago of September 11th, still showing some fresh yellow petals and a very fresh stem and leaves. It must be later than the *speciosa*, and this makes me doubt if it can be the *stricta*. It has a very angled stem and erect narrow pyramidal corymb. Also *S. nemoralis* by roadside. This, though it was not so prevalent as the *caesia* three weeks ago, is still to be seen, while I have not seen the other for some days. It may outlast it, as the *A. puniceus* does the *A. undulatus*, though, by the way, I saw a very fresh *A. undulatus* this afternoon. I hear a few crickets and locusts (?) and see a very small brown beetle. The thistle radical leaves and fragrant everlasting not to be forgotten. Perhaps I have made the everlastings too late! A small gyrimus in Nut Meadow Brook. Since the change and fall of the leaf a remarkable prominence is given to the evergreens; their limits are more distinctly defined as you look at distant woods, since the leaves of deciduous trees ceased to be green and fell. Very small pollywogs in pools, one and a half or two inches long. I see many white pine cones fallen and open, with a few seeds still in them. The cones of the spruce are nearly empty, hanging downward; [Probably old ones.] those of the larch are also open, but, being upright, appear to have a few more seeds in them. I make it my business to extract from Nature whatever nutriment she can furnish me, though at the risk of endless iteration. I milk the sky and the earth. The potamogeton seeds in Nut Meadow Brook have partly left the stem.

I hear the sound of the woodchopper's axe.



November 4, Friday: The Sultan of Turkey declared war upon the Russian invaders.

Peter Cornelius moved into the Altenburg in Weimar at the invitation of Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein.

O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden for solo voices, chorus, and orchestra was performed for the initial time, in Leipzig on the 6th anniversary of the composer Felix Mendelssohn's death.


When **Bronson Alcott** reached Medina on his 1st lecture tour in the great West, he was able to enjoy a weekend visit with cousin Hiram Bronson, aunt Sylvia Alcott, and uncle Noah Bronson.

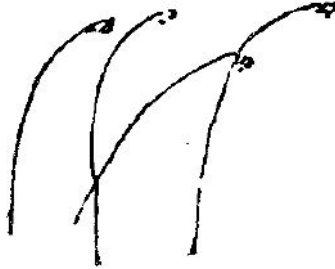
1853-18



1853-1854

Nov. 4. P.M. — To Hubbard's Close.

I find no traces of the fringed gentian there, so that in low meadows I suspect it does not last very late. Hear a nuthatch [**White-breasted Nuthatch**  *Sitta carolinensis* (~~White-bellied Nuthatch~~)]. The fertile catkins of the yellow birch appear to be in the same state with those of the white, and their scales are also shaped like birds, but much larger. The great osmundas in Hubbard's Swamp have universally lost their leaflets, except perhaps one or two small crisped brown ones at the extremity, and the bare midribs alone are left. They look thin and Novemberish.



November 5, Saturday: The 1st [telegram](#) was sent in [Mexico](#), between Mexico City and Nopaluca, Puebla.

At some point during this month the [Empire County Argus](#) was started up in Coloma, [California](#), but we are not certain when because early copies have not yet been located (the earliest copies we have as yet found date to March 1854).

In Placer, [California](#) the [Herald](#) reported that a miner at Spanish Flat a short distance from Auburn, a few days since, had come across a lump of pure gold worth \$500.

In Placerville, [California](#) the [Herald](#) (not the same paper as the [Placer Herald](#) above) was reduced to bloviating during the off season:

As the great center of the middle mining district of California, Placerville stands proudly pre-eminent, not only as a mart for trade in every description of merchandise, required by the common as well as peculiar wants of a great mining population, but it is likewise, as a consequence to its situation, the great emporium of the gold dust trade among the mountains of the middle district.

And this position it will maintain, in consequence of the great extent and value of what are termed the deep diggings abounding in this vicinity — There is scarcely a hill within the compass of five miles (and there is nothing but hills and gulches) that does not contain its gold mine, and many of them number their dozens. Tunnels and shafts pierce the hills in every direction; and the prospect of the winter's yield better than ever before. This is partly owing to the fact that new discoveries are almost daily made, but more particularly from the abundance of water that will be brought to them, through artificial channels, by the various mining water companies.

Immediately to the south of Placerville, distant about a mile is Coon Hollow and hill, a locality celebrated, not only for the great extent and productiveness of its deep diggings, but particularly for the purity of its gold. Immediately on the



1853-1854

1853-1854

commencement of the winter's rains the South Fork Canal will convey to this locality an amount of water sufficient for mining operations to the full extent of the demand, which it has never before enjoyed.

Two miles beyond, on the direct road to Sacramento, is Diamond Springs. Here and indeed for miles around, are scattered with no sparing hand, some of the richest placer and surface diggings to be found in the State; and in consequence of the water introduced and to be introduced over its entire extent by the mining water companies of Bradley, Bedan & Co. and Jones Furman & Co., this vast gold field will yield ten-fold more the coming winter than during any previous rainy season.

To the east of Diamond Springs are the mining villages of Weber, Ringgold, Fort Jim and Newtown, on Weber Creek, all of which are beginning to receive their usual winter accessions of mining population; and the prospect of a successful winter's work and yield, among the rich placers and gulches of that portion of El Dorado County, was never better than at present. While at Smith's Flats, two miles to the east of our city, the greatest activity prevails, preparatory to the introduction of an abundant supply of water, by the South Fork Canal on the commencement of the rainy season.

White Rock, four miles from our city, in an easterly direction famed alike for the purity of its gold as well as the great extent of its surface, gulch and deep or coyote diggings, now using almost the entire water of the South Fork Canal, will, on the first approach of the rainy season, literally swarm with its increased mining population; and from the preparation in progress, it is easy to predict, and with certainty, a much larger winter's yield than any that has preceded it. Between White Rock and our city lie the Reservoir and Negro Hill diggings, of great extent and value, and only await the abundance of water that the early rains, that by means of the canal, will be furnished to the owners of claims, to make it one of the most productive localities in the mines.

Big Canyon, Cold Springs and Middletown to the north and west of Placerville, with each its own extensive mining district, ready to pour into the common aggregate each its own proportion, and this largely increased over former years cannot but satisfy anyone, that the prospect for an increased yield of gold from the places that surround Placerville, as a center, over every season that has preceded it, is more than ordinarily flattering.

The [California Democratic State Journal](#) reported about gold mining in Nevada County:

at the Yuba, about Jefferson we found some companies doing quite well; but we could not help thinking their system of working lacked the thoroughness so common about Nevada.

About Washington to Poor Man's Creek nothing is to be seen but a barren ridge.

At Poorman's Creek, the miners appear to be doing a very good business, and all seem to be at work, making from ten to fifteen dollars per day.

From here until we arrived near Eureka, we scarcely saw anything that indicated animal life much less anything of mining enterprise.

1853-1854

1853-1854

Two miles east of Eureka is located the celebrated National Quartz Lead. It is on the same ridge, dividing the waters of the Middle Yuba and Poorman's Creek. It courses the ridge diagonally, running almost north and south, the surface of the ground being strewn with fragments of broken quartz. It crops out on each side of the ridge at the depth of about forty feet lower than the top of the ridge. It has been quite imperfectly opened, though uncovered in three or four places, showing a continuous ridge of unbroken rock. On the north end it has been uncovered to the depth of about 16 feet, the excavation extending into the hill about 20 feet. Here the only place one can have a fair view of its quality. The whole surface of this huge mass of rock, on the top (15 feet wide) and on each side is literally sprinkled over or impregnated with gold, indicating an extent of mineral wealth rarely beheld. If such indications as are here seen, should ever fail to produce a fair remuneration for investments of capital and labor, quartz mining had better be abandoned.

At Eureka things look more brisk. A few persons were mining with good success. The ground in that vicinity will pay for working. But more is doing here in the way of improvements than otherwise. There is now one saw mill in operation and another constructing. A water ditch, taken from Poorman's Creek, will in a short time carry the water over the ridge, so as to invite the industry of some hundreds of enterprising miners. Here too, the flume by which the water of the Middle Yuba is to be carried over the ridges, passes over the hill and continues near the top for a considerable distance.

The lead at Minnesota, from which large amounts of gold have been taken, has long ascertained to run in a direction from the northwest to the southeast and has been traced from Oregon Creek to Snow Point, a distance of six miles. The lead is about two hundred feet in width, and passes through the mountain at a point about six hundred feet above the water in the Middle Yuba, and four hundred feet below the highest ridge, after passing through the mountain it appears again at Chips'. Strange as it may appear, **there can be no doubt that this lead is the bed of an ancient river**, that must have flowed towards the South long before the mountains now standing, were thrown into their present shape, for the mines on working into the mountain on this lead, find nothing but round, water-worn quartz boulders, and among them the remains of trees, that in some places appear changed to a substance resembling sulphate of iron, in others the wood remains, only decayed so much as to offer but little resistance to the pick. In other places among these boulders are found large deposits of decayed leaves and branches. With but one exception, all the trees and leaves found appear to belong to a species of pine or cedar. In one of these tunnels a log was found, petrified, that had the appearance of once having been of oak, on it could be distinctly seen the marks made by its striking among the rocks as it floated down the river.




Nov. 5. P.M. — To [Hubbard](#) Bathing-Place for shrubs.

Most of the muskrat-cabins were lately covered by the flood, but now that it has gone down in a great measure, leaving the cranberries stranded amid the wreck of rushes, reeds, grass, etc., I notice that



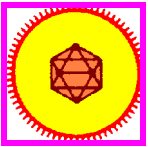
1853-1854

1853-1854

they have not been washed away or much injured, as a heap of manure would have been, they are so artificially constructed. Moreover, for the most part they are protected, as well as concealed, by the button-bushes, willows, or weeds about them. What exactly are they for? This is not their breeding season. I think that they are merely an artificial bank, an air-chamber near the water, houses of refuge. But why do they need them more at this season than in the summer, it may be asked. Perhaps they are constructed just before the rise of the water in the fall and winter, so that they may not have to swim so far as the flood would require in order to eat their clams. I heard some pleasant notes from tree sparrows [Tree Sparrow, American  *Spizella arborea*] on the willows as I paddled by. The buds of the rhodora are among the more conspicuous now, and yet more its seed-vessels, many if not most of which are not yet dry, but purplish.



November 6, Sunday: An outbreak of the [yellow fever](#) (also known as the [black vomit](#)) in [New Orleans](#) had by this point killed 7,848 Americans, so, of course, people were pointing their fingers at each other. Because I am here preparing this account of the events of the year 1853 during the COVID-19 epidemic of 2020, and because as I am doing this Louisiana is shaping up to become one of the hardest hit of our states during this current crisis, I have decided to include at this point an account of the great “Saffron Scourge” that so seriously challenged Louisiana during 1853. The following has been extracted, minus footnotes, from Chapter 3 of Jo Ann Carrigan’s 1961 Ph.D. dissertation at Louisiana State University, THE SAFFRON SCOURGE: A HISTORY OF YELLOW FEVER IN LOUISIANA, 1796-1905:



In a series of visitations spread over a century of Louisiana’s history, the Saffron Scourge achieved a peak of virulence in the 1850s, striking four severe blows in the space of six years; in 1853, 1854, 1855, and 1858. The survivors scarcely had time to forget one epidemic before the appearance of still another. In the four major attacks of the 1850s, the pestilence swept away over 18,000 persons in New Orleans alone, a sufficient number to populate several small towns.

Between the extensive outbreak of 1847 and that most malignant of all epidemics in 1853, New Orleans was not exempt entirely from the fever. During that five-year period, the disease claimed a total of more than 2,000 lives. In the absence of a violent epidemic, however, New Orleanians allowed themselves to hope and then to believe that yellow fever was no longer a disease to be feared.... The ideal of cleanliness and the reality of effecting such a condition in New Orleans remained unreconciled, and in the summer of 1853, with frequent rains and the sun’s excessive heat, the sanitary condition of the city steadily worsened. The Crescent City newspapers complained indignantly of the filthy streets and repeatedly denounced the city government and the Street Commissioner for neglecting their duties. In view of the unsanitary condition of the city, Dr. Erasmus Fenner thought it rather strange that anyone should look beyond New Orleans for the cause of the pestilence. “Indeed it was so bad,” said Dr. Fenner, “that if it had given rise to Egyptian Plague instead of yellow fever, it ought not to have surprised anyone....” In May of 1853 the earliest cases appeared and were pronounced yellow fever by the attending physicians at Charity Hospital, but other physicians, who also viewed the cases, disagreed with the original diagnosis. According to Dr. Fenner, the discussion and debate proceeded along these lines:

Some thought the subjects were too yellow, Others that



1853-1854

1853-1854

the yellowness was not exactly of the right hue ... some said what was pronounced black vomit was not dark enough, others that it was too black; others, again that it was not black vomit because it was of a reddish hue; whilst others, admitting a resemblance, still could not find "the old fashioned Black Vomit." Some would not admit the cases were Yellow Fever, because they occurred "too early in the season," -they had never known Yellow Fever to break out so early in this city, and therefore did not think it possible.

Finally, on June 10, an "unquestionable case" entered Charity Hospital; an Irish girl from Tchoupitoulas Street who turned quite yellow, provided large quantities of "unmistakeable, old-fashioned, coffee-grounds black vomit," and thereby ended the medical controversy. "The skeptics all gave it up after seeing this," said Fenner. From late May and early June the fever made steady progress, but received little publicity until mid-July. New Orleans had no Board of Health at the time. Lacking sufficient authority to enforce its regulations and denied support by the city fathers, the last board had adjourned *sine die* in 1852, leaving only a secretary. Weekly interment reports then were issued under the direction of the mayor and the secretary of the late board. "This was all the correct information that was published," Fenner stated, "and even this was complained of by some who thought it better to suppress the truth than cause a panic. The Crescent City journals published the interment lists and an occasional report from Charity Hospital, but avoided commentary on the disease. Meanwhile the death count steadily increased. Finally on July 13 the Orleanian admitted the existence of yellow fever in the city but discounted its importance. On the same day, several newspapers printed a notice calling a meeting of the Howard Association, the organization which ministered to the needs of the poor during an epidemic. This should have furnished a clue to many readers that the situation was a serious one, By July 16 the pestilence had claimed over 300 lives, and as the word spread through the city along with the disease, citizens fled the scene by the thousands. During the week ending July 23, more than 400 persons died of the fever. Under pressure from the newspapers, which at last had begun to comment on the situation, and urged on by the Mayor, the City Council finally appointed a temporary board of health on July 25. Within two weeks time, the board had established four infirmaries for the indigent sick and two temporary asylums for children orphaned by the epidemic. At this point, horrible scenes of suffering and death could be witnessed throughout the city. Entire families fell victim to the raging pestilence, and "tenants for the cemeteries" multiplied faster than graves could be provided. In order to speed up the process, the grave-diggers soon resorted to long ditches, eighteen to twenty-four inches deep, into which they tossed the coffins and threw on a "few shovelfuls of dirt." The daily rains soon washed away this thin covering and bared the coffins to the blistering heat of the sun which followed each brief downpour. Frequently the putrefying bodies burst through the hastily-built coffins and filled the air "far and near, with the most intolerable pestilential odors." In August the mortality reached incredible

1853-1854**1853-1854**

heights: over 900 the first week, 1,200 the next, and two full weeks of over 1,300 each. Describing the plague-stricken community in August, one observer wrote; "The whole city was a hospital, and every well man, woman, and child were instrumental, in one way or another, in relieving the sick." The streets were deserted except for "the hasty pedestrian on an errand of mercy" or physicians charging rapidly along in their gigs. Funeral trains in the morning and the evening lined the roads to the cemeteries. But the usual happy noises of busy activity, the sounds of shoppers, sellers, and workers, had been strangely silenced by death, disease, or fear. The wharves were all but deserted; virtually all business had ceased, and most of the shops were closed down. In the last week of July, after delegating their powers to the Finance Committee and creating a temporary board of health, the City Council had adjourned until October, leaving the city without a government for two months in the midst of a disaster. Some of the council members fled to places of safety in the North, some to resorts along the Gulf where the epidemic pursued them; some stayed on and extended their services during the crisis. One New Orleans newspaper commented disgustedly: "What a humiliating position! A City Council, in the midst of an unprecedented epidemic, adjourning for their own health, convenience, and comfort.... What a burlesque on municipal government!" became alarmed during the terrible month of August. Up to this point they had felt relatively secure in believing that only the newcomer, the imprudent, and the unclean fell victim to the raging fever. When several of New Orleans' oldest citizens were swept away by the pestilence, a new dread seized the city. Even the French inhabitants, always the last to fear the disease, became alarmed. Editors of the French newspapers attributed the fever's increasing virulence to the noxious effluvia emanating from the gutters and from the graveyards filled with rotting, half-buried corpses. In mid-August the Mayor, on the recommendation of the Board of Health, ordered that 400 rounds of cannon be fired daily at sunset in the various public squares of the city in an attempt to purify the atmosphere and clear away the disease. Toward the same end, he ordered the burning of barrels of tar in the streets and in the cemeteries at nightfall. Since the noise was found to be disturbing as well as injurious to the sick, the cannon firing was discontinued after two days, but the tar-burning program remained in effect for some time. The roar of the guns and the fires in the night, together with the horrors of the creeping pestilence, which spread so insidiously and so mysteriously, must have presented a truly unnerving spectacle to those who were forced to endure it. In addition to the four infirmaries established by the Board of Health, the Howard Association opened four more temporary hospitals for the indigent sick and one especially for convalescents. As all the public schools had been closed for the duration of the epidemic, the Howards obtained the Washington School building on Magazine Street for use as a temporary hospital. A portion of the school house became a place of refuge for children who had lost both parents to the fever. Contributions to the Howard Association poured in from all over the country to the amount of over \$200,000. The long list of contributors from Washington, D.C.

1853-1854**1853-1854**

included the name of President Franklin Pierce. Before Baton Rouge fell victim to the disease, a deputation of citizens from that city came to aid the New Orleans Howards in relieving the sick. The week ending August 27 had witnessed the peak of the epidemic. Yellow fever had claimed almost 1,400 victims in the space of seven days. By September 1 Dr. Fenner reported that the epidemic was rapidly declining, "deaths from it now only amounting to about 100 a day," Through September and early October, the weekly death toll decreased steadily; 700, 400, 200, 125, 85, 42. By October 31 the Board of Health felt safe in declaring the epidemic at an end and assured absentees and strangers a safe entry to New Orleans. A few scattered cases occurred after that date, but for all intents and purposes the crisis was over, and the city could begin the work of regeneration for the delayed business season, while physicians could start the task of explaining New Orleans' most malignant plague, which also had made great ravages throughout the entire Gulf States area. Writing soon after the epidemic, Dr. Bennet Dowler estimated a yellow fever mortality of 8,400 in New Orleans alone. "The bloodiest battle-fields of modern-time scarcely can compare with the New Orleans epidemic of 1853," said Dr. Dowler, "which destroyed five times more than the British Army lost on the field of Waterloo. Created at the close of the epidemic to investigate the facts of the siege, the Sanitary Commission set forth a total of 8,101 yellow fever fatalities. Dr. Edward H. Barton, head of the commission, made an extensive statistical study of the epidemic. He estimated a total population of almost 159,000 in New Orleans in 1853, including some 5,000 transients. Supposedly, almost one-fourth of the population fled when the Saffron Scourge arrived, leaving approximately 125,000 in the Crescent City during the visitation. Hence, the fever claimed about one of every fifteen persons remaining in the city. A total of approximately 29,000 cases and 8,000 deaths indicated a case fatality rate of almost twenty-eight per cent. On the other hand. Dr. Fenner estimated only about 100,000 persons in the city during the epidemic, of which about eight per cent, or one in twelve, died of the fever; and of the total population in the city at the time, over one-fourth suffered attacks. The pestilence of 1853 covered a more extensive area in Louisiana, and the South generally, than ever before. According to Dr. Fenner, it attacked every town along the Mississippi River as far north as Napoleon (Arkansas) at the mouth of the Arkansas River, practically every village in Mississippi and Louisiana south of Vicksburg, and almost every plantation along the Mississippi River south of Natchez. Pensacola, Mobile, Biloxi, Galveston, and Houston also experienced severe visitations, and in each case the fever spread to the interior where it had never appeared before. It seemed to rage with equal force in clean and unclean areas, in high and dry regions and low and wet localities, in piney woods as well as filthy streets, a phenomenon which posed new problems for medical theorists. Some held firm to the concepts of local causation and "epidemic constitution of the atmosphere" in explaining the fever's origin and transmission. Others were converted to the idea of importation, if not contagion itself. In many Louisiana towns where the first case was directly

1853-1854**1853-1854**

traceable to a previous center of infection, it was difficult to avoid the conclusion that the disease had been imported from New Orleans, or from a neighboring town. There were, however, just enough exceptions where contacts had failed to spread the fever from one town to another, or where an imported case failed to touch off an epidemic, to keep the local causationists in business. Points within the state of Louisiana outside of New Orleans where the fever appeared in 1853 included Algiers, St. John Baptiste, Donaldsonville, Plaquemine, Baton Rouge, Bayou Sara and St. Francisville (and nearby Clinton), Vidalla, and Lake Providence along the Mississippi River; Alexandria, Natchitoches, Grand Encore, and Shreveport on the Red River; Cloutlerville on Old River, a branch of the Red River; Pattersonville, Franklin, Centreville, and Washington on Bayou Teche, together with Opelousas only a few miles away; Thibodaux on Bayou La Fourche; Trenton on the Ouachita River; Covington and Madisonville across Lake Pontchartrain from New Orleans; and several other towns in close proximity to one of the above centers. There is every indication that the pestilence of 1853 raged even more severely in some of the small towns than it did in New Orleans itself. In Baton Rouge, for example, out of a population of about 2,000, according to Bennet Dowler, about 200 died of the fever; a later estimate set the figure as high as 400. In early September a report from Thibodaux described a desolate situation there. The town had been largely abandoned, and almost every person remaining had the fever. In one day, twenty-two persons had fallen victim to the fever and about 160 new cases had occurred. According to Dowler's figures, yellow fever claimed nearly 150 persons, or fifteen per cent of the Thibodaux resident population. In his well-known account of travels through "The Cotton Kingdom," Frederick Law Olmsted mentioned the epidemic in commenting on Alexandria, which city he visited in December of 1853. He noted that the community ordinarily had a population of 1,000, but had been almost entirely deserted by its citizens when the pestilence struck. Of some 300 who had remained in town, he was told that 120 had died. Dr. Dowler estimated that one-fifth to one-sixth of Alexandria's population had been wiped out by the disease and that Lake Providence, where yellow fever had never appeared before, had lost over half its small population. An experience such as the Great Epidemic of 1853 could scarcely be forgotten by those who lived through it, not even by New Orleanians long accustomed to epidemic disease. This time, however, no intermission followed, no summer or two in which the memory of epidemic yellow fever might begin to fade. The very next year the disease again appeared in New Orleans and carried off almost 2,500 additional victims. Although a rather destructive epidemic in terms of fatalities, the pestilence of 1854 claimed less than a third of the number lost in 1853. A resident of New Orleans wrote in his diary in September: "This is considered among the old residents one of the bad 'epidemic years' yet coming after the frightful pestilence of last summer it seems to excite but little attention - such is the power of 'contrast.'" In early November he noted that "the epidemic just closing is pronounced the worst that has ever existed in New Orleans except those of 1847 and 1853.... Not once throughout the entire season did the




1853-1854

1853-1854

Picayune admit the existence of a full-scale outbreak. While publishing the weekly interment figures and Charity Hospital reports, the editor repeatedly commented on the freedom of the city from anything resembling epidemic disease, apparently taking the disaster of 1853 as the new standard for epidemics....



November 6. 2.30 P.M. — To Lee's Cliff.

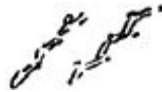
I saw yesterday for a moment by the river a small olivaceous-yellow bird; possibly a goldfinch, but I think too yellow. I see *some* gossamer on the causeway this afternoon, though it is very windy; but it requires such a day as October 31st. It is remarkable how little we attend to what is passing before us constantly, unless our genius directs our attention that way. There are these little sparrows with white in tail [**Vesper Sparrow**  **Poocetes gramineus**], perhaps the prevailing bird of late, which have flitted before me so many falls and springs, and yet they have been as it were strangers to me, and I have not inquired whence they came or whither they were going, or what their habits were. It is surprising how little most of us are contented to know about the sparrows which drift about in the air before us just before the first snows. I hear the downy woodpecker 's metallic *tchip* or peep. Now I see where many a bird builded last spring or summer. These are leaves which do not fall. How similar in the main the nests of birds and squirrels and mice! I am not absolutely certain that the mice do not make the whole nest in a bush sometimes, instead of building on a birds nest. There is in the squirrel in this respect an approach to the bird, and, beside, one of his family is partially winged. Mere, too, is a sort of link between quadrupeds and birds. I perceive that the starting of the amelanchier buds is a very common phenomenon, this fall at least, and when partially unfolded they are, frost-bitten. See a few robins [**American Robin**  **Turdus migratorius**].

Climbed the wooded hill by Holden's spruce swamp and got a novel view of the river and Fair Haven Bay through the almost leafless woods. How much handsomer a river or lake such as ours, seen thus through a foreground of scattered or else partially leafless trees, though at a considerable distance this side of it, especially if the water is open, without wooded shores or isles! It is the most perfect and beautiful of all frames, which yet the sketcher is commonly careful to brush aside. I mean a pretty thick foreground, a view of the distant water through the near forest, through a thousand little vistas, as we are rushing toward the former, -that intimate mingling of wood and water which excites an expectation which the near and open view rarely realizes. We prefer that some part be concealed, which our imagination may navigate.

Still the Canada snapdragon, yarrow, autumnal dandelion, tansy, shepherd's-purse, silvery cinquefoil, witch-hazel. The sweet-briar hips are abundant and fresh, a dozen sometimes crowded in a space of two inches square. Their form is a handsome oval with a flat apex. Is it not somewhat like an olive-jar? The hips hold on, then, though the haws have fallen, and the prinos, too, for the most part. There are also *some* fragrant and green leaves left. These are about the prettiest red berries that we have.

Gathered some of those fine large mocker-nut (?) hickory nuts, which are now in their prime (*Carya tomentosa*?). I perceived a faint sweetness in the dry, crisp leaves on the ground (there were some also on the tree), and I perceive that **Emerson** speaks of their resinous-scented leaves.

The witch-hazel spray is peculiar and interesting, with little knobs at short intervals, zigzag, crinkle-crinkle.



How happens it? Did the leaves grow so close? The bud is long against the stem, with a neck to it. The fever-bush has small roundish buds, two or three commonly together, probably the blossom-r-buds. The rhodora buds are purplish, as well as the not yet dry seed-vessels, smaller but *somewhat* like the swamp-pink. The alternate cornel, small, very dark reddish buds, oil forking, smooth, slender twigs at long intervals. The panicked andromeda, minute pointed red buds, hugging the curving stuns. The plump, roundish, club-shaped, well-protected buds of the alders, and rich purplish or mulberry catkins, three, four, or five together. The red maple buds, showing three or more sets of scales. The remarkable roundish, plump red buds of the high blueberry. The four-sided, long (five eighths of air inch), spear-head-shaped buds of the *Viburnum Lentago*,



at the end of forked twigs, probably blossom-buds, with minute leaf-buds lower on sides of twigs. Sonic willow buds already burst their scales and show the woolly catkins, reddish at base. Little brownish, scale-like buds on the ends of the red cedar leaves or leaflets (branchlets), probably male blossom-buds. The creeping juniper

1853-1854

1853-1854

berries are yet green, with three white, swelling lips -it apex and very minute buds in the arils of the leaves. I am struck: with the variety in the form and size of the walnuts in shells, — some with a slight neck and slightly club-shaped perhaps the most common; some much longer, nearly twice as long as wide; some, like the mocker-nut, slightly depressed or rather flattened above; some pignuts fiery large and regularly obovate, an inch and a quarter in diameter.

A sweet-briar hip; but most are more regular jar-shape.



During the last decade of his life, Thoreau visited his rivers more than twice as often as the upland woods and lakes that he is far better known for writing about.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), *THE BOATMAN*, page 3



November 7, Monday: The Marysville, [California Herald](#) reported that on the previous day a solid lump of gold weighing 11 pounds and a half had been taken out of a claim at Minnesota called the “Blue Tunnel.” Several other tunnels near the Minnesota diggings were yielding from \$20 to \$100 per day to the man. A company of 5 men working a bank claim about 5 miles up the North Fork River took out the past week the round sum of \$560 to the hand. This was said to be not uncommon — the news reporter had personally viewed yesterday a beautiful lump of solid gold taken out of the claim of Mr. Bailey & Company at the Blue Bank, weighing some 13 ounces. Gold miners in the vicinity of Marysville were preparing sluice operation for their winter diggings. The [Mountain Echo](#) had reported that last week, 2 men working out old diggings in Bryfogle Flat Ravine had taken out a lump weighing 16 ounces.

The chairman, Julius Illing, and another member, Joseph Herz, of the Allgemeiner Musikverein Committee visited Clara Schumann with the unanimous proposal that in future [Robert Schumann](#) conduct only his own music.

According to a report entitled “Lecture by Sojourner Truth” in the New-York [Tribune](#), beginning at 8PM after a prayer offered by “an elderly colored man,” [Sojourner Truth](#) delivered a very interesting discourse to “a respectable audience of colored people” at the church in Anthony Street, from a pulpit decorated with a banner of white [silk](#) on which was inscribed “ASHTABULA COUNTY. Am I not a Woman and a Sister? [Kneeling figure of a woman with uplifted hands.] How long, O Lord! how long. A Million-and-a-half of American Women in chains. Shall we heed their wrongs? Will not a righteous God be avenged upon such a Nation as this?” Truth began by singing

“I am pleading for my people, / A poor, down-trodden race ...”

After her hymn was finished, she detailed much of her

1853-1854**1853-1854**

practical experience as a slave. Some twenty-five years have elapsed since she received her freedom, but the brutality of the Dutch family, whose slave she was, had not been effaced by time. In her heathen despair she used to pray to God that he would kill all the white people. She prayed to God, but she did not know what or who the Divine being was. In her mind he was like Napoleon, or General Washington. When her soul was lighted by the influx of celestial love, her nature changed; where she had before showered curses, she called down blessings. She went on to talk of the condition of the colored people and their prospects. They were gradually being thrust out from every menial occupation by their white brethren; but she believe this was ominous of a better future. They were being prepared for some great change that would take place ere long. She was decidedly opposed to the colonization project; they must stay, and a short time would show that that was the best course. When the colored people were waiters, and did all the common and lower kinds of work the streets were clean; the servants scraped the dirt from the corners, swept out the gutters and half-way across the streets. Now, white folk clean boots, wait at table, lie about lazy, and beg cold victuals. The colored people did that sometimes too – but not to keep borders on it! [Laughter.] Well, in those times, twenty-five or thirty years ago, the streets were kept nice and clean without costing the people a penny. Now the white people have taken it in hand, the dirt lies in the streets until it gets too thick, and flies all about into the shops and people's eyes, and then they sift water all over it, make it into mud, and that's what they do over and over again, without ever dreaming of such an easy thing as taking it away. In the course of time it becomes too thick, and too big a nuisance and then they go to work right straight off with picks and crow bars, and pull up the stones, above the dirt, and then go on again! [Laughter.] Not long ago nobody but colored people were coachmen and barbers, but now they have white Pompeys, with the livery coats on, and poor black Pompey goes to the wall. My colored brothers and sisters, there's a remedy for this; where I was lately lecturing out in Pennsylvania, the farmers wanted good men and women to work their farms on shares for them. Why can't you go out there? – and depend upon it, in the course of time you will get to be independent. She asked the audience to review the history of the past fifty years, and although the course was slow, the colored race had vastly improved, and that menial position to which nature seemed to have consigned them was rapidly being changed for the better. How long ago was it that a colored woman could address a white audience of a thousand people, and be listened to with respectful attention. These things were signs of the time. The papers rarely recorded crimes committed by her race, thought they often teemed with those committed against



1853-1854

1853-1854

them. She hoped her people would thus continue to put the white people to the blush. Mrs. Truth is something of a reformer in her way. She commented somewhat severely on the modern style of preaching the Gospel. The parsons went away into Egypt among the bones of dead Pharaohs and mummies, and talked about what happened thousands of years ago, but quite forgot that the living present around them teemed with the sternest realities. Many of the churches were big, lumbering things, covering up costly space and doing good to no one. While many of the citizens of this metropolis were living in low dens and sky-lighted garrets, these immense buildings, which would comfortably lodge them, were about one third filled once in the week, and for the other six days allowed to lie unoccupied, and a dead loss. And then the preachers, too, came in for a share of her satire. Big Greek-crammed, mouthing men, who, for many a long century, had been befogging the world, and getting its affairs into the most terrible snarl and confusion, and then when women came in to their assistance, cried "shame on the women!" They liked the fat and easy work of preaching and entangling too well, not to feel alarmed when women attempted to set matters aright. She conceived that women were peculiarly adapted to fill the talking professions, and men should no longer unsex themselves by leaving the plow and the plane, for the pulpit and the platform. She hoped all her sex would set to work and drag the world right side up, disentangle it from the snarl which men have willfully got it into, and set matters in general aright, and then keep them so. They could only do this by being united and resolutely putting their shoulders to the wheel.

The newspaper reported that after this oration, a resolution in support of the Free Democracy ticket was read and adopted, and that [Sojourner](#) "did a considerable business in the way of selling the first part of her life, done up in some 120 pages, 12mo., to support the remainder."⁴⁵



Nov. 7. 6.15 A.M. — To Cliffs.

A clear, cold, as well as frosty, morning. I have to walk with my hands in my pockets. Hear a faint chip, probably from a tree sparrow [[American Tree Sparrow](#) [Spizella arborea](#)], which I do not see in the garden.

I find the cistus or frost-weed, abundantly surrounded with crystals by the Spring Path. How long? And also by the wall this side the orchard on Fair Haven the ground is spotted with it, — like little pouches [?] or fingers full of purest white cotton, tucked about the bases of their stems. These crystals are low in the withered grass, close to the ground, and fast attached to the stems, as if they grew so. They extend about an inch upward, and are from one half to one inch wide. I saw them on no other plants, and not on all the cistuses. Those which had them had their bark invariably split up a short distance at the base and thrown off, as if forced up by the frost, and the crystals were close

45. Referring, of course, to the [NARRATIVE OF SOJOURNER TRUTH, A NORTHERN SLAVE EMANCIPATED FROM BODILY SERVITUDE BY THE STATE OF NEW YORK IN 1828](#) that had been written out for her by the white amanuensis [Olive Gilbert](#) whom she had met by way of the [Association of Industry and Education](#) near [Northampton](#). (I do not have an image of the title page of this original edition referred to here, bound in soft covers only.)

1853-1854

1853-1854

beneath this, adhering both to stem and bark. The others were sound in this respect. It appeared as if



they were a vapor which had curled up from the root and clung about the stem in the night, frozen as it ascended, — shell-like, dimpled crystals, the frozen shells of vaporous whirlpools in the air. The stems were dead, with their seed-vessels and seeds still atop, though perhaps there was a little moisture or sap in them close to the ground; and directly beneath in the earth was a little reddish-green shoot, already started, ready to burst up in the spring. Oftenest it appeared as if two curls of vapor from different sides of the stem had united and frozen together at their extremities, forming little white, sugar-like horns, open upward and downward, or the crystals had the appearance of the bark of the willow-herb, cracked about the base of the stem. A section looking thus: These were very



beautiful on close inspection, like the finest imaginable white silk or glass, floss-like, of the finest staple, or like asbestos of a very fine and loose grain. It is not a particularly frosty morning. Whence does this vapor come from? The cistus has thus not only its second flowering, but its third frost flowering. Will it form again about the same stem, the bark being rent? It is a sort of incense offering in behalf of the young shoot ready to spring.

The notes of one or two small birds, this cold morning, in the now comparatively leafless woods, sound like a nail dropped on an anvil, or a glass pendant tinkling against its neighbor.

The sun now rises far southward. I see westward the earliest sunlight on the reddish oak leaves and the pines. The former appear to get more than their share. How soon the sun gets above the hills, as if he would accomplish his whole diurnal journey in a few hours at this rate! But it is a long way round, and these are nothing to the hill of heaven. Whether we are idle or industrious, the sun is constantly travelling through the sky, consuming arc after arc of this great circle at this same rapid pace.

Nightshade berries still in water or over it. Great straggling flocks of crows still flying westerly.

P.M. — To Conantum by boat, nutting.

October 31st, when the river was at its height after the rains of the 24th and 8th, our first fall flood, the wreck of the river and meadow with an unusual quantity of cranberries was washed up, and is now left high and dry, forming the first water-mark of the season, an endless meandering light-brown line, further from or nearer to the river. It is now very fresh, and it is comparatively easy to distinguish the materials which compose it. But I love to see it even in midsummer, the old water-line of the last year, far away from the edge of the shrunken stream, in some meadow, perchance in the woods, reminding me of the floods and the windy days of the fall and spring, of ducks and geese and gulls, of the raw and gusty days which I have spent on the then wilderness of water, of the origin of things, as it were, when water was a prevailing element. The flood comes and takes all the summer's waste, all that lies loose, from the riverside and meadows and floats it, not to ocean, but as far toward the upland as the water reaches; there it plants again and again the seeds of fluvial shrubs and trees and flowers. A new line of wreckage is formed every year. I looked this afternoon to see what it was (composed of. Where I looked the most prominent part was different lengths of a large three-sided cellular reed (?), perchance the *Sparganium ramosum* (?),⁴⁶ for the most part faded, but some still a little juicy, pieces of rushes and eel-grass, and cranberry leaves which the rake has torn off with cranberries, I believe some flags, wool-grass and various sedges, pads, potamogeton,

1853-1854

1853-1854

water ranunculus, mid various other weeds of the riverside mid meadows, the radical leaves (?) of heart-leaf very delicate and transparent (but this is more conspicuous, at least, still floating in water along the edge); and there was a quantity of what looked like the stems of buttonwood leaves, which I now suspect were polygonum steins. There was not much, if any, pontederia where I looked, for that, though long dead, still holds to the bottom. More of this in other places, however; also small flat shells?⁴⁷



I perceive, when I look, that some of the most en (hiring, of the river weeds are the *Polygonatum hydropiperoides* (one still in bloom), which stand withered still above the flood, and also wool-grass, and the *Scirpus lacustris*, both curved downward. But in other places, less open, there is an abundance of sere meadow-grasses standing. The seeds of the sweet flag are now coming off by degrees, like coarse chaff.

Under the warm south side of Bittern Cliff, where I moor my boat, I hear one cricket singing loudly and undauntedly still, in the warm rock-side.

I shook two mocker-nut trees; one just ready to drop nuts; and most came out of the shells. But the other tree was not ready; only a part fell, and those mostly in the shells. This is the time for *our* best walnuts; the smallest, say the last of October. Got a peck and a half shelled. I did not wish to slight any of Nature's gifts. I am partial to the peculiar and wholesome sweetness of a nut, and I think that some time is profitably spent every autumn in gathering even such as our pig-nuts. Some of them are a very sizable, rich-looking, and palatable fruit. —low can we expect to understand Nature unless we accept like children these her smallest gifts, valuing them more as her gifts than for their intrinsic value? I love to get my basket full, however small and comparatively worthless the nut. It takes very severe frosts, and sun and wind thereafter, to kill and open the shells so that the nuts will drop out. Many hold on all winter. I climbed to the tops of the trees, and then found that shaking would not do, only jarring the limbs with my feet. It is remarkable how these nuts are protected, some with an outer shell about a quarter of an inch thick, and an inner nearly as thick as the other, and when cracked open the meat is still hard to extract. I noticed, however, that the nuts on one tree, the second, notwithstanding these thick shells, were now full of fine cracks, as if, now that they were ripe, they had made themselves ready to be cracked by man or squirrels or the frost. They really crack much easier. It is a hard, tough tree, whose fruit is stones, fit to have been the food of man in the iron age. I should like to see a man whose diet was berries and nuts alone. Yet I would not rob the squirrels, who, before any man, are the true owners. I am pretty sure I heard a striped squirrel in the wall near me, as if he blowed a short blast on a dry leaf. They will not be in a hurry to go into winter quarters until they have laid up some of these nuts. The shallow pools in woods were shimmed over this morning, and there was a little ice along the riverside, which can still be detected at sundown. Three [bluebirds](#) still braving the cold winds, — Acton Blues, not gone into winter quarters. Their blue uniform makes me think of soldiers who have received orders to keep the field and not go into winter quarters. A muskrat-house on the top of a rock, too thin round the sides for a passage beneath, yet a small cavity at top, which makes me think that they use them merely as a sheltered perch above water. They seize thus many cores to build on, as a hummock left by the ice. (Red clover.) The wads of which this muskrat-house was composed were about six inches by four, rounded and massed at one end, flaking off at the other, and were composed chiefly of a little green (for the most part withered dark-brown) moss-like weed, and had the strong odor of the fresh-water sponge and conferva.

THOREAU AS
ORNITHOLOGIST

46. Though Gray says its leaves are one to two feet high, I saw some of *this*, still greenish, in the water where I keep my boat, six feet high! It lasts longer-than flags, which it resembles.

47. *Vide* Nov. 8.



1853-1854

1853-1854



November 8, Tuesday: When a fireman was arrested, members of Crescent Engine Co. No. 10 of [San Francisco](#) fought the police.

When [Bronson Alcott](#) arrived in [Cincinnati, Ohio](#) by train on his 1st lecture tour in the great West, he found that everything about his visit had been prearranged by [Waldo Emerson](#)'s friend [Ainsworth Rand Spofford](#), a bookseller. Tickets admitting "a gentleman and a lady" had been retailed for \$2.50 each and the Apollo Rooms at the corner of 5th Street and Walnut Street had been leased. The initial conversation was to be on "Chaos" and was to take place on November 11th (general admission was being advertised at 50¢).


William Speiden, Jr. visited friends at [Macao](#) Roads.




Nov. 8. Mayweed and shepherd's-purse.

10 A.M. — Our first snow, the wind southerly, the air chilly and moist; a very fine snow, looking like a mist toward the woods or horizon, which at 2 o'clock has not whitened the ground. The children greet it with a shout when they come out at recess.

P. M. To riverside as far down as near Peter's, to look at the water-line before the snow covers it. By Merrick's pasture it is mainly a fine, still more or less green, thread-like weed or grass of the river bottom (?), sedges, utricularias (that coarse one especially, whose name I am not sure of, with tassels (?)), (*Utricularia vulgaris*?) yellow water ranunculus, potamogeton's translucent leaves, a few flags and pontederia stems. By Peter's there was much of that coarse triangular cellular stem mentioned yesterday as sparganium (?). I would not have thought it so common. There is not so much meadow grass or hay as I expected, for that has been raked and carried off. The pads, too, have wasted away and the pontederias' leaves, and the stems of the last for the most part still adhere to the bottom.

Three larks [[Eastern Meadowlark](#)  [Sturnella magna](#)] rise from the sere grass on Minott's Hill before me, the white of their outer tail-feathers very conspicuous, reminding me of arctic snowbirds by their size and form also. The snow begins to whiten the plowed ground now, but it has not overcome the russet of the grass ground. Birds generally wear the russet dress of nature at this season. They have their fall no less than the plants; the bright tints depart from their foliage or feathers, and they flit past like withered leaves in rustling flocks. The sparrow is a withered leaf.

The *Stellaria media* still blooms in Cheney's garden, and the shepherd's[-purse] looks even fresher. This must be near the end of the flower season. Perchance I heard the last cricket of the season yesterday. They chirp here and there at longer and longer intervals, till the snow quenches their song. And the last striped squirrel, too, perchance, yesterday. They, then, do not go into winter quarters till the ground is covered with snow.

The partridges [[Ruffed Grouse](#)  [Bonasa umbellus](#) (Partridge)] go off with a whir, and then sail a long way level and low through the woods with that impetus they have got, displaying their neat forms perfectly.

The yellow larch leaves still hold on, — later than those of any of our pines.


I noticed the other day a great tangled and netted mass of an old white pine root lying upon the surface, nearly a rod across and two feet or more high, too large even to be turned up for a fence. It suggested that the roots of trees would be an interesting study. There are the small thickly interwoven roots of the swamp white oaks on the Assabet.

At evening the snow turned to rain, and the sugaring soon disappeared.



1853-1854

1853-1854

 November 9, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed a woodlot [Charles Gordon](#) was purchasing from "Littleton" Buttrick. He and [Ellery Channing](#) rowed to Fair Haven Hill against a very powerful wind.



[Robert Schumann](#) made a formal reply to the Musikverein Committee demand of November 7th, by asserting this to amount to a breach of contract.

[Perry Davis](#) of [Providence, Rhode Island](#) was ordained to the [Baptist](#) ministry.



Since Mr. Davis was a world-class drug dealer specializing in [opiates](#) and [ethanol](#), we may be pardoned for turning at this point to an insight about the heartlessness of capitalist society by [Karl Marx](#):



"*Religious* distress is at the same time the *expression* of real distress and the *protest* against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the *opium* of the people. The abolition of religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is required for their *real* happiness. The demand to give up the illusion about its condition is the demand to *give up a condition which needs illusions*. The criticism of religion is, therefore, *in embryo, the criticism of that vale of tears* of which religion is the *halo*."



— [Karl Marx](#), CRITIQUE OF HEGEL'S
PHILOSOPHY OF RIGHT (February 1844)

Excerpt from "Thoreau as Storyteller in the Journal" by Professor Sandra Harbert Petruionis:

On November 29, 1853, sandwiched in between the Journal's discussion of a rare beetle and a local boy's find of a Native American artifact, Thoreau records a story told to him by local farmer George Minott—a tale of a rabid dog which met its demise in Concord many years before. Francis H. Allen included this tale in his 1936 Men of Concord, a compilation of the Journal's

1853-1854

1853-1854

character sketches. As a way of leading in to it, Thoreau relates the fact that recently a boy in nearby Lincoln had been fatally bitten by a rabid dog. Thoreau—who calls what he's about to write a "story"—justifies the digression as "worth telling for it shows how much trouble the passage of one mad dog through the town may produce" (Journal V 522).

[5] In classic storytelling fashion, Thoreau begins by establishing the time and setting: "It was when he [Minott] was a boy and lived down below the Old Ben Prescott House—over the Cellar Hole on what is now Hawthorne's Land." The following excerpts summarize Minott's description of the dog's progress through town:

When the dog got to the old Ben Prescott Place ... there were a couple of turkeys—[it] drove them into a corner—bit off the head of one.... They then raised the cry of mad dog ... his [Minott's] mother and Aunt Prescott ... coming down the road—and he shouted to them to take care of them selves—for that dog was mad— Minott next saw Harry Hooper—coming down the road after his cows ... & he shouted to him to look out for the dog was mad—but Harry ... being short the dog leaped right upon his open breast & made a pass at his throat, but missed it. (522-523)

[6] the name of Fay—dressed in small clothes" was waylaid by the dog and bitten twice because he failed to heed Minott's warning that the oncoming dog was mad. Thoreau writes that "Fay ... well frightened, kicked the dog, "seized [it] ... held him ... fast & called lustily for somebody to come & kill him." Unfortunately, when a man named Lewis "rushed out" to help, his axe was somewhat "dull," and after a worthless "blow across the back," the "dog trotted along still toward town" (523-524).

[7] The dog proceeded to bite two cows, both of which later died, to grab "a goose in the wing" and "kept on through the town" (523). Finally, however, it met its demise at the hands of the story's unlikely hero: "The next thing that was heard of him—Black Cato ... was waked up about midnight ... he took a club & went out to see what was the matter— Looking over into the pen this dog reared up at him & he knocked him back into it & jumping over—mauled him till he thought he was dead & then tossed him out" (524-525). Unfortunately, Cato discovered the next morning that the dog was in fact not dead and had disappeared. Later that day, he encountered the dog again, "but this time having heard the mad dog story he ... ran—but still the dog came on & once or twice he knocked him aside with a large stone—till at length ... he gave him a blow which killed him— & lest he should run away again he cut off his head & threw both head & body into the river—" (525). Cato succeeds where esteemed white citizens fail; his heroic act rids the town of danger.

[8] From the vantage of our safe hindsight, the story's humor is inseparable from its potential tragedy. Anyone who comes in contact with this dog could, of course, be killed. Nevertheless, Thoreau has a bit of fun at the expense of the townsfolk. Mr. Fay was possibly Grant Fay, a local farmer whose son Addison was a contemporary of Thoreau. As "a large and stout old gentleman

... dressed in small clothes," twice bitten by the dog largely through his own ineptitude, Fay suffers at Thoreau's hands. Moreover, Thoreau concludes with the information that "Fay went home ... drank some spirit ... went straight over to Dr. Heywoods ... & ... was doctored 3 weeks. cried like a baby. The Dr cut out the mangled flesh & ... Fay ... never experienced any further ill effects from the bite" (525).



Nov. 9. High wind and rain in the night. Still more strong and gusty but remarkably warm southwest wind during the day.

P.M. — To Fair Haven Hill by boat with [W.E.C.](#)

We rowed against a very powerful wind, sometimes scarcely making any headway, It was with difficulty often that we moved our paddles through the air for a new stroke. As C. said, it seemed to blow out of a hole. We had to turn our oars edgewise to it. But we worked our way slowly upward, nevertheless, for we came to feel and hear it blow and see the waves run. There was quite a sea running on the lee shore, — broad black waves with white crests, which made our boat toss very pleasantly. They wet the piers of the railroad bridge for eighteen inches up. I should guess that the whole height from the valley between to the top of a wave was nearer fifteen inches.

The muskrats have added a new story to their houses since the last flood which covered them; I mean that of October 31st and thereabouts. They are uncommonly high, methinks, full four feet by five or more in diameter, a heaping ox-cart load. There are at least eight such within half a mile from Clamshell Hill to Hubbard's Wood. It is remarkable how little effect the waves have on them, while a heap of manure or a haycock would be washed away or undermined at once. I opened one. It was composed of coarse grass, pontederia stems, etc., etc., not altogether in mouthfuls. This was three feet and a half above water, others quite four. After taking off a foot I came to the chamber. It was a regularly formed oval or elliptical chamber, about eighteen inches the longest way and seven or eight inches deep, shaped like a pebble, with smooth walls of the weeds, and bottomed or bedded with a very little drier grass, a mere coating of it. It would hold four or five, closely packed. The entrance,



eight or nine inches wide, led directly from this to the water at an angle of 45°, and in the water there I saw some green and white stub ends of pontederia (?) stems, I think, looking like flagroot. That thick wall, a foot quite or more above and eighteen inches or two feet around, being of these damp materials, soon freezes and makes a tight and warm house. The walls are of such [thickness at] the bottom that the water in the gallery probably never freezes. If the height of these houses is any sign of high or low water, this winter it will be uncommonly high.

Soon after, we saw a mink swimming in the agitated water close to the shore, east side, above Nut Meadow Brook. It showed the whole top of the back and part of the tail, unlike the muskrat, and did not dive. Stopped a moment when we headed toward it, and held up its head at the end of its long neck toward us, reminding me of pictures of the otter, then turned and swam and ran the other way; dark-brown. We see no birds, unless one crow [x]; the wind is too strong for them. I must know what that tall, coarse grass is which stands withered so abundantly amid the button-bushes all along the shore. It escapes the mower by its position. The water milkweed stands withered amid the button-bushes, the polls still erect, though open and empty. Landed and walked over Conant's Indian rye-field, and I picked up two good arrowheads. The river with its waves has a very wild look southward, and I see the white caps of the waves in Fair Haven Bay. Went into the woods by Holden Swamp and sat down to hear the wind roar amid the tree-tops. What an incessant straining of the trees! It is a music that wears better than the opera, methinks. This reminds me how the telegraph-wire hummed coarsely in the tempest as we passed under it.

Hitherto it had only rained a little from time to time, but now it began suddenly in earnest. We hastily rowed across to the firm ground of Fair Haven hillside, drew up our boat and turned it over in a twinkling on to a clump of alders covered with cat-briars which kept up the lee side, and crawled under it. There we lay half an hour on the damp ground and cat-briars, hardly able to see out to the



1853-1854

1853-1854

storm which we heard on our roof, through the thick alder stems, much pleased with the tightness of our roof, which we frequently remarked upon. We took immense satisfaction in the thoroughness of the protection against the rain which it afforded. Remembered that such was the origin of the Numidian architecture and, as some think, of the nave (ship) in Gothic architecture, and if we had had a dry bed beneath us, and an ugly gap under the windward side of the boat through [which] the wind drew had been stopped, we should have lain there longer. At length, as it threatened to be an all-night storm, we crawled out again and set sail homeward.

It now began to rain harder than ever, and the wind was so strong and gusty, and blew so nearly at right angles with the river, that we found it impossible to keep the stream long at a time with our sail set, sitting on one side till the water came in plentifully, that the side might act as a keel, but were repeatedly driven ashore amid the button-bushes, and then had to work our way to the other side slowly and start again. What with water in the boat and in our clothes, we were now indifferent to wet. At length it began to rain so much harder than before, the great drops seeming to flat down the waves and suppress the wind, and feeling like hail on our hands and faces, that, as we remembered, it had only sprinkled before. By this time of course we were wet quite through and through, and C. began to inquire and jest about the condition of our money — a singular prudence methought — and buried his wallet in his pocket-handkerchief and returned it to his pocket again. He thought that bank-bills would be spoiled. It had never occurred to one if a man got completely wet through how it might affect the bankbills in his wallet, it is so rare a thing for me to have any there. At length we both took to rowing vigorously to keep ourselves warm, and so got home just after candlelight.



November 10, Thursday: When, at a subscription concert in Düsseldorf, conductor [Robert Schumann](#) failed to appear, his place was taken by his assistant Julius Tausch.


When Maria, Queen of Portugal, died in childbed, her husband Ferdinand, a Prince of Saxe-Coburn, became regent during the minority of her son and successor Pedro V (who at the point was only 16 years of age).



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR NOVEMBER 10TH]

1853-1854

1853-1854

 November 11, Friday: After a popular uprising that had gone on for 6 months, Imperial Chinese troops restored their control over [Amoy](#). Since most of the citizens had joined this revolt, the soldiers indulged in a blood bath: on this day alone 2,500 citizens were beheaded.

David Livingstone departed Linyanti heading northwest, looking for a route to the Atlantic coast.

[Bronson Alcott](#) offered his initial “conversation” at the Apollo Rooms at the corner of 5th Street and Walnut Street in [Cincinnati, Ohio](#): “Chaos.” Nearly a hundred attended and the husband would be able to write home to the wife and daughters that “You will remember my doubts as to any adaptations of mine to this wild population, and will share the surprise at the results.”

[William Cooper Nell](#) registered the following in [William Lloyd Garrison's The Liberator](#):

Publics of Meetings, &c.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF COLORED PEOPLE.

It will be seen by reference to the Constitution, that an election in the several States is to take place on Nov. 15, for two additional members to the National Council, and of twenty for the State Council.

A tax of ten cents will qualify any colored inhabitant to vote.

It is presumed that the friends in Western Massachusetts will at once concentrate upon an able representative to the National Council; and the Eastern friends will be as prompt in their selection.

The place for holding the meeting in Boston will be duly announced.

In behalf of the Council,
WILLIAM C. NELL.

REV. ANDREW T. POSS, an Agent of the Massachusetts A. S. Society, will lecture as follows:—

Dover	.....Friday.....eve'g.....	Nov 11.
Great Falls	.....Sunday.....	" 13.
Exeter, N. H.	.....Tuesday eve'g.....	" 16.
South Berwick, Me.	.....Wednes. ".....	" 18.
Dover, N. H.	.....Thursday ".....	" 17.
Portsmouth, N. H.	.....Sunday.....	" 20.
Bradford,.....	.....Sunday.....	" 27.
Hopkinton.....	.....Tuesday eve'g.....	" 29.
Henniker.....	.....Wednes ".....	" 30.
Wenro.....	.....Thursday ".....	Dec. 1.
East Wearo ".....	.....Friday ".....	" 2.
Milford ".....	.....Sunday.....	" 4.

G. B. STEPHENS, an Agent of the Mass. Anti-Slavery Society, will lecture as follows:—

Mapleville, R. I.	.....Friday eve'g.....	Nov. 11.
Pascong.....	.....Sunday.....	" 13.
Coventry.....	.....Tuesday eve'g.....	" 16.
Anthony Village	.....Wednesday ".....	" 16.
Pickville.....	.....Thursday ".....	" 17.
Knightsville.....	.....Friday ".....	" 18.
Providence.....	.....Sunday.....	" 20.

1853-18





1853-1854

Nov. 11. 7 A.M. — To Hubbard Bathing-Place.

.k fine, calm, frosty morning, a resonant and clear air except a slight white vapor which escaped being frozen or perchance is the steam of the melting frost. Bracing cold, and exhilarating sunlight on russet and frosty fields. I wear mittens now. Apples are frozen on the trees and rattle like stones in my pocket. *Aster puniceus* left. A little feathery frost on the dead weeds and grasses, especially about water, — springs and brooks (though now slightly frozen), — where was some vapor in the night. I notice also this little frost-work about the mouth of a woodchuck's hole, where, perhaps, was as warm, moist breath from the interior, perchance from the chuck!

9 A.M. — To Fair Haven Pond by boat.

The morning is so calm and pleasant, winter-like, that I must spend the forenoon abroad. The river is smooth as polished silver. A little ice has formed along the shore in shallow bays five or six rods wide. It is for the most part of crystals imperfectly united, shaped like birds' tracks, and breaks with a pleasant crisp sound when it feels the undulations produced by my boat. I hear a linaria-like mew from some birds that fly over [**Common Redpoll**  *Carduelis flammea*] (or ~~Lesser Redpoll or Red-crown~~). Some muskrat-houses have received a slight addition in the night. The one I opened day before yesterday has been covered again, though not yet raised so high as before. The hips of the late rose still show abundantly along the shore, and in one place nightshade berries. I hear a faint cricket (or locust?) still, even after the slight snow. I hear the cawing of crows toward the distant wood through the clear, echoing, resonant air, and the lowing of cattle. It is rare that the water is smooth in the forenoon. It is now as smooth as in a summer evening or a September or October afternoon. There is frost on all the weeds that rise above the water or ice. The *Polygonum Hydropiper* is the most conspicuous, abundant, and enduring of those in the water. I see the spire of one white with frost-crystals, a perfect imitation at a little distance of its loose and narrow spike of white flowers, that have withered. I have noticed no turtles since October 31st, and no frogs for a still longer time. At the bathing[-place] I looked for clams, in summer almost as thick as paving-stones there, and found none. They have probably removed into deeper water and into the mud (?). When did they move? The jays [**Blue Jay**  *Cyanocitta cristata*] are seen and heard more of late, their plumage apparently not dimmed at all.

I counted nineteen muskrat-cabins between Hubbard Bathing-Place and Hubbard's further wood, this side the Hollowell place, from two to four feet high. They thus help materially to raise and form the river-bank. I opened one by the Hubbard Bridge. The floor of chamber was two feet or more beneath the top and one foot above the water. It was quite warm from the recent presence of the inhabitants. I heard the peculiar plunge of one close by. The instant one has put his eyes noiselessly above water he plunges like a flash, showing tail, and with a very loud sound, the first notice you have of his proximity, — that he has been there, — as loud as if he had struck a solid substance. This had a sort of double bed, the whole about two feet long by one foot wide and seven or eight inches high, floored thinly with dry meadow-grass. There were in the water green butts and roots of the pontederia, which I think they eat. I find the roots gnawed off. Do they eat flagroot? A good deal of a small green hypnum-like river-weed forms the mouthfuls in their masonry. It makes a good sponge to mop the boat with.

The wind has risen and sky overcast. I stop at Lee's Cliff, and there is a *Veronica serpyllifolia* out. Sail back. Scared up two small clucks, perhaps teal. I lead not seen any of late. They have probably almost all gone south.

1853-1854

1853-1854



November 12, Saturday: [Bronson Alcott](#) offered his 2nd “conversation” at the Apollo Rooms at the corner of 5th Street and Walnut Street in [Cincinnati, Ohio](#): “Paradise.” — the audience turned out to be rather more timid and reserved than the visitor would have preferred.

At Bidwell’s Bar in [California](#), the [Butte Record](#) put out its initial issue.

[Sam Houston](#) made a major speech in Austin, defending his Senate record and advocating the development of railroads in [Texas](#).

“Slavery in Massachusetts” was reprinted in [The National Anti-Slavery Standard](#).



[Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed some Lincoln and [Waltham](#) woodlots for the heirs of John Richardson. (Richardson had built a townhouse on the west side of the Concord Common, but in 1789 swapped it with Middlesex County for the hotel that was on the spot later occupied by the [Middlesex House](#).)



View [Henry Thoreau](#)’s personal working drafts of his surveys courtesy of AT&T and the Concord Free Public Library:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/Thoreau_Surveys.htm

(The official copy of this survey of course had become the property of the person or persons who had hired this Concord town surveyor to do their surveying work during the 19th Century. Such materials have yet to be recovered.)

View this particular personal working draft of a survey in fine detail:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/103.htm



Nov. 12. I cannot but regard it as a kindness in those who have the steering of me that, by the want of pecuniary wealth, I have been nailed down to this my native region so long and steadily, and made to study and love this spot of earth more and more. What would signify in comparison a thin and diffused love and knowledge of the whole earth instead, got by wandering? The traveller’s is but a barren and comfortless condition. Wealth will not buy a man a home in nature, — house nor farm there. The man of business does not by his business earn a residence in nature, but is denaturalized rather. What is a farm, house and land, office or shop, but a settlement in nature under the most favorable conditions? It is insignificant, and a merely negative good fortune, to be provided with thick garments against cold and wet, an unprofitable, weak, and defensive condition, compared with being able to extract some exhilaration, some warmth even, out of cold and wet themselves, and to clothe them with our sympathy. The rich man buys woollens and furs, and sits naked and shivering still in spirit; besieged by cold and wet. But the poor Lord of Creation, cold and wet he makes to warm him, and be his garments.

Tansy is very fresh still in some places. Tasted to-day a black walnut, a spherical and corrugated nut with a large meat, but of a strong oily taste.



1853-1854

1853-1854

8 P.M. — Up river to Hubbard Bathing-Place.

Moon nearly full. A mild, almost summer evening after a very warm day, alternately clear and overcast. The meadows, with perhaps a little mist on them, look as if covered with frost in the moonlight. At first it is quite calm, and I see only where a slight wave or piece of wet driftwood along the shore reflects a flash of light, suggesting that we have come to a season of clearer air. This occasional slight sparkling on either hand along the water's edge attends me. I come out now on the water to see our little river broad and stately as the Merrimack or still larger tides, for though the shore be but a rod off, the meeting of land and water being concealed, it is as good as if a quarter of a mile distant, and the near bank is like a distant hill. There is now and of late months no smell of muskrats, which is probably confined to the spring or rutting season. While the sense of seeing is partly slumbering, that of hearing is more wide awake than by day, and, now that the wind is rising, I hear distinctly the chopping of every little wave under the bow of my boat. Hear no bird, only the loud plunge of a muskrat from time to time. The moon is wading slowly through broad squadrons of clouds, with a small coppery halo, and now she comes forth triumphant and burnishes the water far and wide, and makes the reflections more distinct. Trees stand bare against the sky again. This the first month in which they do. I hear one cricket singing still, faintly deep in the bank,⁴⁸ now after one whitening of snow. His theme is life immortal. The last cricket, full of cheer and faith, piping to himself, as the last man might. The dark squadrons of hostile clouds have now swept over the face of the moon, and she appears unharmed and riding triumphant in her chariot. Suddenly they dwindle and melt away in her mild and all-pervading light, dissipated like the mists of the morning. They pass away and are forgotten like bad dreams.

Landed at the bathing-place. There is no sound of a frog from all these waters and meadows which a few months ago resounded so with them; not even a cricket or the sound of a mosquito. I can fancy that I hear the sound of peeping hylodes ringing in my ear, but it is all fancy. How short their year! How early they sleep! Nature is desert and iron-bound; she has shut her door. How different from the muggy nights of summer, teeming with life! That resounding life is now buried in the mud, returned into Nature's womb, and most of the birds have retreated to the warm belt of the earth. Yet still from time to time a pickerel darts away. And still the heavens are unchanged; the same starry geometry looks down on their active and their torpid state. And the first frog that puts his eye forth from the mud next spring shall see the same everlasting starry eyes ready to play at bo-peep with him, for they do not go into the mud.

However, you shall find the muskrats lively enough now at night, though by day their cabins appear like deserted cabins. When I paddle near one, I hear the sudden plunge of one of its inhabitants, and sometimes see two or three at once swimming about it. Now is their day. It is remarkable that these peculiarly aboriginal and wild animals, whose nests are perhaps the largest of any creatures' hereabouts, should still so abound in the very midst of civilization and erect their large and conspicuous cabins at the foot of our gardens. However, I notice that unless there is a strip of meadow and water on the garden side they erect their houses on the wild side of the stream.

The hylodes, as it is the first frog heard in the spring, so it is the last in the autumn. I heard it last, methinks, about a month ago. I do not remember any hum of insects for a long time, though I heard a cricket to-day.



November 13, Sunday: The [San Francisco Daily Herald](#) published an account of the death of "Lone Woman," in Santa Barbara, California:

In the family of Mr. George Niedever, she lived very contentedly, and apparently gratified with the change; she was evidently much pleased by the novel sights which were presented to her, in horses and other large

48. Was it not a frog?



1853-1854

1853-1854

animals. She ate freely of many things which were given to her, and seemed particularly fond of shell-fish, coffee, liquor, and fruits, but her system was unu[s]ed to such diet, and after too free an indulgence she sickened and died on the 18th of October. She was undoubtedly the last of her race.

This fragmentary history would be parasitized by Scott O'Dell in a novel *ISLAND OF THE BLUE DOLPHINS* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960):

The girl Robinson Crusoe whose story I have attempted to recreate actually lived alone upon this island from 1835 to 1853, and is known to history as The Lost Woman of San Nicolas. The facts known about her are few. From the reports of Captain Hubbard, whose schooner carried away the Indians of Ghalas-at, we know that the girl did jump into sea, despite efforts to restrain her. From records left by Captain Nidever we know that he found her eighteen years later, alone with a dog in a crude house on the headland, dressed in a skirt of cormorant feathers. Father Gonzales of Santa Barbara Mission, who befriended her after her rescue, learned that her brother had been killed by wild dogs. He learned little else, for she spoke to him in only signs; neither he nor many Indians at the mission could understand her strange language. The Indians of Ghalas-at had long since disappeared.

(The conceit that "Lone Woman" was the last of her Nicoleño race seems to have been merely a white-useful construct. Still alive was a Nicoleño known as Tomás who worked in Antonio Coronel's vineyard at Alameda and 7th Street, close to the former site of the Rancheria de los Pipemares — who would live at least until 1860, and was married with a Refugio López with whom he may have had children.)



Nov. 13. Rain all day.



November 14, Monday: Folsom Street was opened in [San Francisco, California](#), as a planked road (constructed by the San Francisco and Mission Dolores Plank Road Company).

[Emily Dickinson](#) wrote to her younger brother [Austin Dickinson](#):

Dear Austin.
You did'nt come, and we were all disappointed, tho' none so much as father, for nobody but father really believed you would come, and yet folks are disappointed sometimes, when they dont expect anything. Mother got a great dinner yesterday, thinking in her kind heart that you would be so hungry after your long ride, and the table was set for you, and nobody moved your chair, but there it stood at the table, until dinner was all done, a melancholy emblem of the blasted hopes of the world. And we had new custard pie, too, which is a rarity in days when hens dont lay, but mother knew you loved it, and when noon really got here, and you really did not come, then a big piece was saved in case you should come at night. Father seemed perfectly sober, when the afternoon train came in, and there was no intelligence of you

1853-1854

1853-1854

in any way, but "there's a good time coming"! I suppose Father wrote you yesterday that Frank Conkey was chosen Representative. I dont know whether you will care, but I felt all the while that if you had been here, it w'd not have been so.

I wonder if you voted in Cambridge, I did'nt believe you would come. I said so all the while, and tho' I was disappointed, yet I could'nt help smiling a little, to think that I guessed right. I told Father I knew you w'd vote somehow in Cambridge, for you always did what you wanted to, whether 'twas against the law or not, but he would'nt believe me, so when he was mistaken, I was a little gratified. Sue "spent the afternoon, and took tea" at Dea [John] Leland's yesterday. I was with her last evening, and she came half way home with me. She did'nt think you would come. George Allen remarked at their table yesterday, that for his part, he hoped Frank Conkey would be chosen representative, for he was a very smart fellow, and the finest Lawyer in Amherst — also that he was said to present his cases in court much finer than any other, and should he himself George Allen, have any difficult business, he should surely entrust it to him!

If that is'nt the apex of human impudence, I dont know anything of it. She remarked in her coolest, most unparalleled way, that she wanted to open the door, and poke him out with the poker!

So much for the Amherst youth! I should recommend a closet, and self examination, accompanied with bread and water, to that same individual, till he might obtain faint glimpses of something like common sense. If Joseph Addison were alive, I should present him to him, as the highest degree of absurdity, which I had yet discerned, as it is, I will let him alone in the undisturbed possession of his remarkable folly.

Mr James Kellog's brother from New York, with a family of nine, are here for a little while, and board at the Amherst House. Quite an affair to the town, and to the Landlord's purse. I'm telling all the news, Austin, for I think you will like to hear it. You know it's quite a sacrifice for me to tell what's going on.

We want to see you, all of us — we shall be very happy when you come. I hope you'll get home on Saturday. Prof Park will preach in Amherst next Sunday. I know you will want to hear him.

I send my prescription, Austin, and would be glad to have you attend to it for me, if you have time, but if it is inconvenient, no matter now. Mother sends much love — father is gone away. Winnie has written herself, and I am today, and always,

your aff

Sister Emily.



Nov. 14. Methinks I have not seen any of those white-in-tail birds [Vesper Sparrow *Poocetes gramineus*] for a week (?); but I see a little sparrow or two to-day, maybe a song sparrow [Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia (melodia)*]? Mallows still in bloom, and hedge-mustard.

P.M. — To Annurnsack and Cedar Swamp.

There is a clear air and a strong northwest wind drying up the washed earth after the heavy rain of yesterday. The road looks smooth and white as if washed and swept. It is surprising how rapidly our sandy soil dries up. We walk dry-shod the day after a rain which raises the river three feet. I am struck by the dark blue of the agitated river.

Saw yarrow apparently just opened and tansy still fresh, but the fringed gentian in P. Barrett's meadow has long since withered. It falls before the first severe frosts. It is remarkable how short a career it has, in our meadows

1853-1854

1853-1854

at least. Its stem and leaves never conspicuous, it is not to be detected at all, perhaps, before the middle of September, and by about the middle of October with us it has already succumbed to the frosts. It came very near not being an inhabitant of our latitude, perhaps our globe, at all. The witch-hazel lasts much longer. However, I have seen it in November on a high hillside in Weston. When the flower season is over, when the great company of flower-seekers have ceased their search, this just raises its blue face above the withering grass beside the brooks for a moment, having at the eleventh hour made up its mind to join this planet's floral exhibition.

I climb Annursnack. Under this strong wind more dry oak leaves are rattling down. All winter is their fall. A distinction is to be made between those trees whose leaves fall as soon as the bright autumnal tints are gone and they are withered and those whose leaves are rustling and falling all winter even into spring.

October is the month of painted leaves, of ripe leaves, when all the earth, not merely flowers, but fruits and leaves, are ripe. With respect to its colors and its season, it is the sunset month of the year, when the earth is painted like the sunset sky. This rich glow flashes round the world. This light fades into the clear, white, leafless twilight of November, and whatever more glowing sunset or Indian summer we have then is the afterglow of the year. In October the man is ripe even to his stalk and leaves; he is pervaded by his genius, when all the forest is a universal harvest, whether he possesses the enduring color of the pines, which it takes two years to ripen and wither, or the brilliant color of the deciduous trees, which fade the first fall.

From this hill I am struck with the smoothness and washed appearance of all the landscape. All these russet fields and swells look as if the withered grass had been combed by the flowing water. Not merely the sandy roads, but the fields are swept. All waters — the rivers and ponds and swollen brooks — and many new ones are now seen through the leafless trees — are blue as indigo, reservoirs of dark indigo amid the general russet and reddish-brown and gray.

October answers to that period in the life of man when he is no longer dependent on his transient moods, when all his experience ripens into wisdom, but every root, branch, leaf of him glows with maturity. What he has been and done in his spring and summer appears. He bears his fruit.

Now for the bare branches of the oak woods, where hawks have nested and owls perched, the sinews of the trees, and the prattling (?) of the wind in their midst. For, now their leaves are off, they've bared their arms, thrown off their coats, and, in the attitude of fencers, await the onset of the wind, to box or wrestle with it. Such high winds would have done much harm six weeks ago. The top of Annursnack has been burned, and sown with winter rye, and the green blade contrasts with the black ground there. It is the most conspicuous radical leaf.

Went through the white cedar swamp. There are white cedars, larch (now bare), spruce, etc.; cedars two feet through, the only ones I know in Concord. It was here were cut the cedar posts which Alcott put into Emerson's summer-house. They could not be spared even for that. It is a stout tree here, tapering with singular abruptness. Its small flattish leaves, dispersed crosswise and at other or different angles with each other, give it a peculiarly light, fantastic look. Myriads of little ones are springing in the more open parts of the swamp. They are turned a reddish green now. The large trees have a very rough bark, regularly furrowed perpendicularly, and a bright-yellow resin between the furrows. I find that the inner bark makes a good lye. Is this used by the Indians? Methinks these are flower-buds which are formed at the ends of the leaflets and will open early in the spring. This swamp must be visited in midsummer. You see great shelf-shaped fungi, handsomely buttressed and perfectly horizontal, on the under side of slanting dead trees, at different stages one above another. Do lichens or fungi grow on you? Sometimes the one side of a man is pasture for fungi while the other is clothed with lichens, he being partially rotten.

Our arbor-vitæ cones are full of broadly winged seeds.

6.30 P.M. — To Baker Farm by boat.

It is full moon, and a clear night, with a strong northwest wind; so C. and I must have a sail by moonlight. The river has risen surprisingly, to a spring height, owing to yesterday's rain, higher than before since spring. We sail rapidly upward. The river apparently, almost actually, as broad as the Hudson. Venus remarkably bright, just ready to set. Not a cloud in the sky, only the moon and a few faint unobtrusive stars here and there, and from time to time a meteor. The water washes against our bows with the same sound that one hears against a vessel's prow by night on the ocean. If you had waked up here, you would not know at first but you were there. The shore-lines are concealed; you look seemingly over an almost boundless waste of waters on either hand. The hills are dark, vast, lumpish. Some near, familiar hill appears as a distant bold mountain, for its base is indefinitely removed. It is very pleasant to make our way thus rapidly but mysteriously over the black waves, black as ink and dotted with round foam-spots with a long moonlight sheen on one side — to make one's way upward thus over the waste of waters, not knowing where you are exactly, only avoiding shores. The stars are few and faint in this bright light. How well they wear! C. thought a man could still get along with them who was considerably reduced in his circumstances, that they were a kind of bread and cheese that never failed. Fair Haven Hill never looked more grand and mountain-like than now that all its side is dark and we only see its bold outline at an indefinite distance. Under the lee of the Holden wood we found unexpectedly smooth and pleasant water and stillness, where we heard the wind roar behind us. The night is cool and not damp, and methinks you can be abroad with more impunity than in summer nights even. The walls on Conantum are


1853-1854

1853-1854

merely black streaks, inky lines running over the hill. The wind goes down somewhat. The features of the landscape are simpler and lumped. We have the moon with a few stars above, a waste of black, dashing waves around, reflecting the moon's sheen on one side, and the distant shore in dark swelling masses, dark floating isles between the water and the sky, on either hand. Moored our boat under Fair Haven Hill.

The light is so strong that colors of objects are not much changed from the day. The water seen from the hill is still blue, and the fields are russet.

How can we omit to go forth on the water these windy days and nights, to be tossed by the waves? It is some such novelty to a landsman as an earthquake. To take the hand of Nature and be shaken. Heard one cricket to-night.

 Middle of November: [Bronson Alcott](#) arrived in [Cincinnati, Ohio](#), the westernmost city of his tour, and lectured on "Chaos" in The Apollo, a public edifice on Walnut Street, to an enthusiastic crowd of about a hundred. Soon he would be able to send home a bank draft for the magnificent sum of \$150.⁰⁰.

 November 15, Tuesday: When Queen Maria II of Portugal died in Lisbon she was succeeded by her son, 16-year-old Pedro V, under regency.

The Asylum Journal of Mental Science, the principal British psychiatric journal, 1st appeared, under the editorship of [Sir John Charles Bucknill](#) (its title would later change to Journal of Mental Science).⁴⁹

PSYCHOLOGY

[Henry Thoreau](#), on November 2d elected curator of the Concord Lyceum, had declined that responsibility. At this point, to his journal, he attempted to explain himself.



Nov. 15. P.M. — To Fair Haven Hill and by boat to witch-hazel bush.

Were they not the white-in-tail birds [[Vesper Sparrow](#) [Pooecetes gramineus](#)] I saw this afternoon? Cricket still. After yesterday's clear, windy weather we have to-day less wind and much haze. It is Indian-summer-like. The river has risen yet higher than last night, so that I cut across Hubbard's meadow with ease. Took up a witch-hazel with still some fresh blossoms; also a barberry bush. What appeared to be the minute fibrous roots of the last covered one side of a rock thickly like a piece of rotten flannel. How conspicuous its bright yellow roots in the soil!

The flood has covered most muskrat-cabins again. It has also reached and floated higher yet the last week. Just after sundown, though it had been windy before, the waters became suddenly smooth, and the clear yellow light of the Western sky was handsomely reflected in the water, making it doubly light to me on the water, diffusing light from below as well as above.

Were those insects on the surface after the moon rose skaters or water-bugs?

After having some business dealings with men, I am occasionally chagrined, and feel as if I had done some wrong, and it is hard to forget the ugly circumstance. I see that such intercourse long continued would make one thoroughly prosaic, hard, and coarse. But the longest intercourse with Nature, though in her rudest moods, does not thus harden and make coarse. A hard, insensible man whom we liken to a rock is indeed much harder than a rock. From hard, coarse, insensible men with whom I have no sympathy, I go to commune with the rocks, whose hearts are comparatively soft.

I was the other night elected a curator of our Lyceum, but was obliged to decline, because I did not know where to find good lecturers enough to make a course for the winter. We commonly think that we cannot have a good journal in New England, because we have not enough writers of ability; but we do not suspect likewise that we have not good lecturers enough to make a Lyceum.

The tall wool-grass, with its stately heads, still stands above and is reflected its the smooth water.

49. Street, W.R. A CHRONOLOGY OF NOTEWORTHY EVENTS IN AMERICAN [PSYCHOLOGY](#). Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 1994

1853-1854

1853-1854

Together with the barberry, I dug up a brake root by chance. This, too, should have gone into the witches' caldron. It is large and black, almost like a cinder without, and within curiously black and white in parallel fibres, with a sort of mildewiness as if it were rotting; yet fresh shoots are ready for the spring with a cottony point.

Goodwin says he killed a mink the other day on a small *white pine tree*. Some years ago, about this season, he dug out fifteen muskrats in one nest in the ground at Goose Pond. He says the white rabbit does not run to his hole, but the gray one does.

This evening at sundown, when I was on the water, I heard some booming up the river what I suppose was the sound of cannon fired in Lowell to celebrate the Whig victory, the voting down the new Constitution. Perchance no one else in Concord heard them, and it is remarkable that I heard them, who was only interested in the natural phenomenon of sound borne far over water. The river is now so full and so high over the meadows, and at that hour was so smooth withal, that perchance the waves of sound flowed over the smooth surface of the water with less obstruction and further than in any other direction.

I also noticed this afternoon that, before the water generally was smoothed, those parts of the inundated meadow where spires of grass rose thinly above the surface were already quite smooth and glossy, so effectually did they break and dissipate the wavelets. A multitude of fine grass stems were a sufficient breakwater to render the surface smooth.

This afternoon has wanted no condition to make it a gossamer day, it seems to me, but a calm atmosphere. Plainly the spiders cannot be abroad on the water unless it is smooth. The one I witnessed this fall was at time of flood. — May it be that they are driven out of their retreats like muskrats and snow-fleas, and spin these lines for their support? Yet they work on the causeway, too. I see many cranberries on the vines at the bottom, making a great show. It might be worth the while, where possible, to flood a cranberry meadow as soon as they are ripe and before the frosts, and so preserve them plump and sound till spring



November 16, Wednesday: The [Daily Alta California](#) of [San Francisco](#) reported that the rainy season being now not far distant, gold miners who had been working the river beds were preparing that with the 1st downpour they would need to abandon their claims, some of which had been yielding enormously — at Sailor, Union, and Cove claims on Feather River, for instance, the average for the past week was upwards of \$20,000.

[Waldo Emerson](#)'s mother, [Ruth Haskins Emerson](#), died.

[Henry Thoreau](#) went paddling with his sister [Sophia Thoreau](#) up the Assabet River to Nawshawtuct. The river was so high that the route was more direct than usual.



Nov. 16. P.M. — To Nawshawtuct by boat with [Sophia](#), up Assabet.

The river still higher than yesterday. I paddled straight from the boat's place to the Island. I now take notice of the green polypody on the rock and various other ferns, one the marginal (?) shield fern and one the terminal shield fern, and this other, here inserted, on the steep bank above the Hemlocks.

I admire the fine blue color of the cedar berries.

1853-1854

1853-1854



After November 16: [Henry Thoreau](#) brought [Robert Bulkeley Emerson](#) from [Littleton, Massachusetts](#) for the funeral of [Ruth Haskins Emerson](#) (his and [Waldo Emerson](#)'s mother).



November 17, Thursday: [Johannes Brahms](#) arrived in Leipzig to find that city all atwitter about “the new genius” whose arrival had been trumpeted by Schumann’s article “Neue Bahnen.”

[Bronson Alcott](#) offered his 3d “conversation” at the Apollo Rooms at the corner of 5th Street and Walnut Street in [Cincinnati, Ohio](#): “The Fountain” — the audience for this was “very select and sympathizing.”

Street signs were authorized, to be placed at [San Francisco, California](#) intersections.




Nov. 17. I notice that many plants about this season of the year or earlier, after they have died down at top, put forth fresh and conspicuous radical leaves against another spring. So some human beings in the November of their days exhibit some fresh radical greenness, which, though the frosts may soon nip it, indicates and confirms their essential vitality. When their summer leaves have



1853-1854

1853-1854

faded and fallen, they put forth fresh radical leaves which sustain the life in their root still, against a new spring. The dry fields have for a long time been spotted with the small radical leaves of the fragrant life-everlasting, not to mention the large primrose, johnswort, etc., etc. And almost every plant, although it may show no greenness above ground, if you dig about it, will be found to have fresh shoots already pointing upward and ready to burst forth in the spring. Are not more birds crushed under the feet of oxen than of horses?


 November 18, Friday: [Edward Pinkney Williams](#), a merchant of [New Orleans](#), died at the age of 34. Born in [Maryland](#), he had been a Harvard classmate of [Thoreau](#):

PALMER, Joseph. NECROLOGY OF ALUMNI OF HARVARD COLLEGE, 1851-52 TO 1862-63. Boston MA: J. Wilson and son, 1864, 544 pages:

1837. — EDWARD PINKNEY WILLIAMS died in New Orleans, 18 November, 1853, aged 34. He was born in Baltimore, 9 June, 1819; and was a merchant in New Orleans.



Nov. 18. Conchologists call those shells “which are fished up from the depths of the ocean” and are never seen on the shore, which are the rarest and most beautiful, *Pelagii*, but those which are cast on shore and are never so delicate and beautiful as the former, on account of exposure and abrasion, *Littorales*. So it is with the thoughts of poets: some are fresh from the deep sea, radiant with unimagined beauty, — *Pelagii*; but others are comparatively worn, having been tossed by many a tide, — *Littorales*, — scaled off, abraded, and eaten by worms.

 November 19, Saturday: Moses Grant wrote to George Stevens to inform that he was unable to serve on the Committee of Ward 4.

Katherine Lawrence wrote from Boston that since Colonel Lawrence was in London, he couldn't serve on the Executive Committee of the 4th Ward.⁵⁰

The Placer, [California Herald](#) reported that river-bed gold mining on the North and Middle Forks of the American River had almost been suspended for the present season. “We hear of companies taking their flumes out and disposing of the lumber. In fact, river mining has not been as successful as was anticipated, save with a few companies, but not withstanding, this does not seem to deter miners. We hear of calculation being made for next season by turning the American high up on the Middle Fork.”

At Bidwell's Bar in [California](#), the [Butte Record](#) reported that “The thriving little place called Adams Town opposite Long's Bar is quite brisk. Rich Gulch and Morriss's ravine are also very rich, averaging \$16 to \$20 the hand where there is water, which has been rather scarce for the past two months. Oregon Gulch and Spring Valley have paid very well. Some big lumps were taken out last week near Simmens Store. Several very rich quartz leads have been struck near these places some 3 or 4 crushing machines have been put in successful operation.”

50. Stimpert, James. A GUIDE TO THE CORRESPONDENCE IN THE CHARLES WESLEY SLACK MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION: 1848-1885. Kent State University, Library, Special Collections



Nov. 19. P.M. Up river in boat to Hubbard's meadow, cranberrying. They redden all the lee shore, the water being still apparently at the same level with the 16th. This is a very pleasant and warm Indian-summer afternoon. Methinks we have not had one like it since October 31st. This, too, is a gossamer day, though it is not particularly calm. If it were, it would be still more perfect. My boat I find to be covered with spiders, whose fine lines soon stretch from side to side. Got a bushel and a half of cranberries, mixed with chaff. Brought home one of those little shells found in the shore wreck, which look like a bugle-horn. I notice that at the bridges there is now



a slight rapid, and the water is perceptibly several inches lower on the down-stream side, the piers acting as a dam, the stream being somewhat narrowed there withal by the abutments. What is the peculiarity of the Indian summer? From the 14th to the 21st October inclusive, this year, was perfect Indian summer; and this day the next? Methinks that any particularly pleasant and warmer weather after the middle of October is thus called. Has it not fine, calm spring days answering to it? Autumnal dandelion quite fresh. Tansy very fresh yesterday.



November 20, Sunday: The Russian fleet destroyed a Turkish squadron in the harbor of Sinope.

During this night an earthquake was felt in San Francisco (there had been more than 30 shocks since January).

CALIFORNIA

[Henry Thoreau](#) referred in his journal to an anonymous article "Does the Dew Fall?" that was appearing in [Harper's New Monthly Magazine](#) for September, that he was currently perusing:⁵¹

"DOES THE DEW FALL?"



Nov. 20. 7.30 A.M. — To [Hubbard](#)'s meadow, cranberrying. Still quite warm as yesterday. I wear no greatcoat. There has been no freezing in the night. I hear a single hylodes in the wood by the water, while I am raking the cranberries. This warmth has aroused him. While raking, I disturbed two bullfrogs, one quite small. These, too, the warm weather has

51. It is presumably safe to infer from such a reference, and from the fact that we also know that Thoreau read an article in the August issue, that an omnivorous reader such as himself would have been familiar with the contents of all the issues of [Harper's Magazine](#) from June to November of this year at least — and therefore all the contents of this particular series of issues of this particular monthly magazine that have come to be bound together as "Volume VII" will be included in this Kouroo Contexture.

- HARPER'S FOR JUNE '53
- HARPER'S FOR JULY '53
- HARPER'S FOR AUG '53
- HARPER'S FOR SEP '53
- HARPER'S FOR OCT '53
- HARPER'S FOR NOV '53

1853-1854

1853-1854

perhaps aroused. They appear rather stupid. Also I see one painted tortoise, but with no bright markings. Do they fade?

I observe on some muskrat-cabins much of that bleached and withered long grass, strewn as if preparatory to raising them, for almost all are covered with water now. It apparently is used as a binder. I find, washed up with the cranberries and also floating over the meadow and about the cabins, many fragments of a root, often with that green, somewhat pellucid, roundish pad attached. This appears to be the muskrats' principal vegetable food now. It is not flagroot, but either yellow lily, pontederia, white lily, — or can it be heart-leaf root?

The shore is so reddened with cranberries that I perceive them fifteen rods off, tingeing it. Many of them being frost-bitten, they have now the pleasant taste of spring cranberries, which many prefer. They, as well as the wreck generally, are covered, as if peppered, with the skipping snow-fleas. In the wreck I find also the common little trumpet-shaped cockle, and some caddis-worms out of their cases. There is an abundance of chaff, *i.e.* broken meadow-grass and cranberry leaves, in it now.

Minott said he heard geese [**Canada Goose** █ *Branta canadensis*] going south at daybreak the 17th, before he came out of the house, and heard and saw another large flock at 10 A.M. Those I heard this afternoon were low and far in the western horizon. I did [not] distinctly see them, but heard them farther and farther in the southwest, the sound of one which did the honking guiding my eyes. I had seen that a storm was brewing before, and low mists already gathered in the northeast. It rained soon after I got home. The 18th was also a drizzling day. Methinks the geese are wont to go south just before a storm, and, in the spring, to go north just after one, say at the end of a long April storm. I have not seen any tree sparrows [**American Tree Sparrow** █ *Spizella arborea*] of late, nor white-in-tails [**Vesper Sparrow** █ *Poocetes gramineus*]. Would it not be worth the while to flood a cranberry meadow just before the frosts come, and so preserve them plump and fresh till spring? I once came near speculating in cranberries. Being put to it to raise the wind to pay for "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers," and having occasion to go to New York to peddle some [pencils](#) which I had made, as I passed through Boston I went to Quincy Market and inquired the price of cranberries. The dealers took me down cellar, asked if I wanted wet or dry, and showed me them. I gave them to understand that I might want an indefinite quantity. It made a slight sensation among them and for aught I know raised the price of the berry for a time. I then visited various New York packets and was told what would be the freight, on deck and in the hold, and one skipper was very anxious for my freight. When I got to New York, I again visited the markets as a purchaser, and "the best of Eastern Cranberries" were offered me by the barrel at a cheaper rate than I could buy them in Boston. I was obliged to manufacture a thousand dollars' worth of pencils and slowly dispose of and finally sacrifice them, in order to pay an assumed debt of a hundred dollars.

What enhances my interest in dew — I am thinking of the summer — is the fact that it is so distinct from rain, formed most abundantly after bright, starlit nights, a product especially of the clear, serene air. The manna of fair weather; the upper side of rain, as the country above the clouds. That nightly rain called dew, which gathers and falls in so low a stratum that our heads tower above it like mountains in an ordinary shower. It only consists with comparatively fair weather above our heads. Those warm volumes of air, forced high up the hillsides in summer nights, are driven thither to drop their dew there, like kine to their yards to be milked; that the moisture they hold may be condensed and so dew formed before morning on the tops of the hills. A writer in *Harper's Magazine* (vol. vii, page 505) says that the mist at evening does not rise, "but gradually forms higher up in the air." He calls it the moisture of the air become visible. Says there is most dew in clear nights, because clouds prevent the cooling down of the air; they radiate the heat of the earth back to it; and that a strong wind, by keeping the air in motion, prevents its heat from passing off. Therefore, I proceed, for a plentiful dew it must not only be clear but calm. The above writer says bad conductors of heat have always most dew on them, and that wool or swan's-down is "good for experimenting on the quantity of dew falling," — weight before and after. Thinks it not safe to walk in clear nights, especially after midnight, when the dew is most abundantly forming; better in cloudy nights, which are drier. Also thinks it not prudent to venture out until the sun begins to rise and warms the air. But methinks this prudence begets a tenderness that will catch more cold at noonday than the opposite hardness at midnight.



1853-1854

1853-1854



November 21, Monday: [Jerome Van Crowninshield Smith](#) wrote to the Citizen's Union, accepting its having nominated him to be Mayor of Boston.

[Bronson Alcott](#) offered his 4th "conversation" at the Apollo Rooms at the corner of 5th Street and Walnut Street in [Cincinnati, Ohio](#): "The Seminary" — the evening was in "every way delightful."

[San Francisco](#) experienced yet another earthquake shock.

William Speiden, Jr. was suffering from a violent fever and would be bedridden on board his vessel in [Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry](#)'s far-eastern fleet until the 28th.

[Cassius M. Clay](#) wrote from Cincinnati, Ohio in response to an invitation from [William Lloyd Garrison](#), President of the American Anti-Slavery Society, and from [Wendell Phillips](#), [Edmund Quincy](#), and [Sydney Howard Gay](#), Secretaries of the American Anti-Slavery Society, that he address their annual convention at Boston:

Gentlemen:

Your kind letter of the 10th inst., inviting me to attend the Twentieth Anniversary of the American Anti-Slavery Society, is received. I should be proud to be with the pioneers of the cause of Liberty, on such a day, did time allow; but it does not. There is something significant in your going South. You have "conquered a peace" in Boston. When you were driven from New York, a few years ago, you immediately came in close sympathy with a large class of stern men and women, who before stood aloof in their countenance of your movement. New York is now won; and Philadelphia must now determine whether gracefully, or no, she will submit to the unconquerable truth, and the progress of the age! You are right when you class me with those who contend for "the speedy and eternal overthrow of Slavery in our land, by all rightful instrumentalities." I value it above all other questions. You fight outside of the Union; I within. So long as we agree in purpose, we will agree to disagree in the means. I love "the Union" as much as the "Silver Grays" or Southern canters; but I love it not for itself. I love it as the means to an end. I love it as the exponent and conservator of the principles of man's equality and self-government. I love it as the legacy of fathers who avowed that government had only its authority from the consent of the governed. I love it as the guardian also of religious liberty, and the true Christianity—that religion is between man and his god, and that no man can rightfully, in this respect, exercise censorship over others. I love the Union as the banner-bearer of the aspirants of Freedom of all lands and nations—lovely in order to be loved. But when it fails in these "glorious" ends—and in these only "glorious"—then, say I, let it perish for ever!

And as I thus love it, I shall make eternal war upon all those canting scoundrels, whether in Church or State, who would pervert its true prestige to the retainment of Slavery, and its extension and perpetuity. I return the war of lynchers and "respectable" mobs! I return the war of those, however powerful, whose main business it is in these States to "crush out Abolitionism!" I return the war of those who would, by sermons, tracts, or literature, aid the reaction of anti-revolutionary

1853-1854

1853-1854

avowals. I return the war of those, who, under the hallowed names of Democracy and Republicanism, stand by foreign despotisms, and who, amid blood and prisons, bear banners described with "law and order!" I return the war of the supreme Courts of the United States, who, under the pretence of devotion to law, pervert every principle of justice; of the President, of the slave Power, and of a servile congress! With a manly heart, which may be beaten down, but never conquered, I shall stand by you and all true men; and my voice shall ever be, "Don't give up the ship."

I am, truly, your friend, C.M. Clay



Nov. 21. Monday. A fine misty rain all night and to-day.

Raking so many cranberries has made me quite conversant with the materials of the river wreck. There are many middle-sized living black dor-bugs in it, as well as bugle-horn shells, as I find on washing out my cranberries in the kitchen to-day. I have got about two and a half bushels of clear cranberries, and added those of Saturday afternoon makes about three and a half. I find my best way of getting cranberries is to go forth in time of flood, just before the water begins to fall and after strong winds, and, choosing the thickest places, let one, with an instrument like a large coarse dung-fork, hold down the floating grass and other coarser part of the wreck mixed with [it], while another, with as common iron garden rake, rakes them into the boat, there being just enough chaff left to enable you to get them into the boat, yet with little water. When I get them home, I filled a half-bushel basket a quarter full and set it in a tub of water, and, stirring the cranberries, the coarser part of the chaff was held beneath by the berries rising to the top. Then, raising the basket, draining it, and upsetting it into as bread-trough, the main part of the chaff fell uppermost and was cast aside. Then, draining off the water, I jarred the cranberries alternately to this end and then to that of the trough, each time removing the fine chaff — cranberry leaves and bits of grass — which adhered to the bottom, on the principle of gold-washing, except that the gold was what was thrown away, and finally I spread and dried and winnowed them. It would have been better if the basket had been a very coarse riddle and the trough had had a rough bottom.

The last two nights, at least, there has been no freezing.

Is not the dew but a humbler, gentler rain, the nightly rain, above which we raise our heads and unobstructedly behold the stars? The mountains are giants which tower above the rain, as we above the dew in the grass; it only wets their feet.



November 22, Tuesday: [Hector Berlioz](#) conducted "Harold in Italy" with Joseph Joachim in Hanover.

The Marysville, [California Herald](#) reported that there were at present but few persons mining at Foster Bar, although the few who were mining were doing well. In the hills above, everything was wearing a lively appearance and towns were springing up as by magic — Camptonville, where last April there had been only a small store and blacksmith shop, had come to boast at least 1,000 inhabitants. At Galena Hill, Young's Gold Hill, Railroad Hill and numerous other locales in these hills, the miners were obtaining good prospects. "I saw his Honor Judge S., last night with some 10½ ounces in his pan, which he had informed me he had taken out of a claim nearly opposite the El Dorado with six men that day."

[Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to [Francis H. Underwood](#).



Concord Nov. 22nd '53
 Dear Sir,
 If you will inform
 me in season at what rate
 per page, (describing the page)
 you will pay for accepted articles,
 —returning the rejected within a
 reasonable time—and your
 terms are satisfactory, I will
 forward something for your
 Magazine before Dec 5th,
 and you shall be at liberty
 to put my name in the
 list of contributors.
 Yours
 Henry D. Thoreau[.]



Nov. 22. Geese [**Canada Goose** **Branta canadensis**] went over yesterday, and to-day also. The drizzling rain of yesterday has not checked the fall of the river. It was raised by the rain of Sunday, the 13th, and began to fall the 20th.

P.M. — Up river by boat.


I think it must be the white lily root I find gnawed by the rats, though the leaves are pellucid. It has large roots with eyes and many smaller rootlets attached, white tinged with a bluish slate-color. The radical leaves appear to have started again. Turnip freshly in bloom in cultivated fields; knawel still; yarrow is particularly fresh and innocent; but I find no blossom on the *Arenaria serpyllifolia*.

If there is any one with whom we have a quarrel, it is most likely that that one makes some just demand on us which we disappoint.

I see still, here and there, a few deep-sunk yellow and decayed pads, the bleared, dulled, drowned eyes of summer.

I was just thinking it would be fine to get a specimen leaf from each changing tree and shrub and plant in autumn, in September and October, when it had got its brightest characteristic color, the intermediate ripeness in its transition from the green to the russet or brown state, outline and copy its color exactly with paint in a book, — a book which should be a memorial of October, be entitled October Hues or Autumnal Tints. I remember especially the beautiful yellow of the *Populus grandidentata* and the tint of the scarlet maple. What a memento such a book would be, beginning with the earliest reddening of the leaves, woodbine and ivy, etc., etc., and the lake of radical leaves, down to the latest oaks! I might get the and impression of their veins and outlines in the summer — with lampblack, and after color them.

As I was returning down the river toward night, I mistook the creaking of a plow-wheel for a flock of blackbirds passing overhead, but it is too late for them. The farmers plow considerably this month. No doubt it destroys many grubs in the earth.

 November 23, Wednesday: Tokugawa Iesada became Shogun in [Japan](#).


The Marysville, [California Herald](#) learned through an agent of Wells, Fargo & Company that a piece of fine gold weighing 41 and a half ounces and valued at \$713 had been recovered from Dixon Creek 2 and a half miles above Onion Valley. The Downieville [Echo](#) reported that it had been shown on Monday last, a pan nearly full of gold (over \$800) which had been pounded in a common mortar out of a lump of quartz weighing 10 pounds 5 ounces. That lump had been recovered from the Middle Yuba River some 3 miles below Minnesota in the claims of the Humboldt Company on Humboldt Flat. There were 7 men in that company and they had been averaging, for several weeks, 2 ounces per day to the man — exclusive of this particularly magnificent lump. In walking over Durgan Flat the other day, the reporter had been informed of several companies who were making \$8 to \$32 per day to the man. A company in which his friend Smith “was gaged” took out in two days last week 28 ounces, and all other companies near this area were said to be averaging an ounce per day to the hand. The gold diggings at Badger Hill, situated about half a mile above town on the South Fork, is probably the richest hill digging that has ever been struck in this vicinity.

During this day and the following one, [William Cooper Nell](#) and Jeremiah Burke Sanderson had been invited to act as members of the State Council.

[Bronson Alcott](#) offered his 5th [Cincinnati, Ohio](#) “conversation” at the Apollo Rooms at the corner of 5th Street and Walnut Street: “The Mart” — the crowd turned out to be “large and appreciating.”



Nov. 23. 6 A.M. — To Swamp Bridge Brook mouth.

The cocks are the only birds I hear, but they are a host. They crow as freshly and bravely as ever, while poets go down the stream, degenerate into science and prose. I have not seen a flock of small birds, either tree sparrows or *F. hyemalis* or white-in-tails [[Vesper Sparrow](#)  *Poocetes gramineus*], etc., for about a fortnight. ']here is now no sound of early birds on the leafless trees and bushes —willows and alders— along this watercourse. The few that are left probably roost in the evergreen woods. Yet I hear; or seem to hear, the faintest possible lisp or creak from some sparrow, as if from a crack in the mist-clad earth, or some ox-yoke or distant wain. I suspect that the song sparrow lingers as late, here and there alone, as any migrating bird.

By 8 o'clock the misty clouds disperse, and it turns out a pleasant, calm, and springlike morning. The water, going down, but still spread far over the meadows, is seen from the window perfectly smooth and full of reflections. What lifts and lightens and makes heaven of the earth is the fact that you see the reflections of the humblest weeds against the sky, but you cannot put your head low enough to see the substance so. The reflection enchants us, just as an echo does.

If I would preserve my relation to nature, I must make my life more moral, more pure and innocent. The problem is as precise and simple as a mathematical one. I must not live loosely, but more and more continently.

What an engineer this water is! It comes with its unerring level, and reveals ail the inequalities of the meadow. The farmer may see now what route to take to get the driest and firmest ground for his hay-carts, how to cut his ditches, and where to drop more sand. It is an obvious piece of geometry in nature. Every peculiar curve in the limbs of the trees is doubly conspicuous seen both above and beneath, yet the rhyme makes even what was odd,



regular what was irregular. For a week or more there has been no freezing day or night. The springs and swamps are getting filled .

The Indian summer itself, said to be more remarkable in this country than elsewhere, no less than the reblossoming of certain flowers, the peep of the hylodes, and sometimes the faint warble of some birds, is the reminiscence, or rather the return, of spring, — the year renewing its youth.

At 5 P.M. I saw, flying southwest high overhead, a flock of geese, and heard the faint honking of one or two. They were in the usual harrow form, twelve in the shorter line and twenty-four in the longer, the latter abutting

1853-1854

1853-1854

on the former at the fourth bird from the front. I judged *hastily* that the interval between the geese was about



double their alar extent, and, as the last is, according to Wilson, five feet and two inches, the former may safely be called eight feet. I hear they were fired at with a rifle from Bunker Hill the other day. This is the sixth flock I have seen or heard of since the morning of the 17th, *i.e.* within a week.



November 24, Thursday: The Schumann family left Düsseldorf for a concert tour of the Netherlands.

There is in existence a receipt by which one "V.L. Witt" acknowledged on this date the sale for \$925 of a 12-year-old slave named George to a new owner "W. W. Westin." He warranted "the wright [*sic*] and title to the said boy" and that the piece of property was of "sound and healthy boddy [*sic*] and mind." This handwritten document measures 6½" x 4½" and although it has some fold marks, it comes nicely matted and framed in a 12" x 10" frame — the purchaser will be proud to exhibit such on home or office wall. (Make an offer, please.)

The Grass Valley, [California Telegraph](#) reported that the operation upon many of the rivers this past season has established some curious facts in regards to the action of the water upon *debris* of the beds. Claims upon the

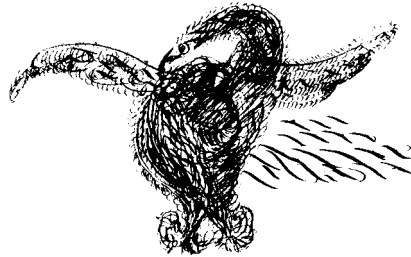
1853-1854

1853-1854

Feather River, which last fall prospects exceedingly rich with a heavy stratum into flumes, to have been swept clean to the bed rock and were almost wholly unproductive; while other points failing to give more than *color* provided great unnumerative. This fact, will vouch for will explain the phenomena of the renewed productiveness of *bars* that have been through thoroughly worked out in previous years, and will have the effect to give a more permanent value to river diggings, by bringing down changing the position of the golden sand.

[Tiphen Walsingham Allen](#), who hailed from the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, wrote in his diary of student life at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania (the original of this diary is now in Special Collections at the college library):

Quite a change since yesterday, very windy and also a cool air stirring today yet towards night the weather became very cold. This being thanksgiving day - College duties are suspended. I arose in time for prayers - + after breakfast I took into my violin, + practiced the Washington Grand March - a beautiful tune - continued to perform on the instrument until eleven - at which time I proceeded to the M.E. Church and listened to Prof Tiffany's magnificent sermon - suitable for the occasion. I then proceeded to our boarding House, and satisfied my eating propensities - from a well filled table - A splendid dinner! I only wish Thanksgiving day would continue in the way of dinners, hence forth and forever - After dinner, I came to my room, and during the afternoon entertained some of my dear friends - Presented Aaron Boon with a black, leath-coat - which Billy Heallan made for me - but as I have a sufficient supply with out it, and knowing that Boon is very scarce of mean's - neither Father or Mother, also as it fit him much better than myself - I freely gave it to him with no other motive than that of kindness. A feeling which I possess for those who I know are poor - yet industrious. I think from the appearance of things to day, this even that many of the students have been drinking a goodly quantity of the simon - pure - "Fight-town undies! drunk!" Have not studied any to day - smoked two segars - excited me - was at Mr S Nyle's from 8 until 10. Miss Nealie was there - Billy H. escorted her home. Miss Polin - Mr. Moulder - Collins - levvons Duke Allen- votives at 12.



Nov. 24. At noon, after a drizzling forenoon, the weather suddenly changed to clear and wintry, freezing cold with strong wind from a northerly quarter. It seems like the beginning of winter. Ice forms in my boat at 5 P.M., and what was mud in the street is fast becoming a rigid roughness. This after more than a week of mild and much drizzly weather without frost, one or two of the fairest days being Indian-summerish. Methinks we have had clear yellow sunsets and afterglows this month, like this to-night (not glowing red ones), with perhaps an inclination to blue and greenish clouds.



1853-1854

1853-1854



November 25, Friday: Boston merchant captain John Heard accidentally discovered an island (it now bears his name) in the south Indian Ocean.

The Ulster County town of Woodstock, [New York](#) annexed parts of the towns of Olive and Hurley.

The [California Democratic State Journal](#) reported:

MINING IN SIERRA. — From a gentleman who is largely interested in mining in the southern portion of Sierra County, we learn that the work in the river bed of the Middle Yuba has not been profitable this season; the miners succeeded in draining the water from their claims, but with few exceptions the ground has not paid nearly as well as was anticipated. At Orleans Flat, Moore's Flat and Snowy Point, on the south side of the Middle Yuba, there are rich and extensive diggings, and great preparations are being made, in anticipation of the winter rains. A company are engaged in cutting a canal, to supply this region with water during the summer months. At Kanaka Creek the miners have been successful; the creek has been flumed nearly its whole length, and almost all the companies at work in it have taken out large amounts of gold. The miners at work on Oregon Creek have also been successful.

At Smith's Flat but little gold has been taken out during the past three months, in consequence of a want of water. Preparations are being made for doing a large business in the numerous tunnels in this neighborhood during the winter.

At Chipps' a great many men are employed in tunneling "running side drifts and opening up new leads," preparatory to the winter rains. Tunneling in this vicinity has been very profitable. At Minnesota extensive works are carried on at tunneling, and in consequence the town, which lies within a few miles of the eastern boundary of the State, has increased about four hundred in population during the past year. All of the tunnels at this place continue to pay well, averaging, those of them that have been opened to the lead, from fifty to sixty dollars dividends to the share per week, during the past summer. Some of these tunnels extend a distance of six hundred feet into the mountain, but have been so well planned, as regards ventilation, and their side drifts so well arranged that a large number of men can work in them at the same time. The North Fork and Wayne Companies will each keep constantly employed from fifty to sixty men during the winter.

The work in these tunnels is performed by the light of candles, and continues without interruption day and night, as one body of workmen leave others take their place. In the Blue Tunnel at this place, there was found during the past week, one lump of gold weighing ten pounds six ounces which was sold to Mr. Adams & Co., at Nevada for \$1,950.

The lead at Minnesota, from which large amounts of gold have been taken, has long ascertained to run in a direction from the northwest to the southeast and has been traced from Oregon Creek to Snowy Point, a distance of six miles. The lead is about two hundred feet in width, and passes through the mountain at a point about six hundred feet above the water in the Middle Yuba, and four hundred feet below the highest ridge, after passing through

1853-1854

1853-1854

the mountain it appears again at Chips'. Strange as it may appear, there can be no doubt that this lead is the bed of an ancient river, that must have flowed towards the south long before the mountains now standing, were thrown into their present shape, for the mines on working into the mountain on this lead, find nothing but round, water-worn quartz boulders, and among them the remains of trees, that in some places appear changed to a substance resembling sulphate of iron, in others the wood remains, only decayed so much as to offer but little resistance to the pick. In other places among these boulders are found large deposits of decayed leaves and branches. With but one exception, all the trees and leaves found appear to belong to a species of pine or cedar. In one of these tunnels a log was found, petrified, that had the appearance of once having been of oak, on it could be distinctly seen the marks made by its striking among the rocks as it floated down the river.








Nov. 25. Frost on the windows.

10 AM. — To Cliffs.

A clear, cold, windy day. The water on the meadows, which are rapidly becoming bare, is skimmed over and reflects a whitish light, like silver plating, while the unfrozen river is a dark blue. In plowed fields I see the asbestos-like ice-crystals, more or less mixed with earth, frequently curled and curved like crisped locks, where the wet ground has frozen dry. By the spring under Fair Haven Hill, I see the frost about the cistus now at 11 A.M. in the sun. For some weeks I have heard occasionally the hounding of hounds, like a distant natural horn in the clear resonant air. Though the grass has but little life, even in its roots, cattle are still turned out more or less.

The landscape, seen from the side of the hill looking westward to the horizon through this clear and sparkling air, though simple to barrenness, is very handsome. There is first the clean light-reflecting russet earth, the dark-blue water, the dark or dingy green evergreens, the dull reddish-brown of young oaks and shrub oaks, the gray of maples and other leafless trees, and the white of birch stems. The mountains are remarkably distinct and appear near and elevated, but there is no snow on them. The white houses of the village, also, are remarkably distinct and bare and brought very near.

Going through the orchard, I saw two birds like jays [**Blue Jay**  **Cyanocitta cristata**] and soon heard a whistle-like note of alarm, between a robin [**American Robin**  **Turdus migratorius**] and a downy woodpecker . Perhaps it was a butcher-bird [**Northern Shrike**  **Lanius excubitor** (**Butcher-bird**)]. A heavy-shouldered hawk  sails over. A *Solidago nemoralis* with flowers still at root. Just after the sun set to-night, I observed that the northern hemisphere of the heavens was covered with fleecy clouds, which abruptly terminated in a straight line, stretching east and west from one horizon to the other directly over my head, the western end being beautifully rose-tinted. Half an hour later this cloud had advanced southward, showing clear sky behind it in the north, until its southern edge was seen at an angle of 45° by [*sic*] me. but though its line was as straight as before, it now appeared regularly curved like a segment of a melon-rind, as usual.



1853-1854

1853-1854



November 26, Saturday: Introduction and Allegro op.134 for piano and orchestra by [Robert Schumann](#) was performed for the initial time, in Utrecht, by Clara Schumann.

Turkish troops attacked Russian positions at Akhaltsikhe but were repulsed.

The [California Butte Record](#) reported on a new mining town named Elizabeth City that had sprung up on one of the “hills” to the north of the American Valley. The town, that had come to number more than 20 houses, had been produced by a late discovery of very rich and extensive “dry” gold pits varying in depth from 3 to 50 feet to bed rock. Winter mining had been rewarded handsomely.

[Bronson Alcott](#) offered his 6th and final [Cincinnati, Ohio](#) “conversation” at the Apollo Rooms at the corner of 5th Street and Walnut Street: “The Altar” — Cincinnatians had paid for 64 course tickets and, after counting up all the receipts from single admissions, the visitor had earned the magnificent sum of \$209. This was much more lucrative than anything Alcott had been able to achieve back in New England! There seemed a good prospect of “meetings again in the coming Autumn and after.”



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR NOVEMBER 26TH]



November 27, Sunday: On or after this day, when he made his will, [Christopher A. Greene](#), who had had some sort of serious respiratory condition ever since his military service in Florida, died in [Providence, Rhode Island](#) at the age of 37. ([Sarah Chace Greene](#) would for many years be operating a girls’ school in Providence.)




Nov. 27. Now a man will eat his heart, if ever, now, while the earth is bare, barren and cheerless, and we have the coldness of winter without the variety of ice and snow; but methinks the variety and compensation are in the stars now. How bright they are now by contrast with the dark earth! The days are short enough now. The sun is already setting before I have reached the ordinary limit of my walk, but the 21st of next month the day will be shorter still by about twenty-five minutes. In December there will be less light than in any month in the year. It is too cold to-day to use a paddle; the water freezes on the handle and numbs my fingers. I observe the *Lycopodium lucidulum* still of a fresh, shining green. Checkerberries and partridge-berries are both numerous and obvious now.



1853-1854

1853-1854

 November 28, Monday: [Giacomo Meyerbeer](#) was awarded the Orden der Kunst und Wissenschaft by King Maximilian II of Bavaria.

The 1st of 2 performances by [Hector Berlioz](#) in Hanover took place. At the 1st rehearsal Joseph Joachim, who played “Harold in Italy” on November 22d in Bremen, introduced Berlioz to his friend [Johannes Brahms](#).

[Henry Thoreau](#) went into Boston and Cambridge, and while there checked out, from [Harvard Library](#), the [Reverend William Gilpin](#)'s OBSERVATIONS ON THE COASTS OF HAMPSHIRE, SUSSEX, AND KENT, RELATIVE CHIEFLY TO PICTURESQUE BEAUTY: MADE IN THE SUMMER OF THE YEAR 1774 (London, Printed by A. Strahan for T. Cadell and W. Davies).⁵² He also checked out the [Reverend](#)'s THREE ESSAYS: ON PICTURESQUE BEAUTY; ON PICTURESQUE TRAVEL; AND ON SKETCHING LANDSCAPE: WITH A POEM ON LANDSCAPE PAINTING. TO THESE ARE NOW ADDED, TWO ESSAYS GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF THE PRINCIPLES AND MODE IN WHICH THE AUTHOR EXECUTED HIS OWN DRAWINGS (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies), in its 3d edition issued in 1808.



THREE ESSAYS, 3D EDITION

Having already perused the volumes for the years 1633-1638 and 1640, Thoreau checked out the JESUIT RELATION volumes for the years 1640-1641 and 1642.⁵³


<http://www.canadiana.org>

At the Boston Society of Natural History, Thoreau checked out the 3d volume of [Henry Rowe Schoolcraft](#)'s and Captain [Seth Eastman](#)'s HISTORICAL AND STATISTICAL INFORMATION RESPECTING ... THE INDIAN TRIBES OF THE UNITED STATES.

THE INDIAN TRIBES, III, 1854

52. He would copy from this into his Fact Book, and use some of the material in [CAPE COD](#).

53. Thoreau presumably read each and every volume of the JESUIT RELATIONS that was available in the stacks at the [Harvard Library](#). We know due to extensive extracts in his Indian Notebooks #7 and #8 that between 1852 and 1857 he did withdraw or consult all the volumes for the years between 1633 and 1672. Thoreau took notes in particular in regard to the reports by [Father Jean de Brébeuf](#), [Father Jacques Buteux](#), [Father Claude Dablon](#), [Father Jérôme Lalemant](#), [Father Paul Le Jeune](#), [Father François Le Mercier](#), [Father Julien Perrault](#), [Father Jean de Quens](#), [Father Paul Ragueneau](#), and [Father Barthélemy Vimont](#).

 Cramoisy, Sebastian (ed.). *RELATION DE CE QUI S'EST PASSÉ EN LA NOUVELLE FRANCE IN L'ANNÉE 1636: ENVOYÉE AU R. PERE PROVINCIAL DE LA COMPAGNIE DE JESUS EN LA PROVINCE DE FRANCE, PAR LE P. PAUL LE JEUNE DE LA MESME COMPAGNIE, SUPERIEUR DE LA RESIDENCE DE KÉBEC. A Paris: Chez Sebastian Cramoisy...*, 1637

1853-18



1853-1854

Nov. 28. *Monday*. Saw boys skating in Cambridge-Port the first ice to bear – Settled with J. Munroe & Co — and on a new Act placed 12 of my books with him on sale. I have paid him directly out of pocket since the book was published 290 dollars and taken his receipt for it — This does not include postage on proofsheets &c &c — I have received from other quarters about 15 dollars. This has been the pecuniary value of the book— Saw at the Nat Hist- Rooms the skeleton of a moose — with horns— The length of the spinal processes (?) over the shoulder was very great— The hind legs were longer than the front — & the horns rose about 2 feet above the shoulders & spread between 4 & 5 I judged— [Dr Harris](#) described to me his finding a species of Cicindela at the White mts this fall — (the same he had found there one specimen of som time ago—) supposed to be very rare — found at st Peter's River & at Lake Superior — but he proves it to be common near the Wht. mts.

CAPE COD: To-day it was the Purple Sea, an epithet which I should not before have accepted. There were distinct patches of the color of a purple grape with the bloom rubbed off. But first and last the sea is of all colors. Well writes Gilpin concerning "the brilliant hues which are continually playing on the surface of a quiet ocean," and this was not too turbulent at a distance from the shore. "Beautiful," says he, "no doubt in a high degree are those glimmering tints which often invest the tops of mountains; but they are mere coruscations compared with these marine colors, which are continually varying and shifting into each other in all the vivid splendor of the rainbow, through the space often of several leagues." Commonly, in calm weather, for half a mile from the shore, where the bottom tinges it, the sea is green, or greenish, as are some ponds; then blue for many miles, often with purple tinges, bounded in the distance by a light almost silvery stripe; beyond which there is generally a dark-blue rim, like a mountain ridge in the horizon, as if, like that, it owed its color to the intervening atmosphere. On another day it will be marked with long streaks, alternately smooth and rippled, light-colored and dark, even like our inland meadows in a freshet, and showing which way the wind sets.

Thus we sat on the foaming shore, looking on the wine-colored ocean,—

Θίν' ἔφ' ἄλός πολιῆς, ὀρόων ἐπὶ οἶνοπα πόντον.

Here and there was a darker spot on its surface, the shadow of a cloud, though the sky was so clear that no cloud would have been noticed otherwise, and no shadow would have been seen on the land, where a much smaller surface is visible at once. So, distant clouds and showers may be seen on all sides by a sailor in the course of a day, which do not necessarily portend rain where he is. In July we saw similar dark-blue patches where schools of Menhaden rippled the surface, scarcely to be distinguished from the shadows of clouds. Sometimes the sea was spotted with them far and wide, such is its inexhaustible fertility. Close at hand you see their back fin, which is very long and sharp, projecting two or three inches above water. From time to time also we saw the white bellies of the Bass playing along the shore.

PEOPLE OF
CAPE COD

WILLIAM GILPIN



1853-1854

1853-1854



November 29, Tuesday: [Tiphon Walsingham Allen](#) wrote in his diary of student life at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania (the original of this diary is now in Special Collections at the college library):

A damp disagreeable day - ,,L,,S,, mailed to Mollie Rip. Finished writing out all of my lectures - More news - a secret marriage, the plan, run off, +c,, If I had a wife, and she could act - as a certain woman does in Town, I'd certainly take her to Georgia and trade her away for corn or potatoes. Of all things I detest, is an unkind woman - or to see a married woman when made - I hope I may get a wife who is quite ignorant, as to the manner in which persons get angry, for its seldom every I am angry, and then one kind word will quell all my ill feelings - A kind word stucks deep into my heart - and throws light over all the dark places then around. May I even strive to cultivate that noble trait - and never forget for one moment, the position I now occupy, from the cultivation of it so far - never get angry - never become peevish under any circumstances - But when resenting an offence do it in cool blood. I have been much annoyed lately, By some certain children who are fast making approaches to ruin, through the aid of the another - I love to see children - But better pleased if they behave on when out of sight. An other item - For a woman to be - Oh! Fitzpatrick. I die before I would lie - Liars ought to be tared + feathered + this day has been spent in assiduous study by me. Theatre in Town - John Deford dismissed - As I am tired and much near IL - I'll bid you all adieu



Professor Sandra Harbert Petrulionis has described the entries of this day in the journal of [Henry Thoreau](#) in the following manner:

On November 29, 1853, sandwiched in between the Journal's discussion of a rare beetle and a local boy's find of a Native American artifact, Thoreau records a story told to him by local farmer George Minott - a tale of a rabid dog which met its demise in Concord many years before. Francis H. Allen included this tale in his 1936 *MEN OF CONCORD*, a compilation of the Journal's character sketches. As a way of leading in to it, Thoreau relates the fact that recently a boy in nearby Lincoln had been fatally bitten by a rabid dog. Thoreau - who calls what he's about to write a "story" - justifies the digression as "worth telling for it shows how much trouble the passage of one mad dog through the town may produce" (Journal V 522).

In classic storytelling fashion, Thoreau begins by establishing the time and setting: "It was when he [Minott] was a boy and lived down below the Old Ben Prescott House - over the Cellar Hole on what is now Hawthorne's Land." The following excerpts summarize Minott's description of the dog's progress through

1853-1854

1853-1854

town:



Nov. 29. On Saturday, the 26th, a dog on whose collar the words "Milton Hill," or equivalent ones, were engraved ran through the town, having, as the story went, bitten a boy in Lincoln. He bit several dogs in this town and was finally shot. Some of the dogs bitten have been killed, and rumor now says that the boy died yesterday. People are considerably alarmed. Some years ago a boy in Lincoln was bitten by a raccoon and died of hydrophobia. I observed to Minott to-night that I did not think that our doctors knew how to cure this disease, but he said they could cure it, he had seen a man bitten who was cured. The story is worth telling, for it shows ho much trouble the passage of one mad dog through the town may produce.

It was when he was a boy and lived down below the old Ben Prescott house, over the cellar-hole on what is now Hawthorne's land. The first he remembers a couple of men had got poles and were punching at a strange dog toward night under a barn in that neighborhood. The dog, which was speckled and not very large, would growl and bite the pole, and they ran a good deal of risk, but they did not know that he was mad. At length they routed him, and he took to the road and came on toward town, and Minott, keeping his distance, followed on behind. When the dog got to the old Ben Prescott Place, he turned up into the yard, where there were a couple of turkeys, drove them into a corner — bit off the head of one, and carried the body off across the road into the meadow opposite. They then raised the cry of mad dog. He saw his mother and Aunt Prescott, two old ladies, coming down the road, while the dog was running the other way in the meadow, & he shouted to them to take care of them selves — for that dog was mad — The dog soon reentered the road at some bars and held on toward town. Minott next saw Harry Hooper — coming down the road after his cows, & he shouted to him to look out for the dog was mad — but Harry, who was in the middle of the road, spread his arms out, one on each side, and, being short, the dog leaped right upon his open breast & made a pass at his throat, but missed it, though it frightened him a good deal; and Minott, coming up, exclaimed "Why, you're crazy, Harry; if he'd 'a' bitten ye, 't would 'a' killed ye." When he got up as far as the red house or Curtis place, the dog was about in the middle of the road, and a large and stout old gentleman by the name of Fay — dressed in small-clothes, was coming down the sidewalk. M. shouted to him also to take care of himself, for the dog was mad, and Fay said afterward that he heard him but he had always supposed that a mad dog would n't turn out for anything; but when this dog was nearly abreast of him, he suddenly inclined toward him, and then again inclined still more, and seized him by the left leg just below the knee, and Fay, giving him a kick with the other leg, tripped himself up; and when he was down, the dog bit him in the right leg in the same place. Being by this time well frightened, and fearing that he would spring at his throat next, Fay seized the dog himself by his throat and held him fast, and called lustily for someone to come and kill him. A man by the name of Lewis rushed out of the red house with an old axe and began to tap on the dog's nose with it, but he was afraid to strike harder, for Fay told him not to hit him. Minott saw it all, but kept still his distance. Suddenly Fay, not knowing what he did, let go, and the man, giving the dog a blow across the back, ran into the house, but, it being a dull meat axe, the dog trotted along, still toward town.

He turned and went round the pond by Bowers's and, going down to the brook by the roadside, lapped some water. Just then, Peter coming over the bridge, the dog reared up and growled at him and he, seeing that he was mad, made haste through the bars out of his way and cut across the fields to Reuben Brown's. The dog went on, it being now between sundown and dark, to Peter Wheeler's, and bit two cows, which afterward died of hydrophobia, and next he went to where Nathan Snow now lives, and bit a goose in the wing, and so he kept on through the town. The next that was heard of him, Black Cato, that lived at the Lee place, now Sam Wheeler's, on the river, was waked up about midnight by a noise among the pigs, and, having got up, he took a club and went out to see what was the matter. Looking over into the pen, this dog reared up at him, and he knocked him back into it, and, jumping over, mauled him till he thought he was dead and then tossed him out. In the morning he thought he [would] go out and see whose dog he had killed, but lo! he had picked himself up, and there was no dog to be found.

Cato was going out into the woods chopping that day, and as he was getting over a wall lined with brush, the same dog reared up at him once more, but this time, having heard of the mad dog, he was frightened and ran; but still the dog came on, and once or twice he knocked him aside with a large stone, till at length, the dog coming close to him, he gave him a blow which killed him; and lest he should run away again, he cut off his head and threw both head and body into the river.

In the meanwhile Fay went home (to the Dr. Heywood house), drank some spirit, then went straight over to Dr. Heywood's office and stayed there and was doctored by him for three weeks. The doctor cut out the mangled flesh and made various applications, and Fay cried like a baby, but he never experienced any further ill effects from the bite.

P.M. —To J.P. Brown's pond-hole.

J. Hosmer showed me a pestle which his son had found this summer while plowing on the plain between his

DOG

1853-1854

1853-1854

house and the river. It has a rude bird's head, a hawk's or eagle's, the beak and eyes (the latter a mere



prominence) serving for a knob or handle. It is affecting, as a work of art by a people who have left so few traces of themselves, a step beyond the common arrowhead and pestle and axe. Something more fanciful, a step beyond pure utility. As long as I find traces of works of convenience merely, however much skill they show, I am not so much affected as when I discover works which evince the exercise of fancy and taste, however rude. It is a great step to find a pestle whose handle is ornamented with a bird's-head knob. It brings the maker still nearer to the races which so ornament their umbrella and cane handles. I have, then, evidence in stone that men lived here who had fancies to be pleased, and in whom the first steps toward a complete culture were taken. It implies so many more thoughts such as I have. The arrowhead, too, suggests a bird, but a relation to it not in the least godlike. But here an Indian has patiently sat and fashioned a stone into the likeness of a bird, and added some pure beauty to that pure utility, and so far begun to leave behind him war, and even hunting, and to redeem himself from the savage state. In this he was leaving off to be savage. Enough of this would have saved him from extermination.

I dug for frogs at Heart-leaf Pond, but found none. The ice is two inches thick there, and already, the day being warm, is creased irregularly but agreeably on the upper surface. What is the law of these figures as on watered silks? Has it anything to do with the waves of the wind, or are they the outlines of the crystals as they originally shot, the bones of the ice? It would be worth the while to watch some water while freezing. What is that low yellowish, straw-colored sedge which is so dense in this pond now? I must look for frogs about springs, where Minott says he has dug them out. The andromeda leaves are a rich brown color now.

It has been cloudy and milder this afternoon, but now I begin to see, under the clouds in the west horizon, a clear crescent of yellowish sky, and suddenly a glorious yellow sunlight falls on all the eastern landscape — russet fields and hillsides, evergreens and rustling oaks and single leafless trees. In addition to the clearness of the air at this season, the light is all from one side, and, none being absorbed or dissipated in the heavens, but it being reflected both from the russet earth and the clouds, it is intensely bright, and all the limbs of a maple seen far eastward rising over a hill are wonderfully distinct and lit. I think that we have some such sunsets as this, and peculiar to the season, every year. I should call it the russet afterglow of the year. It may not be warm, but must be clear and comparatively calm. I see now large insects in the calm, sunlit air over the sprout-lands.

Cattle still abroad in the fields, though there is little to be got there. They say that young cattle can stand the cold and starvation best. If I am not mistaken, their coats have less sleekness than in the spring; they have a shaggy, frowzy, and nipped look, their hair standing on end, and the sorrel color seems to predominate. Their pastures look as barren of nutriment as their own backs.

Cato succeeds where esteemed white citizens fail; his heroic act rids the town of danger.

From the vantage of our safe hindsight, the story's humor is inseparable from its potential tragedy. Anyone who comes in contact with this dog could, of course, be killed. Nevertheless, Thoreau has a bit of fun at the expense of the townsfolk. Mr. Fay was possibly Grant Fay, a local farmer whose son Addison was a contemporary of Thoreau. As "a large and stout old gentleman... dressed in small-clothes," twice bitten by the dog largely through his own ineptitude, Fay suffers at Thoreau's hands. Moreover, Thoreau concludes with the information that "Fay went



1853-1854

1853-1854

home ... drank some spirit ... went straight over to Dr. Heywoods ... & ... was doctored 3 weeks ... cried like a baby. The Dr cut out the mangled flesh & ... Fay ... never experienced any further ill effects from the bite" (525).

Thoreau's recording of this incident may have been influenced by his reading of [Henry Schoolcraft's](#) ONEÓTA, a book he had read two years prior, that details many customs and traditions of the Chippewa and Algonquin Indians (Sattelmeyer 266). Within it, Schoolcraft inserts a brief sketch entitled "The Rabid Wolf," in which a diseased wolf enters a small town, and like Minott's mad dog, bites various farm animals before sinking its teeth into "a gentlemen of standing... who came to a melancholy end." The wolf, according to Schoolcraft, "seemed to have a perfect ubiquity - it was everywhere." Finally, "old Colonel S.," the town's Revolutionary War hero, shoots and kills the animal (375-379).

Like Schoolcraft, Thoreau also posits a Revolutionary War veteran as the mad dog's nemesis, except that his story's hero is a black man rather than a venerated white citizen. Who was "Black Cato?" The former slave of prominent Concord citizen Duncan Ingraham, he had fought in the Revolution, after which he continued to live in Concord, dying there in 1805 (Bartlett 129-130). Cato had obtained his freedom in 1795; from then on, like most free blacks in Concord at this time, he lived a hand-to-mouth existence. Thoreau memorialized him in the "Former Inhabitants; and Winter Visitors" chapter of WALDEN as one of a handful of blacks who had preceded Thoreau in Walden Woods (257). J. Lyndon Shanley has documented that Thoreau amplified this chapter in 1853, the same year he writes down the story of the mad dog (66-67, 87, 196-197). Prior to Thoreau's portrayals, Cato had been depicted as a hapless albeit lucky slave: in one anecdote, he manages to avoid being shot during the war when British Major Pitcairn put a gun to his head; and in another, he begs for sustenance from his former master (Brooks 58-59, Bartlett 129).

That Thoreau casts as his hero a free black man who lived - literally and figuratively - on the margins of town appears a purposeful decision - one that possibly modifies the details Minott told. Although of course we can't know if Thoreau changed any of the particulars as Minott related them, it is certainly conceivable that Thoreau elevated Cato's stature as he recorded the events. To be sure, little effort was needed to heroize Cato: he did kill the dog after several others failed to halt its progress. Yet Thoreau seems to juxtapose Cato's bravado with the panic and incompetence of the white characters. In contrast to their near hysterics, Cato acts decisively to hinder and, at last, to decapitate the dog. Although he doesn't realize initially that he's wrestling a rabid dog, when he learns this fact, Cato has the wisdom (unlike Mr. Fay) to try to get away from it. But when forced to deal with the dog literally head-on, Cato deals it a death blow. His swift, instinctual response to the dog reflects Cato's connection to a way of life that Thoreau respects - to a culture that lives closer to nature than do the white townsfolk.

What other reasons might Thoreau have had in the fall of 1853 for enthroning a black man as the hero of his narrative? At this

1853-1854

1853-1854

time, Concord's antislavery residents – including those in the Thoreau household – were in the throes of revolt against the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law. That July, the Thoreaus had hidden a runaway slave in their home; and just weeks before Minott's story, the Thoreau family provided lodging to a free black woman who was attempting to raise the money needed to purchase her husband, enslaved in Virginia. And six months later, in May and June 1854, Thoreau ranted in his Journal against the slave power when fugitive slave Anthony Burns was arrested in Boston (Journal 4 113, Journal V 472, Journal 8 163-210). Unquestionably, Thoreau was affected by the heroism of these black people whose lives were on the line in ways that he and Concord's other white citizens could never comprehend. In his study of the black folk hero, John Roberts argues that authors usually create "heroes ... who ... appear to possess personal traits ... that exemplify our conception of our ideal self" (1). Roberts believes that "folk heroic creation occurs because groups, at critical moments in time, recognize in the actions of certain figures ... qualities or behaviors that they have reason to believe would enhance culture-building" (5). At the juncture of what Thoreau may have perceived to be just such a "critical moment," he elevated Cato to the status of a black folk hero, countering previous depictions of him in the annals of Concord history.



November 30, Wednesday: Next! The widower [Caleb G. Forshey](#) got married a 3d time, with Mary Eunice Williams of [Cincinnati, Ohio](#), a sister of his 2d wife Martha Annie Williams (after two sons who would die very young, they would produce two surviving sons Caleb Ethan Forshey born during January 1859 and Elmore Lindell Forshey born in about 1861; this 3d wife would outlive him).

On the same day, Russian forces destroyed the main Turkish army at Basgedikler and destroyed the Turkish fleet at Sinop on the Black Sea.

William Speiden, Jr. had recovered from his illness in the far-eastern fleet of [Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) and in the following days would be socializing on the local shore.

When [Bronson Alcott](#) arrived again in [Cincinnati, Ohio](#), arrangements were made with wholesale grocer H.M. Chapin for a course of conversations there soon.



Nov. 30. 8 A.M. — To river, to examine roots.

I rake up almost everywhere from the bottom of the river that very fresh and bright green ranunculus, the handsomely divided leaf. I ascertain this morning that that white root with eyes and slaty-tinged fibres and sharp leaves rolled up, found gnawed off and floating about muskrat-houses, is the root of the great yellow lily. The leaf-stalk is yellow, while that of the white lily is a downy or mildewy blue black. The yellow lily root is, then, a principal item, it would seem, in their vegetable diet. I find that those large triangular or rhomboidal or shell-shaped eyes or shoulders on this root are the bases of leaf-stalks which have rotted off, but toward the upper end of the root are still seen decaying. They are a sort of abutment on which the leaf-stalk rested, and the fine black dots on them are the bases of the fine threads or fibres of the leaf-stalk, which, in the still living leaf-stalks, are distinguished by their purple color. These eyes, like the leaves, of course, are arranged spirally around the roots in parallel rows, in quincunx order, so that four make a diamond figure. The slate-tinged fibres spring from the bare white intervals between the bases of the leaves. Closely packed between, and protected by the under leafstalk, I find already the tender club-shaped yellow flower-bud a quarter of an inch

1853-1854

1853-1854


in diameter, with a stem two inches long and wider than the bud. I am surprised to find these roots, even within to the bases of the leaves about the buds, infested with white grubs nearly half an inch long and minute, threadlike reddish and speckled worms. Also on the fibres are transparent elliptical chrysalids, the color of a snail-shell, containing insects apparently just ready to fly.

The white lily roots are more enveloped in down and fibre, a dark-blue or blackish down. I raked up one dark-brown root somewhat like a white lily, except that it was smooth and the leaf-stalks were very slender and the leaf-buds minute. Perhaps it was the kalmiana lily. I raked up one live clam in deep water, and could feel them like stones on the bottom.

All these leaves are lightly rolled up in the form of arrowheads, as thus best prepared to pierce whatever obstacles the mud or water may present. There is a vast amount of decaying vegetable matter at the bottom of the river, and what I draw up on my rake emits a very offensive odor.

P.M. — Down river by boat and inland to the green house beyond Blood's.

A mild and summery afternoon with much russet light on the landscape.

I think it was a flock of low-warbling tree sparrows⁵⁴ [**American Tree Sparrow**  *Spizella arborea*] which I saw amid the weeds beyond the monument, though they looked larger.

I am attracted nowadays by the various withered grasses and sedges, of different shades of straw-color and of various more or less graceful forms. That which I call fescue grass is quite interesting, gracefully bending to the zephyr, and many others are very perfect and pure. Wool-grass is one of the largest and most conspicuous. I observe it rising thinly above the water in which it is reflected, two or three feet, and all its narrow rustling leaves stream southeasterly from the stems, though it is now quite calm, proving the prevalence of northwesterly winds. An abundance of withered sedges and other coarse grasses, which in the summer you scarcely noticed, now cover the low grounds, — the granary of the winter birds. A very different end they serve from the flowers which decay so early. Their rigid culms enable them to withstand the blasts of winter. Though divested of color, fairly bleached, they are not in the least decayed but seasoned and living like the heart-wood.

Now, first since spring, I take notice of the cladonia lichens, which the cool fall rains appear to have started. The *Callitriche verna* is perfectly fresh and green, though frozen in, in the pools.

We are going across the Hunt and Mason pastures. The twigs of young cedars with apparently staminate buds have even a strawberry-like fragrance, and what a heavenly blue have the berries! — a peculiar light blue, whose bloom rubs off, contrasting with the green or purplish-brown leaves.

I do not know so fine a pine grove as that of Mason's. The young second-growth white pines are peculiarly soft, thick, and bushy there. They branch directly at the ground and almost horizontally, for the most part four or five large stems springing from the ground together, as if they had been broken down by cattle originally. But the result is a very dark and dense, almost impenetrable, but peculiarly soft and beautiful grove, which any gentleman might covet on his estate.

We returned by the bridle-road across the pastures. When I returned to town the other night by the Walden road through the meadows from Brister's Hill to the poorhouse, I fell to musing upon the origin of the meanders in the road; for when I looked straight before or behind me, my eye met the fences at a short distance, and it appeared that the road, instead of being built in a straight line across the meadows, as one might have expected, pursued a succession of curves like a cow-path. In fact, it was just such a meandering path as an eye of taste requires, and the landscape-gardener consciously aims to make, and the wonder is that a body of laborers left to themselves, without instruments or geometry, and perchance intending to make a straight road, — in short, that circumstances ordinarily, — will so commonly make just such a meandering road as the eye requires. A man advances in his walk somewhat as a river does, meanderingly, and such, too, is the progress of the race. The law that plants the rushes in waving lines along the edge of a pond, and that curves the pondshore itself, incessantly beats against the straight fences and highways of men and makes them conform to the line of beauty which is most agreeable to the eye at last.

But to return to the walk of the day. Though there were some clouds in the west, there was a bright silver twilight before we reached our boat. C. remarked it descending into the hollows immediately after sunset. A red house could hardly be distinguished at a distance, but a white one appeared to reflect light on the landscape. At first we saw no redness in the sky, but only some peculiar dark wisp-like clouds in the west, but on rising a hill I saw a few red stains like veins of red quartz on a

54. Undoubtedly; also Dec. 3d.



1853-1854

1853-1854

ground of feldspar.

The river was perfectly smooth except the upwelling of its tide, and as we paddled home westward, the dusky yellowing sky was all reflected in it, together with the dun-colored clouds and the trees, and there was more light in the water than in the sky. The reflections of the trees and bushes on the banks were wonderfully dark and distinct, for though frequently we could not see the real bush in the twilight against the dark bank, in the water it appeared against the sky. We were thus often enabled to steer clear of the overhanging bushes.


It was an evening for the muskrats to be abroad, and we saw one, which dove as he was swimming rapidly, turning over like a wheel.

WINTER 1853/1854



1853-1854

1853-1854

 Winter: Lecture Season of '53/54, at the [Odeon Hall](#) in [Boston](#):

15th Season of [The Lowell Institute](#)

Fellows of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 10 lectures

Professor [Joseph Lovering](#).
What is Matter!

Professor [Joseph Lovering](#).
What are Bodies!

Charles Jackson, Jr.
History of the Useful Arts.

Professor H.L. Eustis.
The Britannia Bridge.

Professor J.P. Cooke, Jr.
Light.

Professor A. Guyot.
Psychological and Physical Characters of the Nations of Europe compared with those of the American People.

Professor A. Guyot.
The same subject continued.

Doctor A.A. Gould.
Aquatic Life.

Professor Joel Parker.
The Science of the Law.

Professor H.D. Rogers.
The Arctic Regions.

Professor [L. Agassiz](#).
Natural History 12 lectures

Professor [J. Lovering](#).
Electricity 12 lectures

E.H. Davis.
Mounds and Earthworks of the Mississippi Valley 4 lectures

Reverend Orville Dewey.
Problem of Human Destiny 12 lectures

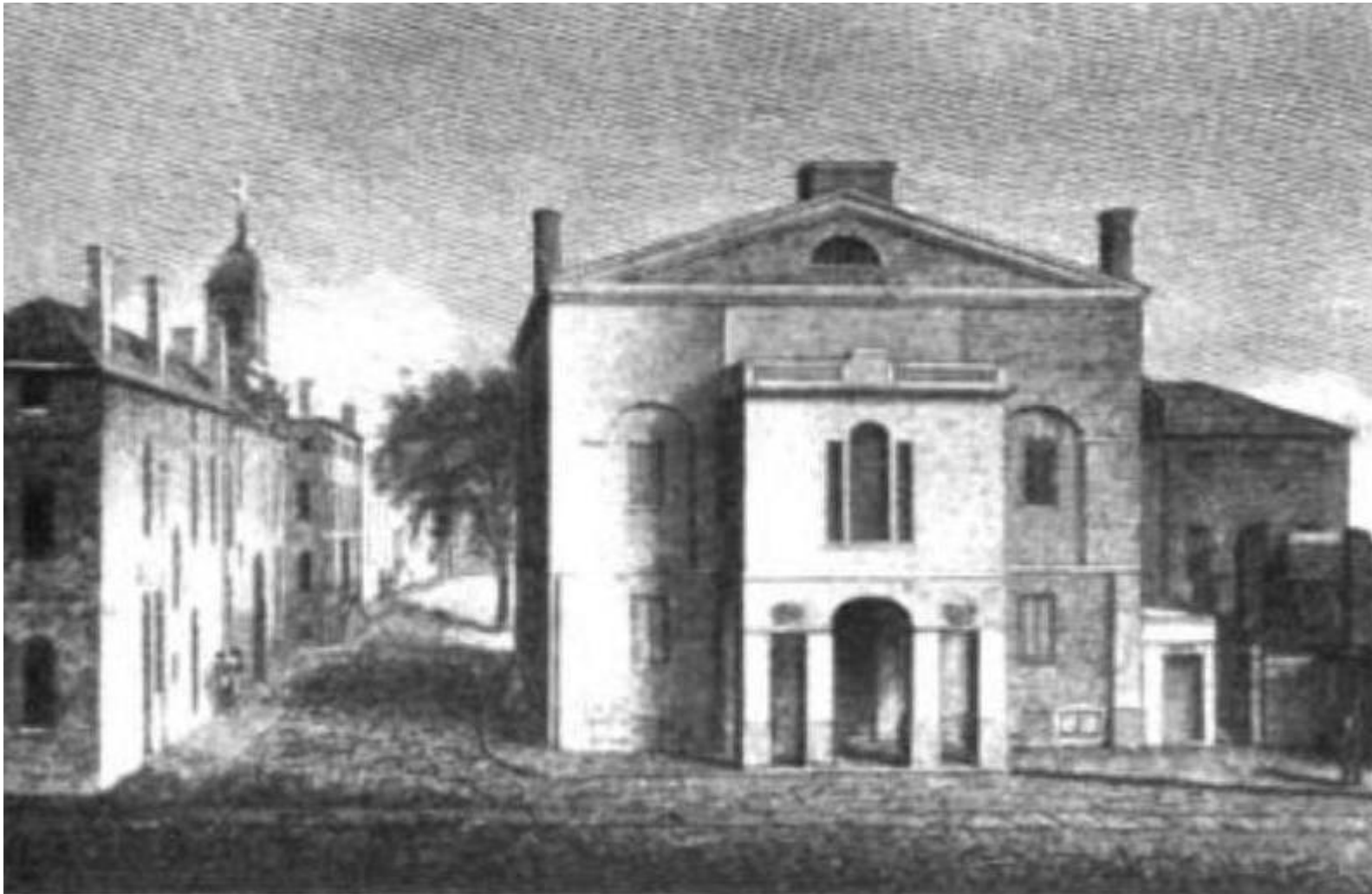
HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

1853-1854

1853-1854



THE LOWELL INSTITUTE

1853-1854

1853-1854

1853/1854: During this year and the following one, Draft F of Henry Thoreau's WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS ms. Thoreau would tack in what would be in effect a response to the Reverend George Ripley's reaction to A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS:

I do not say that the Reverend Ripley will realize all this; but such is the character of that morrow which mere lapse of time can never make to dawn. The light which puts out our eyes is darkness to us. Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star.

(Well, OK, what he would insert would not be so specific as this, actually he would distance the remark through the deployment of cartoon characters: he would alter "the Reverend Ripley" into "John or Jonathan.")



WALDEN: I do not say that John or Jonathan will realize all this; but such is the character of that morrow which mere lapse of time can never make to dawn. The light which puts out our eyes is darkness to us. Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star.

PEOPLE OF WALDEN



"JOHN" (BULL)

"JONATHAN"

REVEREND GEORGE RIPLEY

1853-1854

1853-1854



WALDEN: Ah, the pickerel of Walden! when I see them lying on the ice, or in the well which the fisherman cuts in the ice, making a little hole to admit the water, ^{^golden and emerald} I am always surprised by their rare beauty, as if they were fabulous fishes—~~fresh water dolphins dauphins eldest sons of Walden,~~ they are so foreign to the streets, even to the woods, foreign as Arabia to our Concord life. They possess a ^{^quite} dazzling and transcendent beauty which separates them ~~far~~^{^by a wide interval} from the cadaverous cod and haddock ~~at least two days old~~ whose fame is trumpeted in our streets. ~~handsome artlovers [ILLEGIBLE] & gems—they~~^{^They} are not green like the pines, nor gray like the stones nor blue like ^{^the} sky; but they have, to my ~~eye~~^{^eyes}, if possible, yet rarer colors, like ^{^flowers} and precious stones, as if they were the pearls, ~~of this great shell—~~^{^some} ~~solid opied &~~^{^the} animalized nuclei or crystals of the Walden water. They, of course, are ~~composed of Walden wholly~~^{^Walden all over and all through;} are ^{^themselves small} Waldens in the animal kingdom, ^{^Waldenses} ~~perhaps dolphins~~ ~~—dauphins eldest sons of Walden, for whose behalf this whole world is but a dauphin edition to study—~~ It is surprising that ~~these fishes~~^{^fish}^{^they} are caught here, —that in this deep and capacious spring, far beneath the rattling teams and chaises and tinkling sleighs that travel the Walden road, this great gold and emerald fish swims. I never chanced to see its kind in any market; it would be the cynosure of all eyes there. ^{^Easily,} with a few convulsive quirks, they give up their ~~diluted~~^{^watery} ghosts, like a mortal translated before his time to the ~~subtile~~^{^thin} air of heaven.

“like a mortal translated before his time to the thin air of heaven”: This is a reference not only to [hanging](#), but to the hanging of the [Huguenot](#) saints in [France](#) after revocation of the Edict of Nantes, while the members of [Thoreau](#)’s family, the intermarried Thoreaus and Guillets, were fleeing to the relative safety offered by the Isle of [Jersey](#) in the English Channel.

1853-1854

1853-1854

The pickerel of Walden Pond was of course a small pike, and the pike is named of course for its pointy head. Per FACTS ON FILE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WORD AND PHRASE ORIGINS, this is the fish that lifted its head from the water to observe the Crucifixion — and it bears images of the cross, three nails, and a sword. You will remember that on page 40 of A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS, Thoreau imagines that his soul is “bright invisible green.” These great gold and emerald Waldenses are the ghosts of Thoreau’s Huguenot ancestors, translated before their time, by the believers of France, to the thin air of heaven. **Hanged!** I show, on the next page, an old illustration of Anne du Bourg dancing on air, and a 20th Century painting by N.C. Wyeth titled “Fishing Through the Ice,” and what I suggest is that the one is quite as apt an illustration of this passage from WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS as the other.

No, more than that. I suggest that the painter Wyeth had no **clue** what Thoreau was talking about in this passage. He was trapped in the pikeresque, and might as well have been drawing Norman-Rockwellish kitsch covers for the Saturday Evening Post. But WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS is a book of pending issues, a book in which Brahmins **hang** suspended over flames on page 4, in which we **hang** conspirators from the tough rafters of the trees on page 208, in which still-living heads **hang** on either side of a warrior like ghastly trophies on page 231, in which a man thinks to **hang** himself because he belongs to the race of pygmies on page 326, in which a man stands on the gallows on page 327 and says “Tell the tailors to remember to make a knot in their thread before they take the first stitch” —although his companion’s prayer is forgotten,— and in which on page 330 our author chooses not to **hang** by the beam of the scale and try to weigh less.

GALLOWES HUMOR



You may well wonder how I am going to make a connection between these two illustrations, of Anne du Bourg dancing on air and of a pickerel dancing on air, other than by offering that the pickerel, being a fish, evokes that old graphitum of primitive Christianity scratched into the walls of the catacombs of Rome.

- ιχθυσ = “fish”
- ι = Jesus
- χ = Christ
- θ = God’s
- υ = Son
- ς = Savior



1170

1184

1487

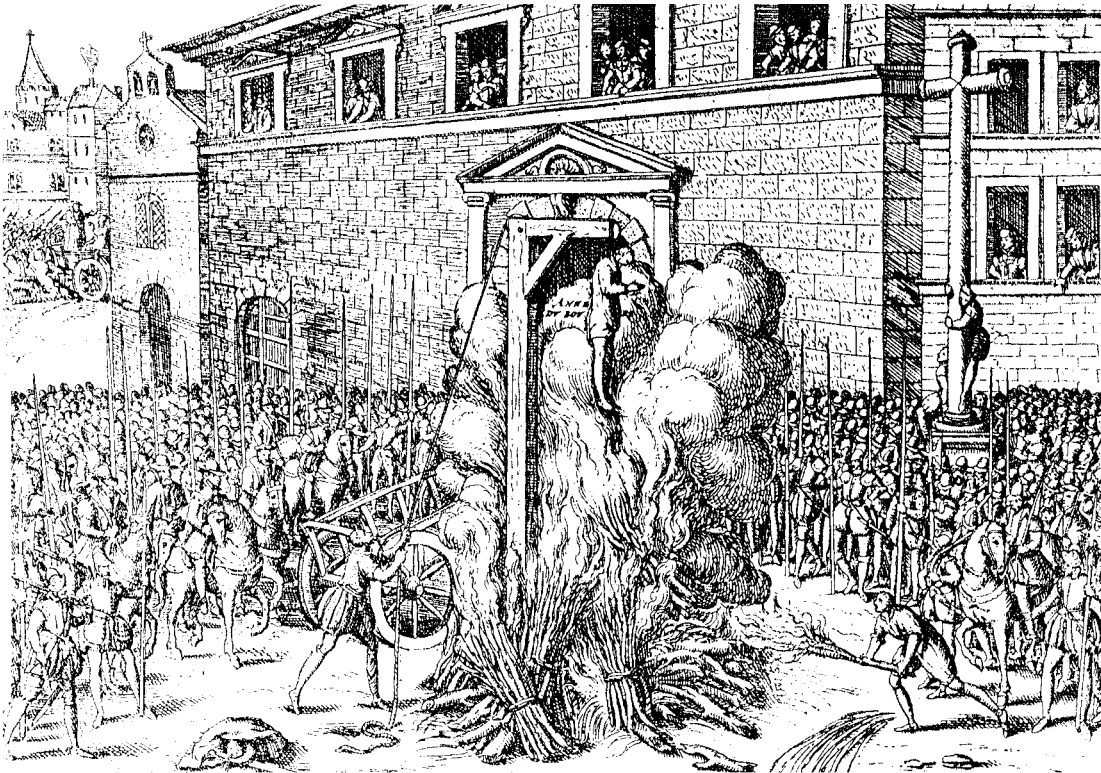
But the pickerel connection, once it is made, will be obvious to you, for Thoreau speaks of them as “Waldenses” and that word is only from the Medieval Latin *Valdenses* via the French *Vaudois* and the Italian *Valdese*. The followers of that “**Peter Waldo**” or “**Pierre Vaudès**” —who, in AD1170, in his thirtieth year, hired two priests to translate the Bible into common French, and then accepted the invitation of Luke 18:23 to sell all he had and give the proceeds to the poor— were medieval convinced persons who strived, until they were suppressed by Christians, to live in the manner of life portrayed in the Gospels. At his point of greatest acceptability, Waldo was confirmed in his vow of poverty by Pope Alexander III, although this dangerous man was most pointedly **not** granted permission to teach or preach about his convictions. His teaching was banned by Pope Lucius III in the bull *Ad Abolendam* issued at the Synod of Verona in AD1184. Innocent VIII declared in AD1487 that when a Christian kills one of the Waldenses —followers of the way of Waldo— he inherit his property if any. Those who embraced this discipline were variously termed *Pauperes* or “poor ones” (the entire subject of the first chapter of WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS), *Picards* or “those who read the Bible for themselves” (thus Thoreau’s “pickerel” metaphor), *Waldenses* (to get this reference into his text, Thoreau pretends that “Waldenses” is merely a plural form for “Walden” like the more obvious “Waldens,” whereas “Waldenses” is a collective term), *Vaudois* and *Valdese* or “those who live in the valleys,” and finally “**Huguenots**” or people who have made a covenant, people who have “sought individual perfection apart from the Roman Church, rejected the official clergy, abstained from oaths and the use of force, and attempted in general to reintroduce primitive Christian fellowship and apostolic simplicity of living.”⁵⁵

1853-1854

1853-1854

Draft E of material for page 54 of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#): In 1853 or perhaps in late 1852 Thoreau made a

WALDEN Draft E



Anne du Bourg said, in the presence of Henry II, in regard to his execution of a primitive Christian, that it was no small thing to condemn those who, amidst the flames, invoked the name of Jesus Christ.

The penalty for saying this to the king was the usual penalty accorded to heretics in France in the late 1550s: suspension over a fire by a rope, and dipping in and out of the flames until death.

fair copy of all but the 1st 2 sentences of the following paragraph. Again, as you did for Draft C of 1849, please consider that the thing about Thoreau's argument in regard to the economics of rail travel is, he knows perfectly well that such an argument is not pertinent when the objective is the meeting of a schedule, such as when there is someone waiting for you in a distant town. Thoreau often used the railroad for such purposes, as in traveling to deliver lectures, and he had no qualms over an inconsistency in this regard. Thoreau's argument cannot be defeated by such quibbles over consistency because it is not really an economic argument about wasting money at all. It is a spiritual argument about wasting the present moment which is all we ever have of life. What is being attacked is not thriftlessness, the sort of habit a prudent Poor Richard would grasp as a poor habit, but a habit much more dangerous, an attitude which causes waste of life. Thus Thoreau's blazing amazing non-sequitur, about the Englishman who had to go to India in order to get up garret and become a poet when he might better have been up garret all along, is not a non-sequitur at all, as it would be



HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

1853-1854

1853-1854



**Pickerel dancing on air;
N.C. Wyeth fishing for meaning through the ice of his own incomprehension**



1853-1854

1853-1854

were we to take seriously the Poor Richard wrapper in which this advice is packaged:

Such is the universal law, which no man can ever outwit, and with regard to the railroad even we may say it is as broad as it is long ~~& if you want to make a railroad round the world for mankind you must grade the whole surface.~~ ^{^To make a railroad round the world available to all mankind is equivalent to grading the whole surface of the planet.} Men have an indistinct notion that if they keep up this activity of joint stocks and spades long enough all will at length ride somewhere, in next to no time, and for nothing; ~~no doubt they can ride at last who shall have earned their fare~~ ^{^, that is if they survive} ~~but they will probably have lost their elasticity and desire to travel by that time.~~ Every day it happens that when the bell rings a crowd rushes to the depot, the conductor shouts "all aboard," Whiz-tiz-siz-burz, and the cars are off. But when the smoke blows away and the vapor condenses, it is perceived that a few are riding, but the rest are run over; and it is called, and is, "a melancholy accident." ^{^but though a crowd rushes to the depot, and the conductor shouts, "All aboard!" when the smoke is blown away and the vapor condensed, it will be perceived that a few are riding, but the rest are run over, -and it will be called, and will be, "A melancholy accident."} No doubt they can ride at last who shall have earned their fare, that is, if they survive so long, but they will probably have lost their elasticity and desire to travel by that time. This spending of the best part of one's life earning money in order to enjoy a questionable liberty during the least valuable part ^{^of it}, reminds me of the Englishman who went to India to make a fortune first, in order that he might return to England and live the life of a poet. He should have gone up garret at once. ~~"But!"~~ ^{^"What!"} exclaim a million Irishmen starting up from all the shanties in the land, ~~spade in hand~~, "is not this railroad which we have built a good thing?" Yes, I answer, **comparatively** good, that is, you might have done worse; but I wish, as you are brother of mine, that you could have spent your time better than digging in this dirt.



1853-1854

1853-1854

Draft E of material for page 54 of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#): In 1853 or perhaps in late 1852 Thoreau made a fair copy of all but the 1st 2 sentences of the following paragraph. Again, as you did for Draft C of 1849, please consider that the thing about Thoreau's argument in regard to the economics of rail travel is, he knows perfectly well that such an argument is not pertinent when the objective is the meeting of a schedule, such as when there is someone waiting for you in a distant town. Thoreau often used the railroad for such purposes, as in traveling to deliver lectures, and he had no qualms over an inconsistency in this regard. Thoreau's argument cannot be defeated by such quibbles over consistency because it is not really an economic argument about wasting money at all. It is a spiritual argument about wasting the present moment which is all we ever have of life. What is being attacked is not thriftlessness, the sort of habit a prudent Poor Richard would grasp as a poor habit, but a habit much more dangerous, an attitude which causes waste of life. Thus Thoreau's blazing amazing non-sequitur, about the Englishman who had to go to India in order to get up garret and become a poet when he might better have been up garret all along, is not a non-sequitur at all, as it would be

WALDEN Draft E



1853-1854

1853-1854

were we to take seriously the Poor Richard wrapper in which this advice is packaged:

Such is the universal law, which no man can ever outwit, and with regard to the railroad even we may say it is as broad as it is long ~~& if you want to make a railroad round the world for mankind you must grade the whole surface.~~ [^]*To make a railroad round the world available to all mankind is equivalent to grading the whole surface of the planet.* Men have an indistinct notion that if they keep up this activity of joint stocks and spades long enough all will at length ride somewhere, in next to no time, and for nothing; ~~no doubt they can ride at last who shall have earned their fare~~ [^]~~that is if they survive~~ ~~but they will probably have lost their elasticity and desire to travel by that time.~~ Every day it happens that when the bell rings a crowd rushes to the depot, the conductor shouts "all aboard," Whiz-tiz-siz-burz, and the cars are off. ~~But when the smoke blows away and the vapor condenses, it is perceived that a few are riding, but the rest are run over; and it is called, and is, "a melancholy accident."~~ [^]*but though a crowd rushes to the depot, and the conductor shouts, "All aboard!" when the smoke is blown away and the vapor condensed, it will be perceived that a few are riding, but the rest are run over, -and it will be called, and will be, "A melancholy accident."* No doubt they can ride at last who shall have earned their fare, that is, if they survive so long, but they will probably have lost their elasticity and desire to travel by that time. This spending of the best part of one's life earning money in order to enjoy a questionable liberty during the least valuable part ^{^of it}, reminds me of the Englishman who went to India to make a fortune first, in order that he might return to England and live the life of a poet. He should have gone up garret at once. ~~"But!"~~ [^]*"What!"* exclaim a million Irishmen starting up from all the shanties in the land, ~~spade in hand,~~ "is not this railroad which we have built a good thing?" Yes, I answer, **comparatively** good, that is, you might have done worse; but I wish, as you are brother of mine, that you could have spent your time better than digging in this dirt.

1853-1854

1853-1854

Winter: [Brownson's Quarterly Review](#), No. 4

CATHOLICISM

- I. *The Eclipse of Faith*
- II. *Garneau's History of Canada*
- III. *"Errors of the Church of Rome"*
- IV. *J. V. H. On Brownson's Review*
- V. *Cardinal Wiseman's Essays*
- VI. *Literary Notices and Criticisms*

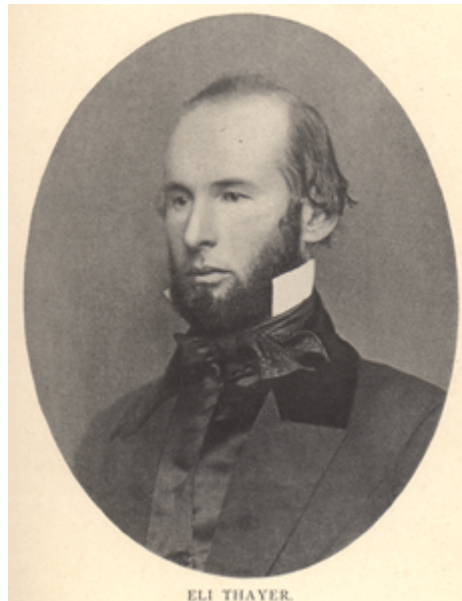
MAGAZINES

ORESTES AUGUSTUS BROWNSON

Winter: A beard craze began in London. At this time of considerable cold and asthma, accounts in the newspapers were describing beards as "natural respirators." (Thoreau would grow a throat beard during the second half of 1857, for this reason.)


[Eli Thayer](#) had been an Alderman in [Worcester, Massachusetts](#), and in this session of the Massachusetts Legislature, served as a representative from Worcester. During this session he presented a bill to incorporate a "[Bank of Mutual Redemption](#)" (a clearinghouse for commercial paper).

He has been an Alderman in his adopted city. During the winter of 1853-5, he served as a member of the Massachusetts Legislature, from Worcester, and again in the following winter.



1853-1854

1853-1854

 Winter: [John Stuart Mill](#), age 47, and his wife [Harriet Taylor Mill](#), a year younger, believing that they were dying of [tuberculosis](#), tried to set down some ideas for “the improvement of mankind,” so that they “may not die with me” (*sic*). The myth of sole authorship was preserved throughout, but the 169 leaves of this manuscript are in the husband’s hand with comments and changes by the wife in pencil. Those changes in which the joint authors concurred, the husband wrote over in ink, and then the manuscript pages were a 2d time commented upon and altered by the wife. (This makes up the earliest complete version of THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JOHN STUART MILL, which would not see publication until 1873, and even then would be published only as reprocessed by at least 5 other “editorial” hands. The upshot of this is that the Columbia UP edition of 1924, labeled AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JOHN STUART MILL PUBLISHED FOR THE FIRST TIME WITHOUT ALTERATIONS OR OMISSIONS FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT IN THE POSSESSION OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, actually contains words placed there by 9 separate individuals — nevertheless, the myth of sole authorship by solitary genius has yet again assiduously been preserved!)

DECEMBER 1853

1854

January							February							March						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4				1	2	3	4
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
29	30	31					26	27	28					26	27	28	29	30	31	
April							May							June						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1	1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3	
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	
30																				
July							August							September						



1853-1854

1853-1854

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	
						1			1	2	3	4	5							1	2
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
30	31																				
October							November							December							
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7					1	2	3	4						1	2
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
														31							

- Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for January 1854 \(æf. 36\)](#)
- Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for February 1854 \(æf. 36\)](#)
- Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for March 1854 \(æf. 36\)](#)
- Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for April 1854 \(æf. 36\)](#)
- Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for May 1854 \(æf. 36\)](#)
- Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for June 1854 \(æf. 36\)](#)
- Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for July 1854 \(æf. 36-37\)](#)
- Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for August 1854 \(æf. 37\)](#)
- Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for September 1854 \(æf. 37\)](#)
- Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for October 1854 \(æf. 37\)](#)
- Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for November 1854 \(æf. 37\)](#)
- Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for December 1854 \(æf. 37\)](#)

1853-1854

1853-1854



Late 1853 to Early 1854: The “F” version of Thoreau’s “[WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#)” manuscript (refer to [The Development of a Manuscript](#)). Thoreau’s mobilization of the absurd inverted-Walden tale came about in 1853-1854 while he was trying to explain the provenance of the rim of smooth “paving stones” around the shoreline of the pond:

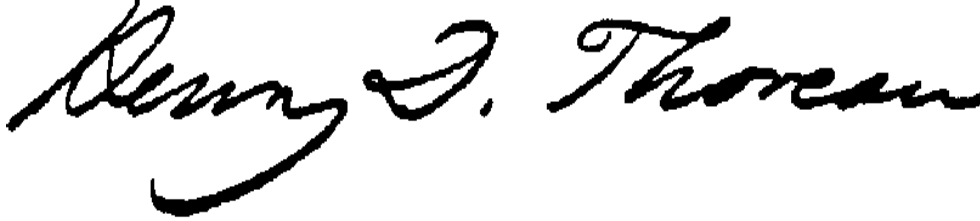


stones have been shoved up into a ridge by the edge of the ice being driven against it, or as if the sand had washed down and collected against the ice, and there remained when the ice was melted. But the truth ~~seems to be~~ probably is that when there is a thaw or warm rain in midwinter which warms the water ~~in the pond,~~ that portion ~~of the water~~ apparently penetrates a little way under the frozen shore apparently takes out some of the frost there, and the shore, whether it is sand or pebbles, or stones or sticks, is puffed up in the form of a pent-roof six inches or more high, and under ~~which~~ this there is found to be no frost. Even pretty large rocks and trees, as I have said, are thus actually tripped up or pried over by a force applied beneath. Some have been puzzled to tell how the shore became so regularly paved. but I observe that the surrounding hills are remarkably full of the same kind of stones, so that they have been obliged to pile them up in walls on both sides of the railroad cut nearest the pond; and, moreover, that there are most stones where the shore is most abrupt; so that, unfortunately, it is no longer a mystery to me. I detect the paver.

1853-1854

1853-1854

 This was [Henry Thoreau](#)'s signature:



Thoreau noted in his journal that, as in the previous year, the water level in [Walden Pond](#) was dropping.

Here is the analysis made by [Robert Milder](#) in his REIMAGINING THOREAU (NY: Cambridge UP, 1995, page 119), of the revisions being made by Thoreau, during this 1852-1853-1854 timeframe, to drafts B and C of the [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) manuscript which had been laid by since 1849:

Unlike drafts B and C of 1849, which expand the initial manuscript written at the pond without substantively changing it, the revisions of 1852-1854 differ both from the 1849 WALDEN and, in subtle but important ways, from each other, though with considerable overlap. In draft D, for example, Thoreau elaborated his critique of getting and spending in "Economy," as he did at every stage of composition, but he also broke new ground in "The Ponds," which drafts E and F would develop with emphases peculiar to each of **those** stages. Sattelmeyer finds WALDEN the work of two Thoreaus, corresponding to its two phases of composition (1846-1849 and 1853-1854), with "an earlier self subsumed but still present, as it were, within the latter." I would divide the second period into identifiable substages and discriminate among three kinds of additions belonging to each: "dominant," "residual," and "emergent." "Dominant" refers to the pattern of the seasons that governed Thoreau's sense of structure and proportion throughout the period; "residual," to the amplification of existing chapters according to their original spirit; and "emergent," to those new and unforeseen elements reflective of Thoreau's development that intruded upon and modified his book within the framework of its seasonal plan.

In Boston, William Ticknor's publishing house became Ticknor & Fields by the addition of James T. Fields (1817-1881).

1853-1854

The fusion of frog sperm and egg was observed under a microscope. For the first time we were getting a clue, as to just how it is that male and female share in the reproductive process.

The first “stereotypes” came into use in newspaper presses. That is, the type itself was no longer mounted upon the rotating cylinder of the press, but instead a cast replica of the type, termed a “stereotype,” was mounted. This achieved two efficiencies, it prevented type from working loose and flying into the press, and it freed up the type so that the setting of type for tomorrow’s newspaper could begin early. Another word for this semicircle of metal was “boilerplate.” (The use of the terms “stereotype” and “boilerplate” to refer, respectively, to hackneyed communication and to standardized communication, would develop in a later timeframe.)



“Among all the manufactures which -for the mental and mechanical skill required in their prosecution, the remarkable steps by which they have attained their present rank, and the influence which they exert on society generally- claim our attention and admiration, none perhaps is more striking than the **manufacture of a book.**”



— George Dodd’s DAYS AT THE FACTORIES

HISTORY OF
THE BOOK

HISTORY OF
THE PRESS



1853-1854

1853-1854

Speaking of stereotypes: Evidently there had been no cross-dressing in the [“The Institute of 1770”](#) predecessor of the Hasty Pudding club while Thoreau had been a member prior to 1837. For the cross-dressing which occurred in this year was evidently being considered an innovation:



The wearing of women's clothes continued to be explicitly forbidden through at least 1816; by 1825, with the list of infractions growing yearly longer, the prohibition in dress was characterized merely as “indecent in language, dress, or behaviour,” and this phrase recurs in the regulations for 1848. Conflict with the law, both university and civil, was probably inevitable for an undergraduate theater group whose increasing focus was on female impersonation. And, as we will see, in two specific instances the club's ambivalent attitude toward gender bending came to the fore. As early as 1854 some members of the Hasty Pudding had begun to specialize in female impersonation; Horace Furness '54 [who would later edit the Shakespeare Variorum] was the club's first diva, “The unparalleled Signorina Furness”; Charles Eliot Furness '63 kept up the family tradition.

Sometime during this year or the previous year, Thoreau made a fair copy of the penciled last part of his parable of the artist of Kouroo and made the final condensations and changes that would constitute the print H version. His parable of the unreality of temporality and of the unworthiness of the consequentialist attitude

was complete:




There was an artist ~~who lived~~ in the city of Kouroo who was ~~truly~~ disposed to strive after perfection. One day it came into his mind to make a staff. Having considered that in an imperfect work time is an ingredient, but into a perfect work time does not enter, he said to himself, It shall be perfect in all respects, though I should do nothing else in ~~all~~ my life. He proceeded instantly to the forest for wood, being resolved that it should not be made of unsuitable material; and as he searched for and rejected stick after stick, his friends gradually deserted him, for they grew old in their works and died, but ~~still~~ he grew not older by a moment. His singleness of purpose and resolution, and his elevated piety, endowed him, without his knowledge, with perennial youth. As he made no compromise with Time, Time kept out of his way, and only sighed at a distance because he could not overcome him. Before he had found a stock in all respects suitable the city of Kouroo was a hoary ruin, and he sat on one of its mounds to peel the stick. Before he had given it the proper shape the dynasty of the Candahars was at an end, and with the point of the stick he wrote the name of the last of that race in the sand, and then resumed his work. By the time he had smoothed and polished the staff Kalpa was no longer the pole-star; and ere he had put on the ferule and the head adorned with precious stones, Brahma had awoke and slumbered many times. But why do I stay to mention these things? When the finishing stroke was put to his work, it suddenly expanded before the eyes of the astonished artist into the fairest of all the creations of Brahma. He had made a new ~~universe~~ ^{^system} in making a staff, a world with full and fair proportions; in which, though the old cities and dynasties had passed away, fairer and more glorious ones had taken their places. And now he saw by the heap of shavings still fresh at his feet, that, for him and his work, the former lapse of time had been an illusion, and that no more time had elapsed than is required for a single scintillation from the brain of Brahma to fall on and inflame the tinder of a mortal brain. The material was pure, and his art was pure; how could the result be other~~wise~~ than wonderful?



1853-1854

1853-1854

 [Thomas Mayne Reid, Jr.](#)'s 1852 THE YOUNG VOYAGEURS; OR, THE BOY HUNTERS IN THE NORTH was reprinted in Boston by Ticknor, Reed, and Fields ([Henry Thoreau](#) would comment on his reading of this on March 9th in his journal, and make notes in his Indian Notebook #8 and Fact Book).



After this author's marriage to his publisher's young daughter there were any number of amusing incidents in and about London, as people continually presumed her to be his daughter (although she would fondly remember all these incidents, I will here relate but one):

The milliner, looking very much astonished, said: "I beg your pardon, sir, I thought the young lady was about returning to school, and that you were choosing a bonnet for her to take."

IT IS NO COINCIDENCE THAT IT IS MORTALS WHO CONSUME OUR HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS, FOR WHAT WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO DO IS EVADE THE RESTRICTIONS OF THE HUMAN LIFESPAN. (IMMORTALS, WITH NOTHING TO LIVE FOR, TAKE NO HEED OF OUR STORIES.)

1853-1854

1853-1854





1853-1854

1853-1854



THE U.S. GRINNELL EXPEDITION IN SEARCH OF SIR JOHN FRANKLIN. A PERSONAL NARRATIVE. BY [ELISHA KENT KANE, M.D., U.S.N.](#) (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 329 & 331 Pearl Street, Franklin Square). [Henry Thoreau](#) would be able to consult this at the Concord Public Library, and it would figure in [WALDEN](#) and in ["SUCCESSION OF FOREST TREES"](#).

U.S. GRINNELL EXPEDITION



[WALDEN](#): What does Africa, -what does the West stand for? Is not our own interior white on the chart? black though it may prove, like the coast, when discovered. Is it the source of the Nile, or the Niger, or the Mississippi, or a North-West Passage around this continent, that we would find? Are these the problems which most concern mankind? Is Franklin the only man who is lost, that his wife should be so earnest to find him? Does Mr. Grinnell know where he himself is? Be rather the Mungo Park, the Lewis and Clarke and Frobisher, of your own streams and oceans; explore your own higher latitudes, -with shiploads of preserved meats to support you, if they be necessary; and pile the empty cans sky-high for a sign. Were preserved meats invented to preserve meat merely? Nay, be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought. Every man is the lord of a realm beside which the earthly empire of the Czar is but a petty state, a hummock left by the ice. Yet some can be patriotic who have no *self-respect*, and sacrifice the greater to the less. They love the soil which makes their graves, but have no sympathy with the spirit which may still animate their clay. Patriotism is a maggot in their heads. What was the meaning of that South-Sea Exploring Expedition, with all its parade and expense, but an indirect recognition of the fact, that there are continents and seas in the moral world, to which every man is an isthmus or an inlet, yet unexplored by him, but that it is easier to sail many thousand miles through cold and storm and cannibals, in a government ship, with five hundred men and boys to assist one, than it is to explore the private sea, the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean of one's being alone.-

“Erret, et extremos alter scrutetur Iberos.
Plus habet hic vitæ, plus habet ille viæ.”

Let them wander and scrutinize the outlandish Australians.
I have more of God, they more of the road.

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN

DR. ELISHA KENT KANE

LEWIS AND CLARK

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

MUNGO PARK



1853-1854


1853-1854



“SUCCESSION OF FOREST TREES”: In the planting of the seeds of most trees, the best gardeners do no more than follow Nature, though they may not know it. Generally, both large and small ones are most sure to germinate, and succeed best, when only beaten into the earth with the back of a spade, and then covered with leaves or straw. These results to which planters have arrived, remind us of the experience of Kane and his companions at the North, who, when learning to live in that climate, were surprised to find themselves steadily adopting the customs of the natives, simply becoming Esquimaux. So, when we experiment in planting forests, we find ourselves at last doing as Nature does. Would it not be well to consult with Nature in the outset? for she is the most extensive and experienced planter of us all, not excepting the Dukes of Athol.

DR. ELISHA KENT KANE
THE DUKES OF ATHOLL

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**1853-1854****1853-1854**

 [Asa Fitch](#) became the 1st professional [entomologist](#) of the New York State Agricultural Society (commissioned by the State of New York).



This made him the very 1st it's-my-day-job entomologist in the US of A (many of his notebooks are now at the Smithsonian Institution).

[Benedict Jaeger](#), assisted by [H.C. Preston, M.D.](#), produced a “valuable ornament for the parlor table” (that’s how he described it) entitled THE LIFE OF NORTH AMERICAN INSECTS ILLUSTRATED BY NUMEROUS COLORED

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**1853-1854****1853-1854**

ENGRAVINGS AND NARRATIVES (Published for the Author. [Providence](#): Sayles, Miller and Simons, Printers).



NORTH AMERICAN INSECTS

This was initially issued in parts, six in all, each with a colored plate of insect illustrations prepared by [Dr. Washington Hoppin](#), and prefaced with a thumbnail biography of [Sir Hans Sloane, M.D.](#), who had founded the British Museum:



SIR HANS SLOANE, M.D.

Afterward the six parts were offered bound together as a book. What [Henry Thoreau](#) had in his personal library may have been this initial printing in six separate parts (and it would seem, out of good judgment or whatever, that he never made notes from this questionable source, in any of his Commonplace books or Indian notebooks, etc.). John D. Sherman's "Catalog 10 of Books on Insects" has characterized Professor Jaeger's volume as "famous as the most worthless of all American Insect books," presumably due to its lack of organization, lack of detailed information, egregious blunders, and "semi-philosophical meanderings."

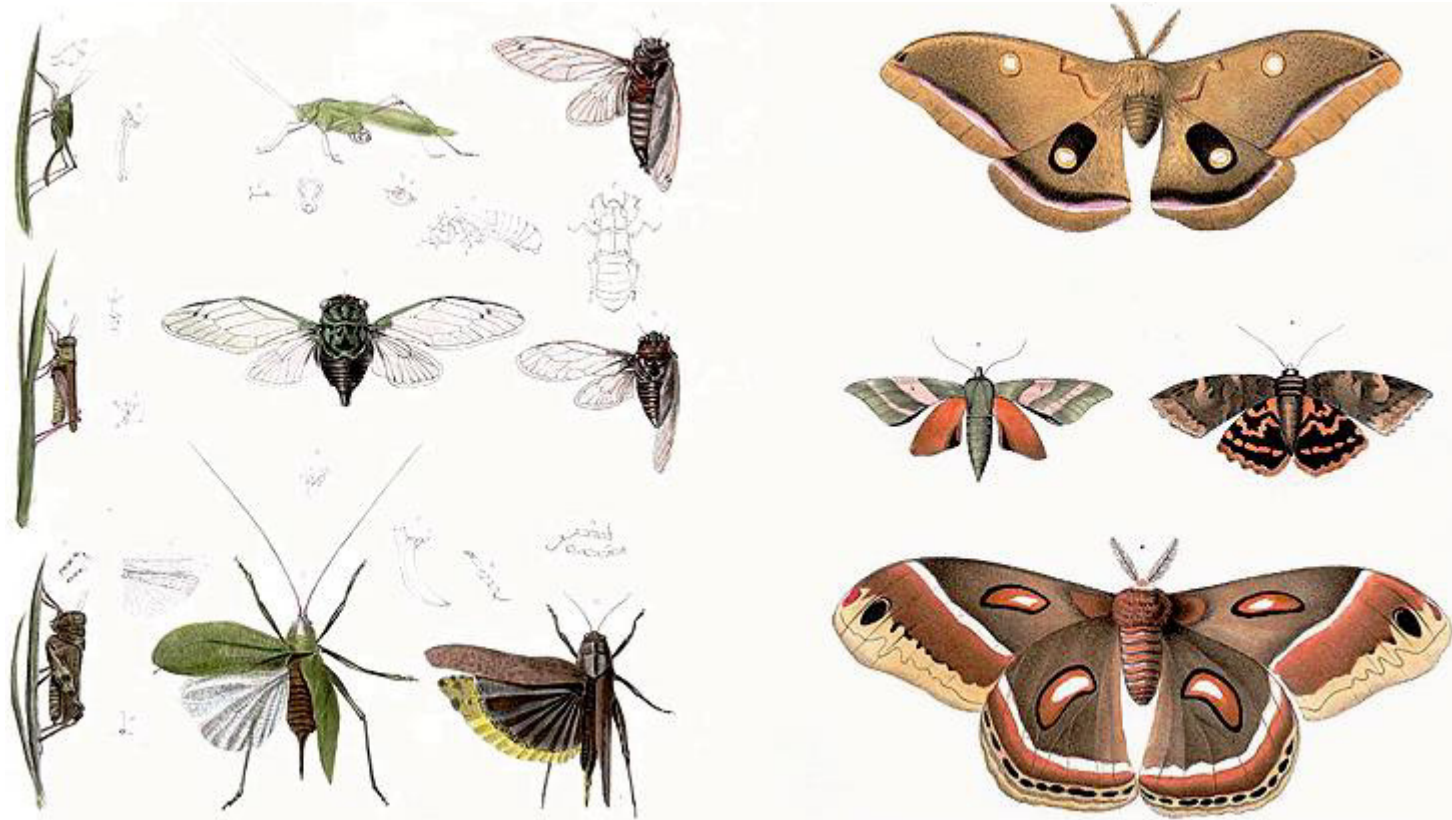
Now it is a fact that during my twenty-two years' residence in this country not a single summer has passed without my seeing some of these red-eyed Cicadas in one or other of the States,

1853-1854

and hence I must maintain that the name "Seventeen-years Locust"
is neither correct nor proper.

At some point [Thoreau](#) would check out, from the [New Bedford, Massachusetts](#) library, a volume published
in this year, [Ebenezer Emmons](#)'s INSECTS OF [NEW-YORK](#).

1853-1854



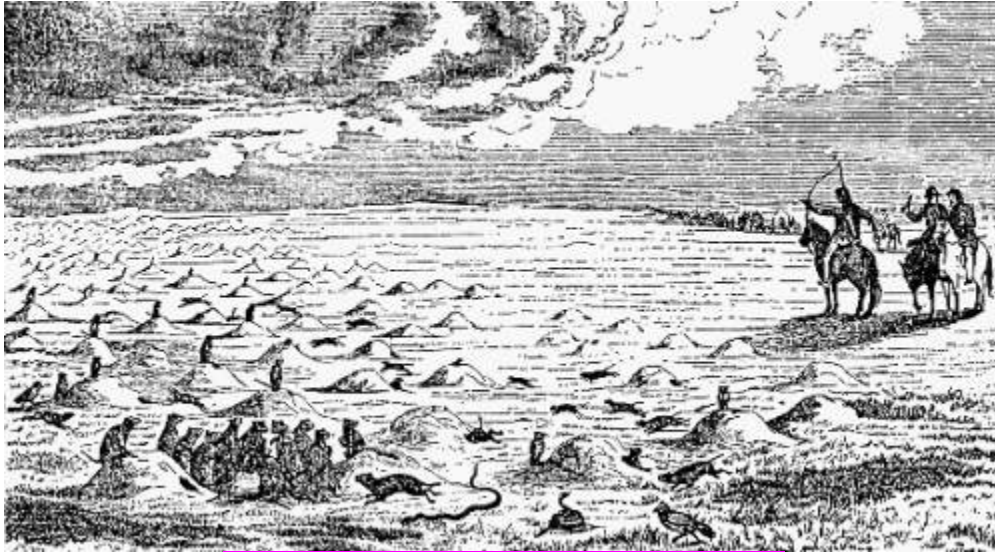
1853-1854

1853-1854



In about this timeframe [Henry Thoreau](#) copied from the volumes of [Josiah Gregg](#)'s COMMERCE OF THE PRAIRIES: OR, THE JOURNAL OF A SANTA FE TRADER, DURING EIGHT EXPEDITIONS ACROSS THE GREAT WESTERN PRAIRIES, AND A RESIDENCE OF NEARLY NINE YEARS IN NORTHERN MEXICO (New York: Henry G. Langley) into his Indian Notebook #8.

MAP OF THE INDIAN TERRITORY



COMMERCE OF THE PRAIRIES

By “northern Mexico” this [tuberculosis](#) sufferer had intended what today we would consider as Oklahoma, Arizona, New Mexico, and southern [California](#), although he did indeed during the [War upon Mexico](#) enter the Mexican state of Chihuahua (no, we’re not referring here to a little doggie).

The sarape saltillero, or fancy blanket completes the picture. This peculiarly useful garment is commonly carried dangling carelessly across the pommel of the saddle except in bad weather when it is drawn over the shoulders, or the rider puts his head through a slit in the middle, while his whole person is thus effectually protected.

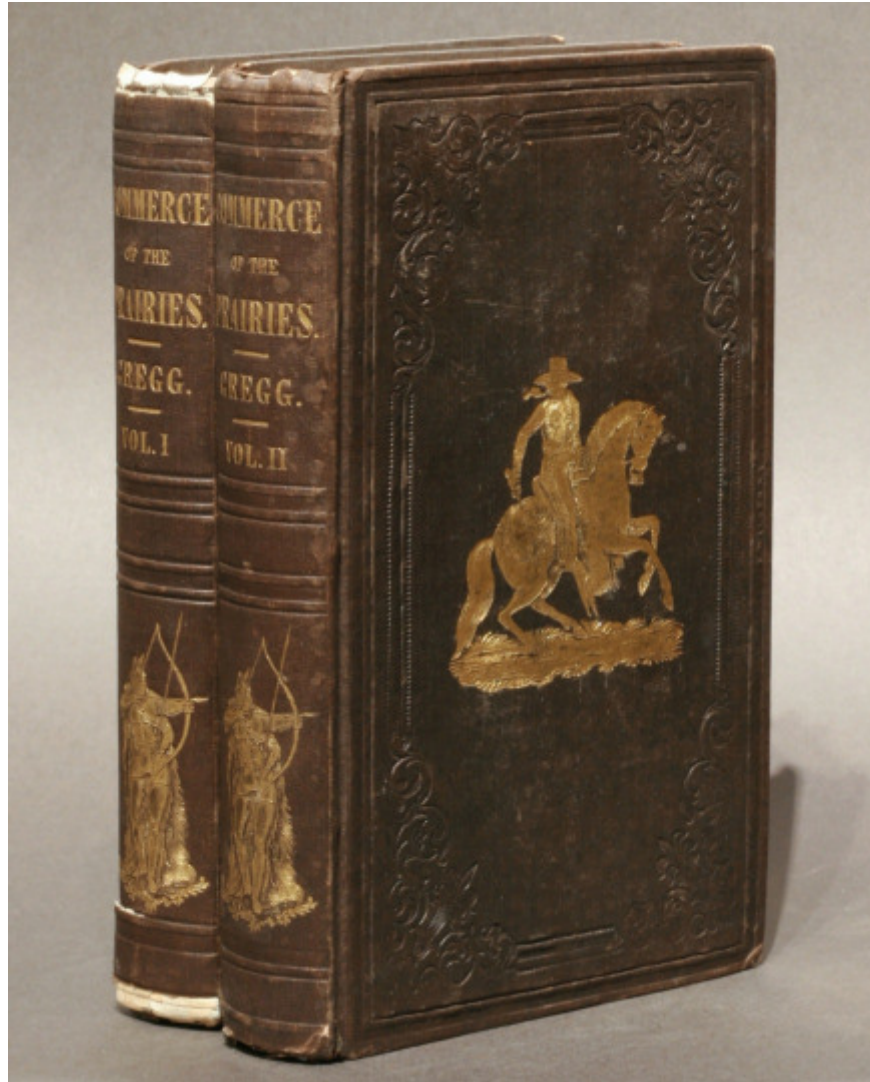
HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

1853-1854

1853-1854



HDT

WHAT?

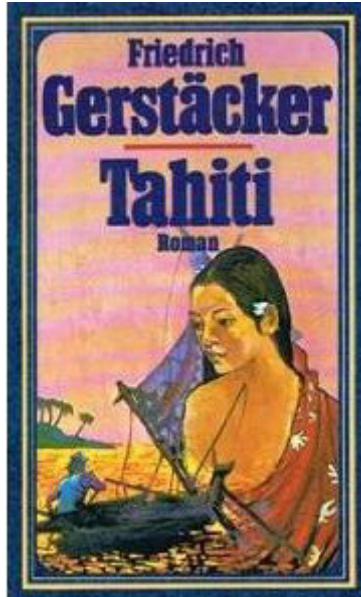
INDEX

1853-1854

1853-1854



[Friedrich Gerstäcker](#)'s 2-volume *AUS ZWEI WELTTEILEN*, *FRITZ WILDAU'S ABENTEUER ZU WASSER UND ZU LANDE*, and *TAHITI*.



Publication in English translation of his 1844 *STREIF- UND JAGDZÜGE DURCH DIE VEREINIGTEN STAATEN NORDAMERICAS*, as *WILD SPORTS IN THE FAR WEST*. An 1859 revision would be read by [Henry Thoreau](#).⁵⁶

WILD WESTERN ARKANSAS

56. This original version of *WILD SPORTS IN THE FAR WEST* is available in a 1968 reprint from Duke UP, Durham, North Carolina.


1853-1854

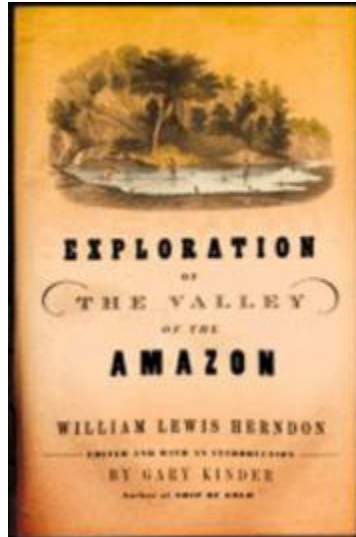
1853-1854

His family moved into the Schloss Rosenau castle, as permanent guests of Duke Ernst II von Coburg.




[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**1853-1854****1853-1854**

 [Lardner Gibbon](#)'s portion, the 2d volume, of EXPLORATION OF THE VALLEY OF THE AMAZON, MADE UNDER DIRECTION OF THE NAVY DEPARTMENT was published in the District of Columbia. This also would be in the personal library of [Henry Thoreau](#), although I don't think Thoreau ever commented on Lieutenant Gibbon's part of the journey.



LT. GIBBON'S AMAZON

 **"LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE"**: Lieutenant Herndon, whom our Government sent to explore the Amazon, and, it is said, to extend the area of Slavery, observed that there was wanting there "an industrious and active population, who know what the comforts of life are, and who have artificial wants to draw out the great resources of the country." But what are the artificial wants to be encouraged? Not the love of luxuries, like the tobacco and slaves of, I believe, his native Virginia, nor the ice and granite and other material wealth of our native New England; nor are "the great resources of a country" that fertility or barrenness of soil which produces these. The chief want, in every State that I have been into, was a high and earnest purpose in its inhabitants. This alone draws out "the great resources" of Nature, and at last taxes her beyond her resources; for man naturally dies out of her. When we want culture more than potatoes, and illumination more than sugar-plums, then the great resources of a world are taxed and drawn out, and the result, or staple production, is, not slaves, nor operatives, but men, -those rare fruits called heroes, saints, poets, philosophers, and redeemers.

1853-1854

1853-1854



[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**1853-1854****1853-1854**

THE GENESIS OF THE EARTH AND OF MAN appeared, anonymously edited by [Edward William Lane](#)'s nephew Reginald Stuart Poole.

A POPULAR ACCOUNT OF THE ANCIENT [EGYPTIANS](#). REVISED AND ABRIDGED FROM HIS LARGER WORK, BY [SIR J. GARDNER WILKINSON, D.C.L., F.R.S., &c.](#) IN TWO VOLUMES. *ILLUSTRATED WITH FIVE HUNDRED WOODCUTS* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 329 & 331 Pearl Street, Franklin Square; illustrated by Joseph Bonomi). These two volumes would be purchased for the personal library of Waldo Emerson and [Henry Thoreau](#) would immediately copy from them into his Fact Book, and into his Indian Notebook #8.

**ANCIENT EGYPT, VOL. I****ANCIENT EGYPT, VOL. II**

[Thoreau](#) copied from [George Douglas Brewerton](#)'s article in the previous August's [Harper's New Monthly Magazine](#) "A Ride with [Kit Carson](#) through the Great American Desert and the Rocky Mountains," into his Indian Notebook #8 (about something that had happened in 1848).

**A RIDE WITH KIT CARSON**



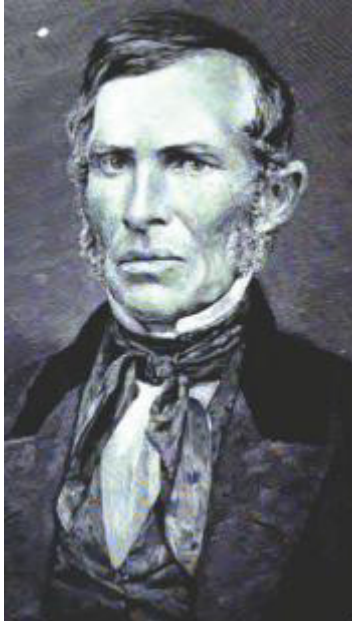
1853-1854

1853-1854

**ONE COULD BE ELSEWHERE, AS ELSEWHERE DOES EXIST.
ONE CANNOT BE ELSEWHEN SINCE ELSEWHEN DOES NOT.
(TO THE WILLING MANY THINGS CAN BE EXPLAINED,
THAT FOR THE UNWILLING WILL REMAIN FOREVER MYSTERIOUS.)**

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**1853-1854****1853-1854**

[Ebenezer Emmons](#)'s AMERICAN GEOLOGY, CONTAINING A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES OF THE SCIENCE WITH FULL ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE CHARACTERISTIC AMERICAN FOSSILS (Albany: Gray, Sprague & Co.). Also, his A TREATISE UPON AMERICAN GEOLOGY.

**PIONEER OF SCIENCE**

Also, his INSECTS OF NEW-YORK (C. van Benthuysen, publisher; this was the 5th volume of the author's AGRICULTURE OF [NEW-YORK](#)), which [Henry Thoreau](#) would check out of the [New Bedford](#) library while visiting [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) in 1857.

THE SCIENCE OF 1854

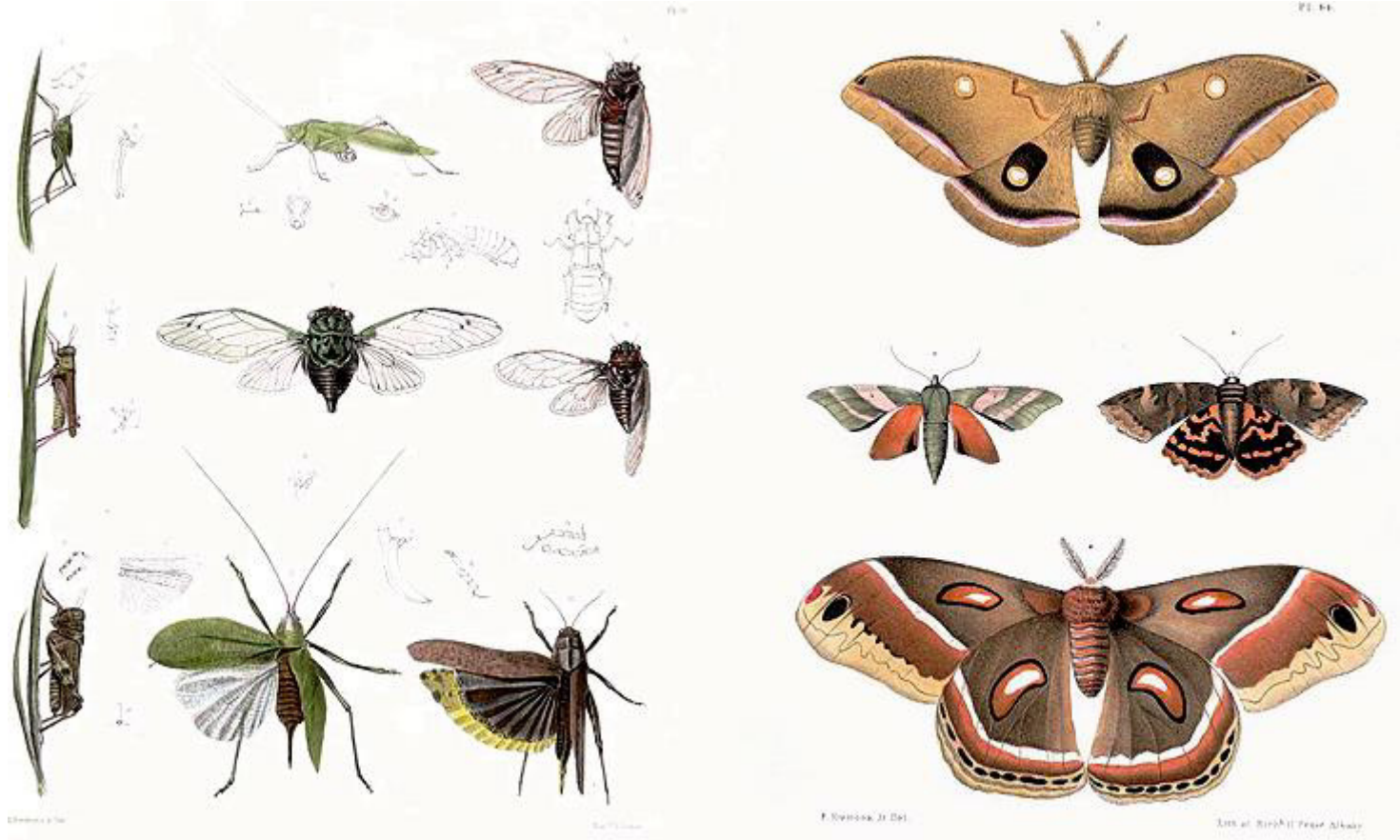
HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

1853-1854

1853-1854






1853-1854

1853-1854



Everett and Laraine Fergenson's "A Personality Profile of [Henry David Thoreau](#): A New Method in Psycho-History" appeared in Raymond D. Gozzi's THOREAU'S PSYCHOLOGY (Lanham, Maryland: UP of America).

"A Review From Professor Ross's Seminar"

Everett Fergenson, Director of the Institute for Behaviorial Analysis at the Stevens Institute of Technology, Hoboken NJ, and his wife Laraine, sent some twenty Thoreau scholars a series of questions from the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) and asked them to answer the questions as they believed that [Henry David Thoreau](#) would have in 1854.  The Fergensons compiled the responses and determined how Thoreau's personality measured on the MMPI scales. Their outstanding finding is that Thoreau registered high on the "male sexual inversion scale," that he was [homoerotic](#) and was plagued by conflicts inhibiting his sexual expression.

As the Fergensons and some of the responding scholars point out, this type of psycho-historical research poses difficulties. 1stly, the test compared Thoreau to thirty-seven year old men living today and not his contemporaries. Thus, Thoreau's frank but platonic love for an [Edmund Quincy Sewall, Jr.](#) has implications in this homophobic age of which Thoreau, Edmund, or Edmund's parents never would have dreamed. 2dly, the scholars note that Thoreau was an artist who played with words, and they wonder how literally he would have taken the test questions. 3dly, they recognize Thoreau as having several different personalities: the literary Thoreau, the biographical Thoreau, and the strident Thoreau would answer the questions on the test differently.

The Fergenson's results generally agree with the Thoreau we know from his work and biographies. While it is interesting to "give" a modern psychological test to a historical figure, I am not sure it reveals very much. The MMPI and other personality tests are designed chiefly to measure the personalities of people whose biographies are unknown. In Thoreau's case, we have both biography and a body of work to explore.

(Scott G. Kassner, January 29, 1986)

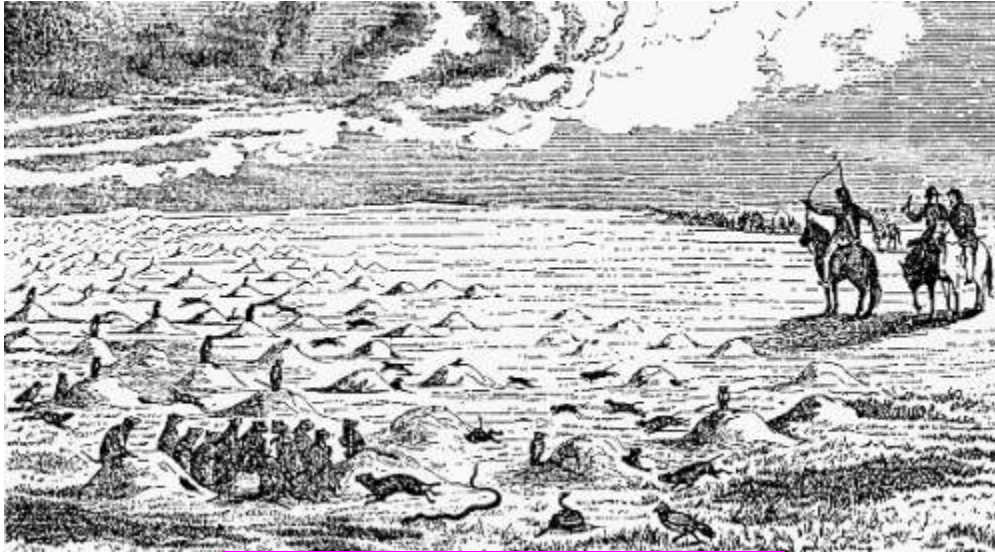
1853-1854

1853-1854



In about this timeframe [Henry Thoreau](#) copied from the volumes of [Josiah Gregg](#)'s COMMERCE OF THE PRAIRIES: OR, THE JOURNAL OF A SANTA FE TRADER, DURING EIGHT EXPEDITIONS ACROSS THE GREAT WESTERN PRAIRIES, AND A RESIDENCE OF NEARLY NINE YEARS IN NORTHERN MEXICO (New York: Henry G. Langley) into his Indian Notebook #8.

MAP OF THE INDIAN TERRITORY



COMMERCE OF THE PRAIRIES

By “northern Mexico” this [tuberculosis](#) sufferer had intended what today we would consider as Oklahoma, Arizona, New Mexico, and southern [California](#), although he did indeed during the [War upon Mexico](#) enter the Mexican state of Chihuahua (no, we’re not referring here to a little doggie).

The sarape saltillero, or fancy blanket completes the picture. This peculiarly useful garment is commonly carried dangling carelessly across the pommel of the saddle except in bad weather when it is drawn over the shoulders, or the rider puts his head through a slit in the middle, while his whole person is thus effectually protected.

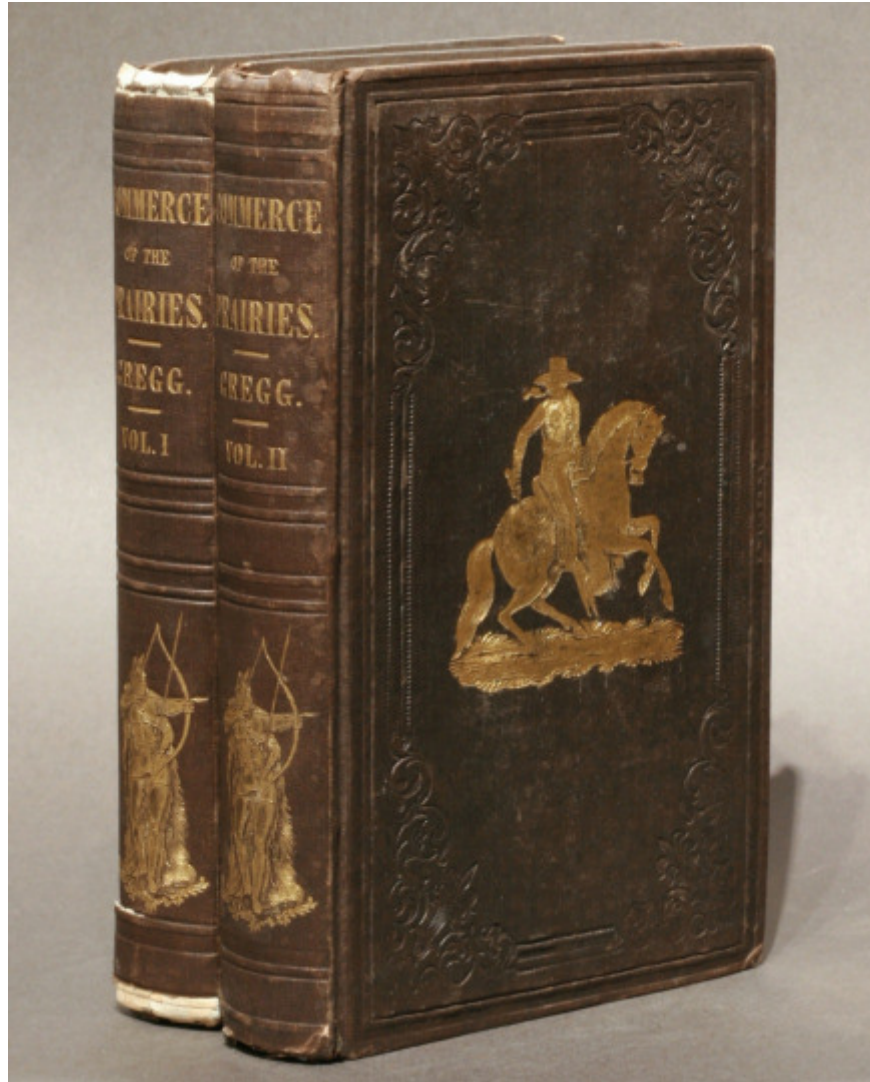
HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

1853-1854

1853-1854



[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**1853-1854****1853-1854**

An English translation of [Gabriel Franchère](#)'s *RELATION D'UN VOYAGE À LA CÔTE DU NORD-OUEST DE L'AMÉRIQUE SEPTENTRIONALE DANS LES ANNÉES 1810, 11, 12, 13, ET 14* of 1820, not merely translated but also extensively re-edited by Jedediah Vincent Huntington, was put out as a 2d edition entitled *NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE NORTHWEST COAST OF AMERICA IN THE YEARS 1811, 1812, 1813, AND 1814 OR THE FIRST AMERICAN SETTLEMENT ON THE PACIFIC*, by the Redfield Press at 110 and 112 Nassau Street in New-York (there would be, subsequent to this point, four more versions, each with extensive notes and introductions).

**GABRIEL FRANCHÈRE**

This volume would be in the personal library of [Henry Thoreau](#).



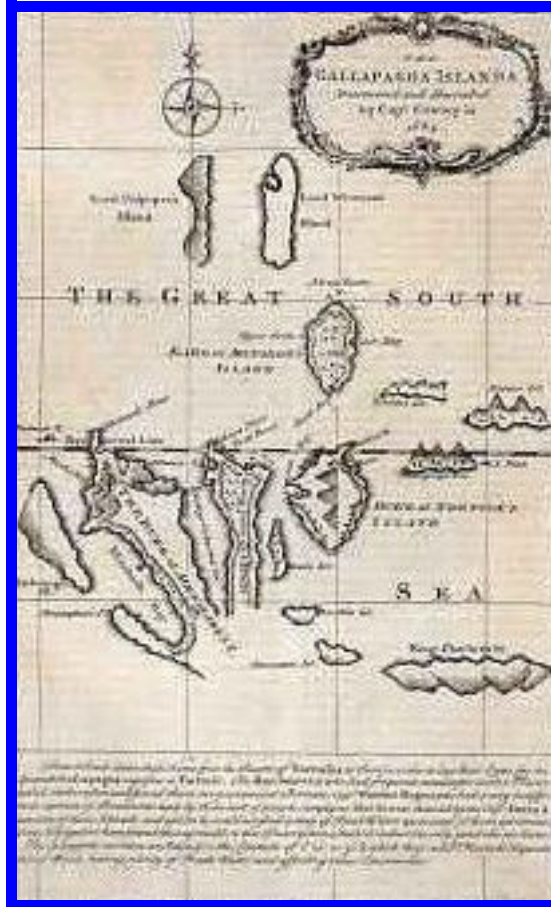
[THE LIFE OF NORTH AMERICAN INSECTS. BY B. JAEGER, LATE PROFESSOR OF ZOOLOGY AND BOTANY IN THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY. ASSISTED BY H.C. PRESTON, M.D. WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS, FROM SPECIMENS IN THE CABINET OF THE AUTHOR.](#) ([Henry Thoreau](#) would own the 8 volumes of the 1st edition).

1853-1854

1853-1854



[Charles Pickering](#) created GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF ANIMALS AND PLANTS (Volume 15 of the Reports of the US South Seas Exploring Expedition of 1838-1842), and would create also a 2d volume (which would be published privately in 1876).



[Herman Melville](#)'s THE ENCANTADAS; OR, ENCHANTED ISLES in Putnam's Monthly Magazine of American Literature, Science and Art gave [Henry Thoreau](#) a chance to learn about the Galápagos Islands (which Melville had visited in 1841 and revisited in 1842) as a symbol of desolation (Melville would recycle these stark images in his *CLAREL: A POEM AND PILGRIMAGE IN THE HOLY LAND* as a comparison for the deserts of the Holy

1853-1854

1853-1854

Land), and [Thomas Cholmondeley](#)'s ULTIMA THULE; OR, THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY A RESIDENCE IN NEW



ZEALAND gave him a chance to learn about [New Zealand](#).⁵⁷ It would have been possible for Thoreau to have learned, at this point, that while the Maori population of New Zealand was still radically declining, its English population had reached:

1846	12,000
1848	17,000
1850	23,000
1852	26,000

and would by this year of [1854](#) have probably arrived at more than [30,000](#) white souls “had not an

57. Cholmondeley, Thomas. ULTIMA THULE; | OR, | THOUGHTS | SUGGESTED BY | A RESIDENCE IN NEW ZEALAND | BY | THOMAS CHOLMONDELEY. | London: | John Chapman, 142, Strand. | MDCCCLIV. 8vo. Pp. iv, 344. “A new country ought to produce new thoughts.’ Speculations and suggestions of a scholarly kind; an outcome of the novel conditions which surround a settler in a new country. The Constitution, Church, society, education, occupation, history, &c., of New Zealand all pass under able review. The author was one of the first Canterbury settlers.”

READ CHOLMONDELEY



1853-1854

1853-1854

overwhelming attraction,” the [Australia](#) of the great gold rush years, “drawn away numbers of settlers.”

The imagination of my own boyhood surrounded the tattooed natives with a halo of delightful mystery. Their warlike power was tremendous; their aspect ferocious; their cruelty unutterable: unfortunate white men seldom escaped, and then only half-roasted, from their horrid orgies; their priests were wizards, and they loved the flesh of the missionaries more than any other food. What principally struck Hongi, when in England, was the magnificence of King George, the multitude and splendour of his men-of-war, and the abundance of his swords and guns. He made up his mind that when he returned home he would become the King George of New Zealand; a determination which he afterwards carried out to the best of his power. A decidedly clever man he must have been. He managed to get supplies of muskets and ammunition by selling at Port Jackson the presents of his English friends. His warlike raids, in one of which he killed about 1500 of his enemies, were so judiciously carried on as never to derange the good understanding between him and the Church Missionary Society. Nor did the work of depopulation, which Hongi's ambition had accelerated, cease with the death of that great savage. The causes lay far deeper than the accident of individual ambition. The native ferocity of a savage race was as yet untamed when they found themselves suddenly in possession of a new and extraordinary means of destruction; suddenly exposed to overwhelming temptations, —perplexed by strange thoughts, without the safeguard of religion; suddenly enchanted by visions of wealth and power, without the check of knowledge and experience. The shadow of the white man, yet afar off, fell like a blight upon them. The evil eye from across the ocean hit them. For twenty years the work of extirpation went on. The north, where the mightiest warriors dwelt, preyed upon the south, which retaliated in its turn. Thousands perished. Thousands were carried away captives. In the whole of the Middle Island, which is larger than England, there are now not above 3000 Maories. In short, the intestine warfare of the native New Zealanders so thinned their numbers, and wore away their strength, that they became only a miserable wreck of former greatness. And thus it became comparatively easy for the Europeans, finding them weakened and divided, to gain a firm foothold among them, and ultimately to appropriate their broad lands.

Nevertheless, given the potential of the wool business, “If we rate the present number of white people at 30,000, as before stated, and account that they have more than doubled in the last eight years, we shall



1853-1854

1853-1854

be warranted in concluding that these 30,000 will have become at least 60,000 by the year 1864.”

The Maori population, now about 100,000, is yearly declining. Altogether, I should place the New Zealanders of 1864, white and dark faces together, at about 150,000. But this calculation is framed upon the supposition that the whites will continue to increase at a little less than the rate of the last few years, while very possibly they may increase much faster; in which case so also will their powers of production; and that the Maories will continue rapidly to decrease; possibly, however, the decay of that nation may yet be arrested. ...the Maories, as such, are disappearing. Those whom their own depopulating wars have left surviving, are dying very rapidly away. The number of the children is small; they do not replace their fathers. It is strange, on entering one of their villages, to see how all the finest specimens of humanity it contains are greatly past the flower of life. The young people look mean, squalid, and sickly; the children miserable in the extreme. Whether the decree is irrevocable; whether the finger of time can go back upon the dial, and the past can be so far recovered as to give this race yet a chance of prolonged existence, is a question which the experience of the next few years will enable us to answer.... Nothing can keep out white settlers, and wherever they come, the natives, as a fact, die away. So, in our woods and fields, even in England, we may observe that a new kind of tree or plant will elbow out another, which flourished before it was introduced. The antagonisms and antipathies of race and society, are but an extension of the phenomena of natural history.

Cholmondeley was much preoccupied by the prospects of the productive middle class of New Zealand, and had a number of general thoughts to offer on the productive middle classes of the various colonies and former colonies of England:

This middle class is all in all in a colony; everything moves to it, and everything depends upon it.... The United States is nothing else but an enormous, an overwhelming middle class, with a few proscribed gentlemen (a thousand, perhaps, who keep to themselves, too glad to be allowed to live), and millions of Negroes, and English, Irish, Scotch, Welsh, French, and German servants, to black their shoes, wheel their barrows, make bricks, &c. This, however, is unexampled prosperity. In the English colonies, generally, and in New Zealand in particular, the small business-capitalist is the man wanted. There are thousands of such men without openings in England.

While in [Australia Richard Henry Horne](#) brought out there a new edition of his ORION. He supported himself as a Goldfields Commissioner at the Waranga goldrush and named the township of Rushworth. During his time there he also reached a peaceful settlement with over 4,000 gold miners who had rioted over the payment of their mining license fee and, in his memoirs, stated that he believed this action, in light of the events at the Eureka Stockade a few months later, was never adequately recognized. Instead he would be dismissed from the civil service for erratic behavior.

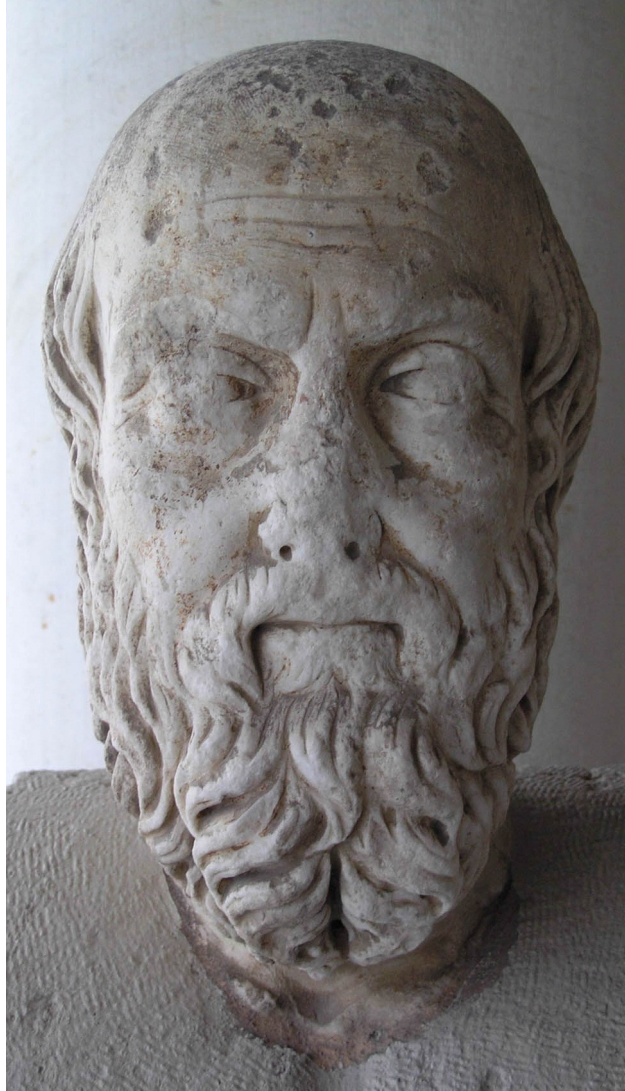


[HERODOTUS](#). A NEW AND LITERAL VERSION FROM THE TEXT OF BAEHR. WITH A GEOGRAPHICAL AND GENERAL INDEX. BY HENRY CARY, M.A., WORCESTER COLLEGE, OXFORD (London: Henry G. Bohn, York Street, Covent Garden. MDCCCLIV).

1853-1854

1853-1854

(In about 1861, [Henry Thoreau](#) would copy from this edition into his Indian Notebook #12, and into his Commonplace Book #2.)



THOREAU READS HERODOTUS



1853-1854

1853-1854



At some point during this year [Emerson](#) would notice that [Thoreau](#) considered the gold rush immoral:

Thoreau thinks 'tis immoral to dig gold in California; immoral to leave creating value, & go to augmenting the representative of value, & so altering & diminishing real value, & that, of course, the fraud will appear. I conceive that work to be as innocent as any other speculating. Every man should do what he can; & he was created to augment some real value, & not for a speculator. When he leaves or postpones (as most men do) his proper work, & adopts some short or cunning method, as of watching markets, or farming in any manner the ignorance of people, as, in buying by the acre to sell by the foot, he is fraudulent, he is malefactor, so far; & is bringing society to bankruptcy. But nature watches over all this, too, & turns this malfeasance to some good. For, California gets peopled, subdued, civilised, in this fictitious way, & on this fiction a real prosperity is rooted & grown.

The recent [California](#) emigrant [John Rollin Ridge](#) (*Chee-squa-ta-law-ny*, “[Yellow Bird](#)”) produced a fiction entitled *THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF JOAQUIN MURIETA, THE CELEBRATED CALIFORNIA BANDIT*. Of course there was no such person in California, actually, as this *bandito desesperado* Joaquin Murieta, but of course there were *banditos desesperados* aplenty in the territory to which Ridge had arrived in 1850, and this native author quite like his fictional character had been driven there by a white-man goldrush of sorts⁵⁸ — except that in Ridge’s real case as a native American, the “goldrush” in question had been the State-of-Georgia-sponsored rush of white citizens into the hilly [Cherokee](#) homelands. In the fiction in question, events have a catastrophic impact upon “Joaquin Murieta” and the author expresses this in a distinctively Emersonian spatial metaphor:

His soul swelled beyond its former boundaries, and the barriers of honor, rocked into atoms by the strong passion which shook his heart like an earthquake, crumbled around him. Then it was he declared ... [that] he would live henceforth for revenge and that his path should be marked with blood.

Because this book did not sell well, Ridge would need to write for the Sacramento [Bee](#) and the San Francisco [Herald](#). While editing the [Bee](#) he would advise his Indian relatives to trust in the federal government to protect their rights (he didn’t have any advice for the California natives, who in his view were an inferior people).




So, now, here below, I will supply you with the extrapolation which has been made upon this theme recently by a scholar named John Lowe in “‘I am Joaquin!’ Space and Freedom in *Yellow Bird*’s *THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF JOAQUIN MURIETA, THE CELEBRATED CALIFORNIA BANDIT*,” which is to be found as pages 104-21 in Helen Jaskoski’s *EARLY NATIVE AMERICAN WRITING: NEW CRITICAL ESSAYS* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996):

Joaquin’s circle of self, thwarted in its effort to grow via the traditional American way (hard work, enterprise, and democratic leadership), has burst through into a new and larger circle through the passion of anger. His vow to cut a “bloody path”


58. A gold nugget weighing in at a full 162 pounds was discovered in the diggings in this year. This real event would have made a better story, of course, if for instance the guy who discovered it had weighed less than it did — but he didn’t.

1853-1854

1853-1854

through the state as he avenges the wrongs done to him and his family presages ever-widening circles of spatial/criminal conquest. His path echoes several principles set down in the 1840s  by [Ralph Waldo Emerson](#) in his seminal essay "CIRCLES". In one of literary [Transcendentalism](#)'s prime expressions, Emerson gives space and confinement elemental circular forms, first in the human eye and then, significantly, in nature, for the "horizon" formed by the eyes is the second circle man knows, a "primary figure" that is repeated "without end" in nature. Here and in his other essays, Emerson maps out an imperial self that properly seeks expansion and power, a process generated from and paralleled by nature itself. The concept of the self expressed by ever-expanding concentric circles has a demonic side as well; at one point in "Circles," Emerson relates his expanding circles of self to explosive anger, the kind Ridge's readers see expressed by [Joaquin Murieta](#): "But the heart refuses to be imprisoned; in its first and narrowest pulses it already tends outward with a vast force and to immense and innumerable expansions." Theories of "self-reliance" and the "imperial self" fed into the ideology of manifest destiny. These ideas would find magnificent expression in other key works of the period, particularly in [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#)'s exploration of the "magic circles" of the self in [THE SCARLET LETTER](#) (1850 ) and in [Herman Melville](#)'s critique of unleashed darker elements of Emersonian and capitalist ideology, [MOBY-DICK](#) (1851 ) , books published only a few years before JOAQUIN. Although it is beyond the scope of this essay, THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF JOAQUIN MURIETA, THE CELEBRATED CALIFORNIA BANDIT surely demands to be studied alongside these books and other masterworks of what we have called the "American Renaissance," as well as with the works of newer members of the canon such as [Frederick Douglass](#), [Harriet Beecher Stowe](#), and [Harriet Jacobs](#).

GENERAL EVENTS OF 1854

 In Toronto, Canada, following the ministry of the [Reverend William Adam](#), who had been a Scottish missionary to [India](#), the [Reverend Charles Henry Appleton Dall](#) had done quite well for several years — until coming into disagreement with the founder of the congregation, Joseph Workman, in regard to the financing of a new church building. Again he took to his bed in illness, and resigned.

The Emerson family of Staten Island relocated to [Manhattan Island](#), renting living quarters from a cousin who had property at 33 East 14th Street. There are few resources shedding light on the early life of [Charles Emerson](#) prior to his years at Columbia College and then Harvard College. A letter from Charles's uncle [Ralph Waldo Emerson](#) addressed to his father [Judge William Emerson](#) shows the affection between the families. In a letter [Waldo](#) wrote to his brother [William](#) about the gifts he sent for New Year's, which included several items for the writing table of young son [Charles](#). Once at Harvard College, [Charles](#) would visit his uncle [Waldo](#) and his family out in [Concord](#).

Dr. John Snow, who had in 1849 investigated the Broad Street pump on [Manhattan Island](#) and suggested that

1853-1854

1853-1854

[cholera](#) was being spread by way of contamination of the public water supply, was still having problems



getting his theory accepted in the medical community, as the disease centered in the [India](#) of the East India Company and as the forces there of colonialist denial were firmly in the saddle. The Indian Medical Service was still engaging in its usual blaming of the victims, alleging that cholera actually was afflicting only those who were anyway predisposed to such [infections](#), and so in this year the elder Dr. Snow charged that:

The alleged predisposition was nothing visible or evident: like the elephant which supports the world, according to Hindoo mythology, it was merely invented to remove a difficulty.

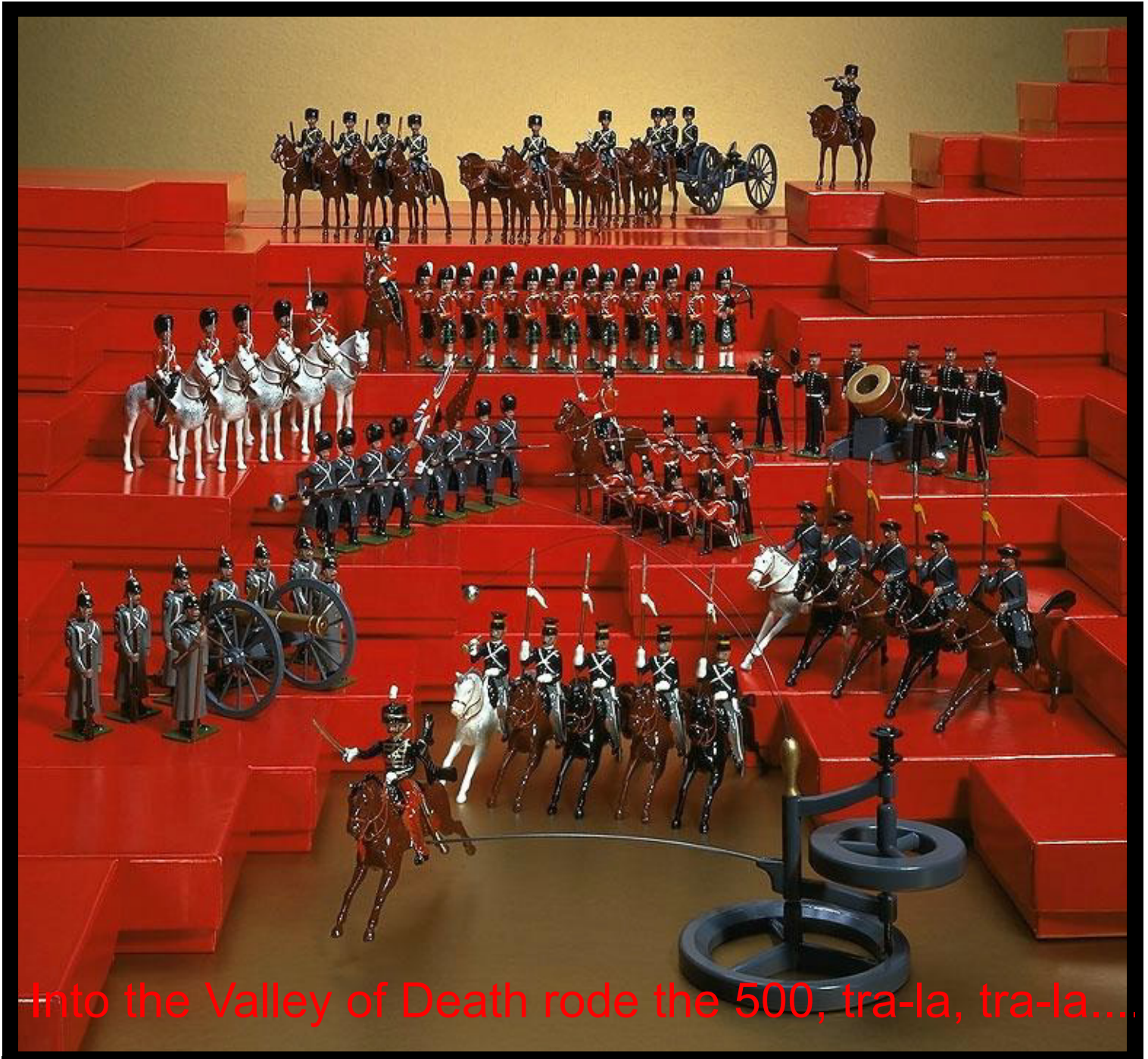


The [Crimean War](#) expanded, as Britain and France allied themselves with Turkey and declared war on [Russia](#) on March 28th. The city of Sevastopol was placed under siege. [Florence Nightingale](#) was given permission to take a group of 38 nurses to Scutari to look after the wounded Brits. She would find appalling conditions in the army hospital. The men, unwashed, were still wearing army costumes “stiff with dirt and gore.” There were

1853-1854

no blankets and there was no decent food. With such conditions at the army hospitals, only one death in six was being caused by the wounds themselves. Diseases such as [cholera](#), [typhoid fever](#), and dysentery were the primary causes of the high death-rate. Nightingale overcame the opposition of the brass by using her contacts at [The Times of London](#) to inform the British public of how the Army treated its victims. Given the task of organizing the barracks hospital after the battle of Inkerman, she improved the [sanitation](#) and dramatically reduced the death-rate.

1853-1854



Into the Valley of Death rode the 500, tra-la, tra-la...

In the Crimea, a [typhoid fever](#) epidemic spread from the Russian army to the French and the British. It spread

1853-1854

throughout Russia and Turkey thanks to merchant ships. [Florence Nightingale](#) took nearly three dozen nurses from London to Scutari, and tried to use sanitary measures to block the spread of the disease. Still, disease would claim many more lives in the [Crimean War](#) than the battles.

1853-1854

IT IS NO COINCIDENCE THAT IT IS MORTALS WHO CONSUME OUR HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS, FOR WHAT WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO DO IS EVADE THE RESTRICTIONS OF THE HUMAN LIFESPAN. (IMMORTALS, WITH NOTHING TO LIVE FOR, TAKE NO HEED OF OUR STORIES.)



Francis William Edmond's "Taking the Census" depicted a scene from the national census of 1850, which had initiated the requirement that a head of household provide accurate information on each of his dependents.





1853-1854

1853-1854



[Stephen Collins Foster](#) reminisced at his house in Hoboken, New Jersey about his estranged spouse [Jane Denny McDowell Foster Wiley](#) (December 10, 1829-January 17, 1903, married July 22, 1850, gave birth to their only child, Marion, on April 18, 1851, after the marital separation supported herself as a telegraph operator) and created "[Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair](#)."

I dream of Jeanie with the light brown hair,
Borne, like a vapor, on the summer air;
I see her tripping where the bright streams play,
Happy as the daisies that dance on her way.
Many were the wild notes her merry voice would pour.
Many were the blithe birds that warbled them o'er:
Oh! I dream of Jeanie with the light brown hair,
Floating, like a vapor, on the soft summer air.

I long for Jeanie with the daydawn smile,
Radiant in gladness, warm with winning guile;
I hear her melodies, like joys gone by,
Sighing round my heart o'er the fond hopes that die:—
Sighing like the night wind and sobbing like the rain,—
Wailing for the lost one that comes not again:
Oh! I long for Jeanie, and my heart bows low,
Never more to find her where the bright waters flow.

I sigh for Jeanie, but her light form strayed
Far from the fond hearts round her native glade;
Her smiles have vanished and her sweet songs flown,
Flitting like the dreams that have cheered us and gone.
Now the nodding wild flowers may wither on the shore
While her gentle fingers will cull them no more:
Oh! I sigh for Jeanie with the light brown hair,
Floating, like a vapor, on the soft summer air.

1853-1854

1853-1854



In this year there were 4 shipwrecks near [Van Diemen's Land](#) (what would soon be renamed "Tasmania"): the *Alert*, a schooner, ran aground in the Arthur River during a violent storm, without loss of life (the remains of this vessel would in 2005 be exposed by a storm), the *Lioness*, a schooner, was lost at Clarke Island on the Furneaux Group, with 4 lives, the *Brahmin*, a full-rigged ship, was lost off King Island, with the loss of 16 lives, and the *Dolphin*, a cutter, was wrecked in Louisa Bay, with 11 lives lost.

Severe floods and fires ravaged [Van Diemen's Land](#).

The surviving [Van Diemen's Land](#) aboriginals of pure blood were 3 men, 11 women, and 2 children.

1802	5,000±
1830	300
1847	47
1854	16
1876	0



FIGURING OUT WHAT AMOUNTS TO A “HISTORICAL CONTEXT” IS WHAT THE CRAFT OF HISTORICIZING AMOUNTS TO, AND THIS NECESSITATES DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN THE SET OF EVENTS THAT MUST HAVE TAKEN PLACE BEFORE EVENT E COULD BECOME POSSIBLE, AND MOST CAREFULLY DISTINGUISHING THEM FROM ANOTHER SET OF EVENTS THAT COULD NOT POSSIBLY OCCUR UNTIL SUBSEQUENT TO EVENT E.



1853-1854

1853-1854



[The Times](#) of [London](#)'s annual summary:

THE TIMES

READ ABOUT THE YEAR

In [London](#), a re-erected [Crystal Palace](#) was opened at Sydenham.

In [London](#), the Working Men's College was established in Red Lion Square.

In [London](#), the Royal Panopticon of Science and Art opened in Leicester Square.

In [London](#), the opening of the Great Northern Hotel at King's Cross.

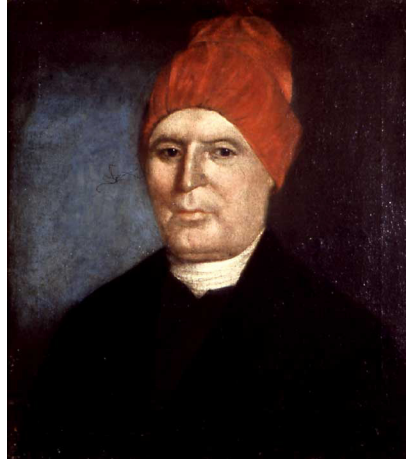
In [London](#), the opening of Paddington Station, and the Great Western Hotel.

1853-1854

1853-1854



Separate publication of the Reverend [Samuel Hopkins](#)'s TREATISE ON THE [MILLENNIUM](#), which had originally appeared in his THE SYSTEM OF DOCTRINES CONTAINED IN DIVINE REVELATION of 1793 and in which he had deduced from prophecies in the books of DANIEL and REVELATION that the millennium would come not far from the end of the 20th Century.



[Harriet Beecher Stowe](#)'s THE MINISTER'S WOOING, in which the lead character was modeled on the Reverend [Samuel Hopkins](#) of the 1st Congregational Church at [Newport, Rhode Island](#) (who had died in 1803).

As her response to the [Kansas/Nebraska Act](#), Mrs. Stowe urged the women of America to hire lecturers, to circulate copies of speeches and petitions, and to pray. This was published as "An Appeal to the Women of America" in the [Independent](#). A petition she was circulating achieved a total of 3,050 signatures, each of these 3,050 signatures not by a mere female-type woman but by a Man Of The Cloth, a minister — and this was duly presented to the Senate of the United States.

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

(One wonders whether, had [Henry Thoreau](#) been a Man Of The Cloth and been asked to sign such a petition, he would have signed or refused — for in his journal this year he was despairing: **"I read some of the speeches in Congress about the Nebraska Bill, — a thing the like of which I have not done for a year. What trifling upon a serious subject! while honest men are sawing wood for them outside. Your Congress halls have an ale-house odor, — a place for stale jokes and vulgar wit. It compels me to think of my fellow-creatures as apes and baboons."**)



Since her relationship with her 49-year-old little sister [Angelina Emily Grimké Weld](#) was not improving, big sister [Sarah Moore Grimké](#) move out of the household at Belleville, New Jersey. Then, however, [Theodore Dwight Weld](#) and Angelina and Sarah —all three— decided to join the Raritan Bay Union of Perth Amboy, [New Jersey](#) and start an "[Eagleswood School](#)" there with Weld as headmaster. (When the Union would fail in 1856, the School would continue with Angelina and Sarah still as teachers. Eventually, during the Civil War, it would forsake its Quaker roots and be transformed into a military academy.)

Since Miss [Caroline Cushing Andrews](#) began to teach in the schools of Perth Amboy, New Jersey in this year, presumably while living at the Eagleswood settlement since she was an abolitionist, perhaps it was at this "Eagleswood School" that she was teaching? —I don't know.



: A sort of "war" between Cleveland and Ohio City was settled through the annexation of the latter.

1853-1854

1853-1854

➡ A 2d edition of [Charles Kraitsir, M.D.](#)'s 1852 GLOSSOLOGY: BEING A TREATISE ON THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE AND ON THE LANGUAGE OF NATURE (New-York: Charles B. Norton).

GLOSSOLOGY: A TREATISE

➡ During this year and the following one [John Henry Kagi](#) would be teaching school at Hawkinstown, Virginia — until his pupils would be led to suspect that their teacher had some sort of trepidation as to the system of [srace slavery](#) prevalent in that area — upon which their teacher would be compelled to return to Ohio under a pledge never to return to Virginia.



Shame on him! He didn't believe in human slavery!

"It is simply crazy that there should ever have come into being a world with such a sin in it, in which a man is set apart because of his color — the superficial fact about a human being. Who could **want** such a world? For an American fighting for his love of country, that the last hope of earth should from its beginning have swallowed [slavery](#), is an irony so withering, a justice so intimate in its rebuke of pride, as to measure only with God."

— [Stanley Cavell](#), MUST WE MEAN WHAT WE SAY? 1976, page 141



➡ [Emma Hart Willard](#)'s ASTRONOGRAPHY; OR ASTRONOMICAL GEOGRAPHY: WITH THE USE OF THE GLOBES: ARRANGED EITHER FOR SIMULTANEOUS READING AND STUDY IN CLASSES, OR FOR STUDY IN THE COMMON METHOD.

ASTRONOGRAPHY

1853-1854



Having studied law under an anti-slavery judge in Elyria, Ohio, [John Mercer Langston](#) became the 1st black lawyer in the United States. After leaving [Oberlin](#) and going to Virginia in 1871, he would make himself the 1st black American admitted to practice law before the US Supreme Court.



This was Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio in 1854:



[John Albee](#) graduated from Phillips Academy in Andover. He would go on to [Harvard Divinity School](#) in Cambridge.

1853-1854

1853-1854

1853-1854

➡ While working on *Die Walküre*, [Richard Wagner](#) plowed through [Arthur Schopenhauer](#)'s *WORLD AS WILL AND IDEA* a total of 4 times. He sent along a copy of *THE RING OF THE NIBELUNG* inscribed "in veneration and gratitude," which presumably looked real nice on the philosopher's coffee-table in his living-room. He fell in love with [Mathilde Wesendonck](#) (since her husband [Otto Wesendonck](#) had saved him from having to pay his bills, one might suppose it would have been more seemly for him to have fallen in love with the husband, but I guess that's not the way this sort of thing works).

➡ [Joseph-Héliodore-Sagesse-Vertu Garcin de Tassy](#)'s *MÉMOIRE SUR LES NOMS PROPRES ET LES TITRES MUSULMANS*. His *TABLEAU DU KALI YUG OU DE L'ÂGE DE FER, PAR WISCHNU-DÂS*. His *LES FEMMES POÈTES DANS L'INDE*. His *CHANTS POPULAIRES DE L'INDE*.



➡ DIARY AND CORRESPONDENCE OF [JOHN EVELYN](#), F.R.S., AUTHOR OF THE "SYLVA": TO WHICH IS SUBJOINED THE PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN KING CHARLES I. AND SIR EDWARD NICHOLAS, AND BETWEEN SIR EDWARD HYDE, AFTERWARDS EARL OF CLARENDON, AND SIR RICHARD BROWNE. EDITED FROM THE ORIGINAL MSS. AT WOTTEN BY WILLIAM BRAY (London: Published for Henry Colburn, by his successors, Hurst & Blackett, Great Marlborough Street).



JOHN EVELYN, VOLUME I
JOHN EVELYN, VOLUME II
JOHN EVELYN, VOLUME III
JOHN EVELYN, VOLUME IV


➡ [New-York](#)'s slaughterhouses were processing 1,058,690 animals during this year.

Some longhorns were herded all the way from [Texas](#) to a slaughterhouse in [New-York](#). To keep the scrotums of the males from chafing during such a long trek, their testicles would have been shoved up into their bodies and the empty sack cut off.⁵⁹ It turned out that the long period of extreme exercise had made the resulting meat altogether too tough and too stringy. —Would a better way be found to provide meat for the citizens of America's burgeoning cities?


59. This do-unto-others procedure would be known as "goodnighting" after the ranchman who developed it, a Mr. Goodnight. Betcha you's not been contemplating this sort of thingie while watching black-and-white cowboy movies on late-night TV!

1853-1854

1853-1854

 GRAINS DE MIL. *GRAINS DE MIL, POÉSIES ET PENSÉES* PAR HENRI-FRÉDÉRIC AMIEL. Sponsored by the democratic party (in opposition to the aristocracy), Professor Amiel was made Professor of Moral Philosophy at the academy of Genève.



 Ticknor, Reed, and Fields of Boston became Ticknor & Fields.





1832-1834	Allen & Ticknor
1834-1843	William D. Ticknor
1843-1849	William D. Ticknor & Co.
1849-1854	Ticknor, Reed & Fields
1854-1868	Ticknor and Fields
1868-1871	Fields, Osgood & Co.
1871-1878	James R. Osgood & Co.
1878-1880	Houghton, Osgood, & Co.
1880-1908	Houghton, Mifflin, & Co.
1908-2007	Houghton Mifflin Company
2007-????	Houghton Mifflin Harcourt



1853-1854

1853-1854


 At the end of the journal entries for this year, [Waldo Emerson](#) listed his recent readings in Oriental materials: “Plotinus; Dionysius of Alexandria; Porphyry; Iamblichus; Synesius; Proclus; Sidonius; Bhagavat Geeta; Vyasa; Saadi, Gulistan; Hafiz.”

 In Palestine, The [Reverend Dr. Johann Ludwig Krapf](#) met Bishop Gobat. He prepared a VOCABULARY OF THE *ENGÚTUK ELOIKOB*, OR OF THE LANGUAGE OF THE *WAKUAFI*-NATION IN THE INTERIOR OF EQUATORIAL AFRICA, and *SALLA SA SUBUCI NA JIONI SASALLIWASO KATIKA KIRIAKI JA KIENGESE SIKU SOTHE SA MUAKA. I.E.: MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS SAID IN THE ENGLISH CHURCH DAILY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. TRANSLATED INTO KISUAHILI BY THE REV^D DR. L. KRAPP*. He challenged the Church Missionary Society to make the grave of his wife and infant daughter, near Mombasa, the starting point for the Christian conversion of East Africa.

When a colony of manumitted Maryland slaves, holding the African coastline between the Grand Cess River and the San Pedro River, declared its independence from the Maryland State Colonization Society, it elected not to become part of the Republic of [Liberia](#).


 The [Reverend William Ingraham Kip](#)'s *THE CATACOMBS OF ROME AS ILLUSTRATING THE CHURCH OF THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES* (Redfield: 110 and 112 Nassau Street, New York).

THE CATACOMBS OF ROME

 [Gregor Mendel](#) received a teaching appointment at the *Oberrealschule* in Brno, where he would successfully teach natural history and physics for the following 16 years. He published his 2d paper, which concerned the beetle *Bruchus pisi*, on crop damage.

[Professor Sir William Jackson Hooker](#)'s *A CENTURY OF FERNS*.

THE PRINCIPLES OF [BOTANY](#), AS EXEMPLIFIED IN THE PHANEROGAMIA; BY [HARLAND COULTAS](#), PROFESSOR OF GENERAL AND MEDICAL BOTANY IN THE PENN MEDICAL UNIVERSITY OF PHILADELPHIA (Philadelphia: King & Baird, Printers, No. 9 Sansom Street).

 Selling his estate “Woodlee,” [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) purchased “Brooklawn,” 3 miles from the center of [New Bedford](#), the estate on which he would build himself a somewhat larger 12X14 board-and-batten unplastered shanty.

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

1853-1854

1853-1854



THE MYRTLE WREATH, OR STRAY LEAVES RECALLED. By *Minnie Myrtle* (New York: Charles Scribner, 145 Nassau St.).




YANKEE COURTSHIP.

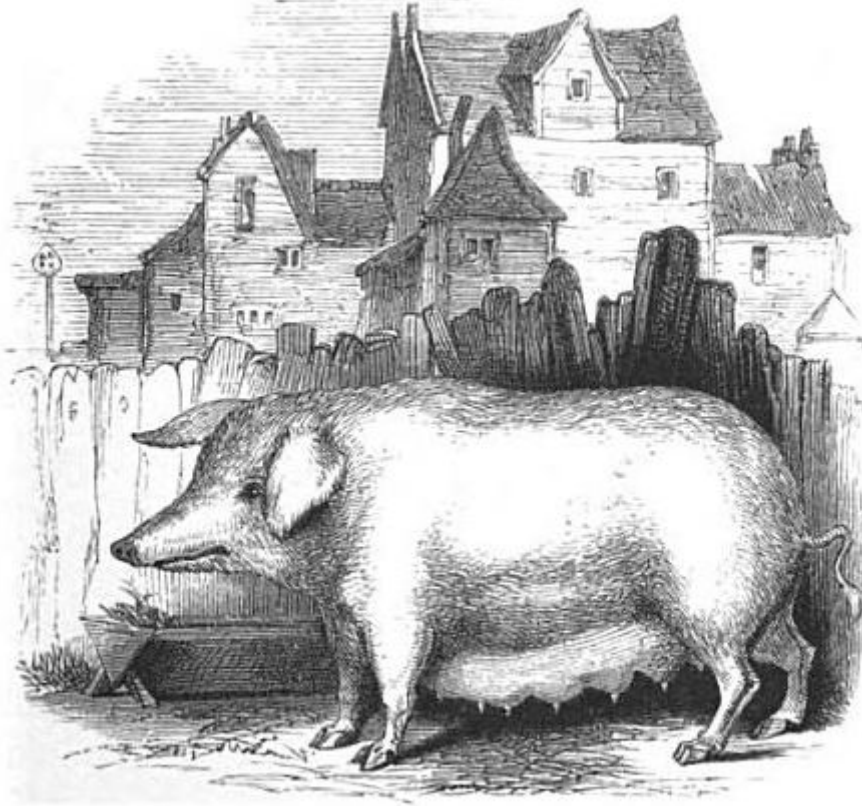
THE MYRTLE WREATH

1853-1854


1853-1854

 [Edward Jesse](#)'s edition of [THE NATURAL HISTORY OF SELBORNE](#); WITH OBSERVATIONS ON VARIOUS PARTS OF NATURE AND THE NATURALISTS CALENDAR / BY THE LATE REV. [GILBERT WHITE](#); WITH ADDITIONS AND SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES BY SIR WILLIAM JARDINE ... WITH FORTY ENGRAVINGS (London: Henry G. Bohn, York Street, Covent Garden), contained a new biography of the reverend.⁶⁰

REVEREND GILBERT WHITE



THE COMMON OR DOMESTIC HOG. (*Sus scrofa*.)

 [Professor George Long](#) edited an ATLAS OF CLASSICAL GEOGRAPHY.



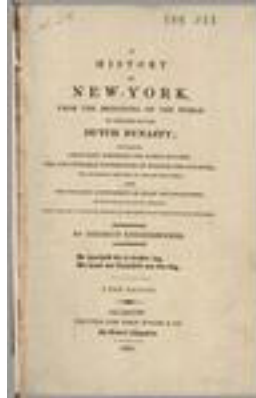
60. The Reverend White's NATURAL HISTORY OF SELBORNE is only the 4th most reprinted book in the English language.



1853-1854

1853-1854

 A new edition of [Washington Irving](#)'s A HISTORY OF [NEW YORK](#), BY "DIEDRICH KNICKERBOCKER."



Poughkeepsie was incorporated as a city.

A steam railroad connected Rochester with Charlotte. The New York Central railroad opened from Rochester to Syracuse. A spur ran to Charlotte.


The final volume of the report of the [New York](#) State Agricultural Department was published.

Henry Larcom Abbot graduated 2d in his class at West Point and was posted to the Topographical Engineers.

Lewiston's Dickersonville Cemetery Association was incorporated.

The [New York](#) State Inebriate Asylum in Binghamton was incorporated, with a 50-year charter.

The US government placed lifeboats on Lake Ontario at the mouth of the Genesee and Niagara rivers, Oswego, Salmon River, Sandy Creek, Sodus, and Tibbetts Point.

 The [Erie Canal](#) was enlarged. A plan was devised to supply water for the [Genesee Valley Canal](#) summit level. The canal reached its peak capacity of 158,942 tons. This year and next the [Chenango Canal](#) carried 14% of all the coal carried on the state's canals.

 [Samuel H. Hammond](#)'s HILLS, LAKES AND FOREST STREAMS: OR, A TRAMP IN THE CHATEAUGAY WOODS (New York: J.C. Derby).



"For myself I prefer the quiet of the country, a ramble along the rivers and brooks, or better still, some wild forest dell, where the birds are merry all the day, and where no unseemly

1853-1854

1853-1854

revelry breaks the stillness of night.”

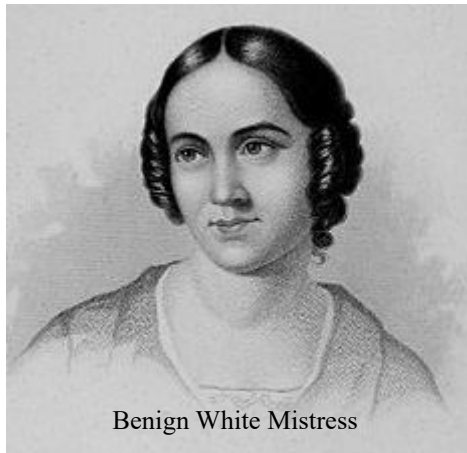
➡ [Isaac-Farwell Holton](#) became a lecturer in Chemistry and Natural History in the College of New Jersey.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

➡ [Professor Robert Hunt](#) was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.



➡ [Mrs. Caroline Lee Hentz](#)'s THE PLANTER'S NORTHERN BRIDE (Philadelphia: T.D. Peterson). The gist of this was that the author, although a personal friend of the misled [Harriet Beecher Stowe](#), had quite a bit more life experience in regard to human slavery. What a crock was her UNCLE TOM'S CABIN! Actual southern white masters *cared* for their black slaves and *watched over* them and *provided for* them. Northern white abolitionists were selfrighteous busybodies and were motivated by a desire for personal gain rather than a desire to benefit humankind. Besides, it would be manifestly wrong to encourage the terror of a slave uprising, and besides, in the “free” North there's a crying need for cheap labor, so there!



Benign White Mistress

... the negroes of the south are the happiest *labouring*

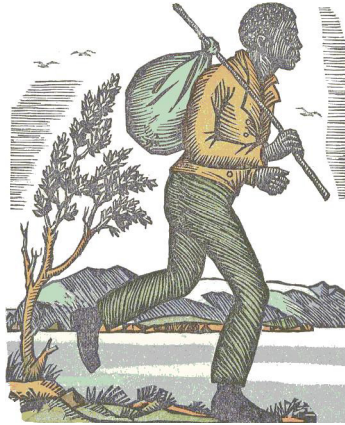
1853-1854

1853-1854


class on the face of the globe.

[Frederick Law Olmsted](#) would write of encountering an escaped US slave during his travels through [Mexico](#). Much to the surprise of white Americans, former slaves were holding their own in their new communities south of the border.

[Bronson Alcott](#) was so perturbed about the capture and return of “fugitive slaves” to the slaveholders of the South that, for the 1st time in his life, he abandoned his posture of complete noncooperation with government, and went to the polls and voted.



 [Heinrich Heine](#)'s *LUTEZIA* and *VERMISCHTE SCHRIFTEN* (VARIOUS WRITINGS).

 [Alexander William Doniphan](#) served a 3d time in the Missouri legislature, as a member of the Whig party.

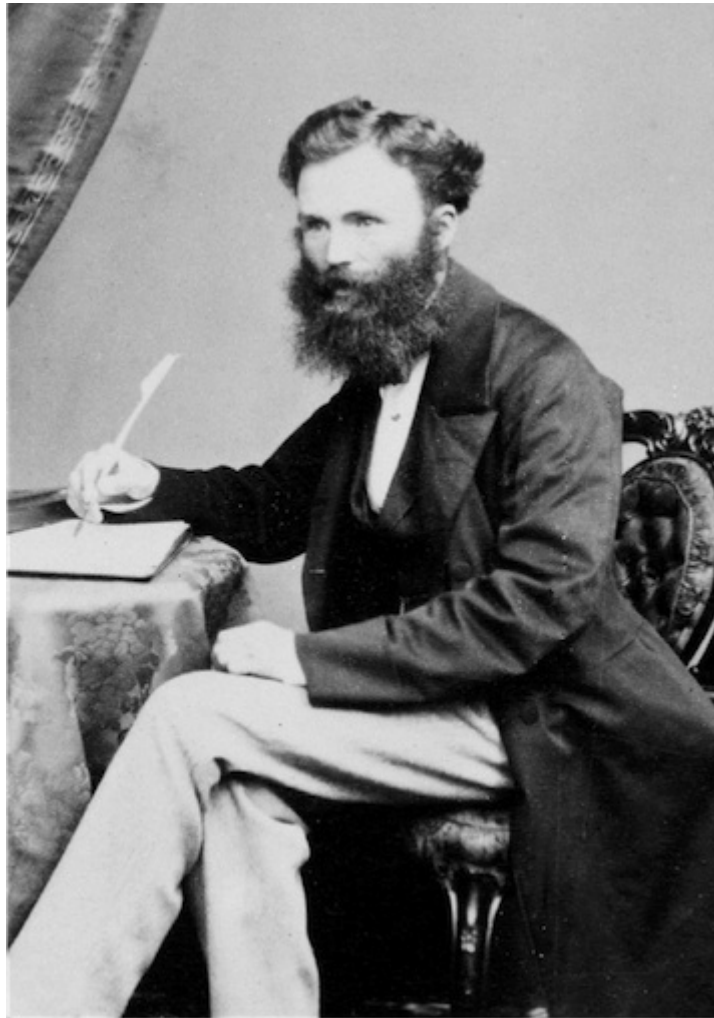
1853-1854

1853-1854



The [Reverend George Gilfillan](#)'s THIRD GALLERY OF LITERARY PORTRAITS (Edinburgh: Hogg).

Completing a year's service as resident physician of the City Cholera Hospital, Edinburgh, [Dr. William Lauder Lindsay](#) became an assistant physician in the Crichton Royal Institution, Dumfries and was then appointed medical officer to Murray's Royal Institution for the Insane at Perth, [Australia](#).



SCOTLAND



Sylvestre de Sacy and Cardinal Dupanloup were elected to the *Académie française*.

[Professor François Pierre Guillaume Guizot](#)'s 2-volume *HISTOIRE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE D'ANGLETERRE ET DE CROMWELL*.

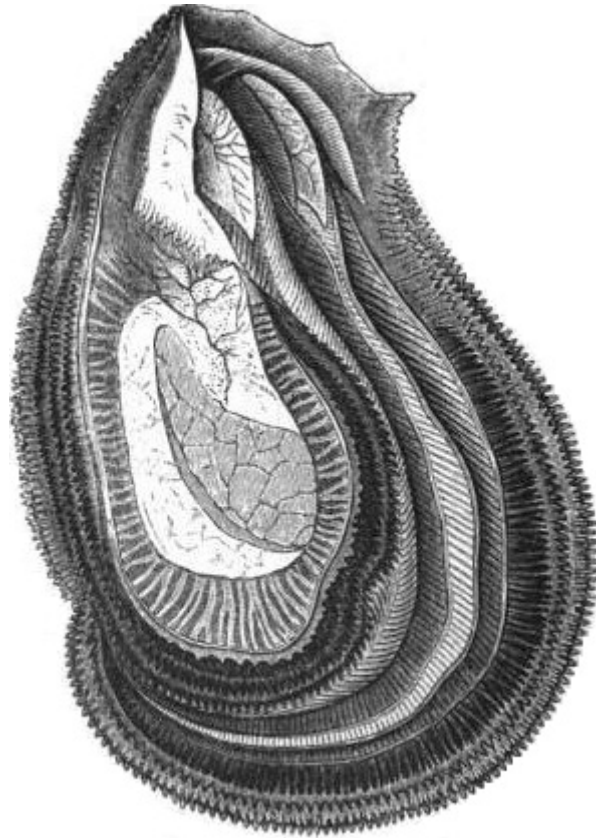


The Reverend [Alexander Dyce](#) contributed biographies of [William Shakespeare](#), Alexander Pope, Akenside, and Beattie to the series PICKERING'S ALDINE POETS.

1853-1854

1853-1854

 [Philip Henry Gosse's NATURAL HISTORY. MOLLUSCA.](#)



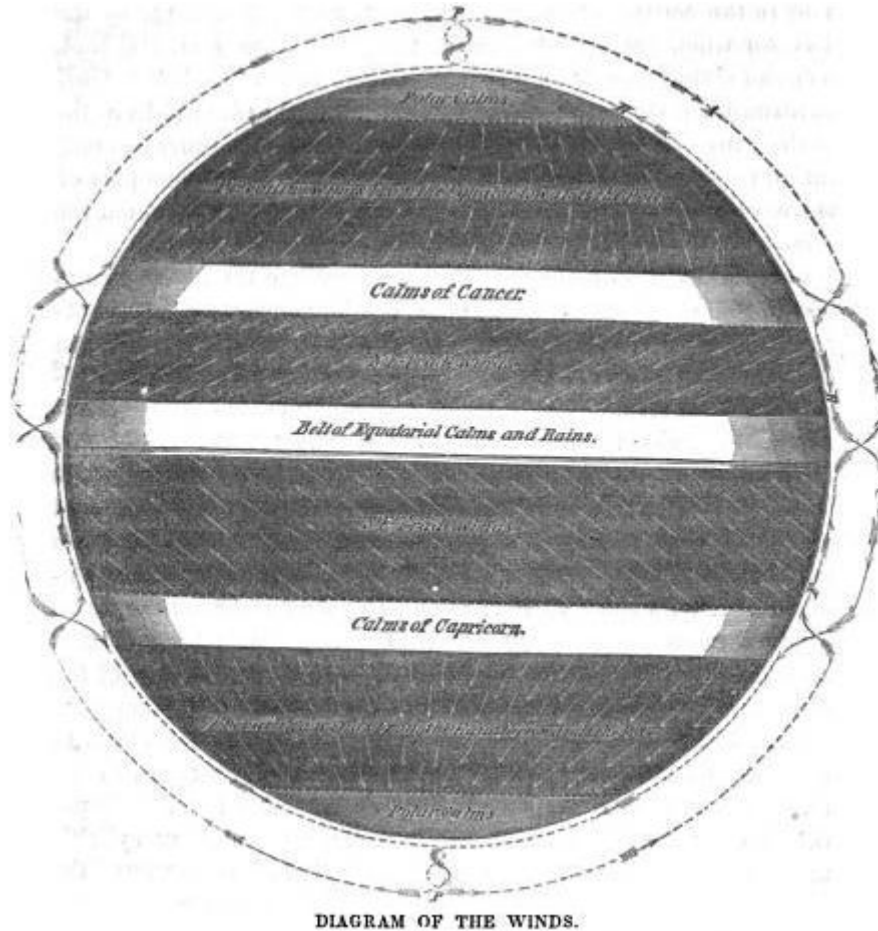
ANIMAL OF THE OYSTER.

NAT. HIST. — MOLLUSCA

1853-1854

1853-1854

→ [Lt. Matthew Fontaine Maury](#)'s *PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE SEA*, the 1st extensive and comprehensive book on oceanography.



→ [Charles Frédéric Girard](#) was naturalized as a citizen of the United States of America. His 4-page article announcement about fish appeared in the *PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOSTON SOCIETY OF NATURAL HISTORY*.

BSNH 1854, PAGES 39-42

→ Massachusetts senator [Winthrop Emerson Faulkner](#), not yet sufficiently self-important, was initiated into the Corinthian Lodge of [Freemasons](#) at [Concord](#), Massachusetts (this was an easy pick, for his daddy had been among the original petitioners for the group's charter).

By this point the [pencil](#) business was no longer working out for Francis Munroe, so he contracted with others for his stock in the company and relocated to Manchester, Vermont, where he would die in 1870.

According to an anonymous undated *ms* in the [Alfred Winslow Hosmer](#) Collection at the Concord Free Public Library:

The story that Thoreau made one pencil and then stopped takes on quite a different aspect in the light [of] investigation into the history of the business. As Henry and his father brought the

1853-1854

1853-1854

lead used for the pencils to a high degree of perfection, it was wanted by a firm in Boston for the stereotype business, and selling it for that purpose was so much more profitable than making pencils that the latter was carried on only as a cover for the other, which it was desirable to keep secret. To keep it a secret, the lead was carried from the mill to the house, and then shipped to Boston from there.



[George Sand](#)'s *HISTOIRE DE MA VIE* (Paris: Victor Lecou, Éditeur, Rue du Bouloi, 10).

Belatedly the grave of [Thomas Hood](#) and Jane Hood in Kensal Green was graced with a stone, inscribed HE SANG THE SONG OF THE SHIRT (the stone neglects to mention any song that might have been sung by the wife).

A bronze statue of [Ebenezer Elliott](#) by Neville Northey Burnard, paid for by the people of Sheffield and Rotherham, was erected in Sheffield marketplace at a cost of £600.



1853-1854

1853-1854

➡ A specimen of *Elliottia racemosa* Muhlenberg ex Elliott, or “Georgia plume,” named in honor of the botanist Stephen Elliott but feared to have been lost because it can be propagated by cuttings but not by seed, was recovered near Hamburg, South Carolina.



➡ Thomas De Quincey moved into town, taking lodgings at 42 Lothian Street in Edinburgh. His “Postscript” to “On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts” appeared in Volume 4 of SELECTIONS GRAVE AND GAY. His friend Professor John Wilson, emeritus of Edinburgh University, died.

In Boston, De Quincey’s THEOLOGICAL ESSAYS AND OTHER PAPERS and the two volumes of his ESSAYS ON PHILOSOPHICAL WRITERS, AND OTHER MEN OF LETTERS came off the presses of Ticknor, Reed, and Fields and wound up in the Concord Town Library, where Henry Thoreau would copy from “The Toilette of the Hebrew Lady” into his Indian Notebook #9 and from “Analects from Richter” into his Commonplace Book #2.

- THEOLOGICAL ESSAYS I
- THEOLOGICAL ESSAYS II
- PHILOSOPHICAL WRITERS I
- PHILOSOPHICAL WRITERS II

➡ Rector George Croly’s most enduring hymn:

Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;
Wean it from earth; through all its pulses move;

1853-1854

1853-1854


Stoop to my weakness, mighty as Thou art;
And make me love Thee as I ought to love.

I ask no dream, no prophet ecstasies,
No sudden rending of the veil of clay,
No angel visitant, no opening skies;
But take the dimness of my soul away.

Teach me to feel that Thou art always nigh;
Teach me the struggles of the soul to bear.
To check the rising doubt, the rebel sigh,
Teach me the patience of unanswered prayer.

Hast Thou not bid me love Thee, God and King?
All, all Thine own, soul, heart and strength and mind.
I see Thy cross; there teach my heart to cling:
O let me seek Thee, and O let me find!


Teach me to love Thee as Thine angels love,
One holy passion filling all my frame;
The kindling of the heaven descended Dove,
My heart an altar, and Thy love the flame.


 [Doctor Walter Channing](#) resigned from the [Harvard College](#) medical faculty.



 A Boston printing of the 3d edition of [Samuel Bailey](#)'s ESSAYS ON THE FORMATION AND PUBLICATION OF OPINIONS.

 George Gilfillan (ed.): THE POETICAL WORKS OF GOLDSMITH, [COLLINS](#), AND T. WARTON, in LIBRARY EDITION OF THE BRITISH POETS.


 [William Carpenter](#) became the editor of the [Sunday Times](#) and the [Bedfordshire Independent](#).

 [Elihu Burritt](#)'s THOUGHTS AND THINGS AT HOME AND ABROAD. WITH A MEMOIR BY MARY HOWITT (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Co.; New York: J.C. Derby). He merged his abolitionist newspaper with a [Quaker](#) periodical promoting a boycott of slavery-produced goods, the [Nonslaveholder](#). This boycott would never sustain itself and by 1856 the enterprise would need to be abandoned.




1853-1854

1853-1854

 [L. Maria Child](#) completed her 3-volume *magnum opus*, THE PROGRESS OF RELIGIOUS IDEAS THROUGH SUCCESSIVE AGES. She intended these volumes to remove “the superstitious rubbish from the sublime morality of Christ” and to provide respectful attention to other world religions. (Despite the immense labor of her research and despite positive reviews this work would not sell well, and the Reverend Thomas Wentworth Higginson would attempt to explain what the problem was: it was “too learned for a popular book and too popular for a learned one.”)

- [PROGRESS OF IDEAS, I](#)
- [PROGRESS OF IDEAS, II](#)
- [PROGRESS OF IDEAS, III](#)

 [Christian C.J. Bunsen](#)'s [CHRISTIANITY](#) AND MANKIND, THEIR BEGINNINGS AND PROSPECTS (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans).⁶¹

- [VOLUME I, HIPPOLYTUS](#)
- [VOLUME II, HIPPOLYTUS](#)
- [VOLUME III, OUTLINES](#)
- [VOLUME IV, OUTLINES](#)
- [VOLUME V, ANALECTA](#)
- [VOLUME VI, ANALECTA](#)
- [VOLUME VII, ANALECTA](#)

 [Orestes Augustus Brownson](#)'s [THE SPIRIT-RAPPER: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY](#).

61. This consists in all of 7 volumes. The initial 2 amount to a 2d edition of the author's treatise on HIPPOLYTUS AND HIS AGE; OR, THE BEGINNINGS AND PROSPECTS OF CHRISTIANITY; the following 2 are made up of his OUTLINES OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF UNIVERSAL HISTORY, APPLIED TO LANGUAGE AND RELIGION: CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THE ALPHABETICAL CONFERENCES; the final 3 are his ANALECTA ANTE-NICÆNA. All 7 of these volumes of Catholic liturgical history would be in the personal library of [Henry Thoreau](#) and in addition, his library would include this author's reconstruction of Egyptian chronology [EGYPT](#)'S PLACE IN UNIVERSAL HISTORY: AN HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION, IN FIVE BOOKS. TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY CHARLES H. COTTRELL, ESQ., M.A. WITH MANY ILLUSTRATIONS (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1848).

- [BUNSEN'S EGYPT, VOL. I](#)
- [BUNSEN'S EGYPT, VOL. II](#)
- [BUNSEN'S EGYPT, VOL. III](#)
- [BUNSEN'S EGYPT, VOL. IV](#)
- [BUNSEN'S EGYPT, VOL. V](#)

1853-1854


1853-1854






1853-1854

1853-1854

 An 11-volume edition of various of the writings of [Professor Dugald Stewart](#) would be being issued from this year into 1858, including the OUTLINES OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY that had originated in 1793, the PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAYS that had originated in 1810, and the PHILOSOPHY OF THE ACTIVE AND MORAL POWERS OF MAN that had originated in 1828.

 [Richard Realf](#), having given up trying to be the lover of Lady Noell Byron, widow of [George Gordon, Lord Byron](#), came to the United States of America due to “instincts” which he characterized as “democratic and republican, or, at least, anti-monarchical.” Initially he would explore the slums of [New-York](#), become a [Five Points](#) missionary, and assist in establishing in that slum environment a course of cheap lectures and a self-improvement association.

While touring the South as a special correspondent of the [New-York Times](#), Frederick Law Olmsted visited a German community near Neu-Braunfels.

When no hospital in [New-York](#) would accept a female physician on its staff, Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell opened a clinic and dispensary on East 7th Street (now honored in Beth Israel Medical Center at Stuyvesant Square East and 15th Street) that would provide the poor and sick with the services of “medical practitioners [*sic*] of either sex.”

The Free Academy of [New-York](#) (later City College) at this point had 14 instructors and 600 students. 11,000 students were attending night classes. The municipality had a total of 224 public schools with 133,831 students enrolled, and of these public schools, 25 were for blacks and 199 were for whites.

Word came to several [New-York](#) newspapers that Daniel Sickles, first secretary to the US legation in London, had been able to introduce his mistress, [New-York](#) madame Fanny White, to [Queen Victoria](#).

In [New-York](#), the opening of the Academy of Music at 14th St. and Irving Place.

 [Sir David Brewster FRS](#)'s MORE WORLDS THAN ONE.

HDT

WHAT?

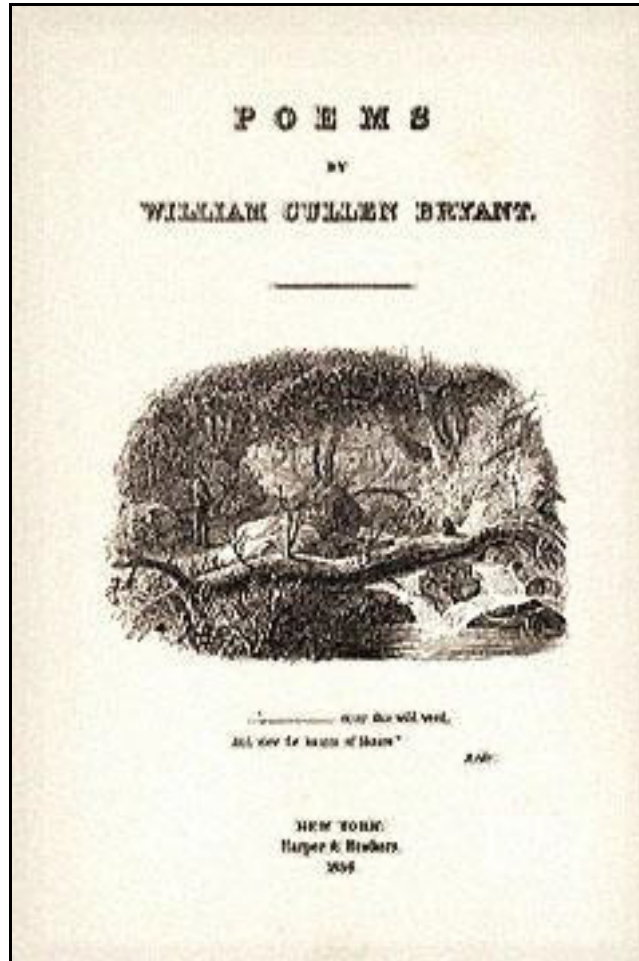
INDEX

1853-1854

1853-1854



Publication of a new collection of [William Cullen Bryant](#)'s poems.



A memoir of the Reverend [Alexander Young](#), DD by the Reverend Chandler Robbins, DD appeared in COLLECTIONS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY (4th Series, Volume 2).

REV. ALEXANDER YOUNG

Volume the 6th of [George Bancroft](#)'s A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES, FROM THE DISCOVERY OF THE AMERICAN CONTINENT.

BANCROFT'S US, VI

The HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES FROM THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA TO THE INAUGURATION OF WASHINGTON is treated by Bancroft in three parts. The first, Colonial History from 1492 to 1748, occupies more than one fourth of his pages. The second part, the American Revolution, 1748 to 1782, claims more than one half of the entire work, and is divided into four epochs: — the first, 1748-1763, is entitled THE OVERTHROW OF THE EUROPEAN COLONIAL SYSTEM; the second, 1763-1774, HOW GREAT BRITAIN ESTRANGED AMERICA; the third, 1774-1776, AMERICA DECLARES ITSELF INDEPENDENT; the fourth, 1776-1782, THE INDEPENDENCE OF AMERICA IS ACKNOWLEDGED. The last part, THE HISTORY OF

1853-1854

1853-1854


THE FORMATION OF THE CONSTITUTION, 1782-1789, though published as a separate work, is essentially a continuation of the History proper, of which it forms in bulk rather more than one tenth.... (Austin Scott)




"The critic's joking comment that Bancroft wrote American history as if it were the history of the Kingdom of Heaven, had a trifle of truth in it."


— [Russel Blaine Nye](#)




 John Maclean, Jr. was installed as the 10th president of the College of New-Jersey.


[PRINCETON UNIVERSITY](#)

 [Francis Galton](#), who had been awarded the Annual Gold Medal of the Royal Geographical Society, was elected to that Society's council.

 In [New-York](#), an Englishman named Harry Hill opens a concert saloon at 25 East Houston Street. Although prizefights were illegal in New York, Harry Hill's nightly entertainments included boxing and wrestling acts. His pugilists were usually male — both William Muldoon and John L. Sullivan started at Harry Hill's — but could be female. In 1876, for instance, Nell Saunders would box (and beat) Rose Harland for the prize of a silver butter dish. A drawing published in the National Police Gazette on November 22d, 1879, would reveal Harry Hill's female boxers as wearing T-shirts, knickers, and buttoned shoes, while displaying a scandalous quantity of arm and thigh. Harry Hill's had a main entrance for men, paying 25¢ for admission, but it also had a side door for women, paying nothing for admission. Hill's drinks were overpriced and his air was a toxic miasma of tobacco smoke. Other than that this was a respectable house and the boxers, circulating through the throng, kept it that way (reform politicians would finally compel Harry Hill's to close, in 1886).

 Lieutenant [Charles Henry Davis](#) was promoted to Commander and given the command of the *USS St. Mary's*, an older sailing vessel that had once upon a time been one of the fastest warships.⁶²



 Williams, Stevens, Williams & Company, art dealers on Broadway Avenue in Manhattan, crafted an exceedingly fine lithographic representation of "Uncle Sam's youngest son, Citizen [Know Nothing](#)" (see following screen).

62. The vessel had seen service in the war on Mexico and had been one of the "black ships" with which Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) had forced the opening up of [Japan](#) in 1850.

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

1853-1854

1853-1854



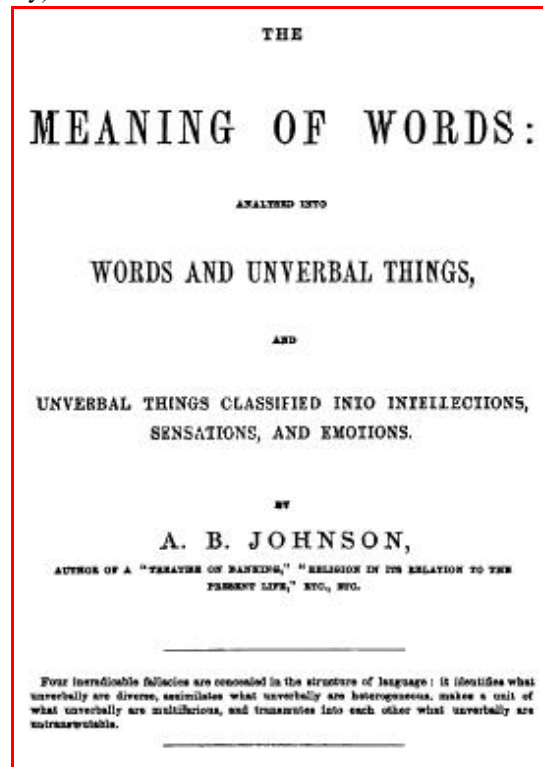


1853-1854

1853-1854

➡ [William Allingham](#)'s PEACE AND WAR (London: G. Routledge). Also, in this year, from the same publisher, his DAY AND NIGHT SONGS, illustrated by his friend [Dante Gabriel Rossetti](#). He moved from [Ireland](#) to London with the intention of finding work in literary journalism.

➡ The 1st edition of [Alexander Bryan Johnson](#)'s THE MEANING OF WORDS ANALYSED INTO WORDS AND UNVERBAL THINGS, AND UNVERBAL THINGS CLASSIFIED INTO INTELLECTIONS, SENSATIONS, AND EMOTIONS (D. Appleton and Company).



➡ [Edmond François Valentin About](#)'s *L'ÎLE D'ÉGINE*.

➡ [Lydia Howard Huntley Sigourney](#)'s PAST MERIDIAN.

➡ In this year the Massachusetts legislature granted property rights to women.

FEMINISM

From this year until sometime in 1857, the Robinson family would be renting the “Texas House” of the Thoreaus on Belknap Street in [Concord](#). After [Mrs. William Stevens Robinson](#) ([Harriet Hanson Robinson](#)) would move to Malden she would have some acerbic memories to relate:

Concord is a very nice place.... But it is a dull old place. It is a narrow old place. It is a set old place. It is a snobbish old place. It is an old place full of Antideluvian people and manners.... The leaves never shake on the trees and the children never cry in the streets.... The women never go out, and the

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**1853-1854****1853-1854**


streets are full of stagnation. It was so still that walking up and down its streets filled me with horror. I used to feel that I must jump up and holler, or do something desperate to make a stir. A good place to be born & buried, but a terrible, wearing place for one to live.



Oh dear me, I am surrounded by dreariness and ineptitude.

1853-1854

1853-1854

 Samuel Peck patented a case molded out of shellac and sawdust for such glassed photos, called the “Union” case.⁶³ Also, in this year, James “Ambrose” Cutting of Boston patented a technique for sealing the “Ambrotype,” so called, within a glass cover plate with Canada balsam, a resin.

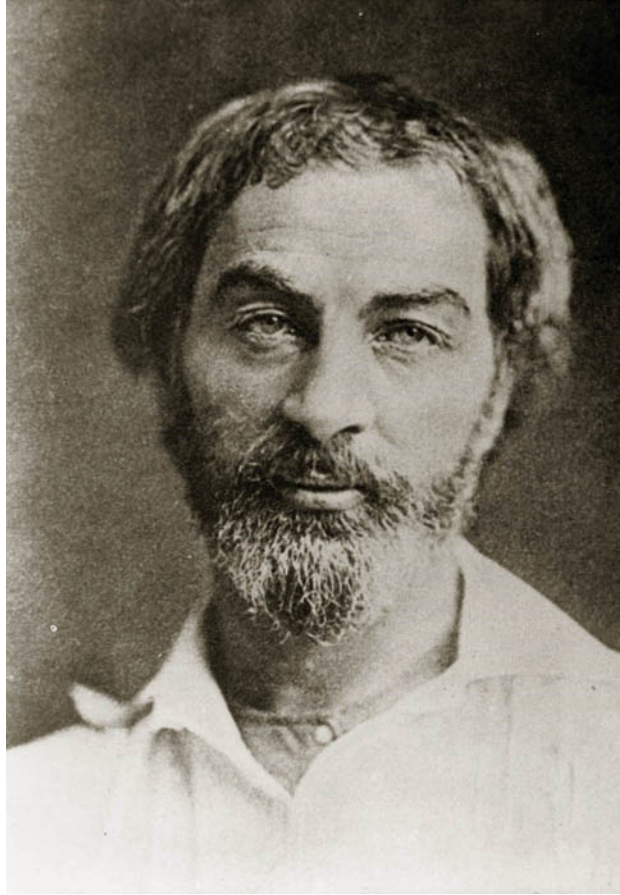
PHOTOGRAPHY

Daguerreotype	direct positive, reversed image	mirrorlike surface shifts from positive to negative as you tilt it	August 19, 1839- <i>circa</i> 1860
Ambrotype	direct positive, reversed image	pry the sheets apart and shine a light through from the back to verify that the image is negative	1855-<i>circa</i> 1865
<i>Carte de Visite</i>	non-reversed image	wedding band is on the proper hand, you can read the titles of books, and clothing is buttoned properly for each gender	1854-<i>circa</i> 1925
“Tintype” (Ferrotpe)	direct positive, reversed image	The metal is attracted to a magnet and there is no mirror appearance	1856-<i>circa</i> 1945

⁶³ These cases were sometimes referred to, incorrectly, as *gutta-perchas*, since that plasticky material had become commercially available in about 1844.

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**1853-1854****1853-1854**

In or about this year an image was made of [Walt Whitman](#), probably by Gabriel Harrison in New-York.



Can you tell that this is a quarter-plate Daguerreotype?

[Walt Whitman](#) would reminisce about this period from 1852 to 1854, in the Camden Post for April 16, 1891:

“Memoranda”

Occupied in house-building in Brooklyn. (For a little while of the first part of that time in printing a daily and weekly paper.)




Formation of the London Stereoscopic Company, with its motto “A stereoscope in every home.”

During the next two years the catalog of available images would increase by one order of magnitude, to 100,000, and some 500,000 such viewers for these images would in fact be placed in some 500,000 homes. You’ve probably seen one on your aunt’s parlor table.

[PHOTOGRAPHY](#)

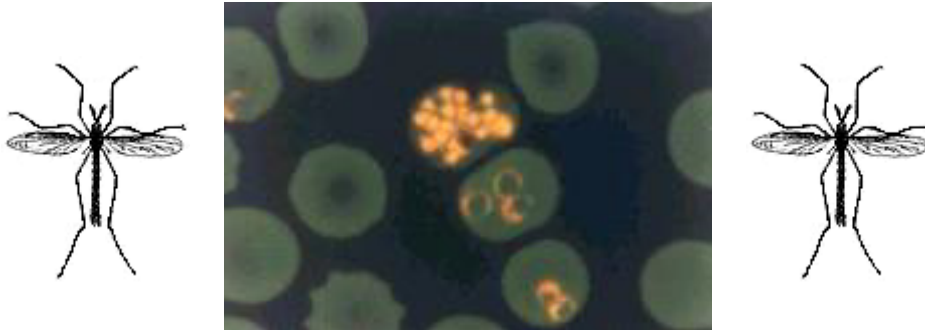
1853-1854

1853-1854

 Charles Pickering Gerrish, son of a [Concord](#) teacher, graduated from [Harvard College](#). He would become a merchant.

NEW "HARVARD MEN"

In 1796, Dr. John Crawford had written a series of reports contradicting the bad-air theory "[malaria](#)," asserting that the illness that went under that name was not being occasioned by the nature of the air of marshes and swamps but instead by tiny "eggs insinuated, without our knowledge, into our bodies" during mosquito bites, tiny eggs that were hatching within the puncture and migrating through the host's body, and were producing the manifestations of the disease.



This notion had been considered so entirely absurd, by Dr. Crawford's American contemporaries, that the local medical journals summarily rejected all Dr. Crawford's articles. He was disparaged so vehemently that his medical practice began to suffer, and so he desisted from this effort. We had lost, for fully half a century, an opportunity to deal with this disease. However, in this year Lewis Daniel Beaupterthy, a "traveling naturalist," published a theory that malaria, and the [yellow fever](#) (or [black vomit](#)) as well, were being "produced by venomous fluid injected under the skin by mosquitoes like poison injected by snakes," that marshes and swamps were made treacherous not by their miasmatic vapors, but by the mosquitoes that proliferated within them.



WALDEN: It is the luxurious and dissipated who set the fashions which the herd so diligently follow. The traveller who stops at the best houses, so called, soon discovers this, for the publicans presume him to be a Sardanapalus, and if he resigned himself to their tender mercies he would soon be completely emasculated. I think that in the railroad car we are inclined to spend more on luxury than on safety and convenience, and it threatens without attaining these to become no better than a modern drawing room, with its divans, and ottomans, and sunshades, and a hundred other oriental things, which we are taking west with us, invented for the ladies of the harem and the effeminate natives of the Celestial Empire, which Jonathan should be ashamed to know the names of. I would rather sit on a pumpkin and have it all to myself, than be crowded on a velvet cushion. I would rather ride on earth in an ox cart with a free circulation, than go to heaven in the fancy car of an excursion train and breathe a *malaria* all the way.

PEOPLE OF WALDEN



SARDANAPALUS
"JONATHAN"



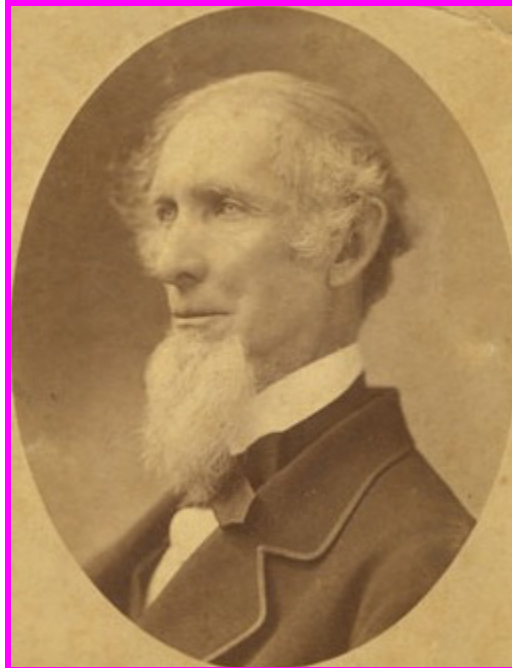
1853-1854

1853-1854

1853-1854

1853-1854

[Dr. Josiah Clark Nott](#) would come to embrace this theory, and eventually would be credited as among the 1st to apply the insect vector theory to [yellow fever](#).



THE SCIENCE OF 1854

[Dr. Josiah Clark Nott](#), [George Robins Gliddon](#), and Louis Ferdinand Alfred Maury's INDIGENOUS RACES OF THE EARTH; OR, NEW CHAPTERS OF ETHNOLOGICAL INQUIRY; INCLUDING MONOGRAPHS ON SPECIAL DEPARTMENTS.

Few of the scientists of [Professor Samuel George Morton](#)'s day would have challenged his thesis that the race concept is a physical reality, or his assumption that cranial volume was a prime indicator of human mental capability or intelligence.

1853-1854

1853-1854



Samuel George Morton

In this year such views were incorporated, for instance, into [Dr. Josiah Clark Nott](#)'s and the former diplomat [George Robins Gliddon](#)'s textbook *TYPES OF MANKIND: OR, ETHNOLOGICAL RESEARCHES, BASED UPON THE ANCIENT MONUMENTS, PAINTINGS, SCULPTURES, AND CRANIA OF RACES, AND UPON THEIR NATURAL, GEOGRAPHICAL, PHILOLOGICAL, AND BIBLICAL HISTORY: ILLUSTRATED BY SELECTIONS FROM THE INEDITED PAPERS OF SAMUEL GEORGE MORTON, M.D., (LATE PRESIDENT OF THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES AT PHILADELPHIA,) AND BY ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PROF. L. AGASSIZ, LL.D., W. USHER, M.D.; AND PROF. H.S. PATTERSON, M.D. (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Co.; London: Trübner & Co.)*, which would go through ten editions offering the unaltering scientific knowledge that the mental superiority of the white man over the colored man was a proven fact. The “Negro-Races” had “ever been *Servants* and *slaves*.”

TYPES OF MANKIND

The book in fact incorporates a letter from Professor [Louis Agassiz](#) of [Harvard](#), who supported such a view without any qualification whatever. The book asserts as an unchallengeable scientific finding that the Negro can exist alongside the white race only as a tributary either in name or in fact. The book quite ignores in all its editions [Frederick Douglass](#), who, in one of his speeches during this year, in no uncertain terms denounced it: “Perhaps, of all the attempts ever made to disprove the unity of the human family, and to brand the negro with natural inferiority, the most compendious and barefaced is the book, entitled *TYPES OF MANKIND*, by Nott and Glidden [*sic*].”⁶⁴

In “Sketch of the Natural Provinces of the Animal World and Their Relation to the Different Types of Man” Professor [Agassiz](#) argued that the distinct human types, in effect distinguishable species, having developed under differing conditions in different regions of the globe, could only degenerate when taken out of these

64. And guess what? Subsequent developments have demonstrated that [Douglass](#) the nonscientist was right, and the scientists were wrong — and not merely on moral but on strictly evidentiary grounds!




1853-1854

1853-1854

environments to which they had accommodated.⁶⁵

But race is a very great reality.... Any analysis of a great creative period ... must have this chaotic spot in its centre: the incalculable fact of racial intermixture. — Percy Wyndham Lewis, *THE LION AND THE FOX: THE ROLE OF THE HERO IN THE PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE* (London: Methuen, 1951 [1927], page 298)


RACISM


Today's reviewer of the evidences marshalled in this volume may marvel at the easy manner in which the authors interpolated their own views inside the context of quotations ostensibly from the work of others. Certain of the "quotations" placed between the covers of this work are said now to have been "half made-up." Clearly, from the standpoint of Nott and Gliddon, there was more at stake here than mere accuracy. In the introduction to this textbook, on page 49, Nott and Gliddon indicated that their understanding of this new science ethnology was that it was not only to pose, but also to provide a definitive answer for, the \$64,000 question of who had to do whose laundry, "what position in the social scale Providence has assigned to each type of man?"⁶⁶ Although this was a quite expensive volume, by 1871  it would have gone through fully ten editions. This scientific treatise declared that

We have had too much of sentimentalism about the Red-man. It is time that cant was stopped now.

Also, this detailed scientific argument for the separate creation of the differing human races and the inherent inalienable superiority of some of these races over other of these races pointed out, by "supplanting inferior types" the Caucasian race rather than incurring shame and guilt would be merely "fulfilling a law of nature."

EVOLUTIONARY ETHICS

 For a decade, Dr. [Benjamin Barrett](#) would be serving as treasurer of the [Northampton](#) Savings Bank.

 Frances Gulick (Jewett) was born to missionary parents in Micronesia.

65. As another conservative biologist, Garret Hardin, would be commenting, a weed is a plant that is out of place. Refer to Stepan, Nancy, "Biological Degeneration: Races and Proper Places," in J. Edward Chamberlain and Sander L. Gilman, *DEGENERATION: THE DARK SIDE OF PROGRESS* (NY: Columbia UP, 1985, page 98-104).

66. Nott's attitude was that "The time must come when the blacks will be worse than useless to us. What then? [Emancipation](#) must follow, which, from the lights before us, is but another name for extermination."

1853-1854

1853-1854

➡ Printing of Joshua Victor Hopkins Clark’s LIGHTS AND LINES OF INDIAN CHARACTER. This amateur local historian Clark (1803-1869) averred that his “Indian Legends have been carefully gathered from the oral registers of the last hoary chiefs of a perishing race. The Pioneer Tales and Anecdotes are from the lips of those aged men of a past generation, many of whom have long since passed away, and their few surviving companions....” –In other words “Don’t bother to check my sources for these native informants are unavailable.” (Nothing being too good for us, this crowd-pleaser would be reissued in 1860 in New-York by Derby & Jackson as INDIAN CAMP-FIRES, AND HUNTING GROUNDS OF THE RED MEN; OR, LIGHTS AND LINES OF INDIAN CHARACTER.) In this volume we may note that there are two-count-’em-two illustrated plates, and both these colored plates depict brutal redskins caught in the act of slaughtering decent white folks!




➡ In this year [Robert Chambers](#) published THINGS AS THEY ARE IN AMERICA, a book of excerpts from his Edinburgh Journal.

VIEW THE PAGE IMAGES

➡ The SOUTHERN HARMONY hymnal attributed the tune “New Britain” –which eventually we would be using for our “Amazing Grace”– to the BAPTIST HARMONY, a collection in the American shape-note tradition.

1853-1854

1853-1854

 Father Bernard Flood began regular [Catholic](#) masses in [Concord](#) (he would, however, be in the area only temporarily).



The American (AKA [Know-Nothing](#)) Party, an anti-immigrant, [anti-Catholic](#), anti-slavery party, ran in opposition to the Whig party and obtained an election landslide in Massachusetts, receiving more votes than the Whigs, Democrats, National (pro-slavery) Democrats, and Free-Soilers all put together, putting into office their entire state ticket and seizing every seat in the Federal legislature that was open.



"To understand is not to forgive. It is only to understand. It is not an end but a beginning."

— [Rebecca West](#)



However, Simon Brown of [Concord](#), himself not much of a bigot, managed to get himself elected Lieutenant-Governor as part of this slate — and then as the political climate would gradually become less inflamed he would gradually come out of the closet, as an abolitionist.

Dr. [Edward Jarvis](#) was appointed by the Governor of Massachusetts to the Lunacy Commission, to study the insane population of the state.



1853-1854

1853-1854



[Robert Collyer](#)'s young son Samuel Collyer, whom he had left behind in Leeds, England in the care of his grandmother, at this point was summoned to [Philadelphia](#).


[Philadelphia](#) became the first major city to issue revolvers to policemen (for the following six decades it would refrain from providing them with any training in the use of such weapons).

A fulltime schoolteacher was hired for the [Eastern State Penitentiary](#) in [Philadelphia](#).

The University of [Pennsylvania](#) appointed [Professor Joseph Leidy](#) as its delegate to the American Medical Association at St. Louis, Missouri.

1853-1854

1853-1854

 [Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevski](#) completed his 4-year sentence to penal servitude at Omsk in western Siberia and began a 5-year period of compulsory military service in the [Russian](#) army at Semipalatinsk in southwest Siberia.




The war correspondent of [The Times of London](#), Billy Russell, witnessing incompetence in the British Army's logistical and medical procedures, inquired of his editor "Am I to tell, or am I to hold my tongue?" Encouraged by this editor, he would file a series of dispatches that would topple the British government and lead to reform of the press laws. At Balaklava just south of Sevastopol in the [Crimea](#) in this year, General Sir Colin Campbell confronted his infantry line, preventing them from dashing after a retreating Russian hussar regiment by crying out "Damn all that eagerness!" However, nearby, Lieutenant General James Thomas Brudenell, 7th Earl of Cardigan ordered the light cavalry to charge. French Marshal Pierre Bosquet would comment about that day's action "*C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre. C'est de la folie.*"

[Adam Gurowski](#) had been on the editorial staff of [Horace Greeley's New-York Tribune](#), writing articles favorable to the Russian cause in the Crimean War. His [RUSSIA AS IT IS](#) and [THE TURKISH QUESTION](#) (New York: William Taylor & Company, No. 18 Ann Street).

RUSSIA AS IT IS

THE TURKISH QUESTION


 There was a [comet](#) during this year, with an orbit similar to the one that had appeared in 1677.⁶⁷

SKY EVENT

67. "GREAT COMET, (C/1854 F1=1854 II). Period of naked eye visibility extended from Mar. 23 until mid-Apr., T=1854 March 24. Relatively short-lived object. Discovered in the morning twilight of March 23 as an object of zero to 1st magnitude. Located in southern Pegasus. Moved to conjunction with the Sun, passing well north of it on March 27, and entering the evening sky. At the very end of the month situated in Pisces, of 1st magnitude with a 5 degree tail. Traversed Aries during the first week of April, fading rapidly from 2nd to about 4th magnitude but tail still spanned up to 5 degrees. In mid April, while crossing southern Taurus, near the limit of naked eye visibility with a 1 degree tail."

1853-1854

1853-1854

 In England, an English laborer accused of criminal actions during the full and new moons, Charles Hyde, defended himself in court by arguing that he was not responsible for acts of “lunacy,” that is, for acts caused not by himself but by the mandate of the heavens. The court was distinctly not impressed by this early version of what is now referred to as “the twinkie defense” and packed this defendant off to prison to protect him for the foreseeable future from the direct influence of the rays of the moon, but a writer named [Robert Louis Stevenson](#) would be impressed enough to use his ingenious apology as the basis for a story, “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.”




Phases of the Moon

-  The New Moon
-  The Waxing Crescent
-  The First Quarter
-  The Gibbous Moon
-  The Full Moon
-  The Gibbous Moon
-  The Last Quarter
-  The Waning Crescent


1853-1854


1853-1854


 [George William Curtis](#) became the author of a “The Easy Chair” column in [Harper’s Monthly Magazine](#). He published an essay about [Waldo Emerson](#) (this would be reprinted in 1895 in his [LITERARY AND SOCIAL ESSAYS](#)).



He received the honorary degree of AM from [Brown University](#).

 [George William Curtis](#) published an essay about [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#). (this would be reprinted in 1895 in Curtis’s [LITERARY AND SOCIAL ESSAYS](#)).

 The [negrero Glamorgan](#), of [New-York](#), was captured while about to embark nearly 700 [slaves](#) (SENATE EXECUTIVE DOCUMENT, 34th Congress, 1st session XV, Number 99, pages 59-60).

The  [negrero Grey Eagle](#), of [Philadelphia](#), was captured off [Cuba](#) by a British cruiser (SENATE EXECUTIVE DOCUMENT, 34th Congress, 1st session XV, Number 99, pages 61-3).

The [negrero Peerless](#), of [New-York](#), landed 350 [slaves](#) in [Cuba](#) (SENATE EXECUTIVE DOCUMENT, 34th Congress, 1st session XV, Number 99, page 66).

The [negrero Oregon](#), of [New Orleans](#), was known to be trading to [Cuba](#) (SENATE EXECUTIVE DOCUMENT, 34th Congress, 1st session XV, Number 99, pages 69-70).

INTERNATIONAL SLAVE TRADE

[W.E. Burghardt Du Bois](#): A somewhat more sincere and determined effort to enforce the slave-trade laws now followed; and yet it is a significant fact that not until Lincoln’s administration did a slave-trader suffer death for violating the laws of the United States. The participation of Americans in the trade continued, declining somewhat between 1825 and 1830, and then reviving, until it reached its highest activity between 1840 and 1860. The development of a vast internal slave-trade, and the consequent rise in the South of vested interests strongly opposed to slave smuggling, led to a falling off in the illicit introduction of Negroes after 1825, until the fifties;

1853-1854

1853-1854

nevertheless, smuggling never entirely ceased, and large numbers were thus added to the plantations of the Gulf States.

Monroe had various constitutional scruples as to the execution of the Act of 1819;⁶⁸ but, as Congress took no action, he at last put a fair interpretation on his powers, and appointed Samuel Bacon as an agent in Africa to form a settlement for recaptured Africans. Gradually the agency thus formed became merged with that of the Colonization Society on Cape Mesurado; and from this union [Liberia](#) was finally evolved.⁶⁹

Meantime, during the years 1818 to 1820, the activity of the slave-traders was prodigious. General James Tallmadge declared in the House, February 15, 1819: "Our laws are already highly penal against their introduction, and yet, it is a well known fact, that about fourteen thousand slaves have been brought into our country this last year."⁷⁰ In the same year Middleton of South Carolina and Wright of Virginia estimated illicit introduction at 13,000 and 15,000 respectively.⁷¹ Judge Story, in charging a jury, took occasion to say: "We have but too many proofs from unquestionable sources, that it [the slave-trade] is still carried on with all the implacable rapacity of former times. Avarice has grown more subtle in its evasions, and watches and seizes its prey with an appetite quickened rather than suppressed by its guilty vigils. American citizens are steeped to their very mouths (I can hardly use too bold a figure) in this stream of iniquity."⁷² The following year, 1820, brought some significant statements from various members of Congress. Said Smith of South Carolina: "Pharaoh was, for his temerity, drowned in the Red Sea, in pursuing them [the Israelites] contrary to God's express will; but our Northern friends have not been afraid even of that, in their zeal to furnish the Southern States with Africans. They are better seamen than Pharaoh, and calculate by that means to elude the vigilance of Heaven; which they seem to disregard, if they can but elude the violated laws of their country."⁷³ As late as May he saw little hope of suppressing the traffic.⁷⁴ Sergeant of Pennsylvania declared: "It is notorious that, in spite of the utmost vigilance that can be employed, African negroes are clandestinely brought in and sold as slaves."⁷⁵ Plumer of New Hampshire stated that "of the unhappy beings, thus in violation of all laws transported to our shores, and thrown by force into the mass of our black population, scarcely one in a hundred is ever detected by the officers of the General Government, in a part of the country, where, if we are to believe the statement of Governor Rabun, 'an officer who would perform his duty, by attempting to enforce the law [against the slave trade] is, by

68. Attorney-General Wirt advised him, October, 1819, that no part of the appropriation could be used to purchase land in Africa or tools for the Negroes, or as salary for the agent: OPINIONS OF ATTORNEYS-GENERAL, I. 314-7. Monroe laid the case before Congress in a special message Dec. 20, 1819 (HOUSE JOURNAL, 16th Congress 1st session, page 57); but no action was taken there.

69. Cf. Kendall's Report, August, 1830: SENATE DOCUMENT, 21st Congress 2d session, I. No. 1, pages 211-8; also see below, Chapter X.

70. Speech in the House of Representatives, Feb. 15, 1819, page 18; published in Boston, 1849.

71. Jay, INQUIRY INTO AMERICAN COLONIZATION (1838), page 59, note.

72. Quoted in Friends' FACTS AND OBSERVATIONS ON THE SLAVE TRADE (ed. 1841), pages 7-8.

73. ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 16th Congress 1st session, pages 270-1.

74. ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 16th Congress 1st session, page 698.

75. ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 16th Congress 1st session, page 1207.

1853-1854

1853-1854

many, considered as an officious meddler, and treated with derision and contempt;' ... I have been told by a gentleman, who has attended particularly to this subject, that ten thousand slaves were in one year smuggled into the United States; and that, even for the last year, we must count the number not by hundreds, but by thousands."⁷⁶ In 1821 a committee of Congress characterized prevailing methods as those "of the grossest fraud that could be practised to deceive the officers of government."⁷⁷ Another committee, in 1822, after a careful examination of the subject, declare that they "find it impossible to measure with precision the effect produced upon the American branch of the slave trade by the laws above mentioned, and the seizures under them. They are unable to state, whether those American merchants, the American capital and seamen which heretofore aided in this traffic, have abandoned it altogether, or have sought shelter under the flags of other nations." They then state the suspicious circumstance that, with the disappearance of the American flag from the traffic, "the trade, notwithstanding, increases annually, under the flags of other nations." They complain of the spasmodic efforts of the executive. They say that the first United States cruiser arrived on the African coast in March, 1820, and remained a "few weeks;" that since then four others had in two years made five visits in all; but "since the middle of last November, the commencement of the healthy season on that coast, no vessel has been, nor, as your committee is informed, is, under orders for that service."⁷⁸ The United States African agent, Ayres, reported in 1823: "I was informed by an American officer who had been on the coast in 1820, that he had boarded 20 American vessels in one morning, lying in the port of Gallinas, and fitted for the reception of slaves. It is a lamentable fact, that most of the harbours, between the Senegal and the line, were visited by an equal number of American vessels, and for the sole purpose of carrying away slaves. Although for some years the coast had been occasionally visited by our cruisers, their short stay and seldom appearance had made but slight impression on those traders, rendered hardy by repetition of crime, and avaricious by excessive gain. They were enabled by a regular system to gain intelligence of any cruiser being on the coast."⁷⁹

Even such spasmodic efforts bore abundant fruit, and indicated what vigorous measures might have accomplished. Between May, 1818, and November, 1821, nearly six hundred Africans were recaptured and eleven American slavers taken.⁸⁰ Such measures gradually changed the character of the trade, and opened the international phase of the question. American slavers cleared

76. ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 16th Congress 1st session, page 1433.

77. Referring particularly to the case of the slaver "Plattsburg." Cf. HOUSE REPORTS, 17th Congress 1st session, II. No. 92, page 10.

78. HOUSE REPORTS, 17th Congress 1st session, II. No. 92, page 2. The President had in his message spoken in exhilarating tones of the success of the government in suppressing the trade. The House Committee appointed in pursuance of this passage made the above report. Their conclusions are confirmed by British reports: PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS, 1822, Vol. XXII., SLAVE TRADE, Further Papers, III. page 44. So, too, in 1823, Ashmun, the African agent, reports that thousands of slaves are being abducted.

79. Ayres to the Secretary of the Navy, Feb. 24, 1823; reprinted in FRIENDS' VIEW OF THE AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE (1824), page 31.

80. HOUSE REPORTS, 17th Congress 1st session, II. No. 92, pages 5-6. The slavers were the "Ramirez," "Endymion," "Esperanza," "Plattsburg," "Science," "Alexander," "Eugene," "Mathilde," "Daphne," "Eliza," and "La Pensée." In these 573 Africans were taken. The naval officers were greatly handicapped by the size of the ships, etc. (cf. FRIENDS' VIEW OF THE AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE (1824), pages 33-41). They nevertheless acted with great zeal.



1853-1854

1853-1854

for foreign ports, there took a foreign flag and papers, and then sailed boldly past American cruisers, although their real character was often well known. More stringent clearance laws and consular instructions might have greatly reduced this practice; but nothing was ever done, and gradually the laws became in large measure powerless to deal with the bulk of the illicit trade. In 1820, September 16, a British officer, in his official report, declares that, in spite of United States laws, "American vessels, American subjects, and American capital, are unquestionably engaged in the trade, though under other colours and in disguise."⁸¹ The United States ship "Cyane" at one time reported ten captures within a few days, adding: "Although they are evidently owned by Americans, they are so completely covered by Spanish papers that it is impossible to condemn them."⁸² The governor of Sierra Leone reported the rivers Nunez and Pongas full of renegade European and American slave-traders;⁸³ the trade was said to be carried on "to an extent that almost staggers belief."⁸⁴ Down to 1824 or 1825, reports from all quarters prove this activity in slave-trading.

The execution of the laws within the country exhibits grave defects and even criminal negligence. Attorney-General Wirt finds it necessary to assure collectors, in 1819, that "it is against public policy to dispense with prosecutions for violation of the law to prohibit the Slave trade."⁸⁵ One district attorney writes: "It appears to be almost impossible to enforce the laws of the United States against offenders after the negroes have been landed in the state."⁸⁶ Again, it is asserted that "when vessels engaged in the slave trade have been detained by the American cruisers, and sent into the slave-holding states, there appears at once a difficulty in securing the freedom to these captives which the laws of the United States have decreed for them."⁸⁷ In some cases, one man would smuggle in the Africans and hide them in the woods; then his partner would "rob" him, and so all trace be lost.⁸⁸ Perhaps 350 Africans were officially reported as brought in contrary to law from 1818 to 1820: the absurdity of this figure is apparent.⁸⁹ A circular letter to the marshals, in 1821, brought reports of only a few well-known cases, like that of the "General Ramirez;" the marshal of Louisiana had "no information."⁹⁰

There appears to be little positive evidence of a large illicit importation into the country for a decade after 1825. It is hardly possible, however, considering the activity in the trade, that slaves were not largely imported. Indeed, when we note how the laws were continually broken in other respects, absence of

81. PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS, 1821, Vol. XXIII., SLAVE TRADE, Further Papers, A, page 76. The names and description of a dozen or more American slavers are given: PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS, 1821, Vol. XXIII., SLAVE TRADE, Further Papers, A, pages 18-21.

82. HOUSE REPORTS, 17th Congress 1st session, II. No. 92, pages 15-20.

83. HOUSE DOCUMENT, 18th Congress 1st session, VI. No. 119, page 13.

84. PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS, 1823, Vol. XVIII., SLAVE TRADE, Further Papers, A, pages 10-11.

85. OPINIONS OF ATTORNEYS-GENERAL, V. 717.

86. R.W. Habersham to the Secretary of the Navy, August, 1821; reprinted in FRIENDS' VIEW OF THE AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE (1824), page 47.

87. FRIENDS' VIEW OF THE AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE (1824), page 42.

88. FRIENDS' VIEW OF THE AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE (1824), page 43.

89. Cf. above, pages 126-7.

90. FRIENDS' VIEW OF THE AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE (1824), page 42.

1853-1854

1853-1854

evidence of petty smuggling becomes presumptive evidence that collusive or tacit understanding of officers and citizens allowed the trade to some extent.⁹¹ Finally, it must be noted that during all this time scarcely a man suffered for participating in the trade, beyond the loss of the Africans and, more rarely, of his ship. Red-handed slavers, caught in the act and convicted, were too often, like *La Coste* of South Carolina, the subjects of executive clemency.⁹² In certain cases there were those who even had the effrontery to ask Congress to cancel their own laws. For instance, in 1819 a Venezuelan privateer, secretly fitted out and manned by Americans in Baltimore, succeeded in capturing several American, Portuguese, and Spanish slavers, and appropriating the slaves; being finally wrecked herself, she transferred her crew and slaves to one of her prizes, the "Antelope," which was eventually captured by a United States cruiser and the 280 Africans sent to Georgia. After much litigation, the United States Supreme Court ordered those captured from Spaniards to be surrendered, and the others to be returned to Africa. By some mysterious process, only 139 Africans now remained, 100 of whom were sent to Africa. The Spanish claimants of the remaining thirty-nine sold them to a certain Mr. Wilde, who gave bond to transport them out of the country. Finally, in December, 1827, there came an innocent petition to Congress to *cancel this bond*.⁹³ A bill to that effect passed and was approved, May 2, 1828,⁹⁴ and in consequence these Africans remained as slaves in Georgia.

On the whole, it is plain that, although in the period from 1807 to 1820 Congress laid down broad lines of legislation

91. A few accounts of captures here and there would make the matter less suspicious; these, however, do not occur. How large this suspected illicit traffic was, it is of course impossible to say; there is no reason why it may not have reached many hundreds per year.

92. Cf. editorial in *Niles's Register*, XXII. 114. Cf. also the following instances of pardons: —

PRESIDENT JEFFERSON: March 1, 1808, Phillip M. Topham, convicted for "carrying on an illegal slave-trade" (pardoned twice). PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, I. 146, 148-9.

PRESIDENT MADISON: July 29, 1809, fifteen vessels arrived at New Orleans from Cuba, with 666 white persons and 683 negroes. Every penalty incurred under the Act of 1807 was remitted. (Note: "Several other pardons of this nature were granted.") PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, I. 179.

Nov. 8, 1809, John Hopkins and Lewis Le Roy, convicted for importing a slave. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, I. 184-5.

Feb. 12, 1810, William Sewall, convicted for importing slaves. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, I. 194, 235, 240.

May 5, 1812, William Babbit, convicted for importing slaves. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, I. 248.

PRESIDENT MONROE: June 11, 1822, Thomas Shields, convicted for bringing slaves into New Orleans. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, IV. 15.

Aug. 24, 1822, J.F. Smith, sentenced to five years' imprisonment and \$3000 fine; served twenty-five months and was then pardoned. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, IV. 22.

July 23, 1823, certain parties liable to penalties for introducing slaves into Alabama. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, IV. 63.

Aug. 15, 1823, owners of schooner "Mary," convicted of importing slaves. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, IV. 66.

PRESIDENT J.Q. ADAMS: March 4, 1826, Robert Perry; his ship was forfeited for slave-trading. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, IV. 140.

Jan. 17, 1827, Jesse Perry; forfeited ship, and was convicted for introducing slaves. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, IV. 158.

Feb. 13, 1827, Zenas Winston; incurred penalties for slave-trading. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, IV. 161. The four following cases are similar to that of Winston: —

Feb. 24, 1827, John Tucker and William Morbon. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, IV. 162.

March 25, 1828, Joseph Badger. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, IV. 192.

Feb. 19, 1829, L.R. Wallace. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, IV. 215.

PRESIDENT JACKSON: Five cases. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, IV. 225, 270, 301, 393, 440.

The above cases were taken from manuscript copies of the Washington records, made by Mr. W.C. Endicott, Jr., and kindly loaned me.

93. See SENATE JOURNAL, 20th Congress 1st session, pages 60, 66, 340, 341, 343, 348, 352, 355; HOUSE JOURNAL, 20th Congress 1st session, pages 59, 76, 123, 134, 156, 169, 173, 279, 634, 641, 646, 647, 688, 692.

94. STATUTES AT LARGE, VI. 376.

1853-1854

1853-1854

sufficient, save in some details, to suppress the African slave trade to America, yet the execution of these laws was criminally lax. Moreover, by the facility with which slavers could disguise their identity, it was possible for them to escape even a vigorous enforcement of our laws. This situation could properly be met only by energetic and sincere international co-operation....⁹⁵

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: It was not altogether a mistaken judgment that led the constitutional fathers to consider the slave-trade as the backbone of slavery. An economic system based on slave labor will find, sooner or later, that the demand for the cheapest slave labor cannot long be withstood. Once degrade the laborer so that he cannot assert his own rights, and there is but one limit below which his price cannot be reduced. That limit is not his physical well-being, for it may be, and in the Gulf States it was, cheaper to work him rapidly to death; the limit is simply the cost of procuring him and keeping him alive a profitable length of time. Only the moral sense of a community can keep helpless labor from sinking to this level; and when a community has once been debauched by slavery, its moral sense offers little resistance to economic demand. This was the case in the West Indies and Brazil; and although better moral stamina held the crisis back longer in the United States, yet even here the ethical standard of the South was not able to maintain itself against the demands of the cotton industry. When, after 1850, the price of slaves had risen to a monopoly height, the leaders of the plantation system, brought to the edge of bankruptcy by the crude and reckless farming necessary under a slave régime, and baffled, at least temporarily, in their quest of new rich land to exploit, began instinctively to feel that the only salvation of American slavery lay in the reopening of the African slave-trade.

It took but a spark to put this instinctive feeling into words, and words led to deeds. The movement first took definite form in the ever radical State of South Carolina. In 1854 a grand jury in the Williamsburg district declared, "as our unanimous opinion, that the Federal law abolishing the African Slave Trade is a public grievance. We hold this trade has been and would be, if re-established, a blessing to the American people, and a benefit to the African himself."⁹⁶ This attracted only local attention; but when, in 1856, the governor of the State, in his annual message, calmly argued at length for a reopening of the trade, and boldly declared that "if we cannot supply the demand for slave labor, then we must expect to be supplied with a species of labor we do not want,"⁹⁷ such words struck even Southern ears like "a thunder clap in a calm day."⁹⁸ And yet it

95. Among interesting minor proceedings in this period were two Senate bills to register slaves so as to prevent illegal importation. They were both dropped in the House; a House proposition to the same effect also came to nothing: SENATE JOURNAL, 15th Congress 1st session, pages 147, 152, 157, 165, 170, 188, 201, 203, 232, 237; 15th Congress 2d session, pages 63, 74, 77, 202, 207, 285, 291, 297; HOUSE JOURNAL, 15th Congress 1st session, page 332; 15th Congress 2d session, pages 303, 305, 316; 16th Congress 1st session, page 150. Another proposition was contained in the Meigs resolution presented to the House, Feb. 5, 1820, which proposed to devote the public lands to the suppression of the slave-trade. This was ruled out of order. It was presented again and laid on the table in 1821: HOUSE JOURNAL, 16th Congress 1st session, pages 196, 200, 227; 16th Congress 2d session, page 238.

96. BRITISH AND FOREIGN STATE PAPERS, 1854-5, page 1156.


97. Cluskey, POLITICAL TEXT-BOOK (14th edition), page 585.


98. De Bow's Review, XXII. 223; quoted from Andrew Hunter of Virginia.

1853-1854

1853-1854

needed but a few years to show that South Carolina had merely been the first to put into words the inarticulate thought of a large minority, if not a majority, of the inhabitants of the Gulf States.

 The US soldiers were again withdrawn from [Fort Niagara](#).

 [Susan B. Anthony](#) began to organize petition drives for women's rights, including women's suffrage. In each county of New York State she, along with others, went door to door obtaining signatures to present to the legislature.



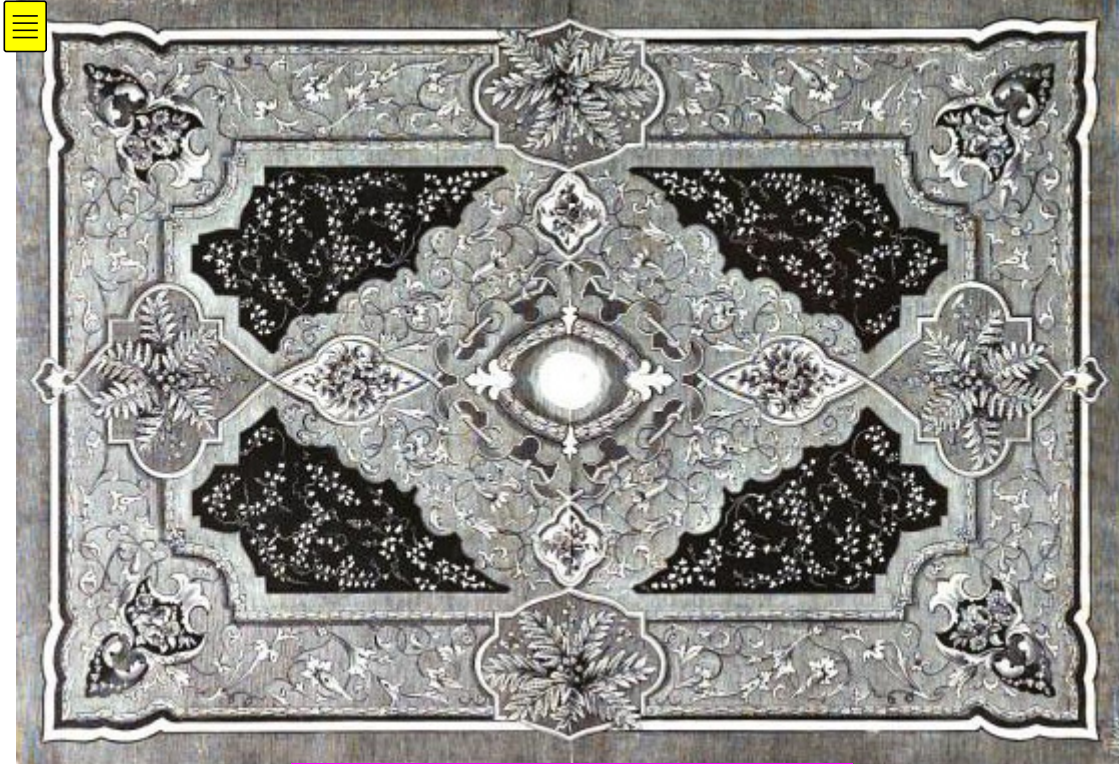
FEMINISM

1853-1854

1853-1854



[Dr. Samuel Kneeland, Jr.](#) contributed to Charles Rush Goodrich's edition, *SCIENCE AND MECHANISM: ILLUSTRATED BY EXAMPLES IN THE NEW YORK EXHIBITION, 1853-4. INCLUDING EXTENDED DESCRIPTIONS OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS, WITH ANNOTATIONS AND NOTES RELATIVE TO THE PROGRESS AND PRESENT STATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE, AND THE USEFUL ARTS* (New York: G.P. Putnam and Company, 10 Park Place. London: — Sampson Low, Son, and Company).




SCIENCE AND MECHANISM

In this year Hermann Ludwig von Helmholtz reasoned that all temperature differences would eventually average out, over the course of time, into a universally uniform temperature: all flows of heat from here to there would disappear at the “heat death of the universe.” All it would take was for the universe to exist long enough, and it was inevitably going asymptotically to approach a state where all energy would be more or less randomized to the point at which there could be no further significant flowing of energy from place to place. (This sort of thinking had originated in the year 1824 when Thoreau was but seven, when Nicolas Léonard Sadi Carnot had in the course of thinking about the conversion of heat into mechanical work made some pregnant observations about the loss of available energy as heat, realizing that the efficiency of this conversion depended on the difference of temperature between an engine and its environment, and then in 1850, when Thoreau was about 33, recognizing the significance of some work by James Prescott Joule on the conservation of energy, Rudolf Clausius would formulate the 2d Law of Thermodynamics in the initial simple form that contrary to the caloric theory of heat popular at the time, which considered heat as a liquid, heat does not spontaneously flow from cold to hot bodies. From that new awareness, Clausius would be able to infer in 1865, subsequent to Thoreau's death, the law that Sadi Carnot had proclaimed in 1824, and coin a definition of a new quantity, which he named “entropy.” Clausius would at that point give this 2d Law of Thermodynamics its definitive present formulation, that entropy tends to increase in any isolated system. The philosophical problem in this is a problem that has to do with our tendency toward future-worship. It has to do with the consequentialist attitude in ethics. This “heat death” thingie which began in 1824 and proceeded through 1850

1853-1854


1853-1854

and 1854 to 1865 was entirely incompatible with our moral consequentialism, our future-worship, because it pointed up the fact that eventually, inevitably, there won't be any sort of livable future anymore, and nothing will be morally legitimate or illegitimate, and everything will be as if no human being had ever lived and struggled and hoped and dreamed and thought. The shit would really hit the fan in the popular mind when a 29-year-old would publish his first successful fiction, in 1895. This would be [H.G. Wells](#) and his science-fiction fantasy THE TIME MACHINE. The book would be suffused with the sadness of knowing that eventually our sun would be exploding, and then fading away, and that eventually, the entire universe would be reduced to a big dull blah. The only "inconvenient truth" that Al Gore is now adding is an awareness that since human civilization is inevitably subject to the "Law of the Most Limiting Condition," our demise is bound to come a whole lot sooner than folks had, during the 19th Century, been imagining.)

 A rail line opened between Vienna and Trieste, crossing the Alps through the Semmering pass.

HISTORY OF RR


 [Jean-François Millet](#) painted *The Reaper*.

 The [Reverend John Lewis Russell](#), after functioning as a Unitarian minister for well over 2 decades at various churches in Fishkill, New York, Burlington, Vermont, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Kennebunk, Maine, and Chelmsford, Massachusetts, and the 2d (South) parish in Hingham, Massachusetts, left the ministry. By this point he had developed an expertise in lichens and in general, "cryptogams," which are plants that reproduce by the use of spores (the bolete fungus *Boletellus russelli* has been named in his honor).


Wherever this man went to fill a pulpit the lovers of nature gravitated toward him, and he made them his allies. They attended him to the fields, and ranged with him the steep hills and the miry swamps. His animated talk and moist kindling eyes as he described the graces of the ferns and the glories of the grasses and the lichens quickened the love of beauty in them. He imparted stimulating knowledge of the secrets of the meadows and woods, and drew about him by instinctive sympathy such as had an ear for the mysteries of the sea, or the forests, or the moss-coated rocks.

— The Reverend Edmund B. Willson

BOTANY

 News items relating to the development of ELECTRIC WALDEN technology:

- [George Boole](#), whose CALCULUS OF LOGIC had appeared in 1848, published AN INVESTIGATION OF THE LAWS OF THOUGHT, ON WHICH ARE FOUNDED THE MATHEMATICAL THEORIES OF LOGIC AND PROBABILITIES, which articulated a binary system of "symbolic logic."
- Georg Riemann's "On the Hypotheses Forming the Foundation of Geometry," based on his famous June 10th lecture in Göttingen.

 The [Cadbury](#) Brothers opened an office in London and received a Royal Appointment as "[Cocoa](#) Manufacturers to [Queen Victoria](#)." The mid-1850s were such difficult times that the brothers would come close to closing the doors of their enterprise.

ELECTRIC
WALDEN

1853-1854**1853-1854**

➡ Due to the ongoing boycott of race segregation of public school facilities, enrollment at Boston's black [Smith School](#) stood at 54. Considering the case of the racially intermixed child Edward Pindall, a city commission determined that Boston's racial segregation of its public schools was "doing more injury" than good. The common council at first endorsed this committee's finding — and then reversed itself 21 to 14.

➡ [Henry Bibb](#) died in Canada at the age of 39.

➡ [Mary Ann Shadd](#) took over editing [The Provincial Freeman](#). The 1st black female editor and publisher in North America, she announced in an article that she had "broken the editorial ice." Shadd's newspaper would bear the slogan "Self Reliance is the True Road to Independence," and would excoriate all such begging and compromising approaches as had been being practiced by the [Bibb](#) family.

**FEMINISM**

1853-1854

1853-1854

➡ [Friend John Wilbur](#) visited England for the 2d time.

➡ The archaeologist Giovanni Battista de Rossi (1822-1984) put on display the Tomb of the Popes, discovered in a catacomb near [Rome](#):



The 18th through the 24th Papas of Rome had been interred here, back at a time in the 3d Century when the Roman papas did not have sovereignty over the papas of other Christian congregations in other cities.

➡ We had known about female eggs and male sperm since the 17th Century. In this year the fusion of frog sperm and egg was 1st more or less observed, or inferred, with the assistance of a microscope. It was all still very confusing, but it would be gradually becoming clearer just how male and female share in the reproductive process.

➡ It was at some point during the early 1850s that the Howes established a summer residence in South [Portsmouth](#) at Lawton's Valley on [Aquidneck Island](#). Eventually Dr. [Samuel Gridley Howe](#) and [Julia Ward Howe](#) and their six children would have the house at 745 Union Street known as "Oak Glen" as their long-term summer home.

RHODE ISLAND

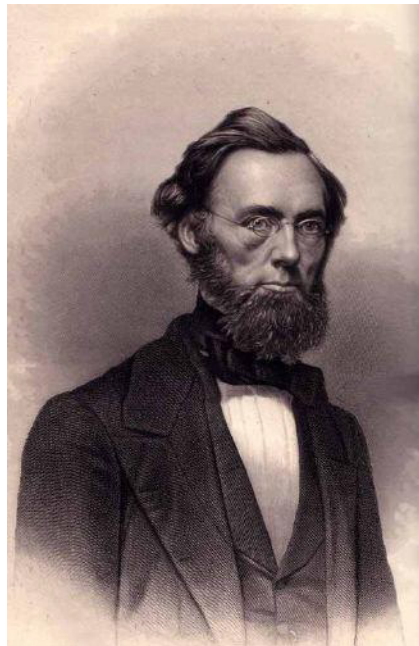
1853-1854

1853-1854

➡ This was the 4th year of the [tuberculosis](#) outbreak in Britain, where over the course of 5 years 1851-1855 some 250,000 would die.

**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.**

➡ [F.A.P. Barnard](#) became the head of the departments of astronomy and mathematics the University of Mississippi in Oxford, Mississippi. While at this institution he would create a small astronomical observatory and suspend a [Foucault pendulum](#) from a dome by a 90-foot piano wire. Although he ordered a 19-inch lens from Clark of Cambridge, by the time this was ready for shipment the Civil War would be going on, and the lense would be delivered instead to the Dearborn Observatory in [Chicago](#). In this year, also, he received orders in the Episcopal church.



[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**1853-1854****1853-1854**

[Elizabeth Oakes Smith](#)'s THE NEWSBOY, a reform novel, and BERTHA AND LILY; OR THE PARSONAGE AT BEECH GLEN, a story about an intellectual woman who bears an illegitimate child.




[Richard Francis Burton](#) and John Hanning Speke were the 1st Europeans to enter the city of Harar in Somaliland in East Africa, and live to tell the tale.



In the course of this, both adventurers were wounded. In 1856 Burton would recount this trip as FIRST FOOTSTEPS IN EAST AFRICA, seeming to minimize the role played by Speke — this would create a feud between the two.

1853-1854

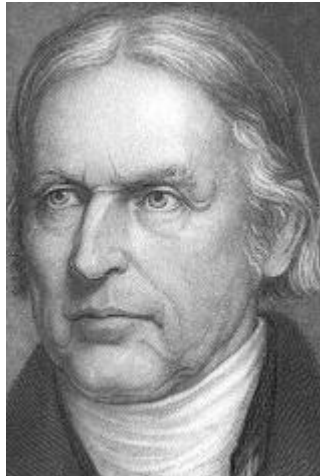
1853-1854

 The Reverend [Adin Ballou](#) wrote his main justification of the [Hopedale](#) Community, PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM.



CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM

The 1st section of this treatise would be his only completed work of systematic theology. He asserted that God permeated an “infinitarium,” that is, an infinity of universes, and that both space and time were without center or limit. Every separate one of these universes, of this infinity of universes within this “infinitarium,” he asserted, was going through an unending sequence of “grand cycles,” each one of which could appropriately be characterized as “an eternity.” His Christology was not Unitarian, nor was it Trinitarian, but instead was rather similar to the ancient heresy known as “Sabellianism.” He asserted that Christ was a manifestation of God, proportioned in such manner as to be comprehensible by our finite minds, but he asserted also that Christianity might not be the sole religion to contain divine truth. Like the Reverend [Hosea Ballou](#), the



Reverend [Adin Ballou](#) portrayed atonement as a form of demonstration by God, an appeal to human beings for a spiritual and moral response. He differed from this other Reverend Ballou in asserting that divine punishment in the afterlife was necessary, not only for the sake of justice but also as a mechanism for individual correction and progress. Our human spirits, as they were gradually regenerated, were eventually to become one with God.



1853-1854

1853-1854

This treatise laid out a plan for human society that was as simple and as obvious as the Lord's Prayer. To be perfect as God is perfect is a difficult thing for us human creatures. We all impinge on each other in one manner or another; we are all in life together, on this planet together, and should we fail to forgive "them" their trespasses, no way could our own trespasses be forgiven — for our own trespasses against "them" are in no way more privileged than "their" trespasses against us. When we manage to avoid seeking to retaliate for the harms that are done to us by others, we face only a further obligation. After accepting these harms with no spirit of retribution, no spirit of doing harm in response, we must go on and do more: we must ask that the people who did these things to us be forgiven. And we can ask for this only if we ourselves are ready to grant the prayer. "After this manner, therefore, pray ye.... Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." The word "as" in this prayer means "to the extent that." To the extent that we are able to forgive these other people for what they have done to us, to that extent and to that extent only, forgive us for what we ourselves have done against them, and, the inverse also, if there should be lurking in us any residual unwillingness to forgive, to that extent please do not forgive us for what we have ourselves done, but instead take retribution against us. There's no such thing as selective forgiveness, it only works if it is perfectly indiscriminate, and if it is perfectly applied across the board.⁹⁹

If, while we sue for mercy, we exercise none; if, while we pray for forgiveness, we meditate vengeance; if, while we ask to be treated better than we deserve, we are trying to respond to others according to their deserts; then we at once display our own insincerity, and our worship is a fraud and God is mocked. Our spirit of partiality is in opposition to the Lord's spirit of indiscriminate acceptance (which seems while we are in this spirit to be mere blind and callous indifference); we stand self-excluded from his presence alike unforgiving and unforgiven. The idea, repeated over and over, is that it is a law of life that only the forgiving can be forgiven. This forgiving is what constitutes our proof of our sincerity. This, not something as trivial as passing the salt to others at the table if we wish others to have the politeness to pass the salt to us, is the meat of the golden rule of doing unto others as we would have done unto ourselves. Our spirits must be fit to receive forgiveness. Then God can commune with us, for we have erected no barrier, we have not held ourselves away from his perfect spirit. It is only in the spirit of human forgiveness that we can receive and enjoy the divine forgiveness.

Yet Christianity has been suborned to authorize, to aid, and to abet the whole catalog of penal injuries, and when they are not enough, capital punishment, and not only that, but also the just war. The Chaplain leads the troops in the Lord's Prayer, while Christians draw near their God with their lips, and hold their hearts far away in a safe place where there may yet be found vengeance.

99. Also, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:12-15). "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?" Jesus said unto him, "I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:21-22). "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any, that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses; but if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses" (Mark 11:25-26). "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven" (Luke 6:37).

1853-1854

1853-1854

This, then, would be the foundation of our economic life, that to the greatest extent possible we voluntarily refrain from gaining our bread in any manner that interferes one with another, recognizing that a certain minimal level of such interference is inevitable, and, since we know full well that these residual interferences are unavoidable, we merely be understanding of these residual interferences in a spirit of awareness that we are as likely ourselves to commit such blunders against others, as they are to commit such against us. – The remainder of any economic program, obviously, is just window dressing and agenda and special pleading.

By this point the Reverend John Murray Spear, Medium, of the [Hopedale](#) community, had come to be under the direction of a group of spirits that termed itself “The Association of the Beneficents.” His committee (in sequence according to how long they had been in the spirit realm) included:¹⁰⁰



DIED	PERSONALITY
65CE	Lucius Annaeus Seneca
1546	Martin Luther
1683	Roger Williams
1772	Emmanuel Swedenborg
1790	Benjamin Franklin
1790	John Howard
1809	John Murray
1813	Benjamin Rush
1825	Thomas Jefferson
1834	Lafayette
1842	William Ellery Channing



100. John Murray, 4th Earl of Dunmore (1732-1809), had been the appointed governor of the Virginia colony. After the battles of Lexington and Concord he had taken gunpowder stores from Williamsburg and moved his seat of government to a British man-of-war anchored off Yorktown. After he had burned Norfolk in 1776, the Americans had been able to drive him back to England from his station on Gwynn’s Island in Chesapeake Bay. It is not clear that John Murray Spear had been named after this earl, and it is not clear that this is the John Murray that he was intending to channel. An alternative hypothesis was that he was intending to channel the father of American Universalism, the Reverend [John Murray](#) (1741-1815) and that somewhere somehow an error has crept in.

1853-1854

1853-1854

What this spiritual committee decided was that voting would not be necessary. All decisions, it seemed, could in the future be made by “a single leading, sound, central mind,” indeed, by the mind of the Reverend John M. Spear, Medium. “The leading mind gathers up, focalizes, concentrates the whole.” (This of course is what we in the 20th Century are familiar with as the *Führerprinzip*.) Spear proceeded to set up a new community of spiritualists in a city to be called Harmonia, in western New York, and to experiment with the creation of a perpetual motion machine. The machine was to be constructed in the Lynn home of the Hutchinson Family Singers, and the spirit of [Benjamin Franklin](#) guaranteed that, when constructed, it would work.



(The community of Harmonia would soon be charged with free love, and would disintegrate.)

THE FALLACY OF MOMENTISM: THIS STARRY UNIVERSE DOES NOT CONSIST OF A SEQUENCE OF MOMENTS. THAT IS A FIGMENT, ONE WE HAVE RECOURSE TO IN ORDER TO PRIVILEGE TIME OVER CHANGE, A PRIVILEGING THAT MAKES CHANGE SEEM UNREAL, DERIVATIVE, A MERE APPEARANCE. IN FACT IT IS CHANGE AND ONLY CHANGE WHICH WE EXPERIENCE AS REALITY, TIME BEING BY WAY OF RADICAL CONTRAST UNEXPERIENCED — A MERE INTELLECTUAL CONSTRUCT. THERE EXISTS NO SUCH THING AS A MOMENT. NO “INSTANT” HAS EVER FOR AN INSTANT EXISTED.





There was a funeral in [Concord](#) for an infant, which was the 1st Episcopal service to be held in that town. The service was conducted by an Episcopal minister from nearby [Waltham](#).

Mary E. Brown, daughter of [Simon Brown](#) and Ann Caroline French Brown, got married with George Keyes. “The first George Keyes moved in with Mary Brown Keyes and raised all the children in that house. Then later his son, George Keyes moved in with him with his wife. The women married different people and moved away, but the sons seemed to stay at home and brought their wives in. Jay’s grandmother also lived at River Cottage, and then made way for her son, Henry Keyes and turned it over to him and she moved out.”

1853-1854


1853-1854

 In [Waltham](#), the Rumford Building was sold to the town for use as a Town Hall.

 Aaron Dennison established the [Waltham](#) Improvement Company (later to become Waltham Watch Company); developed innovative technology of mass production using interchangeable parts; becomes major employer of Yankee Protestants offering higher wages and skilled work. In 100 years of existence produced 40 million jeweled watches, plus clocks, speedometers, compasses, time fuses for bombs and other precision instruments.

 [William Whiting](#)'s "Memoir of Reverend Joseph Harrington" was prefixed to a volume of the Reverend's sermons being printed in Boston.

 [John Bowring](#)'s THE DECIMAL SYSTEM IN NUMBERS, COINS AND ACCOUNTS (he was all for it).

 American pugilism appeared in [California](#) during the mid-1850s (well-known pugilists such as Chris Lilly, John Morrissey, and Yankee Sullivan made the tour). For extra drama, John Morrissey had his seconds threaten his competition with pistols and clubs.


It was not unheard of, in [California](#), for the noose of a man being [hanged](#) to come untied. That happened spectacularly in this year in El Dorado County, when both nooses of two men being hanged together, James Logan and William Lipsey, came untied during the drop, necessitating a "do-over."

[Chinese](#) miners waved homemade spears and swords at one another in Trinity County, [California](#). While reputed killers had been hired by both sides in this mining dispute, the only actual casualties were drunken American and European spectators who shot or stabbed one another while attempting to collect or avoid paying side bets (so the first killing to be clearly attributed to North American Chinese would not be in this year, but would only arrive during November 1857 with the robbery and murder of the bank clerk M.V.B. Griswold).

In [China](#), meanwhile, a 2d child was born to the Reverend [Issachar J. Roberts](#) 罗孝全 and Mrs. [Virginia Young Roberts](#).

1844	50
1846	134
1848	159
1849	175
1850	210
1851	265
1854	250
1860	569
1865	5,129 (due to foreign troops fighting the Taipings)



 In London, the tobacconist Philip Morris began hand-rolling his own [cigarettes](#). Old Bond Street would soon become a center for this retail traffic.

Friedrich Tiedemann authored the 1st exhaustive treatment on [tobacco](#).

The hoop skirt came back into fashion, and was usually fashioned of graduated steel wires covered with a woven cotton netting held together by perpendicular straps of broad tape. Lady Dorothy Neville came too close to a drawing-room fireplace wearing one of these contraptions, one evening after dinner – unfortunately while the gentlemen were still finishing their [cigars](#) and before they came to rejoin the ladies – and when her dress caught [fire](#) none of the other ladies could come to her assistance because of their own skirts,

and in an instant I was in a blaze, but I kept my presence of mind, and rolling myself in the hearth rug by some means or other eventually put out the flames.



Speaking of setting things on fire, in this year William Gates, Jr. patented a machine for mechanizing the handling of the frames that hold [match](#) splints during dipping, thus further reducing the manual labor ingredient in the mass manufacture of matches.¹⁰¹

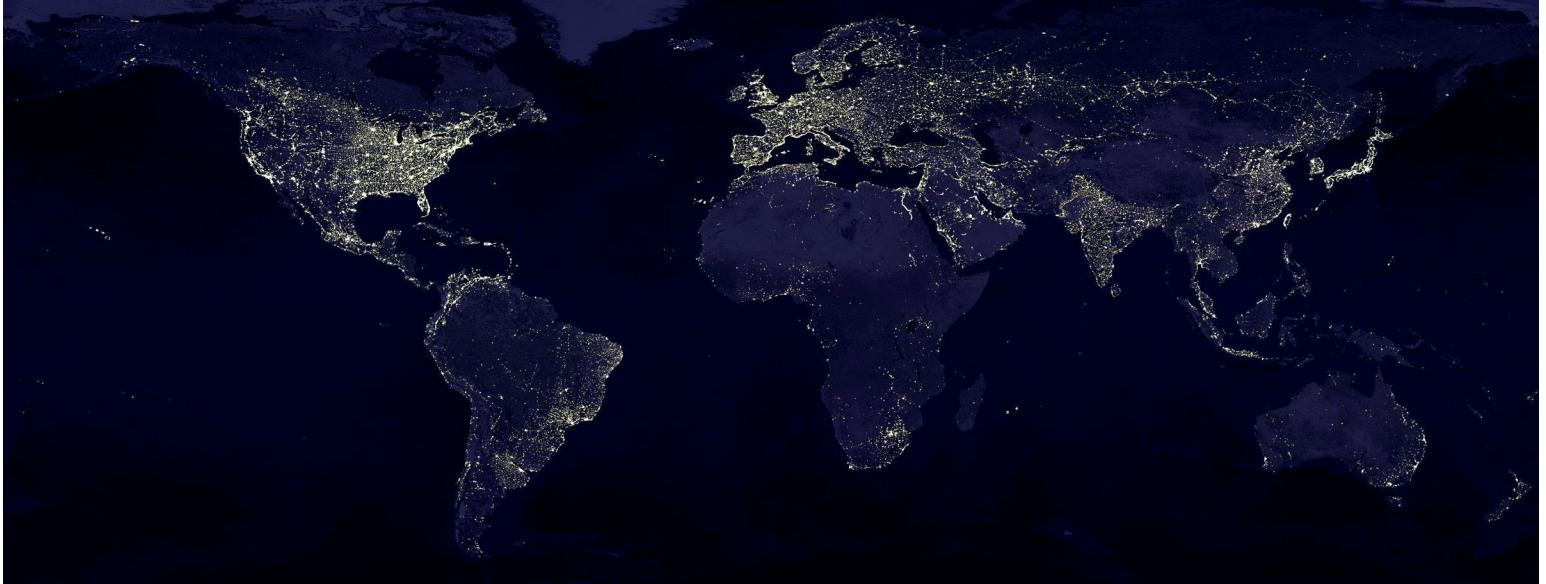
101. Would this Bill Gates the Match King be an ancestor of **the** Bill Gates, richest nerd in the world, biggest benefactor in the world?

1853-1854

1853-1854



Thomas Alva Edison in America and Joseph W. Swann in England did not invent the 1st lightbulbs, a month apart, as of 1880. They merely created two of the 1st **cost-effective** lightbulbs. A watchmaker in Germany, Heinrich Goebel, had already invented electric lightbulbs as of this Year of Our Lord 1854.



Electric street lighting would already be on certain London streets as of 1878, and, where and when I grew up, the first electrically lighted municipality was known to be our home town of Wabash, Indiana. We school kids were taken on a walking excursion to our county museum in our new courthouse, where we could view this blackened preserved apparatus which had been positioned atop the old courthouse's cupola in the year 1880 — the highest available elevation. We were told that if they turned it on, it would still work. We're even in the *ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA*, page 505 of Volume X in my 1979 home edition — and they wouldn't lie to us, ever. Some mottos:

- “London's a big place, but this whole world's been here for the same length of time.”
- “Former residents of Wabash, Indiana are known for their need of illumination.”
- “I have some [electricity](#) to sell — I wonder what I could persuade people to use it for.”

This must have been a very similar circumstance to that faced by the Irvine boys, on their ranch in Southern [California](#)'s Orange County. They were growing grass, which grew cows, which they sold for hides and beef. They were cowpokers, and they were doing OK but were not doing outstandingly. They looked at each other across the dinnertable one night, and mused “What have we **really** got to offer the world?” And the answer was obvious: they had water in the middle of what in many years was a virtual desert. So they posed their question as “We have something to sell people — how could we encourage people to come here and buy it?” The result is beautiful Irvine California, run in the background by a bunch of inheritors riding around in Mercedes Bentzs, the owner/managers of the Irvine Ranch Water Authority.

The US Supreme Court upheld the patent of [Samuel F.B. Morse](#) for a particular design of [electromagnetic telegraph](#) while striking down the Magnetic Telegraph Company's broad claim that this patent covered any design making use of the principle of electromagnetism (however, the competing designs offered by Royal E.


1853-1854


1853-1854


House and Alexander Bain would prove so unreliable in service, that after a few years the telegraph industry in the US would be using Morse's design almost exclusively).


The tale has been retailed that the shortest [telegraphic](#) query and answer was between Oscar Wilde, the [Irish](#) poet and playwright, in his Paris refuge, and his publisher in England. Wilde, curious about the sales of his new book in England, cabled "?" and "!" was the response of the publisher. However, this same story has been retailed about a [telegraphic](#) exchange between [Victor Hugo](#) and his publisher, with Hugo wanting to know whether *LES MISÉRABLES*, was selling well, and also has been retailed in regard to F. Scott Fitzgerald. This all seems entirely spurious for in fact a version of the tale appeared in this year in the humor magazine [Yankee Notions](#):

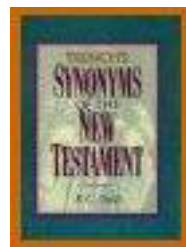
The shortest correspondence on record is one between an American merchant in want of news and his London agent. The letter ran thus: ? And the answer thus: 0, Being the briefest possible intimation that there was nothing stirring.

 [Gail Borden](#) borrowed the technology of vacuum pans from the Shakers of New Lebanon, [New York](#) in order to produce a condensed milk product. In doing this, he supposed it to be the condensing of the milk, rather than the milk's being heated, which was what was so providentially preventing his product from spoiling in the containers.¹⁰²

 Upstate [New York](#) richie-rich real estate magnate and rabid abolitionist [Gerrit Smith](#) resigned from Congress, writing a final letter to his constituents in which he outlined his political philosophy.

 Former US Congressman Fernando Wood defeated [Know-Nothing](#) candidate James W. Barker and Reform candidate Wilson G. Hunt to become the "Soft Shells-Hard Shells" mayor of [New-York](#).

 The Reverend [Richard Chenevix Trench](#)'s SYNONYMS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT; also, "The Sermon on the Mount, as Illustrated from St. [Augustine](#)," "Sacred Latin Poetry," "St. [Augustine](#) as an Interpreter of Scripture."



 [Susan Fenimore Cooper](#)'s RHYME AND REASON OF COUNTRY LIFE; FROM FIELDS OLD AND NEW, a volume of selections "connected together by a mere thread of remarks."

The large reading and fine taste of Miss Cooper are admirably displayed in her choice as well as arrangement of the flowers which go to make up her several bouquets.... Precisely such a book as cultivated persons like to snatch up for a spare hour, during the

102. It would not be until 1860  that [Louis Pasteur](#) of France would develop the technique which would be termed "Pasteurization," of sterilizing milk by heating.

1853-1854

1853-1854

long evenings of winter, in the country, or to carry out with them, in the summer-time, to the shade of a favourite arbour or tree.

— Putnam's Monthly Magazine of American Literature, Science and Art

➡ George Eliot (Marian Evans)'s translation of Ludwig Feuerbach's THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

➡ In this year the German-language Louisiana Staats-Zeitung serialized on its cover page an erotic novel by the exiled Bavarian baron Ludwig von Reizenstein titled (in its English-language translation to be first published in 1998) THE MYSTERIES OF NEW ORLEANS. In this work a woman escapes from the town in man's clothing and is then pursued by her lover decked out as a woman. The plot is a conspiracy plot having to do with a slave uprising, and unmasking the sordidness of life in an American city. Lesbian sexual relations are portrayed as political and as the equivalent of slave revolt. The author of this work would abandon writing and go on to a career in the vending of, of all things, birdcages.¹⁰³

➡ John Mitchel's account of things was published in the United States as JAIL JOURNAL, OR FIVE YEARS IN BRITISH PRISONS. The author had an ideal of freedom. In one entry, for instance, we are allowed to see that the author welcomes the Crimean War because of the consideration that an Irish rebellion can succeed only if England is preoccupied elsewhere. (The sentiment would influence Patrick Pearse in 1916.)



➡ Jacob Hamblin, a missionary to the Indians in southern Utah, had acquired reputé among them as a person of special powers and turned this toward the smoothing of relations between them and the newly arriving hordes of white people.

Benjamin Gilbert Ferris, a Swedenborgian, had most definitely not gotten along with the Mormons of Utah during the 6 months he had spent there as the US Secretary to that Territory, and soon resigned: "He could not suppress his abhorrence [*sic*] of Mormonism nor tolerate its influences, nor accept its devotees as his neighbors, and resigned his high position, thus sacrificing great possibilities in his very promising public career." In this year his record of his experiences appeared as UTAH AND THE MORMONS. THE HISTORY, GOVERNMENT, DOCTRINES, CUSTOMS, AND PROSPECTS OF THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS. FROM PERSONAL OBSERVATION DURING A SIX MONTHS' RESIDENCE AT GREAT SALT LAKE CITY (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers,

103. Birdcages, actually, are an excellent venue for the recycling of writings.

1853-1854

1853-1854

82 Beekman Street).



UTAH AND THE MORMONS

On the banks of *Payzhehooze* Hazel Run south of the Minnesota River, 5 miles upstream from the Yellow Medicine Agency, *Marpiyawicasta Man of the Clouds*, his brother *Mazakutemane* Walks Shooting Iron, and their band of Dakotas joined a “Hazelwood Republic” of “Christian Indians” sponsored by the Reverend Riggs but, in the eyes of the creators of civilization, failed to create a satisfactory imitation of civilization.¹⁰⁴

We had such a respectable community of young men, who had cut off their hair and exchanged the dress of the Dakotas for that of the white men, and whose wants now were very different from the annuity Dakotas generally, that we took measures to organize them into a separate band, which we called the Hazelwood Republic. They elected their President for two years, and other needed officers, and were without any difficulty recognized by the agent as a separate band. A number of these men were half-breeds, who were, by the organic law of Minnesota, citizens. The Constitution of the State provided that Indians also might become citizens by satisfying a court of their progress in civilization. A few years after the organization of this civilized community, I took eight or ten of the men to meet the court at Mankato; but the court deciding that a knowledge of English was necessary to comply with the laws of the State, only one of my men was passed into citizenship.

104. Account of the Reverend Riggs.



1853-1854

1853-1854

In the Minnesota Territory, [President Millard Fillmore](#) was escorted on “The Grand Tour” from St. Anthony “Place where the Water Falls” around Lake Calhoun and Lake Harriet, near the fields of the Dakota bark homes along the lake shore that had made up Marpiyawicasta’s village of Eatonville. This was the package tour that had become known nationwide as the “Fashionable Tour” and it had been taken by, among others, Millard Fillmore and Anthony Trollope and Clara Barton. The journey had been being puffed by James M. Goodhue, the editor of the [Minnesota Pioneer](#), for at least the past 9 years:¹⁰⁵

Who that is idle would be caged up between walls of burning brick and mortar, in dog-days, down the river, if at less daily expense, he could be hurried along through the valley of the Mississippi, its shores studded with towns, and farms, flying by islands, prairies, woodlands, bluffs – an ever varied scene of beauty, away up into the land of the wild Dakota, and of cascades and pine forests, and cooling breezes? – Why it is an exhilarating luxury, compared with which, all the fashion and tinsel and parade of your Newports and Saratogas, are utterly insipid.... A month in Minnesota, in dog-days, is worth a whole year anywhere else; and, we confidently look to see the time, when all families of leisure down South, from the Gulf of Mexico along up, will make their regular summer hegira to our Territory, and when hundreds of the opulent from those regions, will build delightful cottages on the borders of our ten thousand lakes and ornament their grounds with all that is tasteful in shrubbery and horticulture, for a summer retreat.

105. This particular puff is dated July 22, 1852.

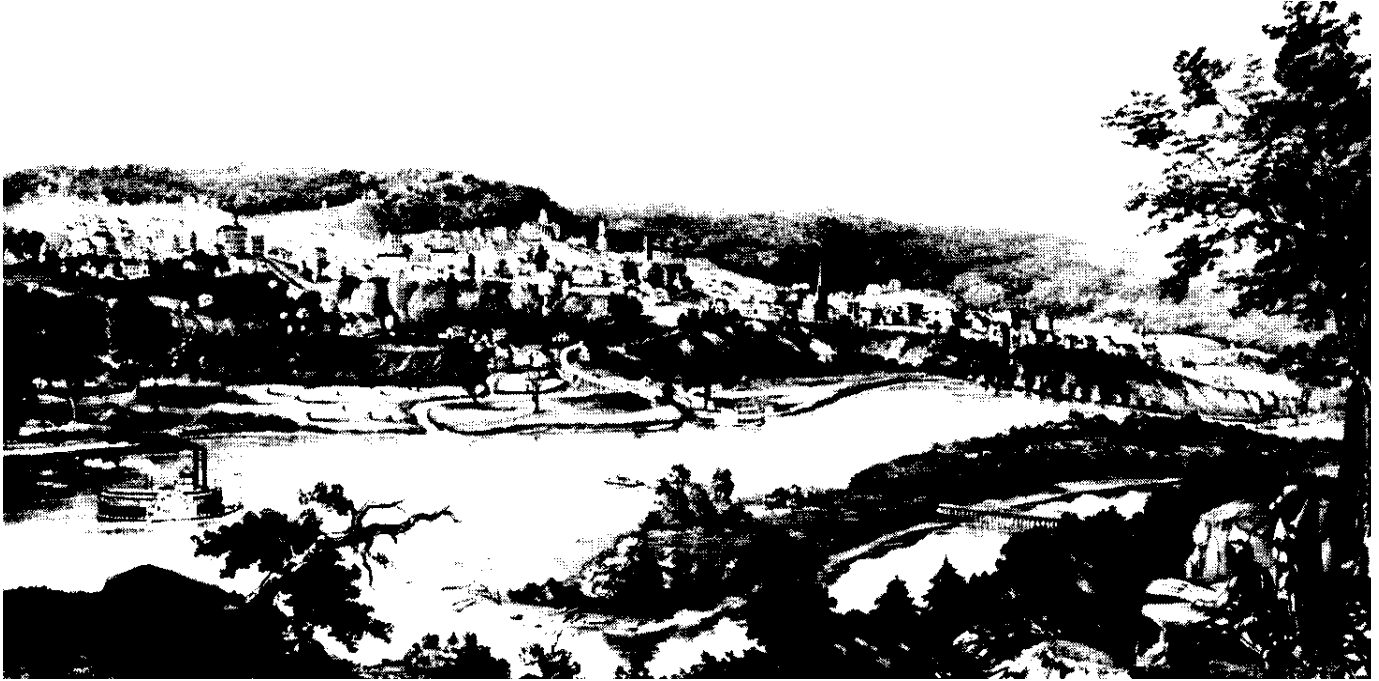
HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

1853-1854

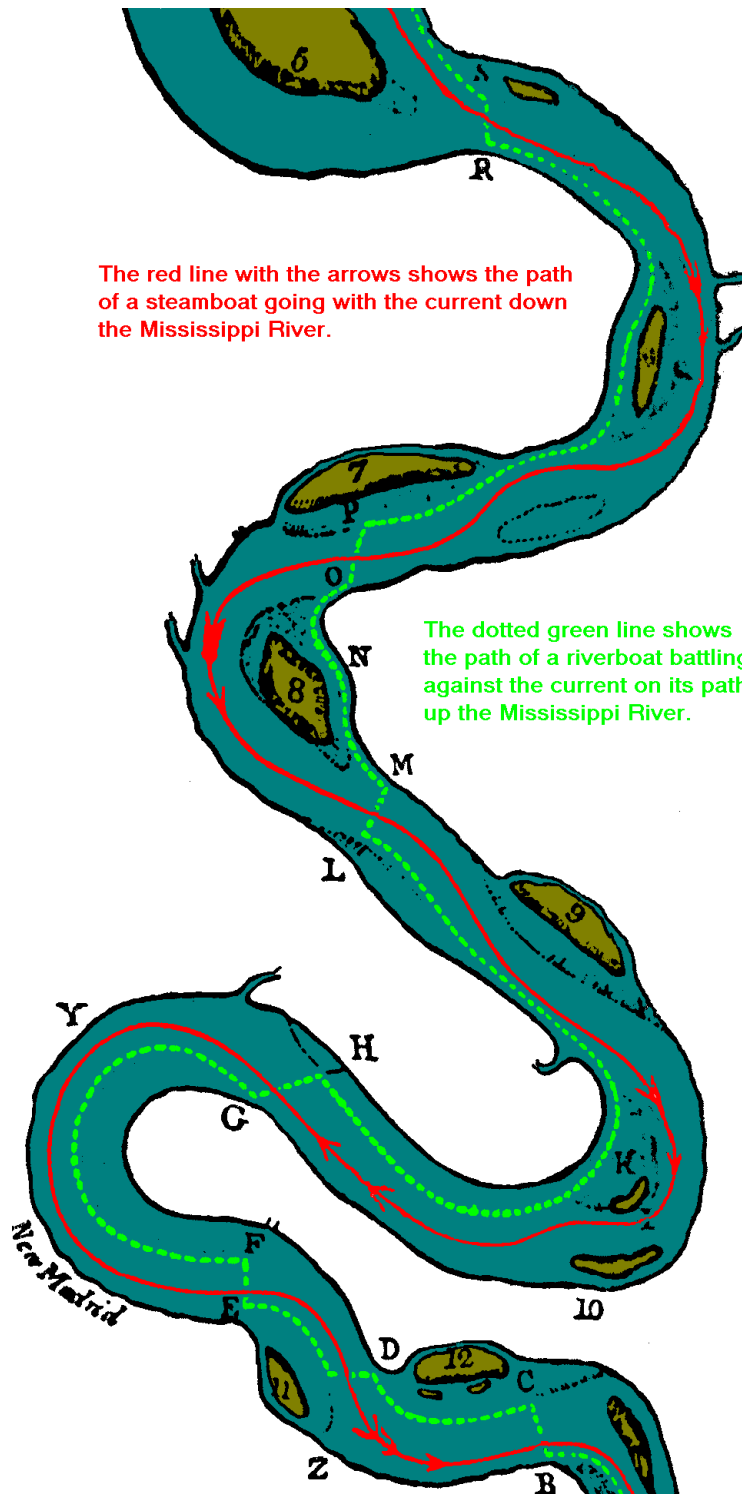
1853-1854



Steamboat arriving at St. Paul "Iminijaska White Rocks," Minnesota

1853-1854

1853-1854



The red line with the arrows shows the path of a steamboat going with the current down the Mississippi River.

The dotted green line shows the path of a riverboat battling against the current on its path up the Mississippi River.

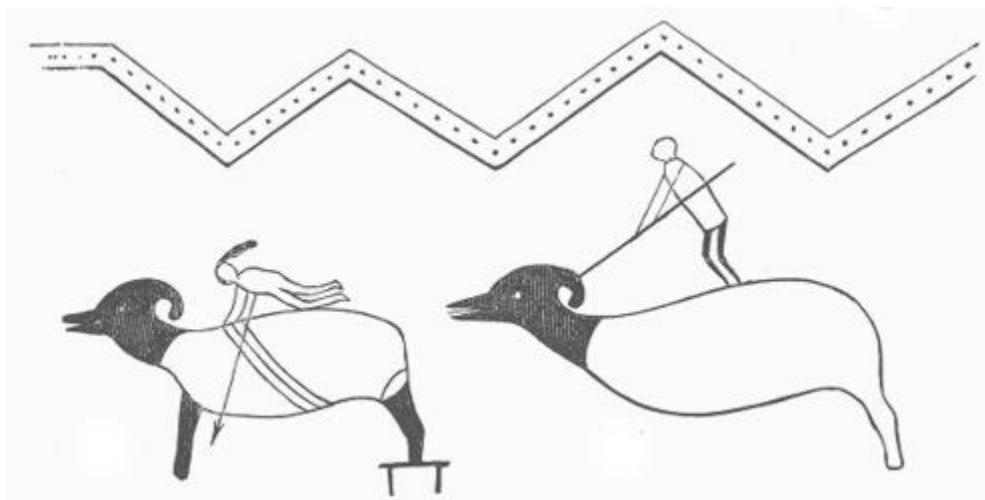
A tourist puff said that
“the Mississippi flows from the pine to the palm”

1853-1854

1853-1854

➡ When [President Franklin Pierce](#) upped the ante and offered Spain \$130,000,000 for [Cuba](#), Spain again turned us down. The President then got into trouble with his Ostend Manifesto, which was considered to be a threat aimed at Spain that the US would “go ahead” and seize this island anyway. (These various attempts to buy or forcibly annex the island by invasion would end with the American Civil War, but the lust to annex the island to the American empire is to this day undiminished.)

When Pierce had become President [John Russell Bartlett](#) had of course been replaced as a United States Commissioner for the survey of the boundary between the United States and [Mexico](#). He published A PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF EXPLORATIONS AND INCIDENTS IN TEXAS, NEW MEXICO, [CALIFORNIA](#), SONORA AND CHIHUAHUA (2 volumes) which included sketches of native petroglyphs.



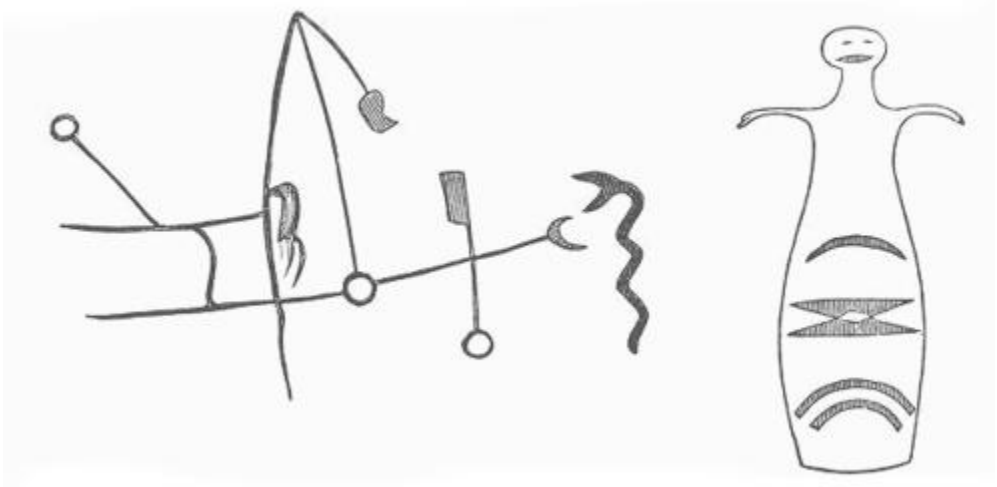
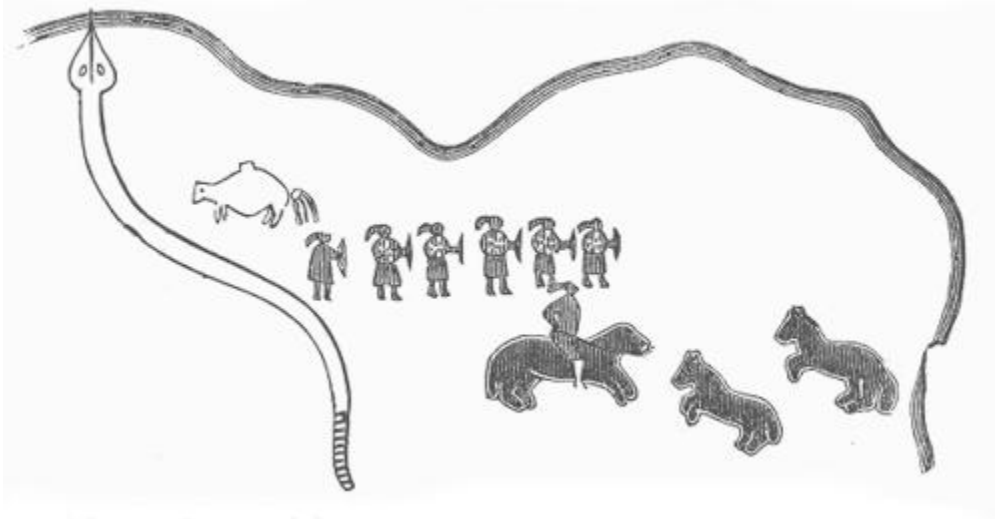
HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

1853-1854

1853-1854



1853-1854

1853-1854



A physician recommended that [Frederick Llewellyn Hovey Willis](#) be sent on a sea voyage for his health, but aboard ship he began to hear rappings in his stateroom, which he attributed to two recently deceased acquaintances. Returning to Boston, he was informed by [spiritualists](#) that perhaps this had happened not as a feverish hallucination but because he was a medium, a person with special powers of sensitivity, having antennae fine-tuned to communicate with the dead. He began to hold séances in the private homes of Cambridge, Boston, Salem, and other locales. He found that he was able to make money by summoning the spirit of Byron –and the spirit of Shelley –and the spirits of the poets of antiquity. Boston was his oyster, and the act quickly came to include camellias, roses, and ferns — that would suddenly materialize out of thin air.

In this year, at the very unusually advanced old age of 24 (students then rarely began later than age 15), Fred matriculated at [Harvard College](#).

Yours truly
Fred L. H. Willis.

Friend [John Greenleaf Whittier](#) savaged the deceased [Daniel Webster](#) in a poem he titled “Ichabod.”¹⁰⁶

Ichabod

So fallen! so lost! the light withdrawn
Which once he wore!
The glory from his gray hairs gone
Forevermore!

Reville him not, the Tempter hath
A snare for all;
And pitying tears, not scorn and wrath,
Befit his fall!

Oh, dumb be passion’s stormy rage,
When he who might
Have lighted up and led his age,
Falls back in night.

Scorn! would the angels laugh, to mark
A bright soul driven,
Fiend-goaded, down the endless dark,
From hope and heaven!

Let not the land once proud of him
Insult him now,
Nor brand with deeper shame his dim,
Dishonored brow.

But let its humbled sons, instead,
From sea to lake,
A long lament, as for the dead,

106. In Hebrew, “Ichabod” means “inglorious.” “This poem was the outcome of the surprise and grief and forecast of evil consequences which I felt on reading the seventh of March speech of Daniel Webster in support of the ‘compromise,’ and the Fugitive Slave Law. No partisan or personal enmity dictated it. On the contrary my admiration of the splendid personality and intellectual power of the great Senator was never stronger than when I laid down his speech, and, in one of the saddest moments of my life, penned my protest. I saw, as I wrote, with painful clearness its sure results, — the Slave Power arrogant and defiant, strengthened and encouraged to carry out its scheme for the extension of its baleful system, or the dissolution of the Union, the guaranties of personal liberty in the free States broken down, and the whole country made the hunting-ground of slave-catchers. In the horror of such a vision, so soon fearfully fulfilled, if one spoke at all, he could only speak in tones of stern and sorrowful rebuke.

But death softens all resentments, and the consciousness of a common inheritance of frailty and weakness modifies the severity of judgment. Years after, in *The Lost Occasion*, I gave utterance to an almost universal regret that the great statesman did not live to see the flag which he loved trampled under the feet of Slavery, and, in view of this desecration, make his last days glorious in defence of ‘Liberty and Union, one and inseparable.’”



1853-1854

1853-1854


In sadness make.

Of all we loved and honored, naught
Save power remains;
A fallen angel's pride of thought,
Still strong in chains.

All else is gone; from those great eyes
The soul has fled:
When faith is lost, when honor dies,
The man is dead!


Then, pay the reverence of old days
To his dead fame;
Walk backward, with averted gaze,
And hide the shame!

“HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE” BEING A VIEW FROM A PARTICULAR POINT IN TIME (JUST AS THE PERSPECTIVE IN A PAINTING IS A VIEW FROM A PARTICULAR POINT IN SPACE), TO “LOOK AT THE COURSE OF HISTORY MORE GENERALLY” WOULD BE TO SACRIFICE PERSPECTIVE ALTOGETHER. THIS IS FANTASY-LAND, YOU’RE FOOLING YOURSELF. THERE CANNOT BE ANY SUCH THINGIE, AS SUCH A PERSPECTIVE.

 [Gregor Mendel](#) received a teaching appointment at the *Oberrealschule* in Brno, where he would successfully teach natural history and physics for the following 16 years. He published his 2d paper, which concerned the beetle *Bruchus pisi*, on crop damage.

[Professor Sir William Jackson Hooker](#)'s A CENTURY OF FERNS.

THE PRINCIPLES OF [BOTANY](#), AS EXEMPLIFIED IN THE PHANEROGAMIA; BY [HARLAND COULTAS](#), PROFESSOR OF GENERAL AND MEDICAL BOTANY IN THE PENN MEDICAL UNIVERSITY OF PHILADELPHIA (Philadelphia: King & Baird, Printers, No. 9 Sansom Street).

 Abigail McIntire Patch died at the age of 84. Her property was valued at \$17.

According to the New-York SPIRIT OF THE TIMES:

Afore you could say [Sam Patch](#), them hogs were yanked aout [sic] of the lot, kilt, and scraped.


 In [Rhode Island](#), William W. Hoppin was in charge.

1853

“Stack of the Artist of Kouroo” Project

1853-1854

1853-1854

 [Thomas Allen Jenckes](#) became a member of the [Rhode Island](#) House of Representatives. He would be a Representative until 1857.



1853-1854

1853-1854



As of 1844 the USA had already, in 15 years, created what had become by a considerable degree,

US	3,688 miles
Britain	2,069 miles
Germany	1,997 miles
France	552 miles
Belgium	343 miles

However, by this point, as of 1854, in the course of a decade, the nation had achieved considerably greater number of miles of railroad track **than the remainder of the world lumped together**. We were really pounding the rails. For instance, by this point railroad tracks extended all the way out Cape Cod as far as Hyannis. Also, it was in this year that a Hartford, [Providence](#), and Fishkill railroad link connected [Rhode Island](#) with the Hudson River.

HISTORY OF RR



Yet another outbreak of the [cholera](#) in [Providence, Rhode Island](#) prompted Dr. Edwin M. Snow to characterize the condition of the local Moshassuck River as “filthy as any common sewer.”



1853-1854

1853-1854




George F. Wilson and Professor Eben N. Horsford built a chemical laboratory just to the east of [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Geo. F. Wilson & Co. They would name their chemical works, and also the village that grew up around it, in honor of [Count von Rumford](#), because he had funded at Harvard University a professorship, and because this chair had since 1847 been held by Professor Horsford as “Rumford Professor of the Application of Science to the Useful Arts.” The factory would manufacture:

- Horsford’s Cream of Tartar Substitute.
- Horsford’s Bread Preparation.
- Horsford’s Phosphatic Baking Powder (Double-Acting Baking Powder).
- Rumford Yeast Powder.
- Horsford’s Acid Phosphate.
- Horsford’s Anti-Chlorine.
- Horsford’s Sulphite for Preserving Cider.

The previous type of baking powder (now known as single-acting) merely fizzed in the presence of liquid. Housewives had been able to make it themselves by combining baking soda and cream of tartar, but timing was critical as the mixture fizzed out rapidly while being mixed. The new “double-acting” baking powder was a convenience product: it was the old concoction plus a substance that did not begin to fizz until heated — sodium aluminum phosphate. Initially the phosphate would be obtained from ground-up slaughterhouse bones. This mixture had a good shelf life, so all the housewife would need to do would be to spoon it out of the convenient red can. Professor Horsford, who of course resided in Cambridge rather than in [Rhode Island](#), would become quite wealthy.



1853-1854**1853-1854**

 [Lev Nikolèvich Tolstòy](#)'s *OTROTSHESTVO* (BOYHOOD). The [Crimean War](#) began, the most famous event of which would be the charge of the Light Brigade. Although the commander would survive unscathed, 503 of his 700 men would be cut down by [Russian](#) artillery. During the Crimean War, in about this timeframe, Tolstòy was commanding a battery. He witnessed (and would write about) the siege of Sebastopol.



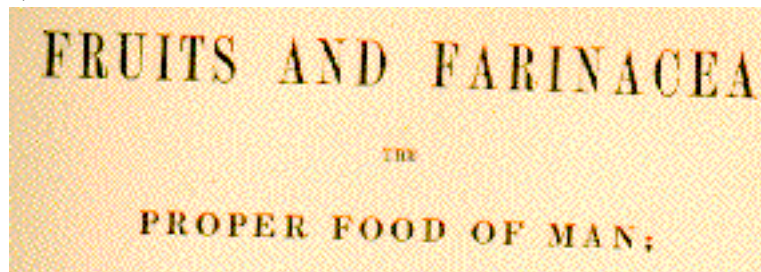
1853-1854

1853-1854

➡ Professor [Jacob Bigelow](#)'s NATURE IN DISEASE, a volume of essays.



➡ John Smith's FRUITS AND FARINACEA, THE PROPER FOOD OF MAN; BEING AN ATTEMPT TO PROVE FROM HISTORY, ANATOMY, PHYSIOLOGY, AND CHEMISTRY THAT THE ORIGINAL, NATURAL, AND BEST DIET OF MAN IS DERIVED FROM THE VEGETABLE KINGDOM. WITH NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY R. T. TRALL, M.D. (NY: Fowler & Wells).



➡ [Elizabeth A. Parkhill Gloucester](#) and [the Reverend James Newton Gloucester](#) gave up their 2d-hand clothing store on 7th Avenue in [New-York](#).

[Victor Hugo](#), in exile on the island of Guernsey, assisted in the campaign against the hanging by the English government of a local man guilty of murder. After the execution he attempted to transform this agitation into a general campaign for the abolition of [capital punishment](#) by the British.

COLDBLOODED MURDER

He produced at this time what would later be repurposed and would be transformed by its new context into the single most famous and graphic European image to appear in the wake of the raid by American abolitionists upon the US arsenal at [Harpers Ferry](#). In this engraving, in an indistinct scene of gloom, a human figure hangs from a gallows. Shafts of light are, however, falling on the figure on the gallows, from one side of the heavens.

It would be in late 1859 or early 1860 that Hugo would be moved to repurpose this bleak illustration to indicate the figure as being [John Brown](#) on his American gallows, and he would be able to do so simply by inscribing beneath it the words:

*Pro Christo-Sicut Christus, John Brown, - Charleston.
Designed by Victor Hugo.*

1853-1854

1853-1854



At the [Yearly Meeting School](#) in [Providence, Rhode Island](#), the “old” gymnasium was erected — a wooden structure that was for use only by the boy scholars. The charge for board and tuition was increased to \$80 per scholar per year, plus a surcharge of \$120 if the scholar happened not to be from a [Quaker](#) family. There would be an additional surcharge of \$10 for instruction in ancient languages, French, and drawing.

One attitude toward [Quakers](#) in the arts:

Thou shalt rob me no more of sweet silence and rest,
 For I've proved thee a trap, a seducer at best.
 —Friend [Amelia Opie](#)'s “Farewell to Music”



(Amelia, who had been a popular fiction writer before giving this up in 1825 in order to become a [Quaker](#), had died in 1853 leaving her book manuscript THE PAINTER AND HIS WIFE unfinished.)

And another, completely different, attitude toward [Quakers](#) in the arts, in the same year: Friend [John Greenleaf Whittier](#)'s LITERARY RECREATIONS AND MISCELLANIES. Among the poems from this period is “Maud Muller,” with its best-known couplet:

Of all sad words of tongue and pen
 The saddest are these, “It might have been.”



1853-1854**1853-1854**

Human bones were dug up on Cole's Hill in [Plymouth, Massachusetts](#) during a sewer project. These would be identified by [Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes](#) as the remains of white persons, and thus would be presumed to be the bones of Pilgrims who had expired during the First Winter, who had been buried in secret according to a tradition preserved by Elder Faunce, on Leyden Street near the original Common House. Eventually such sacred white-people bones would be re-interred alongside the Plymouth Rock under its canopy.

[Dr. Holmes](#) produced another volume of sickeningly self-celebrating Harvard "poetry," entitled SONGS OF THE CLASS OF 1829.



For instance, he wrote of his classmate the Baptist [Reverend Samuel Francis Smith](#), who had in 1831 made himself author of words for (not the tune of) the patriotic song "[America](#)," that:

There's a nice youngster of excellent pith,
Fate tried to conceal him by naming him Smith;
But he shouted a song for the brave and the free,
Just read on his medal, "[My country 'Tis of thee](#)."

1853-1854

1853-1854

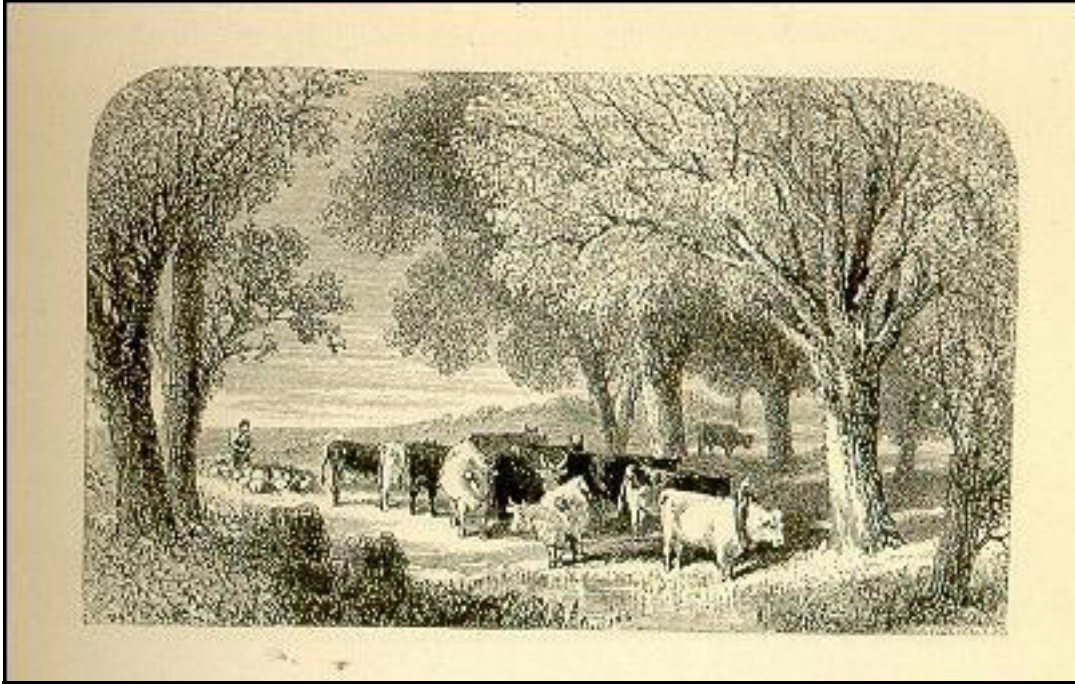


**Literary Hermits Recreating Themselves in Their Chapel:
Whittier-Holmes-Emerson-Motley-Alcott-Hawthorne-Lowell-Agassiz-Longfellow**

1853-1854

1853-1854

 [Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's](#) POEMS:



When an English acquaintance wrote the poet, unhelpfully suggesting without amplification that the famous “A Psalm of Life” and “Reaper” had amounted to mere translations from Goethe (LETTERS, Volume III, page 443), Longfellow responded in the negative.



My business, if I have any here to-day, is with the present. The accepted time with God and his cause is the ever-living now.




“Trust no future, however pleasant,
Let the dead past bury its dead;
Act, act in the living present,
Heart within, and God overhead.”

We have to do with the past only as we can make it useful to the present and to the future.

— Frederick Douglass

FULL TEXT OF THE ORATION

 Two municipal housing issues, the 1st pleasantly high-rent, the 2d unpleasantly low-rent:

- The doors of [Parker House](#) at 60 School Street in [Boston](#) opened for its upscale clientele. (And these doors’ve evidently been open ever since, for this edifice, now the “Omni Parker House,” lays claim to being the oldest continuously operating hotel in the US of A.)¹⁰⁷

1853-1854

1853-1854

- [Boston](#) began to house its paupers on [Deer Island](#) in [Boston Harbor](#) (where Native American Christian hostages used to be kept to starve while awaiting sale as slaves to the Azores Islands, and where Boston's prisoners would be kept to rot, and Boston's sewage processed).



107. The establishment, which has since positioned itself as “Boston’s Literary Hotel,” would be distinguished more by the quality of its lowly help than by that of its uppity clientele: although a prominent actor named [John Wilkes Booth](#) would indeed stop overnight in 1865 while on a journey toward the District of Columbia, during 1912/1913 the establishment would employ [Hô Chí Minh](#) in its bakeshop, and in the early 1940s a busboy named Malcolm Little ([Malcolm X](#)).

The founder [Harvey D. Parker](#) would pioneer the deployment of the term “scrod” to describe a fish dish that might be cod but maybe was instead halibut, or any other young whitefish being sold on the docks that morning. His hotel would be the venue for the creation of Boston Cream Pie (Massachusetts’s official dessert), would pioneer the Parker House Roll (appropriate for Boston both because shaped like a purse and due to its ability to absorb an infinite amount of real butter), would be the 1st hotel in Boston to boast hot and cold running water (although subsequent to the Tremont House’s installation of indoor plumbing and a rooftop water tank, with toilets on the ground floor and customer bathing in the basement), and the 1st in Boston to have a powered passenger elevator (although subsequent to the 1857 steam-powered passenger elevator in the 5-story department store of E.W. Haughtwhat & Company on Broadway in Manhattan, the 1859 passenger elevator in the Fifth Avenue Hotel in Manhattan, and the 1868 rope elevator designed by Otis Tufts for the American House on Hanover Street in Boston).

1853-1854

1853-1854



Literary Hermits Recreating Themselves in Their Chapel:

Whittier-Holmes-Emerson-Motley-Alcott-Hawthorne-Lowell-Agassiz-Longfellow

An [Irish](#) priest, to an immigrant: “[Boston](#) is a dreadful place for making Protestants of people, and you must be careful, especially of the children, or they will get them from you.”

A group of German Jews separated from the Ohabai Shalom congregation in [Boston](#), which was mainly Polish in background, to form the Temple Israel congregation.

A man with a horn, who called himself Gabriel, was making quite a nuisance of himself in beautiful downtown [Boston](#). He would attract attention with his horn and then deliver a nearly incoherent quasipolitical speech which would wind up with his passing the hat. (Eventually collections would fall off, this man would be unable to pay for his lodgings, and he would take ship for Santo Domingo where, after being detained as a disturber of the police, he would die in jail.)



Perhaps to protect the tree from men with horns, Mayor J.V.C. Smith ordered that an iron grillwork fence be installed around the [Great Elm \(*Ulmus americana*\)](#) on [Boston Common](#).¹⁰⁸


THE OLD ELM
THIS TREE HAS BEEN STANDING
HERE FOR AN UNKNOWN PERIOD. IT IS
BELIEVED TO HAVE EXISTED BEFORE THE
SETTLEMENT OF BOSTON, BEING FULLY
GROWN IN 1722, EXHIBITED MARKS OF OLD
AGE IN 1792, AND WAS NEARLY DESTROYED
BY A STORM IN 1832. PROTECTED BY AN
IRON ENCLOSURE IN 1854.
J.V.C. SMITH, MAYOR.

108. One account has it that after 1658 and before 1674 one Hezekiah Henchman had transplanted this [Great Elm](#) from the North End.

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

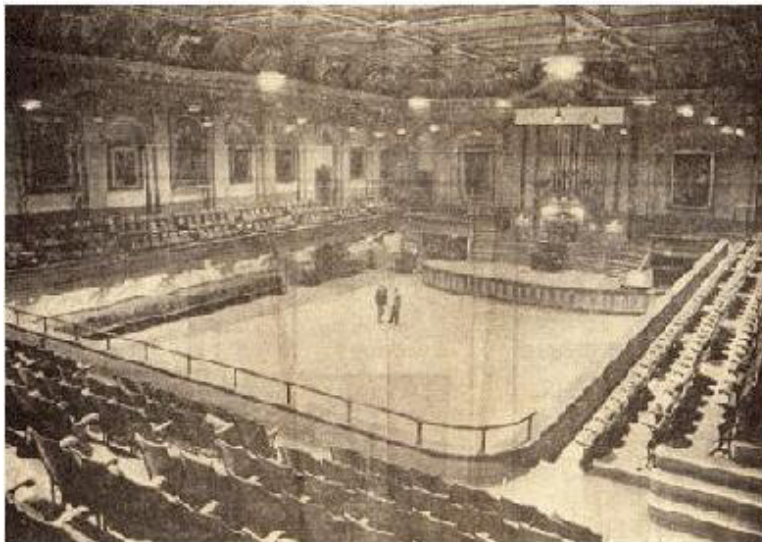
1853-1854

1853-1854

 A piano manufacturer in [Worcester, Massachusetts](#) advertised the firm's wares:



On the site formerly occupied by the Waldo Mansion, a Mechanics Hall was completed. This edifice would proudly record that it had hosted lecturers such as John B. Gough, Rufus Choate, President McKinley, ex-Vice President Stevenson, the Honorable James R. Garfield, President Taft, President [Theodore?] Roosevelt, and President [Woodrow Wilson](#).



Hey, didn't [Henry Thoreau](#) also lecture there? –Or, was that at Worcester's Washburn Hall?

1853-1854

1853-1854




In this year approximately 30,000 American [tourists](#) departed for destinations other than [Mexico](#) or Canada, by way of contrast with a figure from the year 1954 of approximately 1,000,000 such tourists. Here is Honolulu, [Hawaiian Islands](#), a view upslope and a view downslope, in a couple of lithographs prepared in this year by Paul Emmert for the firm of Britton & Rey in San Francisco:



Having been rebuffed in the previous year as the official emissary of the London Missionary Society to the island of [Madagascar](#), the Reverend [William Ellis](#) returned from the island of Mauritius to Madagascar for a 2d try. He was again rebuffed (this may have had to do with French influence on the island).


1853-1854

1853-1854

 [Arnold Henri Guyot](#) was appointed Professor of [Geology](#) and Physical Geography at the College of New Jersey. You can see, in Guyot Hall at [Princeton University](#), the field toilet kit he used to carry on his mountain explorations.



The Reverend Professor [Edward Hitchcock](#), likewise a [geologist](#), left off being President of [Amherst College](#), retaining his teaching role. During his presidency he had personally conducted the worship in the college church.

 Sir [George Back](#) was made an honorary doctor of civil law at [Oxford University](#).



1853-1854

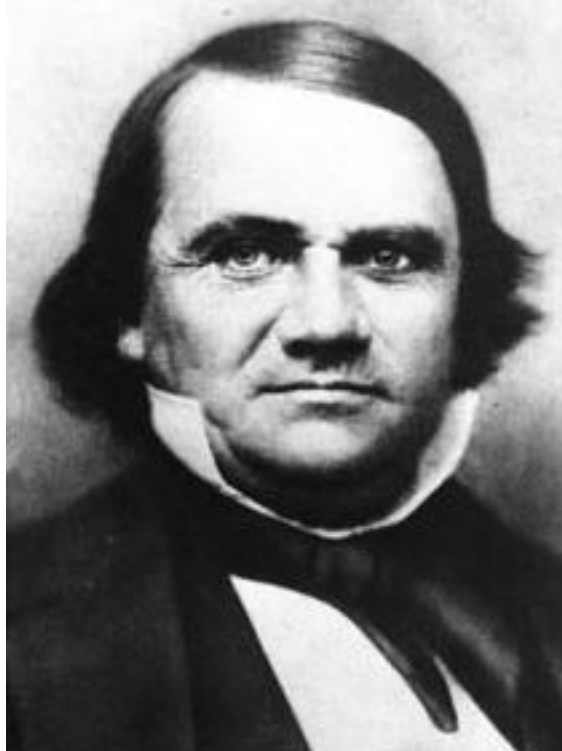
1853-1854



**Literary Hermits Recreating Themselves in Their Chapel:
Whittier-Holmes-Emerson-Motley-Alcott-Hawthorne-Lowell-Agassiz-Longfellow**

1853-1854**1853-1854**

Anti-slavery, and therefore an opponent of the [Fugitive Slave Law](#), [Richard Josiah Hinton](#) assisted in the organization of the [Republican Party](#). The party took its name from the “Democratic-Republican” party founded by Thomas Jefferson (that party had dropped “Republican” from its name in 1828). Prominent in the Republican platform was the opposition to the extension of slavery. The issue of slavery, and this year’s [Kansas-Nebraska Act](#) proposed by [Illinois](#) Senator [Stephen A. Douglas](#) as a way of repealing the [Missouri Compromise](#) and extending slavery, contributed to the defection of many Whigs to the new party.

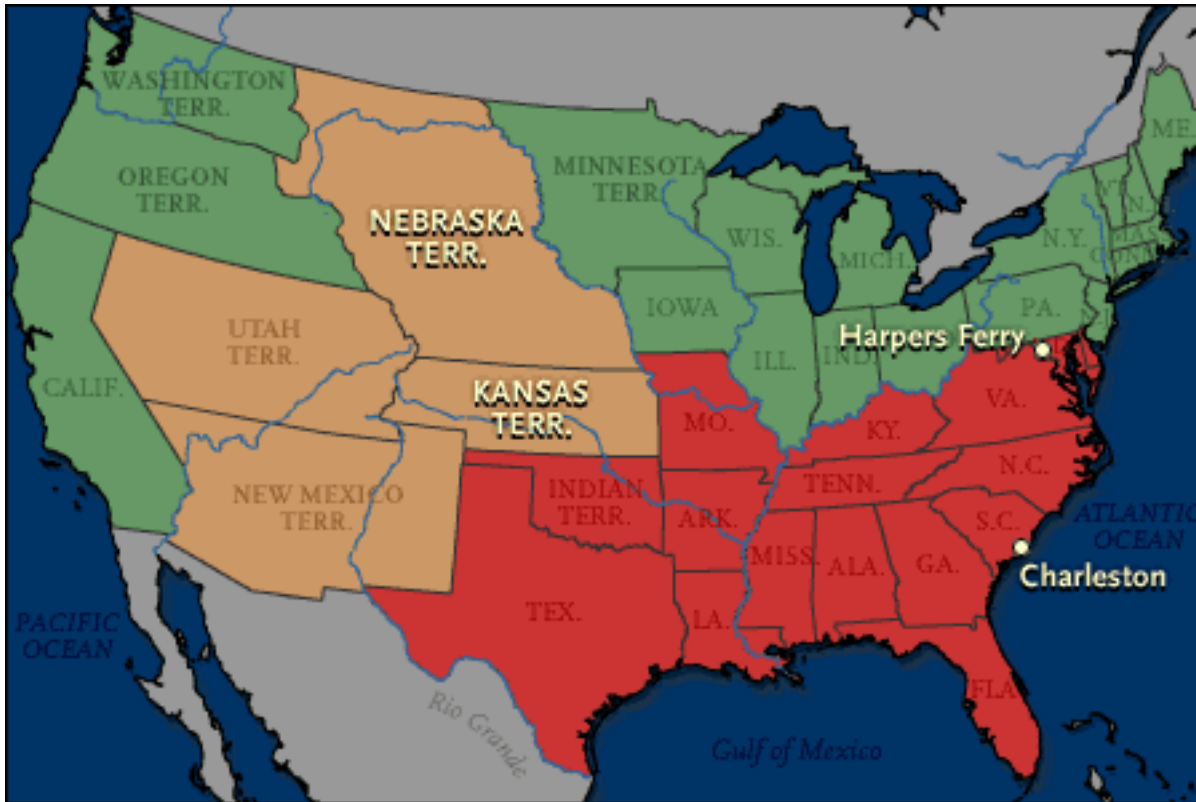


[Waldo Emerson](#)’s attitude toward the [Kansas/Nebraska Act](#) was: “the question is properly, whether slavery or whether freedom shall be abolished.”¹⁰⁹

109. Slater, Joseph, ed. THE CORRESPONDENCE OF EMERSON AND CARLYLE. New York: Columbia University Press, 1964, page 499.

1853-1854

1853-1854



[Frederick Douglass](#) made a modest proposal about [“Bleeding Kansas”](#):¹¹⁰ It has been alleged by Michael Goldfield in “The Color of Politics in the United States: White Supremacy as the Main Explanation for the Peculiarities of American Politics from Colonial Times to the Present” (in LaCapra, Dominick, ed. THE BOUNDS OF RACE: PERSPECTIVES ON HEGEMONY AND RESISTANCE. Ithaca NY: Cornell UP, 1991, page 124) that:



Until the early 1850s when Joseph Wedemeyer and other radical followers of [Karl Marx](#) who understood the importance of abolition for the white workers, gained some small influence in the white workers’ movement, labor leaders as a whole were more interested in freedom from Afro-Americans than in freedom for them. The rallying cry of Free Soilism in 1845 was the Wilmot Proviso, which barred slavery from the new territories, but suggested that land rights should be reserved for whites only. Such an approach was counterposed to the more radical and more realistic approach offered by Douglass for [Kansas](#) in 1854. Douglass argued that 1,000 free black homesteading families settling in [Kansas](#) would put up a “wall of living fire” through which slavery could not pass.

[Frederick Douglass](#) delivered an address “The Claims of the Negro Ethnologically Considered” before the literary societies of Western Reserve College in Rochester, New York, in which he attacked the use of the scientism of his day as a legitimator for racism. Weighing craniological and physiological similarities against differences, he proposed that from a purely scientific standpoint humans constituted one grouping, which should not have been a difficult conclusion for his audience to accept, since, as we now know, were the same

110. You will notice an amazing thing here. We’ve got “Douglas” and “Douglass” in the very same data element!




1853-1854


1853-1854

standards for speciation to be applied to the pongid branch of mammals as are routinely applied to, say, beetles, we would be forced to recognize that there is only one existing species of pongids, of which chimpanzees, humans, and the recently discovered gorillas would constitute at most differing local races. Nevertheless, at the end of all this rationalization Douglass proclaimed it all to be quite literally of no significance. For even if none of this turned out to be the case, he indicated, even if anatomical differences were someday by someone demonstrated to far outweigh similarities, it would never follow that one human group ought to hold another human group in contempt as inferior beings. The title to freedom, liberty, and knowledge he held to depend not at all upon any “natural” realities, but instead upon the law of “the Courts of Heaven.” What difference does difference make, when it comes to human rights? None whatsoever. One is reminded of our contemporary “Calvin and Hobbes” cartoon in which Hobbes the Tiger destroys Calvin the boy terror’s incipient Social Darwinism by informing him that living things were obviously put upon the face of this planet in order to chase and tear one another, and to eat one another alive. (Chastened of his naturalism, Calvin goes home, and at the end of the strip he is locking all the doors and turning on all the lights.)

[Abraham Lincoln](#) re-entered politics in opposition to the [Kansas/Nebraska Act](#) and was elected to the [Illinois](#) legislature, but declined this seat in order to try to become a US Senator. The Act succeeded in sweeping aside the Missouri Compromise, which had been restricting the expansion of slavery. With a nod to Southern power, the federal government was placing the volatile issue of slavery into the hands of those settling the new territories. “The people” will decide, by “popular vote,” whether to be “free” or “slave.”

 The [Reverend Nehemiah Adams](#) offered A SOUTHSIDE VIEW OF SLAVERY (Boston: T.R. Marvin) as a rejoinder to [UNCLE TOM’S CABIN](#) (just so you’ll know, the Reverend Adams happened to be a white man, and happened to have what we’d be tempted to term a white man’s tolerant attitude toward race slavery).

 [John James Audubon](#)’s THE QUADRUPEDS OF AMERICA began to be published.

 Jesse Hoover moved from Ohio with his father Eli. They traveled by river boat and covered wagon to a farm outside West Branch, Iowa, a small town founded by [Quakers](#).

[HERBERT HOOVER](#)

During this year 84 certificates of membership from very divergent sources would be received by the Iowa [Quakers](#). When the Red Cedar Monthly Meeting (“[Springdale](#)”) became overcrowded these new immigrants moved on to the northwest, and for many years the fertile divide between the Iowa River and Cedar River to the northwest of Springdale would be known as “Quaker Ridge.”

The immigration into Iowa the present season is astonishing and unprecedented. For miles and miles, day after day, the prairies of Illinois are lined with cattle and wagons, pushing on towards this prosperous State. At a point beyond Peoria, during a single month, seventeen hundred and forty-three wagons had passed, and all for Iowa.

1853-1854

1853-1854

How very different the peaceable settlement of Iowa was, as above, from the warlike settlement that was going on simultaneously in the [Kansas Territory](#)! [Amos Adams Lawrence](#), co-founder of the emigration company concept, has a town there named after him; after [Kansas](#) would become “[Bleeding Kansas](#)” such emigration companies would be supplying arms and ammunition to their anti-slavery settlers. The city of Topeka was founded by 5 [antislavery](#) activists. Five of [John Brown](#)’s sons went to the [Kansas Territory](#), taking with them 2 small shotguns and a revolver and staking claims 8 or 10 miles from [Osawatimie](#).



THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

The beginning of publication of the Leavenworth [Herald](#), 1st newspaper in the [Kansas Territory](#).

[Thaddeus Hyatt](#) became actively involved in the abolitionist movement after Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act. The law, which mandated that the question of legalizing slavery in the [Kansas Territory](#) be settled by the territory’s voters, would spark a race between proslavery and antislavery factions to move to Kansas and tip the ballot boxes. These factions would clash in what would come to be regarded as “Bleeding Kansas.” Several state-level committees would be formed to provide aid to antislavery settlers, including the New York Kansas League of which [Hyatt](#) was president (during this year, also, he would be awarded Patent No. 11,695 for a “Vault-Light”). [Hyatt](#) and William Barnes simultaneously but separately embarked on efforts to organize counties in upstate New York to participate in packing the [Kansas Territory](#) with antislavery voters.

Meanwhile the South was packing the territory with armed proslavery settlers. You do understand what was going on here, don’t you? –The antislavery North and the proslavery South, locked in opposition to one another in the US federal Senate, had determined that they would fight a [proxy war](#) in this territory, by pouring in armed proslavery activists and armed antislavery activists as sponsored “settlers.” They would kill each other and kill each other, and otherwise dominate and subdue each other, until in the end one or the other side in this proxy struggle would succeed in packing the ballot boxes sufficiently full — and the new state of [Kansas](#) would then emerge in the form of two extra votes in the US Senate for the proslavery South, that would allow the proslavery South to dominate the nation, or else emerge as two extra votes in the US Senate for the antislavery North, which would allow the antislavery North to dominate the nation. Study up on [proxy war](#), it isn’t just something that happened to Vietnam.

1853-1854

1853-1854



[Parker Pillsbury](#) served as an emissary from the American Anti-Slavery Society to Great Britain, residing there with the surgeon John Estlin and his abolitionist daughter Mary Estlin (both John and Mary would become involved in Pillsbury's problematic correspondence with the British activist [Louis-Alexis Chamerovzow](#)).



During the [Anthony Burns](#) case, after Transcendentalist poets and preachers had attacked the Boston courthouse, the building had been converted into a sort of armored slavepen, in that it was guarded by a detachment of [U.S. Marines](#), and 2 artillery companies with loaded cannons and with fixed bayonets on their rifles, as well as by the US Marshall's guard consisting of "a gang of about one-hundred and twenty men, the lowest villains in the community, keepers of brothels, bullies, blacklegs, convicts...." Not even the judges, let alone the jurors, the witnesses, and the litigant attorneys, were being permitted inside the courthouse without first passing a cordon of men 5 men deep, and proving their right to be there.



Boston abolitionists had offered the [slavemaster](#) of Burns the sum of \$1,200 in return for a document in



1853-1854

1853-1854

[manumission](#), but had been refused.



Nothing in the whole record of the Burns affair is more striking to a modern audience or at first more off-putting than the apparent incapacity of even the most committed of the radicals to express a direct, authentic outrage on Burns's personal behalf. Phillips's unelaborated reference to his "suffering" is as close as they come. The evil that Parker undertakes to agitate against is the threat to the civil liberties of Northern white men. There is an oddity about this argument even on the supposition that it consciously appeals to self-interest ... if they are to be made to fight again, it must probably be for the same thing [their own personal liberty] and not ... for ... the right of another man than oneself to be free.

WENDELL PHILLIPS

THEODORE PARKER

At some point in the year, in regard to the enforcement of the federal Fugitive Slave Act in regard to the Burns case, the Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) would deliver a sermon entitled "Massachusetts in Mourning."



After British abolitionists had "purchased" his [manumission](#) papers, redeeming him from the danger of re-enslavement under the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, [William Wells Brown](#) returned to reside in the Boston area. While abroad he had created CLOTEL, which would be the 1st novel by an American of color, and he had ST. DOMINGO, a work indicative of growing antislavery militancy, in process. (He had also produced a travelogue complete with a rolled 24-scene [panorama](#), and would produce a play, a compilation of antislavery songs, and finally 3 volumes of black history.)


ABOLITIONISM

1853-1854

1853-1854

 [Daniel Gookin](#)'s INDIAN CHILDREN PUT TO SERVICE 1676 was published in the New England Historical and Genealogical Register VIII:270-273.



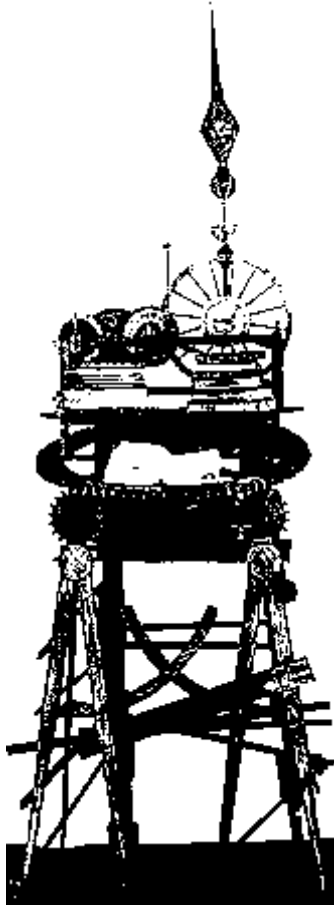
 In this period it was common to regard extraordinary physical performance as a Native American racial characteristic, to the extent that at some fairgrounds there were races for endurance and speed which were restricted to Native American athletes only. A Seneca tribesman named Albert Smith was regarded as the current dominant such “pedestrian.” At this point John Grindall and Mickey Free went to Buffalo, New York specifically to test themselves, as white men, against these Native American athletes. Mickey Free beat a Native American named Armstrong in the speed quarter-mile, in 56 seconds, and then tested himself against Native American runners named Burton, Armstrong, [Louis “Red Jacket” Bennett](#), and an aging runner named Steeprock who had been dominant during the 1840s, in a 5-mile endurance race over 500 3-foot hurdles. Burton won. There was then a similar 7-mile race, which was awarded to a Native American named Sundown after the Native American runner Albert Smith was revealed to have knocked down one of the 700 hurdles without going back and righting it. There was also a 4.42-mile race in which Grindall defeated Sundown and a 10-mile race in which Albert Smith defeated Grindall. In none of these longer contests could Red Jacket manage to get among the winners.¹¹¹

1853-1854

1853-1854



At the age of 16, in Wisconsin, [John Muir](#) was becoming greatly interested in literature and poetry. No Luddite his reputation to the contrary notwithstanding, he was beginning to construct clocks, barometers, hydrometers, table saws, and other such pieces of technology.



Another expression of a Luddistic kind, also contemporary with the [Luddites](#), was Romanticism, beginning with [William Blake](#) and [William Wordsworth](#) and [George Gordon, Lord Byron](#) particularly, who like the machine-breakers were repulsed by the Satanic mills and the getting-and-spending of the past. (The identity was so immediate for Byron at least that at one point he was even moved to write, "Down with all kings but King Ludd!") This Romanticism, and particularly its attachment to an unspoiled machine-free nature, was echoed across the Atlantic by [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#), [Edgar Allan Poe](#), and [Herman Melville](#), among literary lions, and notably by [Waldo Emerson](#) and [Henry David Thoreau](#) and their great heir, [John Muir](#). Muir, one feels, would have been a Luddite given half the chance, and there is in his tirades against the developers of the West – "These Temple destroyers, devotees of ravaging commercialism, seem to have a perfect contempt for Nature, and instead of lifting their eyes to the

111. Having been built in Rockland ME by the firm of Deacon George Thomas in the previous year, the clipper [Red Jacket](#) (named in honor of Headman Sagoyewatha of the Seneca) in this year sailed under master Asa Eldridge from New-York dockside to Liverpool dockside in but 13 days, 1 hour, and 25 minutes. This is still the record.

1853-1854

1853-1854

God of the mountains, lift them to the Almighty Dollar" – the taste of the acrid anger found in the Luddite letters. ...What purpose does this machine serve? What problem has become so great that it needs this solution? Is this invention nothing but, as Thoreau put it, an improved means to an unimproved end?





➡ Things having more or less quieted down on the political front, the [Harvard Corporation](#) was able to offer the Reverend Professor [Francis Bowen](#), who had up to this point been in the History Department, its Alford Chair of Moral Philosophy.


➡ [Hugh Miller's AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY: MY SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLMASTERS; OR, THE STORY OF MY EDUCATION.](#)

1853-1854

1853-1854

 **John Henry Clifford** again became attorney general of Massachusetts (as he had been 1849-1853, and this time he would serve until 1858).

 In Germany, the 1st volume of Jacob Ludwig Carl Grimm and Wilhelm Carl Grimm's *DAS DEUTSCHE WÖRTERBUCH* appeared.

 **Robert FitzRoy** devoted himself to weather prediction. He set up a storm warning system for mariners and invented the FitzRoy barometer, but did not discover the ENSO oscillation:

ENSO

	Southern Oscillation	South Pacific current reversal	Indonesian monsoon	Australian droughts	Indian monsoon	Annual Nile flood
1847	absent	cold La Niña	adequate	adequate	adequate	adequate
1848	absent	cold La Niña	adequate	adequate	adequate	adequate
1849	absent	cold La Niña	adequate	adequate	adequate	adequate
1850	strong	warm El Niño moderate	drought	drought	deficient	quite weak
1851	absent	cold La Niña	adequate	adequate	adequate	adequate
1852	moderate	warm El Niño moderate	adequate	adequate	deficient SBM	quite weak
1853	moderate	cold La Niña	drought	adequate	deficient	adequate
1854	strong	warm El Niño moderate	adequate	drought	adequate	adequate

The southern ocean / atmosphere "seesaw" links to periodic Indonesian east monsoon droughts, Australian droughts, deficient Indian summer monsoons, and deficient Ethiopian monsoon rainfall causing weak annual Nile floods. This data is presented from Tables 6.2-6.3 of Quinn, William H. "A study of Southern Oscillation-related climatic activity for AD 622-1900 incorporating Nile River flood data," pages 119-49 in Diaz, Henry F. and Vera Markgraf, eds. *EL NIÑO: HISTORICAL AND PALEOCLIMATIC ASPECTS OF THE SOUTHERN OSCILLATION*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992.

1853-1854

1853-1854

➡ What remained of the Caddo confederation, the 1st Native Americans in what is now the USA to have been confronted by adventuresome Europeans (the De Soto expedition below) were at this point being relocated, from their ancestral homelands, onto a reservation in Texas.





1853-1854

1853-1854

F. TODD SMITH

THE CADDO INDIANS:

TRIBES AT THE CONVERGENCE OF EMPIRES, 1542-1854

(COLLEGE STATION TX: TEXAS A&M UP, 1995)

Reviewed by Michael James Foret, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

In *THE CADDO INDIANS*, F. Todd Smith has done something very old, but at the same time something new and exciting. Like an old-fashioned historian, he wrote a narrative history. What's new? He wrote a narrative history of the Caddo Indians and their relations with the Europeans and Americans who settled the Red River Valley of present-day Louisiana and eastern Texas. Like Daniel Usner in *INDIANS, SETTLERS, AND SLAVES*,¹¹² Smith wonders in his introduction that historians have so long neglected such an interesting subject. The Caddo were among the first natives in North America contacted by Europeans—during the Soto expedition—and they occupied a strategic location that put them at various times between various combinations and permutations of New Spain, New France, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, the United States, and other Indian groups, a position that allowed them to “play off” the peoples around them, although Smith does not use that exact term.

To explain this neglect, Smith points to “the bias of American historians toward English colonization over the contemporaneous history of those areas once controlled by France and Spain” (p. 4). He makes it clear at the same time that he is writing Indian-centered history — that is, not a general history of Indian-white relations, but the history of the three peoples that made up the Caddo confederacies, from first contact until the establishment of their Texas reserve in 1854. That history involves two main themes. First, the Caddo confederacies were able to play off the European (French and Spanish) and Euroamerican (Texan and U.S.) powers well into the nineteenth century. Second, close contact with Europeans led to a dwindling population and to the Caddos’ becoming dependent on Europeans, first for goods, then for food as well.

The Caddo confederacies have a history that should be told and that should be studied by historians who want to make sense of American history. In Chapter 1, as is common among such histories, Smith begins with an overview of Caddoan prehistory and culture. The Caddoan confederacies lived in what is today Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, but there is also a Caddoan language group that includes Plains tribes such as the Arikaras, Pawnees, Wichitas, and Kichais. The “Caddos” as a people included three confederacies, although membership changed over time between the fifteen

112. *INDIANS, SETTLERS, AND SLAVES IN A FRONTIER EXCHANGE ECONOMY: THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI VALLEY BEFORE 1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 2-5.



1853-1854

1853-1854

or so towns, known as the Kadohadacho, Natchitoches, and Hasinai. Smith explains the basic religious tenets of the Caddos, as well as their civil government, which probably reflect Mississippian survivals. The Caddos were expert agriculturalists, which Smith argues accounted for their large population and their ability to retain independence from the Europeans for so long. Caddo contact with Soto's expedition was brief, and Smith discusses it briefly in this chapter.

The rest of the book covers the period from 1686 to 1854; it is divided into chapters (two through nine) based mainly on the changing circumstances of the Caddos, which were dictated by the shifting Euroamerican presence in Caddo country and on their borders. The Caddos were able to retain their numbers, even at the levels they did, and their independence in part because Caddo country was not a frontier of settlement until after 1800: Louisiana and Texas were both tactical colonies placed where they were to protect vital European possessions (Canada and Mexico), and neither attracted much settlement. The establishment of Natchitoches and then the Nasonite Post in the early part of the eighteenth century made Caddo country a pivot, if not of empire, of trade and diplomacy, and the Caddos made the most of it. A series of remarkable Caddo leaders such as Bernardino, Tinhouen, Bigotes, Dehahuit, and Iesh exercised great political and diplomatic skills, and some of the Caddo leaders were among the most respected native leaders of their day, at a time when trade, diplomacy, and war could bring together such diverse allies and enemies as the Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Delawares, Kickapoos, Alabama-Koasatis, Osages, Apaches, Comanches, and Quapaws.

Dealing with the Europeans, of course, had to be part of any such considerations. In this one part of the world, at least, France was more powerful than Spain, and the story of just how that came to be is one of the most interesting chapters in North American colonial history. Ironically, even after Louisiana became a Spanish colony after the Seven Years' War, a frontier remained between Louisiana and Texas, as Louisiana fell under the jurisdiction of the viceroyalty of Havana, while Texas continued to be administered from Mexico City.

The Caddos were able to maintain a play-off system later than any other eastern tribes because of a series of episodes that kept the various governments hesitant to challenge the balance of power in the region, and the Caddos were at the center of that balance. First there was the confusion over the Louisiana-Texas border after the Louisiana Purchase, followed by the turmoil of the War of 1812 and the Creek Red Stick revolt. Mexico won its independence from Spain shortly after that, but then the Texas revolutions broke out, followed by the creation of the short-lived Republic of Texas, which was nonetheless significant for the Caddos, because its Indian policies might have made even Andrew Jackson's policies look humane by comparison. Even after the annexation of Texas things remained unsettled, however, as the circumstances of annexation led to Texas' public lands not coming under the immediate jurisdiction of the federal government. Finally, by 1854, the Caddos became just another small, powerless tribe to be pushed here and there by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Although Smith is not writing about a very large area, at least on a continental scale, it is indeed a region "at the convergence of empires," and working in the history of these empires is not easy. Historians have not written about the Caddos and some of the other tribes of the Southeast partly because many of the sources are not in English and thus not accessible to many U.S. historians: Smith notes in the introduction that

1853-1854

1853-1854

the only published history of the Caddos has almost nothing about the Caddos before 1803 (p. 4). Although some French and Spanish archival sources and published primary sources on Texas and Louisiana have been translated, and Smith has used these to great effect, he has also used Spanish-language materials, archival and published, to write this history.

Although I like what is here, there are a few topics and sources that I think the author should have included. Although Smith makes playing off the peoples and states around the Caddos a major theme of the book, he does not make much of the idea of play-off systems; I have absorbed enough anthropology to think that he should at least make reference to other play-off systems and how and why they did or did not work—for instance, Daniel Richter's discussion in *THE ORDEAL OF THE LONGHOUSE*.¹¹³ In the same way, Smith writes about dependency, without calling it that directly or citing any other discussions of this topic, even though he might easily have cited Richard White's work on nations to the east and northwest of the Caddos, the Choctaws and Pawnees, especially because the Choctaws have a least cameo appearances in the book.¹¹⁴

Likewise, the notes and bibliography miss at least a couple of works that the author should have included. Although I can understand why he might not have highlighted it, Smith should at least have made reference to Ross Phares' biography of St. Denis, a crucial European figure in Caddo history, if only to explain why he doesn't make much of it.¹¹⁵ I also think, especially given that some of the Caddo tribes maintained their population levels longer than other groups in the region, that he should have included information about the Caddos and neighboring groups provided by Peter Wood's excellent article on Southeastern demography in *POWHATAN'S MANTLE*.¹¹⁶

I have a few other quibbles—for instance, I do not think that Jackson's removal policy represented a dramatic change in U.S. policy (p. 103)—but overall, *THE CADDOS* is an excellent work. The book has six well-done maps, which are crucial to keeping up with the different groups as they change configurations and places through the years. The book has extensive endnotes and a bibliography, a combination that I think should be standard for history books today, even with book prices as they are.

The Caddos and their territory lay between several zones of convergence in North America. They occupied the borders of ecological zones—that is, the Plains and the Mississippi Valley. Their culture was basically that of the eastern woodlands, but some of their near neighbors were of the Plains cultures. And they certainly occupied the “convergence of empires.” But the Caddos and other groups also occupy frontiers between history and anthropology, between “U.S.” or “American” history and other histories. They have, until very recently, occupied the academic equivalent of the “neutral ground” between Texas and Louisiana. F. Todd Smith's book goes a long way toward opening up that neutral ground for our exploration. I would hope that colleagues outside of Indian history, borderlands, and Texas and Louisiana colonial history do not fail to discover what F. Todd Smith has

113. Daniel Richter, *THE ORDEAL OF THE LONGHOUSE: THE PEOPLES OF THE IROQUOIS LEAGUE IN THE ERA OF EUROPEAN COLONIZATION* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), especially 2-4.

114. Richard White, *THE ROOTS OF DEPENDENCY: SUBSISTENCE, ENVIRONMENT, AND SOCIAL CHANGE AMONG THE CHOCTAWS, PAWNEES, AND NAVAHOES* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983).

115. Ross Phares, *CAVALIER IN THE WILDERNESS: THE STORY OF THE EXPLORER AND TRADER, LOUIS JUCHEREAU DE SAINT DENIS* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952).


116. Peter Wood, “The Changing Population of the Colonial South: An Overview by Race and Region, 1685-1790,” in Wood, Gregory Waselkov, and M. Thomas Hatley, *POWHATAN'S MANTLE: INDIANS IN THE COLONIAL SOUTHEAST* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 35-103.

1853-1854

1853-1854

uncovered here.

Copyright (c) 1996 by H-Net, all rights reserved. This work may be copied for non-profit educational use if proper credit is given to the author and the list.

 Jacob Hamblin, a missionary to the Indians in southern Utah, had acquired repute among them as a person of special powers and turned this toward the smoothing of relations between them and the newly arriving hordes of white people.

[Benjamin Gilbert Ferris](#), a Swedenborgian, had most definitely not gotten along with the [Mormons](#) of Utah during the 6 months he had spent there as the US Secretary to that Territory, and soon resigned: “He could not suppress his abhorrence [*sic*] of Mormonism nor tolerate its influences, nor accept its devotees as his neighbors, and resigned his high position, thus sacrificing great possibilities in his very promising public career.” In this year his record of his experiences appeared as UTAH AND THE MORMONS. THE HISTORY, GOVERNMENT, DOCTRINES, CUSTOMS, AND PROSPECTS OF THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS. FROM PERSONAL OBSERVATION DURING A SIX MONTHS’ RESIDENCE AT GREAT SALT LAKE CITY (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 82 Beekman Street).



UTAH AND THE MORMONS

1853-1854

1853-1854

On the banks of *Payzhehooetez* Hazel Run south of the Minnesota River, 5 miles upstream from the Yellow Medicine Agency, [Marpiyawicasta Man of the Clouds](#), his brother *Mazakutemane* Walks Shooting Iron, and their band of Dakotas joined a “Hazelwood Republic” of “Christian Indians” sponsored by the Reverend Riggs but, in the eyes of the creators of civilization, failed to create a satisfactory imitation of civilization.¹¹⁷

We had such a respectable community of young men, who had cut off their hair and exchanged the dress of the Dakotas for that of the white men, and whose wants now were very different from the annuity Dakotas generally, that we took measures to organize them into a separate band, which we called the Hazelwood Republic. They elected their President for two years, and other needed officers, and were without any difficulty recognized by the agent as a separate band. A number of these men were half-breeds, who were, by the organic law of Minnesota, citizens. The Constitution of the State provided that Indians also might become citizens by satisfying a court of their progress in civilization. A few years after the organization of this civilized community, I took eight or ten of the men to meet the court at Mankato; but the court deciding that a knowledge of English was necessary to comply with the laws of the State, only one of my men was passed into citizenship.

In the Minnesota Territory, [President Millard Fillmore](#) was escorted on “The Grand Tour” from St. Anthony “Place where the Water Falls” around Lake Calhoun and Lake Harriet, near the fields of the Dakota bark homes along the lake shore that had made up Marpiyawicasta’s village of Eatonville. This was the package tour that had become known nationwide as the “Fashionable Tour” and it had been taken by, among others, Millard Fillmore and Anthony Trollope and Clara Barton. The journey had been being puffed by James M. Goodhue, the editor of the [Minnesota Pioneer](#), for at least the past 9 years:¹¹⁸

■ [Walter Roy Harding](#). THE DAYS OF [HENRY THOREAU](#): A BIOGRAPHY. NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966; enlarged and corrected edition, NY: Dover, 1982; Princeton NJ: Princeton UP, 1992



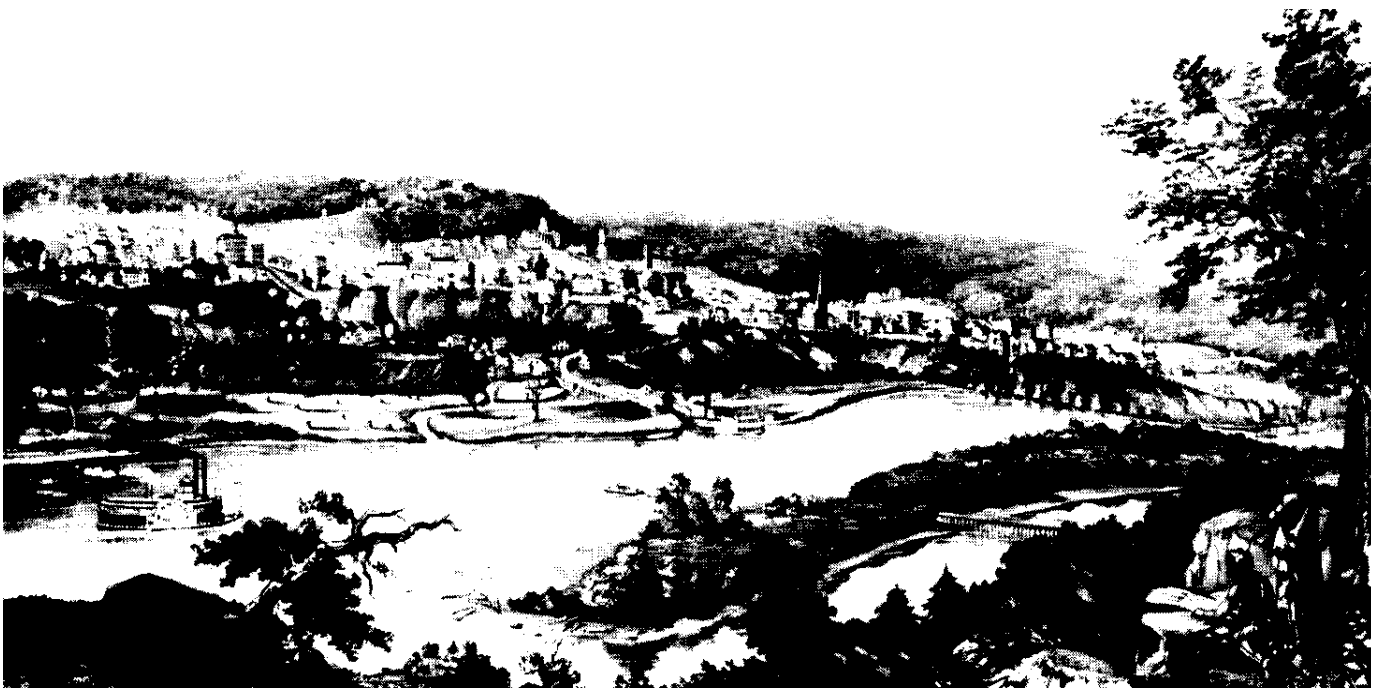
117. Account of the Reverend Riggs.

118. This particular puff is dated July 22, 1852.

1853-1854

1853-1854

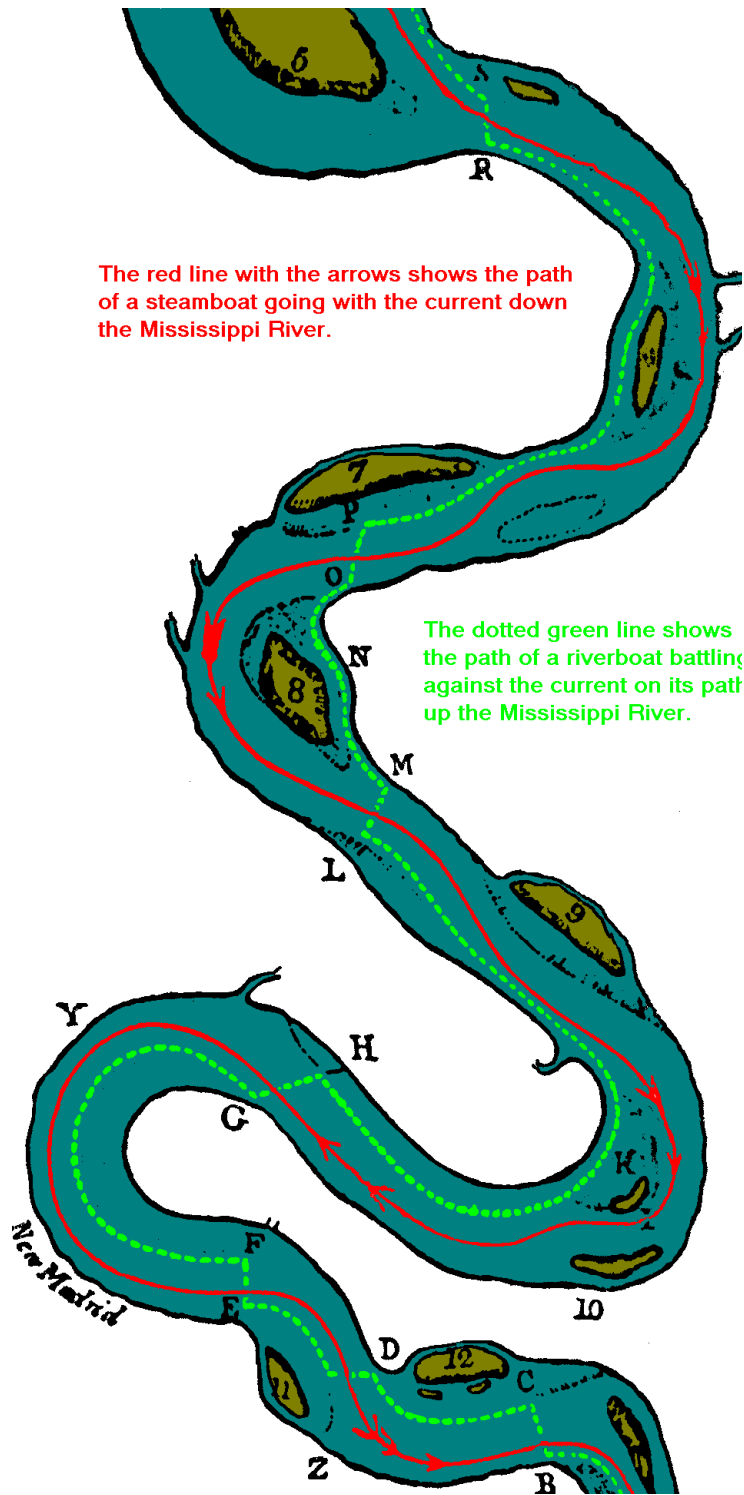
Who that is idle would be caged up between walls of burning brick and mortar, in dog-days, down the river, if at less daily expense, he could be hurried along through the valley of the Mississippi, its shores studded with towns, and farms, flying by islands, prairies, woodlands, bluffs – an ever varied scene of beauty, away up into the land of the wild Dakota, and of cascades and pine forests, and cooling breezes? – Why it is an exhilarating luxury, compared with which, all the fashion and tinsel and parade of your Newports and Saratogas, are utterly insipid.... A month in Minnesota, in dog-days, is worth a whole year anywhere else; and, we confidently look to see the time, when all families of leisure down South, from the Gulf of Mexico along up, will make their regular summer hegira to our Territory, and when hundreds of the opulent from those regions, will build delightful cottages on the borders of our ten thousand lakes and ornament their grounds with all that is tasteful in shrubbery and horticulture, for a summer retreat.



Steamboat arriving at St. Paul “Iminijaska White Rocks,” Minnesota

1853-1854

1853-1854



The red line with the arrows shows the path of a steamboat going with the current down the Mississippi River.

The dotted green line shows the path of a riverboat battling against the current on its path up the Mississippi River.

A tourist puff said that
“the Mississippi flows from the pine to the palm”



1853-1854

1853-1854

"A Review From Professor Ross's Seminar"

WALTER HARDING'S BIOGRAPHY

Chapter 15a (1849-1854) -Thoreau and Emerson's relationship was cooling as Emerson had passed beyond his greatest creative period and was becoming disappointed in Thoreau and other Transcendentalists like Ellery Channing and Jones Very who had "little to show" for their "labors." Thoreau increasingly influenced Emerson in essays like "Culture," "Roots and Imagination" and "Country Life" which were partially derived from conversations between the two men recorded in Emerson's journal. Although their friendship floundered, it never totally dissolved.

Ellery Channing accompanied Thoreau on his walks with greater frequency during a period when Ellery's marriage was falling apart, mainly due to his own irresponsibility, which disgusted Thoreau. Channing's Thoreau biography of twenty years later was characteristically undisciplined and incomplete and wasted an opportunity to further Thoreau's reputation. (HGO Blake's journal achieved much more toward this end when it was published in the 1880s.)

(Robert L. Lace, January-March 1986)

"A Review From Professor Ross's Seminar"

WALTER HARDING'S BIOGRAPHY

Chapter 15b (1853-1854) -In the summer of 1853 Thoreau again visited the Maine woods, this time with his cousin Thatcher and guide Joe Aitteon. Thatcher shot a moose which Thoreau took the opportunity to mismeasure, but he was sickened at the skinning. As his cousin killed for pleasure, for Thoreau it tainted the journey which carried them past Ktaadn and Chesuncook.

Thoreau began to take an interest in social causes such as the anti-slavery movement (he was enraged by the 1851 Fugitive Slave Law) and the plight of the Irish (despite his obvious earlier prejudices.)

With the Anthony Burns case in May of 1854, Thoreau was prompted to cull his journal and created "Slavery in Massachusetts," which was published in Garrison's Liberator on July 21, 1854 and by Greeley's Tribune in August.

Thoreau was disturbed by the hypocrisy he saw in the clergy and in "professional reformers."

Thoreau suffered from recurrent depression in the spring of 1853, possibly from a lack of speaking invitations and his relative failure in the publishing realm.

(Robert L. Lace, January-March 1986)



1853-1854

1853-1854

"A Review From Professor Ross's Seminar"

WALTER HARDING'S BIOGRAPHY

Chapter 16a (1854-1855) WALDEN – by 1852 Thoreau had completed 4 drafts of Walden. At Greeley's suggestion, he sent several excerpts to New York, which were forwarded to Sartain's Union Magazine.

On June 19 and July 22 Greeley "proudly puffed" Thoreau's excerpts in his Tribune.

In July of 1852 "Iron Horse" from the "Sounds" chapter was published in the Union and a month later "A Poet Buying a Farm" from the "Where I Lived" chapter, for which he never received any payment.

In 1853 he wrote the 5th and 6th drafts of WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS, and in March of 1854 completed the 7th and final draft and sent it off to Ticknor & Fields. Fields was extremely impressed and offered Thoreau a 15% royalty rate reserved for "first class authors."

Held up by copyright difficulties in England, the official August 9, 1854 printing consisted of 2000 copies.

Emerson described Thoreau during this time as "the undoubted King of all American lions" walking up and down Concord "in a tremble of great anticipation" of the book's reception.

(Robert L. Lace, January-March 1986)

1853-1854

1853-1854

“A Review From Professor Ross’s Seminar”

WALTER HARDING’S BIOGRAPHY

Chapter 16b -Reviews of Walden generally gave qualified, but sincere praise. Thoreau himself made a personal stylistic evaluation on the inside cover of his manuscript journal for the fall of 1855:

My faults are:

- Paradoxes, — saying just the opposite, — a style which may be imitated.
- Ingenious. Playing with words, — getting the laugh, — not always simple, strong, and broad.
- Using the current phrases and maxims, when I should speak for myself.
- Not always earnest. “In short,” “in fact,” “alas!” etc. Want of conciseness.

Total sales — 2250 copies. Only weeks before his death Thoreau persuaded Ticknor’s to print a second edition. Thoreau tried to capitalize on his relative success by launching a midwestern lecture tour like Emerson, but it never got off the ground as he was not a very talented public speaker and his transcendental humor was too subtle for audiences looking for “humorous lectures.” His “fiery” speeches proved to be his best. After [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) he attracted another important “disciple,” Thomas Cholmondeley. Cholmondely, who became a devoted friend for life, sent Thoreau a 44 volume collection of oriental works and tried in vain to persuade Thoreau to travel to Europe, offering to pay his passage.

(Robert L. Luce, January-March 1986)

JANUARY 1854



Early in this year, [New-York](#) shipowners Howland and Aspinwall approached The Manhattan Life Insurance Company for coverage on a cargo of about 700 coolies they were bringing on the clipper *Sea Witch* from [China](#) to the [Isthmus of Panama](#) (this is the ship that still holds the China-to-New-York record for sailing ships). Since they were valuing these coolies at \$120.⁰⁰ each, the responsible officers wanted to purchase \$84,000.⁰⁰ in life insurance for the group. The minutes of the corporate meetings during this period indicate heated discussions as to whether or not this risk should be taken. In any event, the company finally did issue this policy, which, if it was not the very first, was one of the first group policies ever to be written by an American life insurance carrier. The underwriting was based on certain stipulations, such as that a medical doctor recognized by the crew as responsible for sanitary conditions, food, and other factors affecting the mortality of the cargo be on board during such a voyage. For a premium of \$840.⁰⁰ the company assumed a quarter of the total risk, or \$21,000.⁰⁰ and the balance of the risk was reinsured with four other such companies. Actually, 720 coolies would be packed aboard for this voyage, but within the first 24 hours after raising anchor at Swatow port, three of the men in the cargo managed to jump overboard. During the 65-day voyage, arriving March 31, 1854 in the City of Panama, 11 of the remaining cargo of 717 had died of sundry diseases. Therefore, on April 29, 1854, The Manhattan Life Insurance Company would pay out \$408.⁰⁰, a quarter of the total loss, realizing a net profit of \$432.⁰⁰ on this life policy.



1853-1854


1853-1854

Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) of the USA forcibly “opened” [Japan](#)’s doors to the West by means of the signing of a trade agreement, the Treaty of Kanagawa, with an official of the Shogunate. Exchanges between the two countries would include an American agricultural exhibit managed by Dr. James Morrow, assisted by S. Wells Williams, a Protestant missionary to [China](#). Dried specimens from this initial trip would go to Williams’ boyhood friend, the Harvard College botanist Asa Gray. These specimens would be quickly followed by collections from Charles Wright, who had been working in the North Pacific as botanist on a US Surveying Expedition and would therefore be able to sail directly for [Japan](#) as soon as the existence of this new trade agreement became known.


PLANTS


Diplomatically, he instructed the translator to inform this Japanese official that

Our country has just had a war with a neighboring country, [Mexico](#), and we even attacked and captured its capital. Circumstances may lead your country also into a similar plight.

 January: This month’s issue of [Harper’s New Monthly Magazine](#).

CONSULT THIS ISSUE

 January: [William Cooper Nell](#) was a member of the Massachusetts State Council and a Massachusetts delegate to the National Convention of Colored People of the United States.

 January: [Francis Sales](#), who on account of his health had been trying to resign from [Harvard College](#) for several years, and had been being cozied along from semester to semester by the administration, finally at the age of 84 became simply unable to continue. Professor [Henry Wadsworth Longfellow](#), who had been one of his students, visited this old warhorse in his home:

Called to see Mr. Sales – good old man! He is dying. There he lay, emaciated and sharp, sometimes panting for breath. He clasped both my hands and said in a feeble voice – “Kiss me”

1853-1854

1853-1854

– and then – “Don’t forget me.” I took leave of him forever.



Late 1853 to Early 1854: The “F” version of [Thoreau](#)’s “[WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#)” manuscript (refer to [The Development of a Manuscript](#)). Thoreau’s mobilization of the absurd inverted-Walden tale came about in 1853-1854 while he was trying to explain the provenance of the rim of smooth “paving stones” around the shoreline of the pond:



stones have been shoved up into a ridge by the edge of the ice being driven against it, or as if the sand had washed down and collected against the ice, and there remained when the ice was melted. But the truth ~~seems to be probably~~ is that when there is a thaw or warm rain in midwinter which warms the water ~~in the pond,~~ that portion ~~of the water~~ which penetrates a little way under the frozen shore ~~apparently~~ takes out some of the frost there, and the shore, whether it is sand or pebbles, or stones or sticks, is puffed up in the form of a pent-roof six inches or more high, and under ~~which~~ this there is found to be no frost. Even pretty large rocks and trees, as I have said, are thus actually tripped up or pried over by a force applied beneath Some have been puzzled to tell how the shore became so regularly paved. but I observe that the surrounding hills are remarkably full of the same kind of stones, so that they have been obliged to pile them up in walls on both sides of the railroad cut nearest the pond; and, moreover, that there are most stones where the shore is most abrupt; so that, unfortunately, it is no longer a mystery to me. I detect the paver.



1853-1854

1853-1854



January: The scandal of the new Irish-American racist newspaper, [The Citizen](#), dominated discussion at the Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in Boston. According to Chris L. Nesmith, Thoreau's mention of this newspaper in this period was not a simple derogation, but was instead a complex comment on the abolitionist movement as a whole and upon the role of individual responsibility within that movement. Thoreau was not merely condemning something or someone, but was on his way to telling his audience what they themselves could positively do: they could dissolve their union with these slavemasters and their slavish apologists.

JOHN MITCHEL

HDT

WHAT?

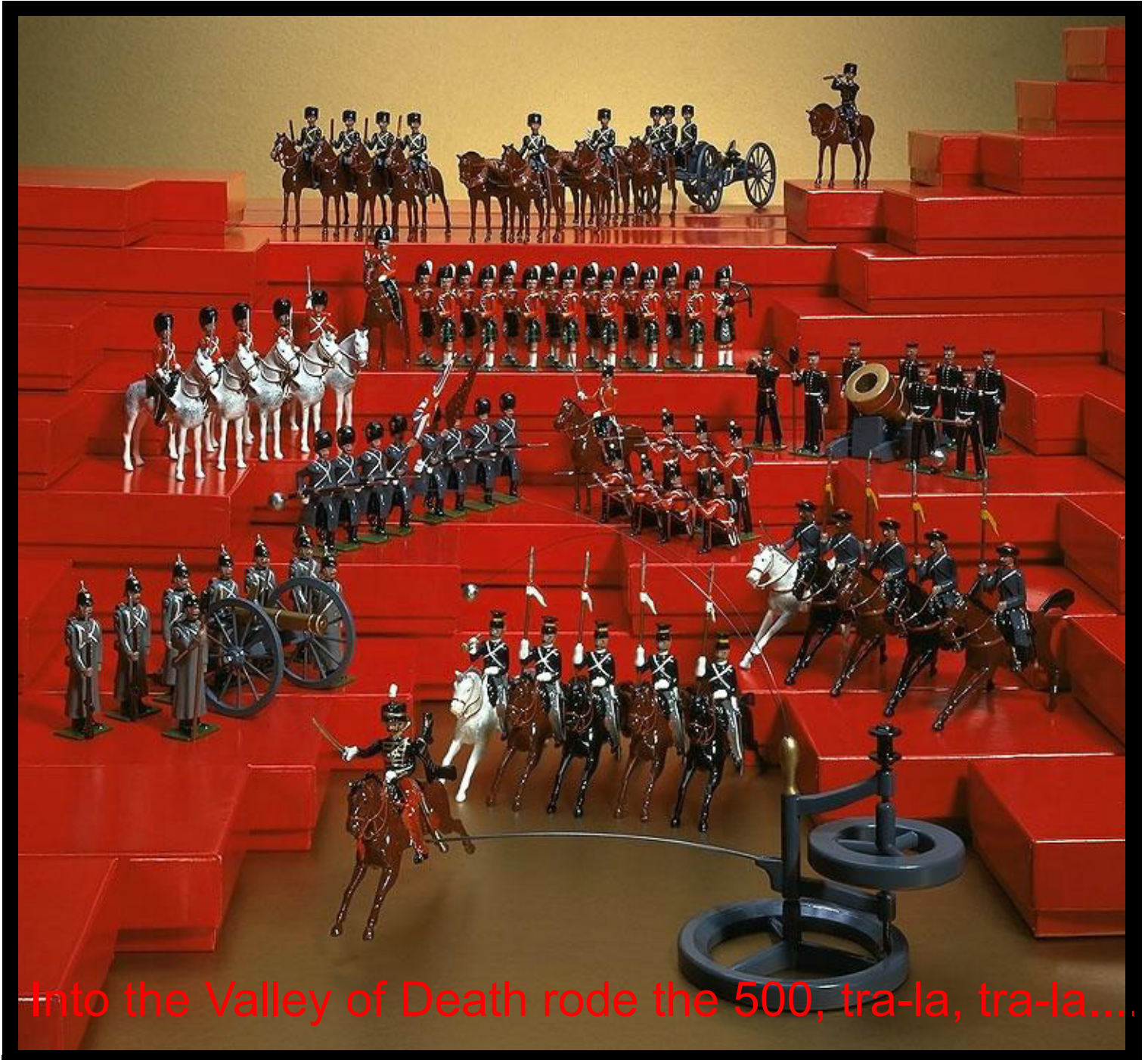
INDEX

1853-1854

1853-1854



January: An Anglo/French fleet went up from the Mediterranean Ocean into the Black Sea (and what goes up must come down).



Friend [Joseph Sturge](#) had become active in various international peace organizations and at this point

1853-1854

1853-1854

journeyed to [Russia](#) in an attempt to prevent the [Crimean War](#).



➡ January: [Jefferson Davis](#) was leading the federal administration's efforts in support of the [Kansas/Nebraska Act](#) (until May).

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

Read ■ [Henry Thoreau's Journal for January 1854 \(æf. 36\)](#)

➡ January 1, Sunday: Lincoln University was chartered in Oxford, Pennsylvania, initially as "Ashmun Institute." This would be one of America's earliest "Negro colleges."

[James George Frazer](#) was born in [Glasgow, Scotland](#).

At a New Year celebration in the strait of Victoria Island, [Hong Kong](#), Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) provided egg nog for his officers aboard his flagship *Susquehanna*. A good time was had by all.

At the Cruz Bay Battery on the Caribbean island of St. John, Judge (Landfoged) Carl Henschell was advised of the death of a 7-year-old at the Cinnamon Bay plantation on the island's north shore, from what appeared to be [cholera](#) (by the following year the epidemic would eliminate almost 1 out of every 4 of the human inhabitants of this island).

[California](#)'s gold exports for the year 1853 had amounted to a grand sum total of \$56,390,812.

A former missionary to [Canton](#) in [China](#), the Presbyterian Reverend William Speer (1822-1904), and his wife, and sons John and James, with his brother James Speer and their Irish servant girl "Biddy," sent greetings for

1853-1854

1853-1854

the new year from [San Francisco](#) to the Speer family in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Many friends would be visiting during the holiday as was usual but “Preachers do not go out, so I am released.” The letter enclosed a prospectus for [The Oriental](#), a [Chinese](#)-American gazette, and asked for assistance in soliciting subscribers.¹¹⁹

Young America Engine Co. No. 13 was organized in [San Francisco](#) with quarters at 144 Second St.

At 9PM the steamer *S.S. Golden Gate*, “probably the most magnificent sea steamer afloat,” built in 1851 for the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, sailed under Captain J.B.G. Isham from the west coast of the [Isthmus of Panama](#) for [San Diego, California](#) carrying 750 passengers such as the 3-person [Kip](#) family.



[Henry Thoreau](#) was being written to by [Waldo Emerson](#):

1 Jan^y 1854

Dear Henry,

I meant to have seen you, but for delays that grew out of the snowbanks, to ask your aid in these following particulars. On the 8 February, Professor Horsford is to lecture at the Lyceum; on the 15th Feb^y, [Theodore Parker](#). They are both to come to my house for the night. Now I wish to entreat your courtesy & counsel to receive these lonely pilgrims, when they arrive, to guide them to our house, & help the alarmed wife to entertain them, & see that they do not lose the way to the Lyceum, nor the hour. For, it seems pretty certain that I shall not be at home until perhaps the next week following these two. If you shall be in town, & can help these gentlemen so far, you will serve the whole municipality as well as

Yours faithfully,

R.W. Emerson

H.D. Thoreau.

119. The 1st such gazette had been [Golden Hills News](#), a weekly published by William Howard in San Francisco for a few months in 1854. [The Oriental](#) would appear weekly from 1855 to 1857 in English and Cantonese. Although neither of these gazettes had Chinese owners, both were edited by recent Chinese immigrants and eventually [The Oriental](#) would be owned by ethnic Chinese. However, the 1st Chinese-owned gazette would be the Sacramento [Daily News](#), published by Ze Tu Yun from 1856 to 1858. San Francisco and Sacramento would consistently have Chinese-language gazettes until the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

Thoreau was reading [Father Paul Le Jeune](#) on American and Canadian natives.



Jan. 1. [Le Jeune](#), describing the death of a young Frenchwoman who had devoted her life to the savages of Canada, uses the expression: "Finally this beautiful soul detached itself from its body the 15th of March," etc.

[Transcript]

The drifts mark the standstill or equilibrium between the currents of air or particular winds. In our greatest snow-storms, the wind being northerly, the greatest drifts are on the south sides of the houses and fences and accordingly on the left-hand side of the street going down it. The north tract: of the railroad was not open till a day or more later than the south. I notice that in the angle made by our house and shed, a southwest exposure, the snow-drift does not lie close about the pump, but is a foot off, forming a circular bowl, showing that there was an eddy about it. It shows where the wind has been, the form of the wind. The snow is like a mould, showing the form of the eddying currents of air which have been impressed on it, while the drift and all the rest is that which fell between the currents or where they counterbalanced each other. These boundary lines are mountain barriers.

The white-in-tails, or grass finches [[Vesper Sparrow](#) [Poocetes gramineus](#)], linger pretty late, flitting in flocks before, but they come so near winter only as the white in their tails indicates. They let it come near enough to whiten their tails, perchance, and they are off. The snow buntings and the tree sparrows are the true spirits of the snow-storm; they are the animated beings that ride upon it and have their life in it.

The snow is the great betrayer. It not only shows the tracks of mice, otters, etc., etc., which else we should rarely if ever see, but the tree sparrows are more plainly seen against its white ground, and they in turn are attracted by the dark weeds which it reveals. It also drives the crows and other birds out of the woods to the villages for food. We might expect to find in the snow the footprint of a life superior to our own, of which no zoology takes cognizance. Is there no trace of a nobler life than that of an otter or an escaped convict to be looked for in the snow? Shall we suppose that that is the only life that has been abroad in the night? It is only the savage that can see the track of no higher life than an otter. Why do the vast snow plains give us pleasure, the twilight of the bent and half-buried woods? Is not all there consonant with virtue, justice, purity, courage, magnanimity? Are we not cheered by the sight? And does not all this amount to the track of a higher life than the otter's, a life which has not gone by and left a footprint merely,¹²⁰ but is there with its beauty, its music, its perfume, its sweetness, to exhilarate and recreate us? Where there is a perfect government of the world according to the highest laws, is there no trace of intelligence there, whether in the snow or the earth, or in ourselves? No other trail but, such as a dog can smell? Is there none which an angel can detect and follow? None to guide a man on his pilgrimage, which water will not conceal? Is there no odor of sanctity to be perceived? Is its trail too old? Have mortals lost the scent? The great game for mighty hunters as soon as the first snow, falls is Purity, for, earlier than any rabbit or fox, it is abroad, and its trail may be detected by curs of lowest degree. Did this great snow come to reveal the track merely of some timorous hare, or of the Great Hare, whose track no hunter has seen? Is there no trace nor suggestion of Purity to be detected? If one could detect the meaning of the snow, would he not be on the trail of some higher life that has been abroad in the night? Are there not hunters who seek for something higher than foxes, with judgment more discriminating than the senses of foxhounds, who rally to a nobler music than that of the hunting-horn? As there is contention among the fishermen who shall be the first to reach the pond as soon as the ice will bear, in spite of the cold, as the hunters are forward to take the field as soon as the first snow has fallen, so the observer, or lie who would make the most of his life for discipline, must be abroad early and late, in spite of cold and wet, in pursuit of nobler game, whose traces are then most distinct. A life which, pursued, does not earth itself, does not burrow downward but upward, which takes not to the trees but to the heavens as its home, which the hunter pursues with winged thoughts and aspirations, — these the dogs that tree it, — rallying his pack with the bugle notes of undying faith, and returns with some worthier trophy than a fox's tail, a life which we seek, not to destroy it, but to save our own. Is the great snow of use to the hunter only, and not to the saint, or him who is earnestly building up a life? Do the Indian and hunter only need snow-shoes, while the saint sits indoors in embroidered slippers?

The Indians might have imagined a large snow bunting to be the genius of the storm.

This morning it is snowing again fast, and about six inches has already fallen by 10 A.M., of a moist and heavy snow. It is about six inches in all this day. This would [be] two feet and a half in all, if it has not settled, — but it has.

I would fain be a fisherman, hunter, farmer, preacher, etc., but fish, hunt, farm, preach other things than usual.


When, in 1641, the five hundred Iroquois in force brought to Three Rivers two French prisoners (whom they had taken), seeking peace with the French,- I believe this preceded any war with them, -at the assembling for

120. But all that we see is the impress of its spirit.

this purpose, they went through the form of tying their prisoners, that they might pass for such; then, after a speech, they broke their bonds and cast them into the river that it might carry them so far that they might never be remembered. The speaker “then made many presents, according to the custom of the country where the word for presents is speech (*où le mot de présens se nomme parole*), to signify that the present speaks more strongly than the mouth.” ([Le Jeune](#).)

Our orators might learn much from the Indians. They are remarkable for their precision; nothing is left at loose ends. They address more senses than one, so as to preclude misunderstanding. A present accompanies each proposition. In delivering one present, the speaker said, “This is the house which we shall have at Three Rivers when we come here to treat with you,” etc. This is in [Paul Le Jeune’s](#) Relation for ’40 and ’41, page 156.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

 January 2, Monday: [Henry Thoreau](#) took an afternoon walk up the Union Turnpike.



Jan. 2. The trees are white with a hoar frost this morning, small leafets, a tenth of an inch long, on every side of the twigs. They look like ghosts of trees. Took a walk on snow-shoes at 9 A.M. to Hubbard’s Grove. A flock of snow buntings [[Snow Bunting](#) [Plectrophenax nivalis](#)] flew over the fields with a rippling whistle, accompanied sometimes by a tender peep and a ricochet motion.

P.M. — Up Union Turnpike.

The tints of the sunset sky are never purer and more ethereal than in the coldest winter days. This evening, though the colors are not brilliant, the sky is crystalline and the pale fawn-tinged clouds are very beautiful. I wish to get on to a hill to look down on the winter landscape. We go about these days as if we had fetters on our feet. We walk in the stocks, stepping into the holes made by our predecessors.

I noticed yesterday that the damp snow, falling gently without wind on the top of front-yard posts, had quite changed the style of their architecture, — to the (ionic style of the East, a four-sided base becoming a dome at top. I observe other revelations made by the snow. The team and driver have long since gone by, but I see the marks of his whip-lash on the snow, — its recoil, — but alas! these are not a complete tally of the strokes which fell upon the oxen’s back. The unmerciful driver thought perchance that no one saw him, but unwittingly he recorded each blow on the unspotted snow behind his back as in the book of life. To more searching eyes the marks of his lash are in the air.

I paced partly through the pitch pine wood and partly the open field from the Turnpike by the Lee place to the railroad, from north to south, more than a quarter of a mile, measuring at every tenth pace. The average of sixty-five measurements, up hill and down, was nineteen inches; this after increasing those in the woods by one inch each (little enough) on account of the snow on the pines. So that, apparently, it has settled about as much as the two last snows amount to. I think there has been but little over two feet at any one time. I think that one would have to pace a mile on a north and south line, up and down hill, through woods and fields, to get a quite reliable result. The snow will drift sometimes the whole width of a field, and fill a road or valley beyond. So that it would be well that your measuring included several such driftings. There is very little reliance to [be] put on the usual estimates of the depth of snow. I have heard different men set this snow at six, fifteen, eighteen, twenty-four, thirty-six, and forty-eight inches. My snow-shoes sank about four inches into the snow this morning, but more than twice as much the 29th.

On north side the railroad, above the red house crossing, the cars have cut through a drift about a quarter of a mile long and seven to nine feet high, straight up and down. It reminds me of the Highlands, the Pictured Rocks, the side of an iceberg, etc. Now that the sun has just sunk below the horizon, it is wonderful what an amount of soft light [it] appears to be absorbing. There appears to be more day just here by its side than anywhere. I can almost see into [it] six inches. It is made translucent, it is so saturated with light. I have heard of one precious stone found in Concord, the cinnamon stone. A geologist¹²¹ has spoken of it as found in this town, and a farmer has described to me one which he once found, perhaps the same referred to by the other. He said it was as large as a brick, and as thick, and yet you could distinguish a pin through it, it was so transparent. If not a mountain of light, it was a brickbatful, at any rate.



January 3, Tuesday: Police raided the Hung Gate Society on Jackson Street in [San Francisco](#) and arrested 159 “Celestials” on charges of extortion.

In the PM, [Henry Thoreau](#) noticed that fishermen were on the ice at [Walden Pond](#), which had only frozen over on December 31st. He noted also that with luck the fishermen could get 15-20 pounds of fish, although the average size of a Walden Pond fish was 2-3 pounds.

When the [Reverend Professor William Whewell](#), Master of Trinity College of Cambridge University, wrote from Lowestoft to his good friend [Sir John Frederick William Herschel, 1st Baronet, Master of the British Mint](#), informing him of an anonymous recent publication on the issue of the possible existence of extraterrestrial intelligent life, [OF THE PLURALITY OF WORLDS: AN ESSAY](#), he refrained from confessing to his correspondent that the book had been self-authored. He did not know who the hell [Thoreau](#) was and was ignorant that Henry would disagree with him (describing his religious attitude that nowhere else in this starry universe, circling any strange distant sun, could there conceivably be anything like what is going on here on the surface of this Earth which has been occupying our God’s special attention, as mere evidence of the inherent “egotism of the race”) — but he was well aware that Sir John was going to disagree with him:

My dear Herschel,
Probably by this time an anonymous book has found its way to you, on “the Plurality of Worlds.” I do not know whether you are likely to guess that I have anything to do with it; but if so, pray do not encourage any body in the same opinion. I believe the doctrines there delivered will be deemed to some extent heterodox in science; as they may well be, being so much at variance with opinions which you have countenanced. But I am sure you will not wish that discussion on such matters should be suppressed; and the author seems to me to have discussed the question very fairly. Perhaps you would not take it much to heart if the inhabitants of Jupiter, or of the systems revolving about double stars which you have so carefully provided for, should be eliminated out of the universe. Indeed, if in this way we could obtain a more satisfactory view of the government and prospects of us, the dwellers on this Earth, many of us would deem the loss a gain. But, at any rate, I hope you astronomers will let us speculate on the one side as well as the other; which is all that my friend asks. We are here in the middle of intense winter; the ground covered with snow to the water’s edge, the wind howling, and the shore strewn with wrecks in various gradations of destruction. I hope that, whatever your outward

121. According to [Professor of Geology Robert M. Thorson](#), this geologist must have been the [Reverend Professor Edward Hitchcock](#), who along among Thoreau’s sources described the cinnamon stone as essonite. By referring to the rock as a “brickbat,” Thorson speculates, Thoreau must have been meaning to suggest something to throw at someone, “almost certainly the Reverend Edward Hitchcock, who irked Thoreau for being a wolf in sheep’s clothing: in this case, a ‘sacred historian’ posing as a ‘Man of Science.’ The wolf was a Christian divine who used his presidency of Amherst College as a bully pulpit to evangelize ‘natural theology’ across the region, a program Thoreau wanted no part of. The sheep’s clothing was Hitchcock’s otherwise excellent FINAL REPORT ON THE GEOLOGY OF MASSACHUSETTS IN FOUR PARTS [Northampton: J. Butler], complete with six hundred hand-tinted copies of a beautiful foldout map of the state. When published in 1841, five hundred copies of the full report were delivered by government order to various institutions, including ‘one copy each to each incorporated Athenaeum, Lyceum, and Academy.’ This gave Thoreau free and convenient public access to the best such work in the nation at a time when [geology](#) was the most fashionable science of the day, and when Hitchcock was one of its leading fashionistas. Seizing his historic moment nearly a decade earlier, Hitchcock had persuaded the Commonwealth to appoint him as ‘geologist of the state,’ fund a long-term mapping project, and publish its massive report at taxpayer expense. Thus it was that Thoreau’s most valuable scientific reference for the most exciting new field of science had been written by someone whose lifelong purpose was to ‘defend and illustrate’ he truth of ‘Christian religion’ by aligning the facts of geology to it.”



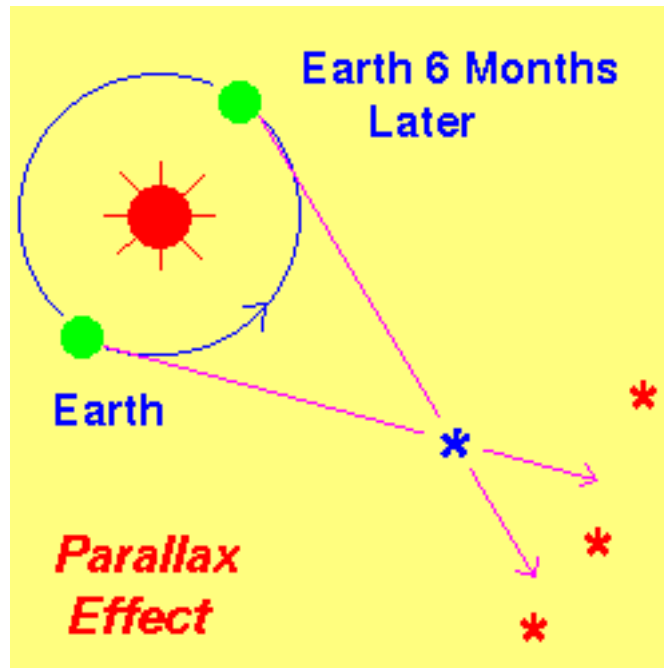
1853-1854

1853-1854

world may look like at present, you have within doors the sunshine which arises from good health and good family news, as you are sure to have the sunshine that comes of love and good humour. Mrs Whewell has been here all the autumn, gaining, I hope, in health and strength. Pray give my affectionate good wishes to Lady Herschel and all your family circle, and especially to my godchild Amelia and my deputy niece Maria. I hope she has pleasant recollections of our sojourn at Kreuznach. When we went thither, it was almost as cold as it is now.

Always, my dear Herschel,
Yours most truly,
W. Whewell

WALDEN: We might try our lives by a thousand simple tests; as, for instance, that the same sun which ripens my beans illumines at once a system of earths like ours. If I had remembered this it would have prevented some mistakes. This was not the light in which I hoed them. The stars are the apexes of what wonderful triangles! What distant and different beings in the various mansions of the universe are contemplating the same one at the same moment! Nature and human life are as various as our several constitutions. Who shall say what prospect life offers to another? Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other's eyes for an instant?



NICOLAS COPERNICUS

TYCHO BRAHE

TYCHONIAN/COPERNICAN

1853-1854

1853-1854



Jan. 3. Tuesday. It is now fairly winter. We have passed the line, have put the autumn behind us, have forgotten what these withered herbs that rise above the snow here and there are, what flowers they ever bore. They are fishing on Walden this P.M. The fisherman gets fifteen or twenty pounds thus, when he has pretty good luck. Two to three pounds is a common size there. From the Peak, I looked over the wintry landscape. First there is the white ground, then the dark, dulled green of evergreens, then the reddish (?) brown or leather-color of the oaks, which generally retain their leaves, then the gray of maples and other trees, which are bare. They are modest Quaker colors that are seen above the snow. The twilight appears to linger in the snow. This it makes the days seem suddenly longer. The sun has set, shorn of its disk [sic] in dun, red clouds. The young moon and the evening star are seen. The partridge has come forth to bud on some wayside apple tree. The woodchopper's task is done; he puts his axe under a log and sets out for home. For an hour the fisherman's lines have been freezing in, and now he, too, has commenced his retreat. That large round track forming nearly a straight line Goodwin thinks a fox.

A thaw appears to be commencing. We hear the eaves run in the evening.



January 4, Wednesday: [Captain William McDonald](#) aboard the *Samarang* discovered the islands that now bear his name, to the east of Heard Island in the south Indian Ocean.

Senator Stephen Douglas of Illinois presented a bill "to organize the Territory of Nebraska," an area covering the present-day states of Kansas, Nebraska, Montana, and the Dakotas. This would be known at the time as "the Nebraska bill" — today we describe it as the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. What was it, actually? It proposed to organize this vast territory "with or without slavery, as their constitutions may prescribe," a doctrine known as "popular sovereignty." This incidentally contradicted the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and allowed southern politicians to press again for the "onward march of civilization" — which of course meant expansion of human slavery. —Which did not mean a whole lot to Senator Douglas because what his heart was desiring was merely a railroad leading into Chicago. —Slavery being merely a necessary means to a wonderful economic goal.



Jan. 4. It thaws all day; the eaves drip as in a rain; the road begins to be soft and a little sloshy.



January 5, Thursday: [Henry Thoreau](#) noted that in the afternoon, it being warm and thawing though fair, the snow was covered with snow-fleas, especially in tracks a woodchopper had made through deep snow. "These are the first since the snow came."

The [New York Times](#) conveyed sad information the [Boston Daily Times](#) had obtained by telegram:

By a private telegraphic dispatch from the United States Consul at Halifax, R.W. Fraser, we are led to believe that Capt. Josiah Richardson, the commander of the [Staffordshire](#), is lost. He was a man about 48 years old, and leaves a wife and four children, residing in the town of Shrewsbury, in this State. Capt. Richardson, having accumulated a large fortune, decided the last time he was home to remain, and not make another voyage; but being urged, he consented, remarking that no man except Mr. Train could induce him to go to sea again.



1853-1854

1853-1854

He had large offers from other houses to induce him to engage in the California trade; but they were of no avail. He was formerly commander and part owner of the packet-ship *Townsend*. "A better man never walked a deck," is the universal remark of all his personal acquaintances, whom we have heard conversing on the subject of his probable loss, and the number is many. We learn that the *Staffordshire* was registered at 1,817 tons, valued at \$120,000, and wholly covered by insurance at offices in New-York and in this city. Her cargo consisted of English goods, such as silks, broadcloths, &c. One firm had 135 packages on board. The whole cargo was valued at about three-quarters of a million dollars, and we learn was insured. It all belonged to Boston. The names of the 1st and 2d mates are Alden and Leach, both reported saved. This is the second escape that Mr. Alden, 1st mate, has had, at sea. He was mate of the packet ship *President* up to the voyage in which she was lost.



Jan. 5. Still thaws. This afternoon (as probably yesterday), it being warm and thawing, though fair, the snow is covered with snow-fleas. Especially they are sprinkled like pepper for half a mile in the tracks of a woodchopper in deep snow. These are the first since the snow came. With the first thawing weather they are [sic]. There is also some blueness now in the snow, the heavens being now (toward night) overcast. The blueness is more distinct after sunset.



January 6, Friday: Sherlock Holmes was born (or so we have been informed).

Aboard the US steam frigate *Mississippi* beautifully decorated with flags, with Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) as guest of honor, there was a theatrical entertainment in Hong Kong harbor for some 200 invitees.

The hulk of the Pacific Mail Steam Ship Company's steamer *SS San Francisco*, that had been built in New-York and had foundered on December 23d off the coast of the Carolinas during its initial voyage toward [San Francisco](#) when its engines broke down, on this day slipped beneath the waves.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) led [Lewis William Tappan](#), a young Transcendentalist friend of [Waldo Emerson](#) and [Ellery Channing](#) to whom Thoreau had been introduced while living on Staten Island, down the railroad tracks to see Heywood Brook, Fair Haven Bay, and Fair Haven Cliffs.



Jan. 6. Walked [Tappan](#) in P.M. down railroad to Heywood Brook, Fair Haven, and Cliffs. At every post along the brook-side, and under almost every white pine, the snow strewn with the scales and seeds of white pine cones left by the squirrels. They have sat on every *post* and dropped them for a great distance, also acorn-shells. The surface of the snow was sometimes strewn with the small alder scales, i.e. of catkins; also, here, and there, the large glaucous lichens (cetrarias?). Showed [Tappan](#) a small shadbush, which interested him and reminded him of a greyhound, rising so slender and graceful with its narrow buds above the snow. To return to the squirrels, I saw where they had laid up a pitch pine cone in the fork of a rider in several places. Many marks of partridges, and disturbed them on evergreens. A winter (?) gnat out on the bark of a pine. On Fair Haven we slumped nearly a foot to the old ice. The partridges were budding on the Fair Haven orchard, and flew for refuge to the wood, twenty minutes or more after sundown. There was a low, narrow, clear segment of sky in the west at sunset, or just after (all the rest overcast), of the coppery yellow, perhaps, of some of Gilpin's pictures, all

TAPPAN FAMILY

1853-1854

1853-1854

spotted coarsely with clouds like a leopard's skin. I took up snow in the tracks at dark, but could find no fleas in it then, though they were exceedingly abundant before. Do they go into the snow at night? Frequently see a spider apparently stiff and dead on snow.

In [Vimont's](#) Jesuit Relation for 1642, he describes the customs of the Iroquois. As in the case of the Hurons, everything is done by presents. The murderer and robber are restrained by the very defect of justice, and because the community (his relations or tribe) whips itself for his fault. They must appease the injured with costly presents. They make that he shall involve his friends in ruin along with himself, and if he would injure any one, shall injure them too. By making it impossible for him to do an injury without doing a greater injury than he wishes, they restrain him.



January 7, Saturday: Friend [William Henry Harvey](#) arrived at Albany on the coast of Western [Australia](#). After a month at Cape Riche he would hike overland through the bush to Perth to visit Fremantle, Rottneest Island (where he would live in a deserted convict establishment), and Garden Island. He would collect some 10,000 specimens of seaweed, many of them new to science.

Having been awarded a hero's welcome when he arrived in New-York, complete with a banquet attended by prominent Americans of Irish extraction, [John Mitchel](#), along with Thomas Meagher, began to put out [The Citizen](#). Within a few weeks this libertarian newspaper, which obsequiously pandered to every rancid prejudice of its target audience, would be enjoying press runs of 50,000.



The publication would of course be greatly in favor of freedom for [Ireland](#). Along the way it would also defend our inalienable right to own other human beings (that is, human [slavery](#)), would attack the great humbug of the Colonization Society, and would insist upon the unimpeachable privilege of a white man to engage in any business at all (that is, for instance, return to the [international slave trade](#)).

Covering all bases, this paper would also be used to argue against the emancipation of the Jews.

[ANTISEMITISM](#)

[RACISM](#)



Jan. 7. Saturday. Thaw ended. Cold last night; rough walking; snow crusted.


P.M. – To Ministerial Swamp.

The bare larch trees there, so slender and tall, where they grow close together, all beaded or studded with buds, or rather stubs, which look like the dry sterile blossoms. How much fuller, or denser and more flourishing, in winter is the white spruce than the white pine! It has two hues, I believe, the glaucous or bluish and the green, melting into each other. It has not shed all its seeds yet. Now that the snow has lain more than a week, it begins to be spotted and darkened in the woods, with various dry leaves and scales from the trees. The wind and thaw have brought down a fresh crop of dry pine and spruce needles. The little roundish and stemmed scales of the alder catkins spot it thickly. The bird-shaped scales of the white birch are blown more than twenty rods from the trees. I see also the wings of pine seeds, — the seed being gone, — which look exactly like the wings of ants. Also, in the pastures, the fine star-shaped fuzz of the gray goldenrod, somewhat like a spider with many legs. The snow is still very deep in the more open parts of the swamp, where it is light, being held up by the bushes; but in thick woods there is much less of it, beside that it has settled far more. There is also much more

1853-1854

1853-1854

in sprout-lands than in woods. Is it that the ground not being frozen in the woods melts it so much faster, while in the swamp, even if the ground is equally warm, the snow, lying light, does not come in contact with it enough to melt it?

The ice has all been snow ice of late, not interesting to study. However, there are now some little pools over the snow in hollows frozen, where the thin ice is yellow and full of white bubbles and like small coins. Is this the melted snow made into tea by running amid the dead leaves and grass? I see the muddy, dripping tracks of [a] muskrat or mink that has come out of a ditch on to the snow here in the swamp. Saw a fat pitch pine stump, whose sap, four inches thick, has long been gone, but the scales of the thick bark still form a circle level with the ground four inches from the (solid or fat) wood on every side. I see at Martial Miles's house where many hundred bees lie dead on the snow close to their hives, plainly having come out during the late warmer days. I went to these woods partly to hear an owl [Great Horned Owl]  *Bubo virginianus*], but did not; but now that I have left them nearly a mile behind, I hear one distinctly, *hoorer hoo*. Strange that we should hear this sound so often, loud and far, —a voice which we call the owl,— and yet so rarely see the bird. Oftenest at twilight. It has a singular prominence as a sound; is louder than the voice of a dear friend. Yet we see the friend perhaps daily and the owl but a few times in our lives. It is a sound which the wood or the horizon makes. I see the cars almost as often as I hear the whistle.



(George Edwards's A NATURAL HISTORY OF UNCOMMON BIRDS, 1745)



January 8, Sunday morning: Aboard [Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry](#)'s far-eastern fleet, Court Martial sentences were rendered for cases of disgraceful conduct.

Before his walk [Henry Thoreau](#) placed excerpts into his Fact Book from the [Reverend William Gilpin](#)'s OBSERVATIONS ON THE COASTS OF HAMPSHIRE, SUSSEX, AND KENT, RELATIVE CHIEFLY TO PICTURESQUE BEAUTY: MADE IN THE SUMMER OF THE YEAR 1774, and it is clear when he characterizes such an approach as “superficial” and then explodes in outrage “And he a clergyman, ‘vicar of Boldre!’” — that his two-year inquiry into British leisure-class hoity-toity aesthetic theorizing has definitively come to an end.




Jan. 8. Sunday. [Gilpin](#), in his essay on the “Art of Sketching Landscape,” says: “When you have finished your sketch therefore with Indian ink, as far as you propose, tinge the whole over with some light horizon hue. It may be the rosy tint of morning; or the more ruddy one of evening; or it may incline more to a yellowish, or a greyish cast.... By washing this tint over your *whole drawing*, you lay a foundation for harmony.” I have often been attracted by this harmonious tint in his and other drawings, and sometimes, especially, have observed it in nature when at sunset I inverted my head. We love not so well the landscape represented as in broad noon, but in a morning or evening twilight, those seasons when the imagination is most active, the more hopeful or pensive seasons of the day. Our mood may then possess the whole landscape, or be in harmony with it, as the hue of twilight prevails over the whole scene. Are we more than crepuscular in our intellectual and spiritual life? Have we awakened to broad noon? The morning hope is soon lost in what becomes the routine of

1853-1854

1853-1854

the day, and we do not recover ourselves again until we land on the pensive shores of evening, shores which skirt the great western continent of the night. At sunset we look into the west. For centuries our thoughts fish those grand banks that lie before the newfoundland, before our spirits take up their abode in that Hesperian Continent to which these lie in the way.

P.M. – To the Spruce Swamp in front of J. Farmer’s. Can go across both rivers now. New routes are more practicable. Stood within a rod of a downy woodpecker [**Downy Woodpecker**  *Picoides pubescens*] on an apple tree. How curious and exciting the blood-red spot on its hindhead! I ask why it is there, but no answer is rendered by these snow-clad fields. It is so close to the bark I do not see its feet. It looks behind as if it had on a black cassock open behind and showing a white undergarment between the shoulders and down the back. It is briskly and incessantly tapping all round the dead limbs, but rare twice in a place, as if to sound the tree and so see if it has any worm in it, or perchance to start them. How much he deals with the bark of trees, all his life long tapping and inspecting it! He it is that scatters those fragments of bark and lichens about on the snow at the base of trees. What a lichenist he must be! Or rather, perhaps it is fungi makes his favorite study, for he deals most with dead limbs. How briskly he glides up or drops himself down a limb, creeping round and round, and hopping from limb to limb, and now flitting with a rippling sound of his wings to another tree!

The lower two-thirds of the white spruce has its branches retraced or turned downward, and then curving upward at the extremities, as much as the white pine commonly slants upwards. Above it is so thick that you cannot see through it. All the black spruce that I know hereabouts stand on higher land than this. Saw two



squirrel-nests in the thick top of a spruce. It was a foot in diameter, of coarse grass and bark fibres, with very thick bottom and sides and a scarcely distinguishable entrance, lined with fine fibres of bark, probably inner bark of maple, very warm. Probably a red squirrel’s, for I heard one winding up his clock. Many white pine cones had been eaten in the neighborhood.

Gilpin’s “Essay on Picturesque Beauty” is the key to all his writings. He says in the outset that he does not mean to inquire “into the general sources of beauty,” but the questions which he proposes to himself depend on the result of such an inquiry. He asks, first, “What is that quality in objects, which particularly marks them as picturesque?” and answers “*roughness*,” assigning to that kind of beauty which he makes the opposite to the picturesque the quality of “*smoothness*.” This last he styles, too generally or exclusively, “the beautiful.” The beautiful, he says, cannot be painted; *e.g.*, “A piece of Palladian architecture may be elegant in the last degree. The proportion of its parts — the propriety of its ornaments — and the symmetry of the whole, may be highly pleasing. But if we introduce it in a picture, it immediately becomes a formal object, and ceases to please. Should we wish to give it picturesque beauty, we must use the mallet, instead of the chisel: we must beat down one half of it, deface the other, and throw its mutilated members around in heaps. In short from a *smooth* building we must turn it into a *rough* ruin.” I do not believe that the “beautiful” is not equally beautiful in picture, that the beautiful statue for instance, however smooth, may not appear beautiful when daguerretyped or painted. In the case instanced he must use, the mallet either because the building is not beautiful, or because lie cannot catch and render the spirit of its beauty. If there is the same genius in the painter that there was in the architect, the painting will be beautiful too. The smooth may be more difficult, but is not impossible, to be represented by picture. It is not the mere roughness of the surface which makes the patriarchal head more interesting than that of a youth ever, nor is this the reason why we “admire the Laocoön more than the Antinoüs,” for we do not admire it more than the Apollo Belvidere.

True, there are many reasons why the painter should select the rough. It is easier to execute; lie can do it more justice. In the case of the patriarchal head, those lines and wrinkles which man’s life has produced his hand can better represent than the fullness and promise of infancy; and then, on the whole, perhaps, we have more sympathy with performance than promise. The humble or sincere and true is more commonly rough and weather-beaten, so that from association we prefer it. But will Mr. **Gilpin** assert that the Venus and Apollo are not fit objects for painting? So we prefer the poor man’s irregular garden for its sincerity and truth to the rich man’s formal and pretending parterres, and the “worn-out cart-horse” to the pampered steed for similar reasons. Indeed “he does riot recommend his art,” if he fails to fix the fleeting forms of the beautiful. The worn-out cart-horse is thought to be more picturesque and admits “of being rendered with spirit,” because we can far more

1853-1854

1853-1854

easily enter into his spirit, whether as beholders or painters, — have more sympathy with it than with that of the free horse of the prairie. Beside, what has the pampered coach-horse done to deserve our respect and sympathy? He defends the painter, first, by saying that “a free, bold touch is in itself pleasing,” and assuming to too great an extent that the objects which he calls beautiful do not admit of being painted in this touch, — but God used a free and bold touch when he created them, and so may the creative painter do when he paints them, — secondly, by saying that “the very essence of his art requires” that he select the Picturesque for the sake of composition, variety, light and shade, and coloring.

But he is superficial. He goes not below the surface to account for the effect of form and color, etc. For instance, he thus attempts to account for the fact that the pampered steed may be a picturesque object. “Though the horse, in a *rough* state, as we have just observed, or worn down with labor, is more adapted to the pencil than when his sides shine with brushing, and high feeding; yet in this latter state also he is certainly a picturesque object. But it is not his smooth, and shining coat, that makes him so. It is the apparent interruption of that smoothness by a variety of shades, and colors, which produces the effect. Such a play of muscles appears, everywhere, through the fineness of his skin, gently swelling, and sinking into each other — he is all over so *lubricus aspici*, the reflections of light are so continually shifting upon him, and playing into each other, that the eye never considers the smoothness of the surface; but is amused with gliding up, and down, among those endless transitions, which in some degree, supply the room of *roughness*.” And this is the reason why a pampered steed can be painted! Mark that there is not the slightest reference to the fact that this surface, with its lights and shades, belongs to a horse and not to a bag of wind. The same reasoning would apply equally well to one of his hind quarters hung bottom upwards in a butcher’s stall. This comes of not inquiring “into the general sources of beauty.”

So I should answer that “the beauty of an old head” is *not* “greatly improved by the *smoothness* of the bald pate” (if bald pates were rough they would do just as well), but it may be improved by the associations which a bald pate suggests.

He fails to show why roughness is essential to the picturesque, because he does not go beneath the surface.

To return to the horse, I should say that no arrangement of light and shade without reference to the object, actual or suggested, so lit and shaded can interest us powerfully, any more than the paint itself can charm us.

In the “Essay on Picturesque Travel,” after speaking of the *objects* of such travel, he treats of the way in which “the mind is gratified by these objects.” He says: “we might begin in moral style, and consider the objects of nature in a higher light than merely as amusement. We might observe, that a search after beauty should naturally lead the mind to the great origin of all beauty,” etc. “But though in theory this seems a natural climax, we insist the less upon it, as in fact we have scarce ground to hope that every admirer of *picturesque beauty* is an admirer also of the *beauty of virtue*.” And he a clergyman, “vicar of Boldre!” This is to give us the play of Hamlet with Hamlet’s part left out. But there is no half way in this case that is not at the same time half true.

Again, as if that were true, which [G.](#) asserts in another essay, that “the *eye*, which has nothing to do with *moral sentiments*, and is conversant only with *visible forms*, is disgusted,” etc., any more than a telescope is disgusted! As if taste resided in the eye! As if the eye, which itself cannot see at all, were conversant with surfaces! Yet he adds directly that “there is a still *higher character* in landscapes than what arises from the *uniformity of objects* — and that is the power of furnishing images *analogous to the various feelings, and sensations of the mind*.” Can good landscape have any lower aim? But he says, “To convey however ideas of this kind is the perfection of the art: it requires the splendor, and variety of colors; and is not to be attempted in such trivial sketches as these.” And this is Dot modesty merely, but a low estimate of his own art. I might have said some pages back that he allows that grandeur which is produced “by uniformity of color, and a long continuation of line,” falls under the head of picturesque beauty, though he says that the idea of it is not easily caught.

The elegant [Gilpin](#). I like his style and manners better than anything he says.

1853-1854

1853-1854



January 9, Monday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) led [Lewis William Tappan](#) to Heywood's Pond (despite being years older than Thoreau, his behavior reminded Thoreau of Hawthorne's 7-year-old [Julian Hawthorne](#)). Thoreau spent that evening at the Channings's, and Ellery got out a map of Rome and showed Thoreau where he had walked during his stay (Thoreau found it remarkable that although Ellery had been in Rome for but a few weeks, the brief sojourn had left such traces in him). At one point during the evening [Ellery Channing](#)'s cat was purring loudly, and Thoreau noticed that Channing's response to this was to punch the cat with the poker.

TAPPAN FAMILY

[New-York](#)'s Astor Library opened (later to be known as the New York Public Library).

In [San Francisco](#), the mechanics, merchants, traders, and bankers converged on the Merchants' Exchange to oppose a licensing law. On this day the city felt a slight shock of earthquake.



Jan. 9. P.M. — To Heywood's Pond with [Tappan](#).

We were looking for rainbow-tinted clouds, small whiffs of vapor which form and disperse, this clear, cold afternoon, when we saw to our surprise a star, about half past three or earlier, a mere round white dot. Is the winter then such a twilight? I wonder if the savages ever detected one by day. This was about an hour and a half before sunset. T. said he had lost fowls by the owls. They selected the roosters and took off their heads and ate their insides. Found many snow-fleas, apparently frozen, on the snow. [*Vide* below, the following day.]

T. has a singularly elastic step. He will run through the snow, lifting his knees like a child who enjoys the motion. When he slumped once through to water and called my attention to it, with an indescribable flash of his eye, he reminded me forcibly of Hawthorne's little son [Julian](#). He uses the greatest economy in speech of any man I know. Speaks low, beside, and without emphasis; in monosyllables. I cannot guess what the word was for a long time. His language is different from the Algonquin.



January 10, Tuesday: "Description of The Seasons," a composition by Joseph Haydn with an oratorio about the short life of the composer by Henry C. Watson, was performed by The Philharmonic Society of [San Francisco](#) at that metropolis's Musical Hall, under the direction of Mr. R. Herold.



*Jan. 10. I cannot thaw out to life the snow-fleas which yesterday covered the snow like pepper, in a frozen state. How much food they must afford to small birds, — chickadees [**Chicadee**, **Black-capped** [Parus atricapillus](#) ~~Titmouse, Titmice~~], etc. The snow went off remarkably fast in the thaw before the 7th, but it is still deep, lying light in swamps and sprout-lands, somewhat hollow beneath. The thaw produced those yellowish pools in hollows in the fields, where water never stands else, and now perhaps there is a bottom of snow; and now for the last three days they have afforded good sliding. You got a start by running over the snow-crust. In one place, where the depression was inconsiderable but more extensive than usual, I found that it was mere glazed snow on which I slid, it having rapidly frozen dry.*

The sportsmen chose the late thaw to go after quails [**Northern Bobwhite** [Colinus virginianus](#)]. They come out at such times to pick the horse-dung in the roads, and can be traced thence to their haunts. When we were walking last evening, [Tappan](#) admired the soft rippling of the Assabet under Tarbell's bank. One could have lain all night under the oaks there listening to it. Westward forty rods, the surface of the stream reflected a silvery whiteness, but gradually darkened thence eastward, till beneath us it was almost quite black. What you can recall of a walk on the second day will differ from what you remember on the first day, as the mountain chain differs in appearance, looking back the next day, from the aspect it wore when you were at its base, or generally, as any view changes to one who is journeying amid mountains when he has increased the distance.

With [Tappan](#), his speech is frequently so frugal and reserved, in monosyllables not fairly uttered clear of his thought, that I doubt if he did not cough merely, or let it pass for such, instead of asking what he said or meant, for fear it might turn out that he coughed merely.


[Channing](#) showed me last night on a map where, as he said, he "used to walk" in Rome. He was there sixteen days.

I mistook the creaking of a tree in the woods the other day for the scream of a hawk. How numerous the

1853-1854

1853-1854

resemblances of the animate to the inanimate!

 January 11, Wednesday: [Charles Wesley Slack](#) wrote from Boston to Evelina E. Vannevar Slack. Family affairs; recent election.¹²²

Having been built in Rockland, Maine by the firm of Deacon George Thomas in the previous year, the clipper [Red Jacket](#) sailed under master Asa Eldridge from New-York dockside in order to get its bottom coppered in Liverpool. She would arrive dockside in but 13 days, 1 hour, and 25 minutes. (The name “Red Jacket” refers to Sa Go Ye Wat Ha, “he who keeps them awake,” the Seneca orator and leader who had aided the British during the American Revolution, earning him his British red uniform and his nickname.)

The [San Francisco, California Daily Alta California](#) passed along news from the Gibsonville [Trumpet](#) about Onion Valley, where, a few days before, a 42-ounce chunk of gold had been found. The village contained a few dwellings and 3 stores, was prosperous and thrifty, and was affording good pay to gold miners. Nelson Creek was also a prosperous locality. One company of 5 there took out \$2,000 last week. Others were doing well. The miners on Hopkin’s Creek were doing well. Poorman’s Creek was also said to yield well. Miners on the Yuba River, in the vicinity of Long Bar, were putting in their horse power and other machinery, in order to commence work in their bank claims. They think the present very low stage of water, with the prospect of soon having rain, warrants them in so doing. At some point during this year [Emerson](#) would notice that [Henry Thoreau](#) considered the California gold rush to be immoral:

Thoreau thinks 'tis immoral to dig gold in California; immoral to leave creating value, & go to augmenting the representative of value, & so altering & diminishing real value, & that, of course, the fraud will appear. I conceive that work to be as innocent as any other speculating. Every man should do what he can; & he was created to augment some real value, & not for a speculator. When he leaves or postpones (as most men do) his proper work, & adopts some short or cunning method, as of watching markets, or farming in any manner the ignorance of people, as, in buying by the acre to sell by the foot, he is fraudulent, he is malefactor, so far; & is bringing society to bankruptcy. But nature watches over all this, too, & turns this malfeasance to some good. For, California gets peopled, subdued, civilised, in this fictitious way, & on this fiction a real prosperity is rooted & grown.

Waldo the nonjudgmental was in favor of prosperity — and who ain’t in favor of prosperity? On this afternoon Henry the judgmental guy was walking not to California but to Fair Haven Cliff and [Walden Pond](#).



Jan. 11. Thick fog in the night. The trees, accordingly, now white with hoary frost, just as the frost forms on a man’s beard or about a horse’s mouth.

122. Stimpert, James. A GUIDE TO THE CORRESPONDENCE IN THE CHARLES WESLEY SLACK MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION: 1848-1885. Kent State University, Library, Special Collections

P.M. — To Cliffs and Walden.

The north side of all stubble, weeds, and trees, and the whole forest is covered with a hoar frost a quarter to a half inch deep. It is easily shaken off. The air is still full of mist. No snow has fallen, but, as it were, the vapor has been caught by the trees like a cobweb. The trees are bright hoary forms, the ghosts of trees. In fact, the warm breath of the earth is frozen on its beard. Closely examined or at a distance, it is just like the sheaf-like forms of vegetation and the diverging crystals on the window-panes. The stiff stubble has a soft, drooping look; now feels the wind and waves like plumes. It is a *chevaux-de-frise* or armor of frost-needles, exclusively on the north side, with a myriad diverging feathery points, sheaves of darts. It covers the width of the twigs, but only a narrow and irregular strip on the larger limbs and trunk; also on the edges and protuberances of the leaves still turned toward the northern foe. Even birds' nests have a white beard.

Birches, especially, are the trees for these hoar frosts and also for glazes. They are so thickly twigged and of such graceful forms and attitudes. I can distinguish a birch now further off than ever. As I stand by its north side (Hubbard's Grove), almost the whole forest is concealed by the hoar frost. It is as if the mist had been caught on an invisible net spread in the air. Yet the white is tinged with the ground color of reddish oak leaves and even green pine-needles. You look up and behold the hugest pine, as tall as a steeple, all frosted over. Nature is now gone into her winter palace. The trunks of the pines, greened with lichens, are now more distinct by contrast. Even the pale yellowish green of lichens speaks to us at this season, reminding us of summer.

The humblest weed is indescribably beautiful, of purest white and richest form. The hogweed becomes a fairy's wand. The blue-curls, rising from bare gray sand, is perhaps particularly beautiful. Every part of the plant is concealed. Its expression is changed or greatly enriched by this exaggeration or thickening of the mere linear original. It is an exquisitely delicate frost plant, trembling like swan's-down. As if Nature had sprinkled her breast with down this cold season. The character of each tree and weed is rendered with spirit, — the pine plumes and the cedar spires. All this you see going from north to south; but, going the other way (*perchance?*), you might not be struck with the aspect of the woods.

Now (or a little earlier, just after the thaw, when it began to freeze) is the time to go out and see the ice organ-pipes. I walked the whole length of the Cliffs, just at the base of the rocks, for this purpose; but [it] is rather late; no water is flowing now. These great organ-pipes are formed where the water flows over triangular projections of the rocks. The perpendicularity of the icicles contrasts strangely with the various angles of the rocks. It is



now quite cold, and in many places only a sharp spear of purest crystal, which does not reach the rock below, is left to tell of the water that has flowed here. These solid, pipe-like icicles commonly unite by their sides and form rows of pillars or irregular colonnades, run together, between which here and there you can insert your hand, revealing a peculiar internal structure, as of successive great drops. Thus when the water has fallen perpendicularly. And behind these perpendicular pipes, or congregated pillars, or colonnades run together, are formed the prettiest little aisles or triangular alcoves with lichen-clad sides. Then the ice spreads out in a thin crust over the rock, with an uneven surface as of bubbling water, and you can see the rock indistinctly through ice three or four inches thick, and so on, by successive steps or shelves down the rock.

Saw where a squirrel, probably a red one, had apparently brought up to the mouth of his hole quite a quantity of walnuts and eaten them there.


I observe that the surface of the snow under the hemlocks is now very thickly strewn with cones and scales. Was



it done by the thaw? Or did the partridges [**Ruffed Grouse** **Bonasa umbellus** (Partridge)] help do it? The ends of the lower limbs are still under the snow.

At night a fine freezing rain begins, which turns the frost to a glaze.



 January 12, Thursday: Great Britain and France informed Russia that their navies were operating on the Black Sea.


The Grass Valley, [California Telegraph](#) reported that a few days ago the editor had been shown a large and solid lump of quartz, the weight of which was about 200 pounds, that was being estimated by the Gold Hill Company to which it belonged to be worth something over \$3,000.



Jan. 12. A.M. — It still rains very finely. The ground, etc., is covered with a black glaze, wet and shiny like water, like an invisible armor, a quarter of an inch or more thick.

Every winter the surface of the pond to the depth of a foot becomes solid so as to support the heaviest teams, and anon the snow covers it to an equal depth, so that it is not to be distinguished from a level field. Thus, like the marmots in the surrounding hills, it too closes its eyelids and becomes partially dormant.

Coarse, hard rain from time to time to-day, with much mist, — thaw and rain. The cocks crow, for the ground begins to be bare in spots. Walking, or wading, very bad.

 January 13, Friday: Incidental music to *Romulus*, a comédie by Dumas, Feuillet and Bocage, by Jacques Offenbach was performed for the initial time, at the Comédie-Française.

It was a warm and thawing day, and [Henry Thoreau](#) walked to [Walden Pond](#) and the Goose Ponds, and Britton's Camp.

[Emily Dickinson](#) wrote to B.F. Newton's last pastor, the Reverend Edward Everett Hale.

Anthony Foss obtained a patent for the accordion. (Might this Anthony Foss be related to [Andrew Twombly Foss](#) of [New Hampshire](#)?)



Jan. 13. Still warm and thawing, springlike; no freezing in the night, though high winds. Are we not apt to have high winds after rain?

P.M. — To Walden, Goose Pond, and Britton's Camp.

The landscape is now patches of bare ground and snow; much running water with the sun reflected from it. Lately all was clean, dry, and tight. Now, though clear and bright, all is moist and dissolving. The cocks crow with new brag. Even the telegraph harp seems to sound as with a vernal sound, heralding a new year. Those pools of greenish-yellow water with a snow bottom, in hollows in fields and woods, are now much increased, ready to be frozen. These thawing days must have been to some extent lichen days too. I did not examine. The stumps are now richly bronzed with greenish mealy lichens. A rich scale is slowly creeping over and covering them. How the red coxcomb lichens contrast with the snow! Some of these days I have heard Therien's axe more than a mile distinctly. He has already carried it home and ground it twice, having dulled it on a stone. Walden is covered with puddles, in which you see a dim reflection of the trees and hills, as in weak soapsuds, on the grayish or light-colored snow-ice.

I saw yesterday my snowshoe tracks quite distinct, though made January 2d. Though they pressed the snow down four or five inches, they consolidated it, and it now endures and is two or three inches above the general level there, and more white.

The water on Walden has been flowing into the holes cut for pickerel and others. It has carried with it, apparently from the surface, a sort of dust that collects on the surface, which produces a dirty or grayish-brown foam. It lies sometimes several feet wide, quite motionless on the surface of the shallow water above the ice, and is very agreeably and richly figured, like the hide of some strange beast. — how cheap these colors in nature! — parts of it very much like the fur of rabbits, the tips of their tails. I stooped to pick it up once or twice, — now like bowels overlying one another, now like tripe, now like flames, *i.e.* in form, with the free, bold touch of Nature. One would not believe that the impurities which thus color the foam could be arranged in such pleasing forms.

1853-1854

1853-1854

Give any material, and Nature begins to work it up into pleasing forms.

In the deep hollow this side of Britton's Camp, I heard a singular buzzing sound from the ground, exactly like that of a large fly or bee in a spider's web. I kneeled down, and with pains traced it to a small bare spot as big as my hand, amid the snow, and searched there amid the grass stubble for several minutes, putting the grass aside with my fingers, till, when I got nearest to the spot, not knowing but I might be stung, I used a stick. The sound was incessant, like that of a large fly in agony, but though it made my ears ache, and I had my stick directly on the spot, I could find neither prey nor oppressor. At length I found that I interrupted or changed the tone with my stick, and so traced it to a few spires of dead grass occupying about a quarter of an inch in diameter and standing in the melted snow water. When I bent these one side it produced a duller and baser tone. It was a sound issuing from the earth, and as I stooped over it, the thought came over me that it might be the first puling infantine cry of an earthquake, which would ere long engulf me. There was no bubble in the water. Perhaps it was air confined under the frozen ground, now expanded by the thaw, and escaping upward through the water by a hollow grass stem. I left it after ten minutes, buzzing as loudly as at first. Could hear it more than a rod. Schoolcraft says, "The present name is derived from the Dutch, who called it Roode Eylant (Red Island), from the autumnal color of its foliage." (Coll. R.I. Hist. Soc. Vol. iii.)



January 14, Saturday: The Placer, [California Herald](#) copied from the Marysville [Herald](#) that new and rich diggings had been discovered at Hesse's Crossing. In one claim, 2 young men had been at work for 9 weeks. The 1st week's work netted \$91 and the production had steadily increased up to last week, when they took out \$500. "There are but few miners in that region at present."

The fleet of Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) received letters from home by a mail steamer, that had been written during November 1853, as his *Powhatan* got underway and stood out of the Hong Kong harbor with the *Lexington* in tow, followed by the *Mississippi* towing the *Southampton* — and the *Susquehanna* departing last with the Commodore aboard.

The [New York State](#) legislature passed "An Act for the Incorporation of Companies formed to Navigate the Waters of Lake George by Steamboats."

[John Mitchel](#)'s new paper, [The Citizen](#), reviewed a lecture that had been delivered by [Charles Lenox Remond](#) before the [New-York](#) Anti-Slavery Society at the Broadway Tabernacle. The gazette included also in this issue



a letter from James Haughton, asking that the editors by embracing the cause of abolitionism "prove themselves true men," and Mitchel reacted to this provocation in no uncertain terms, pointing out that this correspondent already knew full well that the cause of negro [emancipation](#) was something that had always been "distasteful" to him:

Others may exert themselves to gain justice and freedom for Irish serfs; he [James Haughton], for his part, will stand by the negroes, and scathe the cradle-plunderers.

The editor continued in no uncertain terms:

We are not abolitionists; no more abolitionists than Moses, or

Socrates, or Jesus Christ. We deny that it is a crime, or a wrong, or even a peccadillo, to hold slaves, to buy slaves, to keep slaves to their work by flogging or other needful coercion.

The editor continued by informing his audience that he, personally, wished that he owned some “good plantation, well-stocked with healthy negroes, in Alabama.” Have no doubt about it: that would be in his consideration a righteous thingie rather than a wicked thingie.

Henry Thoreau was surprised to note by how much the river was swollen due to the Thursday rain. He received a coat from the tailor and was dismayed by how he looked in it:

GOD IN CONCORD by Jane Langton © 1992

34

This is not the figure that I cut. This is the figure the tailor cuts. That presumptuous and impertinent fashion whispered in his ear, so that he heard no word of mine.
Journal, January 14, 1854

Viking Penguin

Penguin Books USA Inc.


ISBN 0-670-84260-5 — PS3562.A515G58



Jan. 14. If the writers of the brazen age are most suggestive to thee, confine thyself to them, and leave those of the Augustan age to dust and the bookworms. Was surprised this morning to see how much the river was swollen by the rain of day before yesterday.

The channel, or river itself, is still covered with ice, but the meadows are broad sheets of dark-blue water, contrasting with the white patches of snow still left. The ice on the river rises with the water in this case, while it remains attached to the bottom by one edge on each side, and is heaved up and cracked in consequence along the line of the willows, thus:—



All the water on the meadows lies over ice and snow. The other day I started a partridge [**Ruffed Grouse**  **Bonasa umbellus** (Partridge)] from a sumach bush with berries on it, and to-day from a barberry bush with berries. I suspect that they eat the berries of both.

Cato makes the vineyard of first importance to a farm; second, a well-watered garden; third, a willow plantation (*salictum*); fourth, an olive-yard (*oletum*); fifth, a meadow or grass ground (?) (*pratium*); sixth, a grain-field or tillage (?) (*campus frumentarius*); seventh, a copsewood (?) for fuel (?) (*silva caedua*) (Varro speaks of planting and cultivating this); eighth, an arbustum (Columella says it is a plantation of elms, etc., for vines to rest on) (*arbustum*); ninth, a wood that yields mast (*glandaria silva*). He says elsewhere the *arbustum* yields *ligna et virgae*.

He says: “In earliest manhood the master of a family must study to plant his ground; as for building he must think a long time about it (*diu cogitare*); he must not think about planting, but do it. When he gets to be thirty-



1853-1854

1853-1854

six years old, then let him build, if he has his ground planted. So build, that the villa may not have to seek the farm, nor the farm the villa." This contains sound advice, as pertinent now as ever.

As for farming implements, I do not see but the Romans had as great a variety as are now exhibited in the Crystal Palace.

The master of a family must have in his rustic villa "cellam olcariam, vinariam, dolia multa, uti lubeat caritatem exspectare, et rei et virtuti, et gloriae crit" (an oil and wine cellar, many casks, so that it may be pleasant to expect hard times; it will be for his advantage, and virtue and glory).

This, too, to make farmers prudent and thrifty: "Cogitato quotannis tempestates magnas venire, et oleam dejicere solere" (Consider that great tempests come every year, and the olive is wont to fall). The steward must not lend seed for sowing, etc. He may have two or three families of whom to borrow and to whom to lend and no more.

I just had a coat come home from the tailor's. Ah me! Who am I that should wear this coat? It was fitted upon one of the devil's angels about my size. Of what use that in measuring of me if he did not measure my character, but only the breadth of my shoulders, as it were a peg to hang it on. This is not the figure that I cut. This is the figure the tailor cuts. That presumptuous and impertinent fashion whispered in his ear, so that he heard no word of mine. As if I had said, "Not my will, O Fashion, but thine be done." We worship not the Parcae, nor the Graces, but Fashion, offspring of Proteus and Vanessa, of Whim and Vanity. She spins and weaves and cuts with the authority of the Fates. Oh, with what delight I could thrust a spear through her vitals or squash her under my heel! Every village might well keep constantly employed a score of knights to rid it of this monster. It changes men into bears or monkeys with a single wave of its wand. The head monkey at Paris, Count D'Orsay, put on the traveller's cap, and now all the monkeys in the world do the same thing. He merely takes the breadth of my shoulders and proceeds to fit the garment to Puck, or some other grotesque devil of his acquaintance to whom he has sold himself.

I despair of ever getting anything quite simple and honest done in this world by the help of men. They would have to be passed through a powerful press, à la cider-mill, that their old notions might be thoroughly squeezed out of them, and it would be some time before they would get upon their legs again. Then undoubtedly there would be some one with a maggot in his head, offspring of an egg deposited there nobody knows when; fire does not kill these things, and you would have lost your labor. I could cry, if it were not for laughing.

"If you have done one thing late, you will do all your work late," says [Cato](#) to the farmer. They raised a sallow (*salicem*) to tie vines with. Ground subject to fogs is called *nebulosus*. They made a cheap wine of poor grapes, called *vinum praeliganeum*, for the laborers to drink. (So our farmers give their men rum or weak cider.)

Oxen "must have muzzles [or little baskets, *fiscellas*], that they may not go in quest of grass (*ne herbam sectentur*) when they plow."



January 15, Sunday: The [Free Press](#), a Democratic gazette of Detroit, Michigan, delivered to its readership an editorial on slavery in the New Territories:

Slavery in the New Territories.

We do not, ordinarily, deem it necessary to refute misrepresentations of what we may say, especially when such misrepresentations are of a character to furnish the antidote for their own poison. There is a paper in this city whose editor is a professed minister of the Gospel, but were we to judge of him by the tone and temper of his sheet, we should be forced to the conclusion that he is a minister of almost anything else. That paper of Friday, — we refer to the [Democrat](#), — contained the following:

"This morning's [Free Press](#) has a feeble dough-faced article, advising the surrender of Nebraska to the slave power, the trampling upon the Missouri Compromise, and the entire prostration of the Northern Democratic party, at the foot of the slave power. A man who can court degradation so base, must loathe and despise himself."



1853-1854

1853-1854

The allegations above, – that we advised “the surrender of Nebraska to the slave power, and the trampling upon the Missouri Compromise,” – were made, knowing them to be false, or else they are mere images, creations of the writer’s brain. Our impression is that the first of the two suppositions is true; and, were it the only exhibition of a satanic spirit in the same quarter, we should be induced to throw over it the mantle of charity; but it is not, and we therefore record it as another specimen of moral knavery of which no one but a backsliding priest would be guilty.

The bill reported by the Committee on Territories in the United States Senate, the doctrines of which we sustained, in the article to which allusion is made, contemplates that the Territory of Nebraska shall be unrestricted by Congress in respect to her domestic laws and local regulations – that all questions of territorial legislation shall be left to the people inhabiting said territory. This is no new doctrine. It is the doctrine, emphatically, of Gen. Cass’ Nicholson letter, and of the compromise measures of 1850; and its advocacy, as applied to Nebraska, neither surrenders this territory to the slave power, or tramples upon the Missouri compromise. It leaves the subject of slavery where every other local question is left – in the hands of the people directly interested. If they elect to have slavery, the responsibility is with them. If they elect not to have it, they in like manner set upon their own responsibility. – But whatever their decision may be, it cannot be rightfully interfered with by any other power.

The enforcement of this principle is the only truly catholic and democratic mode of dealing with the territories. It is simply recognizing, to its proper limit, the great principle of the right of the people, every where, to self-government. – Any other principle would be monarchical and arbitrary, and would, moreover, be trampling upon human rights.

We have no fear of slavery going into any of the new western territories. The growth or abatement of that institution is controled by natural laws, which human legislation cannot very much affect. If the writer in the Democrat had a more abiding confidence in Omnipotence, he would be less a fanatic, and have a better conception of his political duties under the constitution and laws of the country, than at present. We can conceive of no degradation so loathsome as that in which a professed minister of the Gospel revels, when he so far forgets his sacred obligations as to utter and publish a deliberate lie.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR JANUARY 15TH]



1853-1854

1853-1854



January 16, Monday: The New York Times carried a detailed account of the wreck of the *San Francisco*:

The Wreck of the San Francisco Interesting Statement of a Passenger.

The steamship *San Francisco* left New-York on the 22nd of December, to take its place in the line of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, plying between Panama and San Francisco, and having on board the Third Regiment of the United States Artillery, as well as several cabin passengers. On Saturday morning, Dec. 24, when about 200 miles east of Charleston, a violent northwester sprang up, and the sea commenced running very high. For several hours the steamer stemmed the waves nobly, and it was generally remarked by all the passengers on board, and also confirmed by Lieutenant Murray, of the United States Navy, that she was the easiest vessel that they had ever sailed in.

About 12 o'clock that night, the engine stopped, owing to the piston rod of the air-pump having broken, and the vessel was left to the mercy of the waves. During the whole of that night, such of the cabin passengers as could be gathered together, assembled in the lower cabin, where, with Mr. Cooper, an Episcopal clergyman, they united in prayer to God for their preservation from the impending danger. The sea ran high all night, and great fears were entertained that the vessel would be unable to hold together much longer. At about 8 o'clock in the morning, she was struck amidships by a violent sea carrying the entire main saloon, the paddle-boxes and smoke-stacks overboard, which caused the hurricane deck to break in half and fall upon the cabin floor. When the sea struck the vessel, it precipitated itself into the lower cabin, where the passengers were still engaged in prayer, and instantly there were three feet of water in that part of the vessel. The horror of the moment cannot be described. Families had been gathered together, clinging to each other. Fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters – from the gray-haired veterans of the Army, to the child which nestled at the mother's breast – all were seen groping their way through the water to the upper deck. Several, in the excitement of the moment sprang overboard, and many of the first who reached the deck were under the impression that the steamer was foundering, and that it would be useless to go below again. I was of the number who entertained this opinion. We remained many hours upon the deck, the sea washing over us at every lurch of the vessel, and the cold northwest wind chilling us to the heart. I never experienced such intense cold. It had been truly said by one of the oldest sailors on board, who had braved many a storm, and had saved many a life under perilous circumstances, that persons had never met so untimely a grave in such a glorious conflict of the elements; for while the sea was running – to use a cant phrase, but a



1853-1854

1853-1854

true one – “mountains high,” the sky was clear as on a Summer’s day, and the sun was shining as brightly as I ever remember to have seen it. One of the most heart-rending sights that I ever witnessed occurred upon the deck. It was that of Dr. Satterlee, a veteran surgeon of the Army, whose hair had grown white in the service, and who, in answer to the orders of his Government, had left his family and home, although verging on his 60th year, to join the regiment on their way to California. He was lying on the deck with but his night garment upon him, and perfectly drenched with water. His limbs had been severely bruised in the general crash, and I could not help feeling, even in this imminent hour of danger, that it was improper that the Government should allow an officer who had served his country so faithfully and so long to be sent, at his age, to so distant a station. He was, however, carried below, and, I am glad to say, is among the number who were rescued in the *Kilby*. It was a fearful sight to look upon the water immediately after the accident. I saw not less than 100 human beings clinging to spars, doors, and such other fragments as they could obtain for the preservation of their lives, but the next wave sealed their fate, and they were hurried without a moment’s notice into eternity.

“Then rose from sea to sky the wild farewell –
Then shrieked the timid, and stood still the brave –
Then some leaped overboard with dreadful yell,
As eager to anticipate their grave;
And the sea yawn’d around her like a hell.”

Two of the passengers remained upon deck for five hours after the accident, under the supposition that nothing but the deck itself was left, and that it was floating at the mercy of the waves. One of these persons was brought down stairs with his hands and feet frozen, but owing to the kindness and prompt attention of Lieut. F.R. Murray, of the U.S. Navy, and Dr. Wirtz, of the medical staff, the torpid circulation of his limbs was restored by stimulating applications.

Capt. Gardiner, an officer of the First Dragoons, was sleeping in one of the state rooms on the main deck, when the accident occurred. His servant-man had entered his state-room to tell him that they were in great danger; and had hardly uttered the words when the wave which had hurried so many into eternity swept the servant overboard, while Captain Gardiner, by a special Providence, was the only man on that deck who was saved. When I came down, I found my friend completely covered and surrounded by the débris of the hurricane deck, which had fallen upon him. He was slightly injured and very enfeebled, but, owing to the kindness of several officers, he was restored to comparative health, and when on board of the *Kilby*, afforded much valuable assistance to the other passengers, and was most justly esteemed by them as one of the most efficient of the



1853-1854

1853-1854

officers of the Army who were rescued by that vessel. In the lower cabin, meanwhile, the consternation cannot be depicted. It baffles description. I noticed one family particularly when I went below. The affection which seemed to exist among its members, even in that hour of peril, was truly a beautiful sight. The mother, the father, the daughters and the grandchildren were all clinging together, and seemed each one more interested in the fate of the other, than in their individual safety. I allude to Major Merchant and his family. They are all saved – God be thanked! Lieutenant Colonel Burke, who was near me in the lower cabin, was struck by a brass railing from the skylight of the upper deck, which fell through upon him. He laid upon the floor on his back until the hour of our rescue, without a murmur, and bore his sufferings with Christian fortitude and resignation. Mr. Aspinwall, who had left New-York for the benefit of his health, was in the cabin at the time of the accident, and on hearing that the ship was leaking immediately went below, and taking off his coat, assisted the men in bailing the ship. For several hours he continued there, cheering the people on until his strength gave way, and he was at length borne on a litter into the cabin in which the ladies were assembled. His conduct from the time of the catastrophe until our arrival in New-York, has proved him to be a man of determined courage and energy, and perfectly resigned to his fate. Without a murmur he partook with the sailors the rations which were served out, while the soldiers and others around were grumbling. On Sunday, December 25, service was read to the passengers by Rev. Mr. Cooper, and prayers for speedy deliverance were offered up by Mr. Aspinwall and others. The storm continued to rage upon that day, and towards evening Lieutenant Murray, who had been the life and support, as it were, of others whose spirits had given way, reported a sail in sight. Soon after we found, as she approached, that she was the brig *Napoleon*, of Portland, and, in reply to a hail from Captain Watkins, her Captain promised to lay alongside until the passengers could be taken on board; but unfortunately that night a severe gale sprang up, and in the morning the *Napoleon* was invisible. Lieutenant Murray still encouraged us with the fond hope that we were in the track of vessels, and we need not despair. Towards evening the welcome words, "A sail in sight!" were again passed from mouth to mouth. On her approaching us we found her to be the *Maria Freeman* (bound to Liverpool, Nova Scotia). When she came with hailing distance we spoke her, and she promised to remain near us.

That night the gale continued still from the northwest, and the next morning, the *Maria Freeman* had also disappeared. A strange fate seemed to be hanging over us, and despair was more clearly depicted upon every countenance. All hopes seemed now to have vanished, and had it not been for Lieutenant Murray – the Good



1853-1854

1853-1854

Samaritan of our little flock – many, I fear, would have lost their reason. The sufferings and privations of the ladies can only be imagined. Most of them had lost all their baggage, and every article of raiment, excepting a few which they themselves had saved about their persons. Such of them as had retained any extra clothing, generously distributed it to the needy. Several hours in each day were passed in substituting dry for wet clothes. The sea, which had been continually breaking over the vessel, came rushing in at intervals from the port-holes and skylights above, so that the floor of the cabin was always wet, and the mattresses upon which we laid were perfectly saturated.

On December 28, owing to the imprudence of the waiters in eating some pickled cabbage and such articles as they could procure, the diarrhoea broke out in the fore cabin of the vessel. Johnson, the head waiter, was the first victim, and the corpses of several others, dying from the same cause, were committed to the deep. This melancholy circumstance was only known to a few on board. During the morning the bark *Kilby* from New Orleans and bound to Boston, hove in sight, and reported herself short of provisions and water, and promised to remain alongside of us, which promise we had reason to hope would be fulfilled, from the fact of her being short of provisions. All hearts were cheered, and as the weather moderated our brave Captain was enabled on the following morning to ask the Captain of the *Kilby* to send his boats to the steamer, (our boats having of course been lost). On the next morning, when Captain Watkins boarded the *Kilby*, he, on behalf of the United States Government, contracted to pay the owners \$15,000 to take as many of the passengers off the steamer on board his vessel as was possible. He further agreed to give the Captain \$200 a day, on behalf of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, to lay alongside in case he should be obliged to do so for any great length of time. The Captain was also to receive \$1,000 for his noble conduct in launching his boats when his crew had refused the duty, and the sea threatened to swallow him up with his frail craft, as well as five per cent primage on the amount contracted to be paid by the Government. At 3 o'clock P.M. the hawser was run to the bow of the *Kilby*, and soon after the disembarkation of the passengers commenced. Great fears were entertained by many that the boats would be swamped, owing to the rush to get into them. Several of the officers had provided themselves with weapons to keep back the crowd, and Colonel Gates addressed the troops, declaring that he would be the last to desert the ship, and that he hoped the officers and soldiers on board would follow his example, and wait with patience until their names were called. The first boat soon after came alongside. I was on the deck at the time, and shall never forget the scene of confusion which ensued. The first boat which left carried Col. Gates and family. After this the officers followed



1853-1854

1853-1854

according to grade, and the boats continued plying to and fro until dark, at which time about one hundred passengers had been transferred to the *Kilby*. The last boat which crossed was swamped alongside of her, and the captain of the *Kilby* stated that he would prefer discontinuing the further disembarkation of passengers until the morning, as the sea was beginning to rise, and a violent northwester was again springing up.

So much has already been said with reference to the noble conduct of Captain Watkins and Mr. Mellus, that it would seem idle to add a further tribute to their bravery. The community are in possession of the facts, which will tell their own story, and further comment is unnecessary. I am desirous, however, of saying a few words of such of the officers of the vessel as have been less noticed by the press. Of these, the Purser, Theodore L. Schell, and the Storekeeper, Mr. Wickham, deserve special commendation. They were at the most prominent points of danger, doing their duty like men. The former came frequently into the passengers' cabin with a cheerful countenance, always bringing words of hope and comfort to the passengers, and making the best of everything. The chief engineer, Mr. John Marshall deserves the highest credit for his conduct throughout the whole of these trying scenes. When his assistant engineers had given out, he proved a host in himself, and performed the duties of a dozen men. In fact, there are many subordinates besides those I have already mentioned, who were equally tried and who equally proved themselves to be men. I cannot help here repeating the name of Lieut. Murray of the United States Navy, who deserves the highest credit that words can bestow for his activity, courage and intrepidity. Several of the officers of the Artillery displayed great courage and energy in their efforts to have the steamer pumped. Of these I feel myself in duty bound to allude particularly to Lieut. Charles S. Winder, Lieut. James Van Voast, and Lieut. Chandler.

Too much praise cannot be awarded to these young officers, who worked night and day to preserve the lives of those on board.

The provisions which were to have been sent on board the *Kilby* were not received, and we retired that night fully confident that on the morrow the necessaries of life, as well as the remainder of the passengers would be transferred to her. The names of those who, up to this moment, had reached the *Kilby* were:

Col. Gates, wife and family; Maj. Merchant (disabled) and family; Lieut. Col. Burke, severely injured; Dr. Satterlee, severely wounded; Captain Judd and wife; Dr. Wirtz, of the Medical Staff; Capt. Gardiner, 1st Dragoons, wounded; Lieut. Loeser, wife and Miss Eaton; Lieut. Fremonta and family; Lieut. Van Voast; Lieut. F.R. Murray, U.S. Navy; George Woolsey Aspinwall; James Lorimer Graham, Jr.; Antonio Fales, Belgian Consul; Madame Alex Besse; Mr. and Mrs. Alrio; Rev. Mr. Cooper,



1853-1854

1853-1854

wife and four children; Mrs. Maj. Wyse and child; Mr. F.H. Southworth; Mr. Farnworth, engineer, and about 100 soldiers.

At about 10 o'clock that night the hawser which had been run from the steamer was parted, and fears were entertained among the gentlemen passengers that we should lose sight of the steamer, which only proved too true, for the northwester which had threatened us returned with renewed force, and drifted us off. The following morning, finding ourselves out of sight of the steamer and exceedingly short of provisions, council was held in the cabin as to the most judicious course which should be pursued. I regret to say, as an impartial narrator, that several of the superior officers suggested the propriety of our giving up all hopes of the steamer, and steering for the nearest land. Lieutenant Murray, however, and some of the junior officers, came forward promptly and appealed to the sympathies of those on board, calling upon them in the names of those who were left behind to stand on her course towards the latitude where the steamer was supposed to be, which noble suggestion was finally determined upon. Thus two days were spent in a fruitless search. Meanwhile the provisions on board of the *Kilby* were fast diminishing. A rigid system of economy was immediately adopted, and an officer of the day was appointed in turn to deal out the rations to the passengers, as well as to the soldiers and crew. Biscuit on the second day was denied to the officers and the other male passengers throughout the vessel, and we were obliged to break open and make use of the corn which constituted part of the cargo, and which seems to have been most graciously provided, as if by a kind Providence, for our subsistence. This corn was used by roasting it like coffee, and then dealt out by the handful. Water was also a scarce commodity, and it was served out to us twice a day – our rations being a tumblerfull to every four men. To complete our frugal fare, each person received a piece of bacon, varying from the size of a fifty-cent to a dollar piece. During the fortnight which we passed on board the *Kilby* we were in constant fear of the water giving entirely out. On several occasions we were favored with rains, from which we were able to add to our little store, and a snow storm also fell, when we gathered a small supply of the refreshing element. The effect of our diet became quite apparent after the first two or three days, and all on board, were, more or less, affected with violent attacks of diarrhaea. We were constantly alternating between hope and fear. The *Kilby*, when we boarded her, was not only short of provisions but was deficient in the supply of sails and rigging, and had left New Orleans on her way to Boston, to be refitted there, as the Captain stated, because it could be done cheaper than in New Orleans.

Several times we approached ports in the United States,



1853-1854

1853-1854

when by adverse winds we were driven back into the Gulf Stream. We were at one time in sight of Nantucket Shoals, and had to stand out to sea to avoid running ashore. At another time, by soundings, we supposed ourselves to be within ten miles of Sandy Hook, and three lights being in sight, the Captain became quite sure that they were the Sandy Hook lights, (probably these lights proceeded from the relief steamer *Alabama*, as she took out a reflecting light). The greatest state of uncertainty prevailed as to our whereabouts, the weather being so thick that for several days the Captain was unable to take his observation. During all this time, the greater part of us has been stowed away in the hold, where one hundred bales of cotton had been taken out to make the necessary room – the Government officer having contracted to pay the highest market value for the cargo that was thrown overboard.

The confusion which had existed on board for several days, in regard to cooking in the galley, had been so great that stringent regulations were enforced by the officers on board, and orders were given that none but two cooks, who were appointed, should enter the galley. Guards were stationed at the doors to prevent intrusion. On the 11th of January, Lieutenant Fremont, the officer of the day, having gone forward, found two sailors in the galley, and gave orders to them to retire, which they refused to do, and on his attempting to eject them, they drew their knives upon him. On this, Lieutenant Fremont called for the corporal, and ordered him to bring the guard up to use the necessary force to carry out his orders, and demanded of the Captain the immediate arrest of the two sailors. Captain Low, however, pacified him by stating that in case these men were placed in irons the crew would mutiny, and they would lose the necessary assistance to work the vessel. Upon these grounds the Lieutenant allowed the matter to pass. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Fremont armed himself with a club the only weapon which at the moment was within his reach – and was about to drive the sailors from the galley. Upon this the crew collected together, and had the Lieutenant not desisted, there would undoubtedly have been a mutiny upon the spot.

On the evening of January 12, while standing in for Sandy Hook in a state of uncertainty as to our positive proximity to the coast, the Captain concluded to put out to sea again. In fact it was his only alternative, as a violent northwester was then blowing, and he was fearful of being driven on the Long Island coast. The crew, however, on ascertaining that the ship was again standing away from the shore, went in a body to the Captain, and refused any longer to perform their duties unless he would steer shoreward. Lieutenant Murray, on ascertaining the facts, immediately went forward, and after stating his position as a naval officer to the crew to give weight to his remarks, convinced them that the Captain was acting judiciously in bearing away,



1853-1854

1853-1854

although they had actually extorted a promise from the captain that at 8 o'clock on the next morning he would make for the nearest shore, regardless of consequences. But few of the passengers of the *Kilby* were informed of this circumstance, and it can readily be imagined in the complication of our miseries, how much additional anxiety was thereby created. All night long we laid upon our cotton bales, praying for the morning. About 4 o'clock I was on deck with many other passengers, when a cry was heard that a ship was lying close by us, which we had not observed in consequence of the dense fog which prevailed at the time, but immediately upon our attention being directed to the quarter in which she lay, a vessel was plainly visibly looming up through the mist. The Captain immediately hailed her, and to the joy of all on deck, a light was seen passing along her deck. The hail was soon answered. Capt. Low stated that we were short of provisions, and the cheering answer, delivered in a stentorian voice, was "Send your boats alongside." The passengers now tumbled out of their berths and from the hold, in every style of garment, anxious to hear anything which might be communicated. The greatest state of anxiety prevailed as to her destination, and this was continued for some time. Owing to the officers being unable to determine who should man the small boat to go on board, Lieut. Murray promptly offered his services; but as it was necessary to effect a contract on behalf of the Government, it was the duty of Lieut. Fremont, the Quartermaster of the Regiment; and he was obliged, at the solicitation of all the officers, to go on board. On the return of the boat which carried Lieut. Fremont on board, word came to send all the passengers over; and, to our joy, we noticed, as the fog cleared away, that the *Lucy Thompson* was lowering two of her boats, which soon came alongside. The second disembarkation of the passengers then commenced, which continued for about six hours. All were at length transferred, with the exception of Mr. Faleo, Madame Besse, and Mr. and Mrs. Abrio, who, with about twelve of the United States troops, volunteered to remain behind to assist the captain in bringing his vessel into port. On reaching the ship, Capt. Pendleton immediately sent provisions and sails to the *Kilby*, sufficient to last them for several weeks.

I cannot describe the joy which followed, when the passengers, one by one, entered the cabin of the *Lucy Thompson*. Upon the table we found a most delicious meal of bread and butter, together with abundance of porter. The treatment we received from Capt. Pendleton was the most kind, generous and warm-hearted that one human being could show to another.

The ship was soon under way, and in a few hours a pilot-boat came in sight, and furnished us with a pilot.

The bark *Kilby* was then almost out of sight. About five hours after the pilot had boarded us we approached in sight of the light ship off Sandy Hook, where we



1853-1854

1853-1854

remained until Saturday night, when the steam tug *Titan* arrived laden with every essential of clothing and provision for our comfort. She had been dispatched by Wm. H. Aspinwall, Esq. The passengers stepped on board and were conveyed to this City. On our way up Mr. Lloyd Aspinwall read a letter from his father tendering the hospitalities of his house to the officers and passengers on board; and my brother, who had also come in the *Titan* to receive us, read to a crowd of eager listeners the papers containing the particulars relating to the fate of our fellow passengers whom we had left on board the wreck.

I have thus endeavored to give the particulars of our shipwreck in the simplest matter-of-fact language, without attempting to describe the sufferings of those on board, or to do justice to the noble conduct of the various officers and sailors, or to the Christian resignation and heroism of many of the passengers. No language can adequately describe the scenes of danger and terror through which we have passed; and words of gratitude and thankfulness are fittest to close my hurried narrative of the disaster of the ill-fated steamer *San Francisco*.

James Lorimer Graham, Jr.
New-York, Jan. 15, 1854.

Statement of Colonel William Gates, Commander of the Third Regiment of Artillery.

The narrative of the events in relation to the disaster on board of the steamer *San Francisco*, I perceive, has been given by different persons who have preceded me. They are mainly correct. The whole number of persons under my command was about 520. This includes the women and children. Of these 106 were transferred on board of the *Kilby*, and brought to this port. I estimate that of the whole number which embarked for California from 200 to 220 were swept overboard by the raging sea. The names of the officers and citizens who were lost, including my son, Charles, have been given. On the second night of our voyage, when the vessel received the most furious dash of the wave which swept off the saloon, taking with it about 180 souls, the baggage and other property on deck, and throwing upon me and upon the heads of those below above a ton and a half of water, every soul believed that our time had come. Com. Watkins came aft and called for volunteers to aid him in endeavoring to save the ship. I cannot say too much in praise of this gallant commander and his equally gallant officers, to whose unremitted and untiring zeal for several days we are indebted for the salvation of our lives. When the good ship *Kilby* appeared in sight, on the morning of the 28th inst., notwithstanding the sea was then running at a great height, the Commodore boarded her with his boat, and soon made arrangements for the *Kilby* to receive on board all that vessel would contain. On his return the



1853-1854

1853-1854

Commodore requested me to embark those under my command on that vessel. Fortunately the storm abated considerably, and we were able to carry to the *Kilby* 106 souls. The vessels had been tied together with a hawser, to facilitate the embarkation, but during the night the force of the gale parted the hawser, and in the morning we were out of sight. We cruised about, endeavoring to find the *San Francisco*, for three days without meeting with any success. It was fortunate for us that our Commissary, Lieut. Loeser, had contrived when the embarkation took place, to send over some bread and bacon. The boats which were used to convey us over were in a leaky condition, from not having been used for some time. The boats of the *San Francisco* – eight in number – had all been swept away, previously, by the gale. After we had searched for the *San Francisco* three days, Capt. Low – a most skillful commander, and a noble fellow – stated he considered it to be his duty to put all on board on short allowance, and to make his way, without further delay, to the nearest land. His sails, at that time, were badly tattered; and this, with the high seas, conspired to prevent their making more than three miles an hour. The entire amount of provisions which we had on board, it was estimated, would last six or seven days, but we contrived to make them last sixteen days, by putting all upon an allowance of a gill of water, a gill of tea, and a gill of corn per day. The corn was cooked in various ways, but latterly was parched. The Almighty was pleased to send us rain and snow on two occasions, to relieve our wants; and had it not been for these fortunate supplies we must have perished. So short of provisions, indeed, was the *Kilby*, that I think if it had not been for provisions and water taken by us from the *San Francisco*, the crew of the *Kilby* must have perished, for they had not a pound of meat on board when we reached that vessel. We feel bound to thank Captain Low for his noble conduct, and to praise the Almighty for his providence while we were tossed about in the *Kilby* at the mercy of the waves. As it is, we have been able to reach the land without the loss of a single person on board of that vessel, although we were afflicted with distresses and slight diseases from the want of sufficient food and water, more or less. On Wednesday last, although we were within ten or twelve miles of land, we had the horrible prospect presented to us of being compelled to put out to sea again. We were during the night blown off fifty miles or more. But, on Friday last, while in the midst of utter despair, the good ship *Lucy Thompson*, under the command of the generous Capt. Pendleton, hove in sight; and thus the Almighty again sent to our rescue a noble ship. It is with unbounded gratitude that I express my thanks to this gentleman for his kind and humane reception and entertainment of us all.

At the time when the prospect was most fearful in the *San Francisco*, and while the soldiers were driven to



1853-1854

1853-1854

despair and almost to madness by their sufferings, and great confusion followed as a necessary consequence, they became almost reckless of life, and thought of nothing but immediate gratifications. Hence, they indulged of drinking all kinds of liquor which they had secured from the stores of the ship's officers. For a time the officers of the troops found against difficulty in restoring order; but, by using extraordinary exertions, they got the good and excellent men of the carry out the orders that were given to them. I consider it my duty to speak of the meritorious conduct of Maj. Wyse, Capts. Judd and Fremont, and Lieuts. Chandler, Loeser, Charles Winder, Wm. Winder, and Van Voast. Their conduct is above all praise, and I think that, at least, they deserve the thanks of the Government, for the safety of all on board depended greatly upon their untiring and incessant services. To Lieut. Murray, of the Navy, for his judicious advice and noble conduct in times the most fearful and appalling, too much praise cannot be bestowed. Whilst on board of the *Kilby*, Capt. Low, as well as the rest of us, looked up to him with the greatest confidence.

I forbear to say anything of the machinery of the *San Francisco*, as I have no knowledge in relation to it; but the general impression is, that the steamer had received too large a cargo for her preservation, as the paddle-wheels, from that cause, were under water at least three feet deeper than they ought to have been, and to this fact I think may be attributed the cause of the machinery giving way. When the ship headed the sea and the waves came dashing against it, some of the weaker parts gave way, and the vessel was left at the mercy of the waves. At the time we left the *San Francisco* for the *Kilby*, Capt. Watkins assured me, in the most confident manner, that with forty good volunteers from my command, and all others removed he could sustain himself on shipboard at least thirty days, and keep his vessel up. I learn that the sufferings on board the *San Francisco* were very great after we left, but I cannot believe that they were greater than were ours. Although we have returned to port bereft, dispossessed of all we had, except the clothes on our persons, we consider ourselves favored by the Almighty. I cannot fail to speak of the services of Drs. Satterlee and Wirtz, whose judicious advice both to those afflicted and well, contributed much to the general good, and was instrumental in saving many lives. The lives of many persons who were in the upper saloon were saved by their coming below before the saloon was swept overboard also. Mr. Cooper and his family were thus spared. It is impossible to estimate the losses of the military until the arrival of the survivors in the *Antarctic*. The hardships which the officers and men endured cannot be described, for none except those actually engaged in the labors they performed can properly appreciate them. They were required to bail water from the floor of the engine-



1853-1854

1853-1854

room, to prevent the fire from being extinguished, and with the perplexities of working among the machinery and the suffocating and debilitating steam and heat, there were but few men who could stand to work here more than half an hour without fainting. The bailing was done with buckets, and forty or fifty men to work at a time. Notwithstanding all these difficulties the good fellows persevered to the last.

The scenes exhibited in the lower cabin after the saloon had been swept away were horrible beyond description. The soldiers in their despair and consternation rushed down below, compelling the women to betake themselves aft, and there men, women and some thirty or forty young children were mingled together in a place not sufficiently large for half of them. This was unavoidably endured for two nights, until the ship was put in a better condition. Whenever alarm or despair occurred it was difficult to preserve discipline or order, but upon the assurances of the Commodore that the ship was in safety, good order soon prevailed. All on board, indeed, were made comparatively happy by his manly and cheering assurances.

By this disaster our regiment, through the death of many of its officers and soldiers, is entirely broken up. With this loss I may add the loss of its books, records, regimental colors, arms, accoutrements, baggage, and the entire personal property of officers and men, and many who have been rescued did not have a single suit of clothes when they arrived.

Statement of Mrs. Col. Gates.

On the morning of Wednesday, the 21st of November, we were informed that Mr. Aspinwall had everything in readiness for a departure. We had delayed going on board for some time on account of my children having the measles. We hurried on board on Wednesday afternoon, in anticipation of an immediate departure. When we reached the *San Francisco*, however, we found that Major Taylor and his lady were not on board. Inasmuch as he and his lady were both lost, it may be interesting to state the entire facts connected with their departure on the ship. We waited for their arrival, in hopes that they would come in the remaining boats, but they did not. Col. Gates felt unwilling to wait any longer for them, and on Thursday morning Capt. Watkins sent the Colonel word that he was ready to embark if orders were given to that effect. The Colonel gave orders to leave, but on intercession of Capt. Fremont, reconsidered his decision, and told Capt. Watkins that he would wait a little longer for him, inasmuch as if he did not it would put Major Taylor to a large expense to reach California by the way of the Isthmus. He and his lady finally arrived on board. He had previously commissioned another person to secure a state-room for him, which was done. It was below, but he was much dissatisfied with it, because it was too far aft. He



1853-1854

1853-1854

wanted two or three officers to be removed, that he might be better accommodated, and finally he was given a state-room above, in the saloon, to oblige him. It will be seen from these circumstances that each step that was taken seemed to conspire to lead him on to his fate. Had the vessel not waited for him he would have been saved, and had he occupied the state-room designated for him he would not have been swept overboard when the saloon went over. Maj. Taylor and his wife were last seen with life-preservers around them, and hand in hand. He sank first, but she was seen buffitting the waves for five minutes. They were seen to jump overboard together.

On the second night out the storm broke upon us, and it increased in fury, but we did not apprehend any danger until we heard the clergyman, Rev. Mr. Cooper, in fervent prayer. At 10 o'clock the water came into the state-rooms through the port holes, and also from above. The waves came against the vessel one after another with a crash, and with a force that would seem to crush the vessel. The furniture and dishes were dashed about in the greatest confusion. This continued until daylight. Each wave seemed to be harder, and it seemed to us that our vessel would be rent in two. I was in my berth when the last fearful crash came. The Colonel had gone on deck just before, and he saw the wave coming, which appeared, he says, more like a mountain wall than anything else. He rushed below as quickly as possible, and was standing in the stateroom when it broke over us, sweeping off the upper saloon and crushing in the deck over our heads. We rushed out of our stateroom into the cabin, as well as we could, with our children, and clambering over chairs and tables, all in confusion. We were then in momentary expectation that the next wave would sink us. The Colonel said to us to come aft. We did so, and once there, others seeing us, followed. The hold was open there, and Major Merchant, in bringing his family aft, fell into the hold below, and when picked up he was more dead than living. Soon after this, the steward passed, and I asked of him what we could do. He replied, "Nothing - we can trust only in God." Major Merchant's daughters were shrieking out that their father was dead, and Colonel Gates, in going below to help him, was thrown violently over against a rocking-chair, which created a severe wound in his eye, and subsequently he was again struck in his other eye. Others had followed us aft, and soon the space was occupied, and each was seeking a place where he could lie. We were all in our night clothing, and were saturated with the water and shivering in the cold. Each wave would dash more water upon us, and after it receded would return with renewed force. As the waves struck, voices could be heard simultaneously with "Oh God!" all being in expectation that it would be our last. Some were praying, the children were screaming lustily, but the ladies were almost universally calm. The camp women,

1853-1854**1853-1854**

however, were shrieking a great deal, but the ladies were clinging to each other and the little ones, and were calm and speechless. In this condition, drenched with the water and spray which dashed in upon us, we remained throughout the day. During the day the steward came down and stated that the captain had said her hull was sound and that there was great hope of our being saved. With this intelligence our hopes revived, and all were more quiet. Towards night the fury of the gale had subsided a little. When night came on, during the confusion which had prevailed, no provision had been made for lights, and we remained for two or three hours in total darkness, immersed partially in the water. This was Saturday night, and Christmas eve. A piece of the candle was subsequently found by the steward, I believe, and was placed in a bottle. I cannot speak in terms of too high praise of the steward, of a sergeant named Adams, another named McIntyre, and a soldier named Williams, all of whom were conspicuous and indefatigable in their exertions to assist. They were running at all times for blankets, and were stopping up the port holes to prevent, if possible, the water from rushing in. After dark the scene was more fearful, if possible, than before. The storm had recommenced with greater violence, but Capt. Watkins reassured us that the hulk was perfectly sound and that the sea must go down soon, and we felt encouraged. We were lying at this time in about three inches of water. During the whole of the time subsequently every person was begging the soldiers and waiters for more dry blankets. The officers, soldiers, and indeed all who were able, took turns in bailing out the vessel. Christmas night we passed in prayer, in which even the children participated, as we hardly dared to hope to see the morning light again. When morning did come, however, and with it a bright sunshine, though the sea was running very high, we were like renewed beings. It was on Monday, I believe, that a bark hove in sight, but it stood off and did not render us any assistance. When Monday night came, our hopes again sank, but the Captain and Lieut. Murray would visit us and give us assurances that we were safe, as there was but little water in the vessel. About this time the raw recruits among the soldiers became discouraged, and believing that no hopes of being saved remained, became insubordinate in their despair. They rushed down into the cabin where the women were, and threw themselves down anywhere. By the efforts of the young officers who, by dint of persuasion, and coercion when persuasion would not answer, they would return to their work again. On Sunday, I think it was, that the potted meats and sardines were brought out. Prior to that we had feasted on sea biscuit while lying rolled up in wet blankets. At one time we suffered much for water, and several of the soldiers who had gone forward to get water had been washed overboard. Towards night Colonel Gates

1853-1854

1853-1854

determined, if possible, to get some at the risk of his life. He was advised not to undertake it, but he attempted it and succeeded. On Tuesday morning the men came into the cabin where the women were, in great consternation giving us no further hope of being saved. The wind was blowing in most fearful squalls from the northwest. Men were called after by the Captain, to batten down the hatches, to prevent, as far as possible, the water from rushing in upon us. It was whispered around that the cabin where we were had given way. Major Wyse then put on his life-preserver, and fastened his babe around his neck. The Captain, Col. Gates, and several of the men, succeeded in securing the hatches. Gradually, however, the force of the gale was less violent, and in the afternoon it was more quiet. During the afternoon, the *Kilby* hove in sight. When we learned that she would remain by us, we were in excellent spirits, and the entire night was passed in a most pleasant mood. The passengers were in clusters together, laughing and talking with one another, in excellent spirits. Mrs. Chase and my sister, (Miss Carter), fainted away, however, from the exertion caused by four days and nights being passed without rest. In the morning, much to our joy, the bark was still in sight, and we were still more overjoyed when Captain Low said that he would take us aboard. About noon the wind had subsided sufficiently to commence disembarking. The ladies were let down into the boats by ropes tied around their waists. I was the first lady that descended. The boat was nearly full of water at the time. We were taken across according to the rank in the regiment. Our family was first, then came Major Merchant's family, and then Major Wyse's lady. Major Wyse requested to be allowed to remain on board himself, in order to disembark the troops, as it was expected that all would be taken over before dark. Unfortunately, however, the life-boat stove the second trip. Nobody was lost, however. It was fortunate that Lieutenant Loeser thought of sending over a barrel and a half of sea biscuit and three or four hams. He also sent over three or four casks of water and three boxes of sardines. The *Kilby* was without provisions except a quantity of corn. She had only about 400 gallons of water. During the night the hawser by which we were attached to the steamer was broken by the force of the waves, and in the morning we had drifted out of sight.

During the night Lieut. Murray was frequently with us, endeavoring to cheer us up. Major Wyse having been left in the steamer, his lady felt very uneasy to know whether it was still in sight, in order to be assured of her husband's safety. Whenever Lieut. Murray came down she would ask him if the lights were in sight, to which he would invariably give an affirmative reply, that her fears, in her enfeebled condition, might not be excited too much. We found that we were scantily supplied with food, with 108 additional persons on



1853-1854

1853-1854

board. The next day a half cask of molasses was found within reach, and for two days we feasted upon sea biscuit and molasses. When that was gone, however, we could not obtain any more as it was lying below the cotton in the hold. There was a meeting of the captain and officers held, and it was concluded that on account of the low state of our provisions, we must go upon short allowance immediately. And with the short allowance of water, all suffered much. On the first night out, the best accommodations were given to Colonel Burke, on account of his injury and sickness. Mr. Aspinwall, too, was quite sick. We sat up all night. The next day we were placed each upon an allowance of a slice of fried bacon and a biscuit. For two or three days we fried our bacon, but afterwards eat it raw, in order that none of its nourishment might be lost in cooking. We had port wine and brandy to drink for two or three days, and our lack of water was partially made up by them as long as they remained. Our sufferings were great during the fourteen days we was on board, but nothing transpired worthy of special note, aside from the sufferings, till last Wednesday morning the sun shone brightly, and we confidently expected that by the next day we would be near Sandy Hook. During the night, however, the wind sprung up again and drove us back, and at this time we were nearly out of water, and on Thursday we were again desponding. On Friday morning the news came to us that the *Lucy Thompson* was in sight, and as soon as practicable one of the officers went on board of her, and found Capt. Pendleton willing and desirous to assist us, and furthermore, he refused to accept anything from us or from the Government for the valuable services rendered. We were taken on board of her, with the exception of four of the passengers, who preferred to remain on the *Kilby*. Two days before we left the *Kilby*, I might mention that the crew were given larger rations, to effect which our rations were reduced. The proposition was acceded to with perfect readiness. There were some rather amusing incidents that transpired on board the *San Francisco* during the gale. On Monday, the wife of a sergeant was asking everybody in the most supplicating tones if they had seen anything of her husband, mentioning his name. She repeated the inquiry scores of times, till at last one of the officers said to her, "Good Heavens, woman, you make more noise than all of the rest on board; one would think that you was the only lady who had a husband in the ship."

The officers, too, worked with an effort almost superhuman. Of Lieutenants Chandler, Van Voast, and the two Lieutenants Winders, I cannot speak in terms of too high praise for their noble exertion. If anything was wanted, they did not require asking, but rushed to the spot eager to do all they could. Lieut. Chandler, particularly, seemed possessed of power to do and stand up under anything, and never, during the whole time, did



1853-1854

1853-1854

he seem likely to falter. But in this, however, it is impossible for me to draw a distinction. The whole four worked with a zeal which is almost beyond commendation. If ever men deserved brevets they deserve them. Major Wyse, too, was indefatigable in his efforts. Major Merchant and Dr. Satterlee were sick and could not do anything. Col. Burke was also unable to do anything from the injuries he had received. He had been knocked over violently when the saloon was swept off, by an iron railing, by which his hand was broken. Of Lieut. Murray, of the Navy, I cannot speak in too high terms. He was, as it were, the saviour of the whole. His nautical skill was such that we had reason to trust him; and, as every announcement he made but confirmed the hopes raised by the cheering words of Captain Watkins, he did much to support our drooping spirits. He did all he could to make us as hopeful as he could; and his countenance was watched with intense anxiety whenever he entered the cabin. They relied upon his word almost as much as they did that of the Captain.

During the raging of the gale, when in the *San Francisco*, many of the waiters, soldiers, and camp women became perfectly reckless of their situation and commenced robbing and stealing everything valuable they could lay hold of. Watches, jewelry, and indeed everything that could be obtained was stolen. Trunks were rifled, and some of the waiters, I am told, covered the rings on their fingers with pieces of rags, saying, when asked, that their hands were injured. Capt. Low, of the *Kilby*, who is quite a young man for the position he occupies, has endeared himself to every one who was in the vessel, by his noble, gallant, and generous conduct. Lieut. Murray says that he managed his vessel, under the difficulties which they encountered, with great skill.

Mrs. Gates spoke also in high terms of approbation of several others who had been instrumental in saving life. Among them were Dr. Satterlee, Lieut. Charles Winder and others. She also spoke highly of the attentions of several of the waiters, among whom was a young man named Isaiah Carter; and further, of the hospitable treatment in the *Lucy Thompson*, by the officers and crew.

[Among those not mentioned in these accounts were West Point graduates Lt. Col. John M. Washington and Capt. Horace B. Field, both of whom drowned.]



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR JANUARY 16TH]



1853-1854

1853-1854



January 17, Tuesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed for William O. Benjamin in the east part of Lincoln.

Detroit and [Niagara Falls](#) became connected across Canada by way of the Great Western Railway.

[James Redpath](#), a reporter at [Horace Greeley](#)'s New-York [Tribune](#), having been assigned to cull for republication in the [Tribune](#), articles from Southern newspapers that usefully described the "Facts of Slavery," came upon [the following relevant material](#):

We learn from The Norfolk Beacon that one of the first acts of Judge Baker, of the Superior Court on Monday, Jan. 9, was to sentence Mrs. Douglas, who was convicted at the last term for instructing negroes to read and write, contrary to law, to one month's imprisonment to the city jail, which sentence was immediately carried into execution....



Jan. 17. Surveying for William O. Benjamin in east part of Lincoln. Saw a red squirrel on the wall, it being thawing weather. Human beings with whom I have no sympathy are far stranger to me than inanimate matter, — rocks or earth. Looking on the last, I feel comparatively as if I were with my kindred.

[Cato](#), prescribing a *medicamentum* for oxen, says, "When you see a snake's slough, take it and lay it up, that you may not have to seek it when it is wanted." This was mixed with bread, corn, etc.

He tells how to make bread and different kinds of cakes, *viz.*, a *libum*, a *placenta*, a *spira* (so called because twisted like a rope, perhaps like doughnuts), *scriblita* (because ornamented with characters like writing), *globi* (globes), etc., etc. Tells how to make a vow for your oxen to Mars Sylvanus in a wood with an offering, no woman to be present nor know how it is done.

When the brine will float a dry *maena* (a fish) or an egg, then it will preserve meat. Tells how to cram hens and geese. If you wish to remove an ill savor from wine, he recommends to heat a brick and pitch it and let it down by a string to the bottom of the cask and there remain two days, the cask being stopped.

"If you wish to know if water has been added to wine, make a little vessel of ivy wood (*materia ederacea*). Put into it the wine which you think has water in it. If it has water, the wine will run out (*effluct*), the water will remain. For a vessel of ivy wood does not hold wine."

"The dogs must be shut up by day that they may be more sharp (*aeriores*, more fierce (?)) and vigilant by night." So I might say of a moon and star gazer.

"Make a sacrificial feast for the oxen when the pear is in blossom. Afterward begin to plow in the spring."

"That day is to be holy (*feriae*) to the oxen, and herdsmen, and those who make the feast." They offer wine and mutton to Jupiter Dapalis, also to Vesta if they choose.

When they thinned a consecrated grove (*lucum conlucare*) (as if [to] let in the light to a shaded place) they were to offer a hog by way of expiation and pray the god or goddess to whom it was sacred to be favorable to them, their house and family and children. Whatever god or goddess thou art to whom this grove is sacred, I pray thee be propitious. Should not all groves be regarded as a *lucus*, or consecrated grove, in this sense? I wish that our farmers felt some such awe when they cut down our consecrated groves; would realize that they are sacred to some god.

A *lustrum*, or sacrifice, of a sow, sheep, and bull (*suovitaurlia*) was performed every fifth year, when various things were prayed for.

Gives several charms to cure diseases, mere magician's words.

1853-1854

1853-1854



January 18, Wednesday: Just after midnight, the [steamer SS Golden Gate](#), “probably the most magnificent sea steamer afloat,” limped into the harbor of San Diego, [California](#) with a broken centre shaft, making best use of its one remaining engine and paddlewheel, to take on fresh provisions for its 750 passengers for the trip farther up the coast. At 3PM the vessel began to leave the harbor of San Diego, and there would be a series of mishaps, followed by a storm and a shipwreck, with the 750 passengers being returned to San Diego to board other steamers (the *Golden Gate* would be recovered but this incident would end up costing the steamboat company some \$140,000).

[Thomas A. Watson](#) was born.

[Judah Touro](#) died, leaving more than half a million dollars to various [Catholic](#), Protestant, and [Jewish](#) charities (half a million dollars was serious money in those days). His will established, also, a Ministerial Fund for the empty synagogue in [Newport, Rhode Island](#) at which his father had once officiated while there were still Jews living in that town.

[TOURO SYNAGOGUE](#)



Robert and Clara Schumann left Düsseldorf for Hanover to give concerts and visit [Johannes Brahms](#) and Joseph Joachim (this would be their last trip together).

Having received minimal interference from [Mexican](#) authorities, [William Walker](#) expanded his domains from Baja California to Sonora (although he has never been there).

The Reverend [Henry Ward Beecher](#) sermonized, in his Tabernacle “crowded to its utmost capability,” on [John Mitchel](#) and his attitude toward human slavery. He read to this audience the substance of the disgusting letter that Mitchel had placed in [The Citizen](#), to “a tempest of hisses and cries of shame.” He suggested to this

1853-1854

1853-1854

audience that they consider Mitchel to be among “the dead,” which is a curious thing to say since it is so ambiguous: –it might be taken to mean that everyone ought to shun such a person, –or it might be taken to mean that someone ought to put him out of his misery.

Henry Thoreau was summoned as surveyor by Middlesex County Justice of the Peace L. Marrett of the Court of Common Pleas in Cambridge to help resolve a land dispute at 9 AM on January 20th in regard to a survey he had just completed for William O. Benjamin. The other party was listed as “Leonard Spaulding Lots.”¹²³ The threat made in the legal summons was merely the customary and usual sort of belligerent insolence which one is to expect, when an established government bureaucracy deals with a mere citizen:



Hereof fail not, as you will answer your default under the pain and penalty in the law in that behalf made and provided.

Middlesex[] SS[]To Henry D. Thoreau of Concord
in said County of [Middlesex]

Greeting.

You are hereby required, in the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to make your appearance before Justices of the Court of Common [Pleas] now— — holden at Cambridge Thursday within and for the County of [Middlesex] on [~~Friday~~] the twentieth day of January instant at 9 O clock [A.M] and from day to day until the Action hereinafter named is heard by the court, to give evidence of what you know relating to an Action or Plea of Tort then and there to be heard and tried betwixt ~~William C Benjamin~~ Leonard Spaulding [& als] } Plaintiff

and William [C] Benjamin ----- } Defendant

Hereof fail not[,] As you will answer your default under the pains and penalty in the law in that behalf made and provided.— Dated at Cambridge the [E]ighteenth day of January [] in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty four
L. Marrett Justice of the Peace[.]

View Henry Thoreau’s personal working drafts of his surveys courtesy of AT&T and the Concord Free Public Library:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/Thoreau_Surveys.htm



Thoreau testified in Cambridge, but his client Benjamin lost.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR JANUARY 18TH]

123. It has been pointed out that this episode occurs too late to account for the appearance of the Spaulding farm in “Walking.”



1853-1854

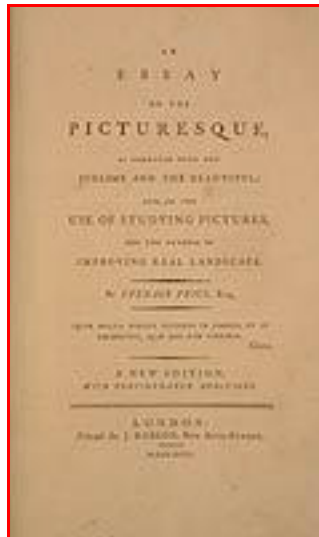
1853-1854

➡ January 19, Thursday: The Reverend [Henry Ward Beecher](#) placed, in his newspaper [The Independent](#), an article "[John Mitchel](#) and Slavery," pointing out that the so-called liberty and the so-called freedom for which Mitchel had struggled in Ireland had no "real principle of liberty at bottom," because this was a "liberty" and a "freedom" that "sends terror through the cotton field," a "liberty" and a "freedom" that "vociferates triumphant bids for comely girls and healthy boys of divided families, among squabbling Legrees, around the auction-block." –His prose may have been purple but his point was of course most valid.

➡ January 19, Thursday: While visiting the metropolis to testify in a court case, [Henry Thoreau](#) stopped by [Harvard Library](#) to turn in the 3d volume of HISTORICAL AND STATISTICAL INFORMATION RESPECTING ... THE INDIAN TRIBES OF THE UNITED STATES,

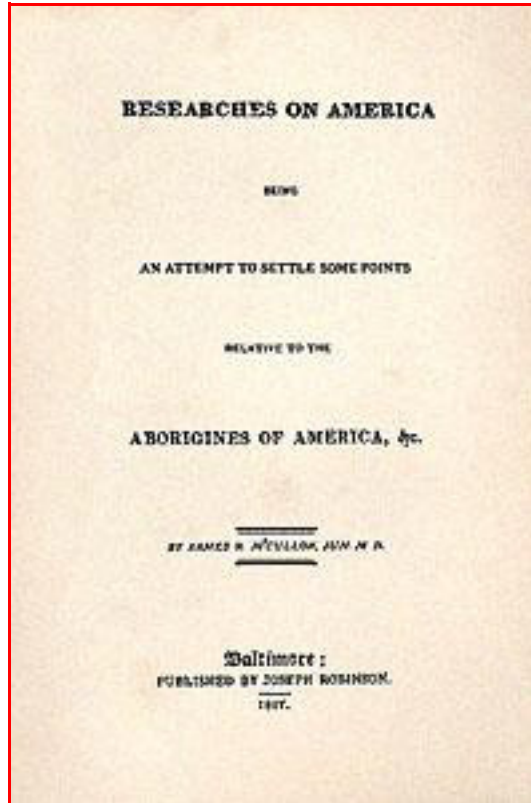
THE INDIAN TRIBES, III, 1854

that he had checked out on the 28th of November, and check out the first of the three volumes of Sir Uvedale Tomkyns Price (1747-1829)'s ESSAYS ON THE PICTURESQUE, AS COMPARED WITH THE SUBLIME AND THE BEAUTIFUL, AND ON THE USE OF STUDYING PICTURES, FOR THE PURPOSE OF IMPROVING REAL ESTATE (London: Mawman, 1810) (1st edition, London: J. Robson, 1794).



[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**1853-1854****1853-1854**

[Thoreau](#) also checked out Dr. James H. McCulloh, Jr. (1793-1870)'s RESEARCHES ON AMERICA: BEING AN ATTEMPT TO SETTLE SOME POINTS RELATIVE TO THE ABORIGINES OF AMERICA, &C. (Baltimore: Joseph Robinson, 1st edition 1816, 2d edition 1817).



[Thoreau](#) also checked out [John Josselyn](#)'s ACCOUNT OF TWO VOYAGES TO NEW-ENGLAND (1674).¹²⁴

**JOHN JOSSELYN'S
TWO VOYAGES**

124. Refer to Philip F. Gura's "Thoreau and John Josselyn" in *NEQ* 48 (December 1975), pages 505-18:

It is my contention that people tracing the sources of Thoreau's singular literary development have overlooked influences very close to home.... Could it not be that Thoreau's true affinity is not to people like Emerson, but to those seventeenth-century men who were, in Urian Oakes's words, "the Lord's **Remembrancers** or **Recorders**"?... Is it accidental that the excursion was Thoreau's chosen form, or that he would compose a botanical index for his trips to the Maine woods?

1853-1854

1853-1854

THE MAINE WOODS: There may be some truth in what he said about the moose growing larger formerly; for the quaint John Josselyn, a physician who spent many years in this very district of Maine in the seventeenth century, says, that the tips of their horns "are sometimes found to be two fathoms asunder," —and he is particular to tell us that a fathom is six feet,— "and [they are] in height, from the toe of the fore foot to the pitch of the shoulder, twelve foot, both which hath been taken by some of my sceptique readers to be monstrous lies"; and he adds, "There are certain *transcendentia* in every creature, which are the indelible character of God, and which discover God." This is a greater dilemma to be caught in than is presented by the cranium of the young Bechuana ox, apparently another of the *transcendentia*, in the collection of Thomas Steel, Upper Brook Street, London, whose "entire length of horn, from tip to tip, along the curve, is 13 ft. 5 in.; distance (straight) between the tips of the horns, 8 ft. 8 1/2 in." However, the size both of the moose and the cougar, as I have found, is generally rather underrated than overrated, and I should be inclined to add to the popular estimate a part of what I subtracted from Josselyn's.

JOHN JOSSELYN



Jan 19th 54

Went to Cambridge to Court.

Dr Harris says that my cocoons found in Lincoln in Dec. are of the Atticus Cecropia. the largest of our emperor moths. He made this drawing of the 4 kinds of Emperor moths which he says we have— The Cecropia is the largest The cocoon must be right end uppermost when they are ready to come out. The A. Promethia is the *only moth* whose cocoon has a *fastening wound round the petiole of the leaf & round the shoot — the leaf partly folded round it.*

That spider whose hole I found — & which I carried *him, he is pretty sure* is the *Lycosa fatifera*.

In a large & splendid work on the insects of Georgia by Edwards & smith (?) near end of last century upstairs, I found plates of the above moths — called not atticus but phalaena — and other species of phalaena.

He thinks that small beetle slightly metallic which I saw with grubs &c on the Yellow lily roots last fall — was a Donax or one of the Donasia?

In **Josselyn's** account of his voyage from London to Boston in 1638 he says "June the first day in the afternoon, very thick foggie weather, we sailed by an enchanted island," &c This kind of remark to be found in so many accounts of voyages — appears to be a fragment of tradition come down from the earliest account of Atlantis & its disappearance—

COLL.MASS.HIST.SOC. 1833

Varro having enumerated certain writers on Agriculture says accidentally that they wrote *soluta ratione* [should be *soluta oratione*] i.e. in prose. This suggests the difference between the looseness of prose & the precision of poetry. A perfect expression requires a particular rhythm or measure for which no other can be substituted— The prosaic is always a loose expression

LIBRIS GRAMMATICIS

Varro makes Fundanius say "I could not live [in Italy?] in a summer day of non diffinderem meo insitio [should be insiticio] somno meridie — if I did not split it with my inserted sleep at noon" — i.e. on account of the heat—

DE AGRICULTURA LIBER



1853-1854

1853-1854

Cato makes much account of the leaves of elms & poplars for sheep & oxen & [Varro](#) particularly recommends to plant elms along the confines of a farm because this not merely preserve the boundary & the fence but bear some baskets of grapes & afford the most palatable leaves for sheep & oxen.

[Varro](#) divides fences into four kinds — unum naturale, alterum agreste, tertium militare, quartum fabrile. (many kinds of each)– The first is the living hedge– One kind of sepes agrestis is our rail fence — & our other dead wooden farm fences would come under this head– The military sepes consists of a ditch & rampart — is common along highways — sometimes a rampart alone. The 4th is the mason's fence of stone — or brick (burnt or unburnt) or stone & earth together.

DE AGRI CULTURA, I

Seges dicitur quod aratum satum est; arvum, quod aratum necdum satum est: novalis, ubi satum fuit ante, quam secunda aratione renovetur.



January 20, Friday: Captain J.B.G. Isham of the steamship *SS Golden Gate* reported to the Pacific Mail Steamship Company:

Mr. E. Flint,—

Dear Sir:—

I am obliged to report to you that on the 10th we broke our centre shaft, and drifted about under sail until the 14th, by which time we were able to steam with one engine and one wheel. I have 750 passengers on board. I came into San Diego on the night of the 18th, between 12 and 1 o'clock, for fresh provisions, all hands having been on an allowance for six days. I was 500 miles from San Diego when I broke down. In leaving San Diego I had got outside and near to Point Toma; coming down broadside too, I gave the engine a back turn to get room to swing around, and when I rang the bell to go ahead, it being so badly balanced it could not be got over the centre, and the result was that the current sheared the ship on to the edge of the bank, which I did not consider of any consequence, notwithstanding I had but one engine and it worked heavy. The ship then swung around and brought up alongside the bank fore and aft.

The steamer *Goliah* was at this time leaving port. I made signal to her; she came alongside and took my hawsers; by the time she got hold the tide had fallen eight inches. She parted both hawsers, and I then saw no chance of getting off until the next high tide. I ran my hawsers again and the *Goliah* came to anchor to be ready when the tide made. By this time it was 5 P.M. and perfectly smooth. The tide commenced to flow at 6 o'clock, at which time a gale from the south east burst upon us. At 9 o'clock the *Goliah* let go my hawsers and made a shelter inside the harbor. At 11 P.M., having sail on the ship and the engines at work, the ship swung around and brought up upon the same shoal, not being able to get away on account of the violence of the storm and the breaking sea. After bringing up, the sea broke heavily on us until 4 o'clock in the morning, when it moderated; but the sea continued to break heavily and around us. During the night the ship pounded very heavily and almost any other ship would have gone to pieces; when the ebb tide made, she soon became more quiet. At daylight the *Goliah* came out to see us; it was too rough to do anything with her. The ship made



1853-1854

1853-1854

considerable water during the night. This day we have been occupied in getting the water out of the ship, which was over the furnaces; we began at 8 o'clock with bail gangs and pumps. At 7 P.M., had the furnaces clear of water and raised steam and started the engines, but it did not effect anything but to keep in position. At 4 A.M., on the 20th, had steamers Goliah and Isthmus off to us; made contract with them to land the passengers, and the Goliah to take off both of our steam anchors. Many of the passengers will go up on these boats, the balance I shall subsist on shore until you send a steamer down to take them up. I shall use every means to take her off. I think she has started some of her butts, but hope, if we succeed in shifting her position, to be able to get her into San Diego; if not, I shall keep her in as shoal water as is necessary, until I get assistance from San Francisco.

I think you had better send down a set of purchases and two or three steam pumps, and if we do not get another gale we shall succeed in saving the ship. At 12 M. I have sounded in two lines from the ship, and find that we must lighten the ship twenty inches to get her up.

The Goliah failed in carrying out my anchors this morning, and I shall be obliged to adopt other expedients. I shall do the best that I can. I shall send the mails up by the steamer Goliah. I have announced to the passengers that the Company will subsist them on shore until you send a steamer to their relief. I have one or two hulks alongside, and shall commence discharging freight, stores and coal to-morrow.

Yours, &c.,
J.B.G. Isham,
Comd'g Golden Gate



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR JANUARY 20TH]

1853-1854

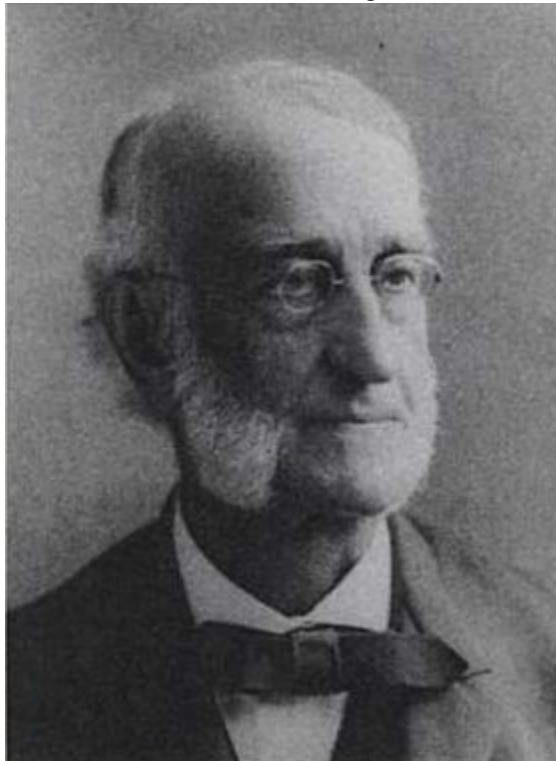
1853-1854

➡ January 21, Saturday: [John Mitchel](#) responded in [The Citizen](#) to the Reverend [Henry Ward Beecher](#)'s sermon against him, by referring to Beecher as "his reverence" and promising that in his eventual response he meant "not only to parry but to thrust."

The fleet of Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) came to anchor near the island of Okinawa in the Nansei, or Ryukyu, Islands, at Naha, Lew Chew.

Phantasie op.131 for violin and orchestra by [Robert Schumann](#) was performed for the initial time, in Hannover. Joseph Joachim was the soloist.

[Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to [H.G.O. Blake](#) in Worcester, telling him that he would visit on Monday.



Concord Jan 21st '54
Mr Blake,
My coat is at last
done, and my mother & sister allow
that I am so far in a condition
to go abroad. I feel as if I had gone
abroad the moment I put it on. It is,
as usual a production strange to
me the wearer, invented by some Count
D'Orsay, and the maker of it was not
acquainted with any of my real depressions
or elevations. He only measured a peg
to hang it on, and might have made



1853-1854

1853-1854

the loop big enough to go over my head. It requires a not quite innocent indifference not to say insolence to wear it. Ah, the process by which we get our coats is not what it should be. Though the church declares it righteous & its priest pardons me, my own Good Genius tells me that it is hasty & coarse & false. I expect a time when, or rather an integrity by which a man will get his coat as honestly, and as perfectly fitting as a tree its bark. Now <<lines missing at bottom of xerox>> our garments are typical of our con[]

Page 2

formity to the world, i. e. of the Devil — & to some extent react on us and poison us like that shirt which Hercules put on. I think to come & see you next week on monday, if nothing hinders. I have just returned from Court at Cambridge, whither I was called as a witness, having surveyed a water-privelege about which there is a dispute since you were here.

Ah! what foreign countries there are, greater in extent than the U. S. or Russia, and with no more souls to a square mile — stretching away on every side from every human being with whom you have no sympathy. Their humanity affects me as simply monstrous. Rocks — earth — brute beasts comparatively are not so strange to me. When I sit in the parlors or kitchens of some with whom my business brings me — I was going to say in contact — (business, like misery, makes strange bed-fellows) I feel a sort of awe and as forlorn as if I were cast away on a desolate shore — I think of Riley's Narrative & his suffering. You y who roared like a merlin with your mate through the realms of ether — in the presence of the unlike drop at once to earth a mere amorphus



1853-1854

1853-1854

<<lines missing at bottom of xerox>>
squab — divested of your air
inflated pinions. (By the way, excuse

Page 3

this writing, for I am using the stub
of the last feather I chance to pos-
sess —) You travel on, however, through
this dark & desert world, you see in the
distance an intelligent & sympathizing
lineament, — ~~the~~ stars come forth in the
dark & oases appear in the desert.
But (to return to the subject of coats), we
are well nigh smothered under yet more fatal
coats, which do not fit us, our whole lives long.
Consider the cloak that our employment
or station is — how rarely men treat each
other for what in their true & naked char-
acters they are — How we use & tolerate pretension;
how the judge is clothed with dignity which
does not belong to him, and the trembling
witness with humility as that does not
belong to him, and the criminal per-
chance with shame or impudence which
no more belong to him — It does not matter
so much then what is the fashion of
the cloak with which we cloak these
cloaks. Change the coat — put the
judge in the criminal box & the criminal
on the bench, and you might think that
you had changed the men.
No doubt the thinnest of all cloaks is
it is sleazy & frays out conscious deception, or lies, it is not close
^ woven like cloth — but its meshes are a coarse
net-work. A man can afford to lie only
at the intersection of the threads, but truth
<<lines missing at bottom of xerox>>
puts in the filling & makes a consistent stuff.

Page 4

I mean merely to suggest how much the
station affects the demeanor & self-respectability
of the parties, & that the difference between the
judge's coat of cloth & the criminal[']s]
is insignificant compared with — or only
partially significant of — the difference
between the coats which their respective



1853-1854

1853-1854

stations permit[s] them to wear —. What airs the judge may put on over his coat which the criminal may not! The judge's opinion (sententia) of the criminal sentences him & is read by the clerk of the court, & published to the world, & executed by the sheriff — but the criminal's opinion of the judge has the weight of a sentence & is published & executed only in the supreme court of the universe — a court not of common pleas. How much juster is the one than the other? Men are continually sentencing each other, but whether we be judges or criminals, the sentence is ineffectual unless we condemn ourselves.
I am glad to hear that I do not always limit your vision when you look this way — that you sometimes see the light through me, that I am here & there windows & not all dead wall. Might not the community sometimes petition a man to remove himself as a [nuisance] a darkener of the day — a too large <<lines missing from bottom of xerox>> mote?
H.D.T.

Bronson Alcott returned home from his Western lecture tour. Almost immediately upon his return, he joined the Committee of Vigilance headed by the white-supremacist Reverend Theodore Parker:

Perhaps blood is to be spilt to rescue the nation from slavery and bring these desperate conservatives to sanity. A retribution is not far off. Let it come.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR JANUARY 21ST]



January 22, Sunday: Birth of the Reverend John Stetson Barry and Louisa Young Barry's 4th child, Esther Stetson Barry, who would become a teacher and a clerk.

William Speiden, Jr. of the flotilla of Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry visited friends in Okinawa, including Usesato, a local resident, and Elizabeth Bettelheim, wife of Church of England missionary the Reverend Doctor Bettelheim.

1853-18



1853-1854

Jan. 22nd 54 Saw Jan 20th some tree sparrows [**American Tree Sparrow** **Spizella arborea**] in the yard. One or twice of late I have seen the mother-o'-pearl tints & rain-bow flocks in the western sky— The usual time is when the air is clear & pretty cool, about an hour before sundown. Yesterday I saw a very permanent specimen like a long knife-handle of mother of pearl very pale with an interior blue. & rosaceous tinges. Methinks the summer sky never exhibits this so finely.

[Transcript]

When I was at Cs the other evening, he punched his cat with the poker because she purred too loud for him.

CAT

R. Rice says he saw a white owl [**Snowy Owl** **Nyctea scandiaca** ~~White Owl~~] 2 or 3 weeks since. [Harris](#) told me on the 19th ult that he had never found the snow flea—

No 2d snowstorm in the winter can be so fair & interesting as the 1st. Last night was very windy — & today I see the dry oak leaves collected in thick beds in the little hollows of the snow-crust — these later falls of the leaf—

A fine freezing rain on the night of the 19th ult produced a hard crust on the snow — which was but three inches deep & would not bear.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

ELLERY CHANNING



January 23, Monday: Ellen Taylor Russell was born to [Mary Ellen “Nellie” Taylor Russell](#) and [Thomas Russell](#).

The clipper [Red Jacket](#) under master Asa Eldridge arrived from New-York harbor in order to get its bottom coppered in Liverpool. It had arrived dockside in but 13 days, 1 hour, and 25 minutes.

Visiting the capital of the Ryukyu Kingdom, Shuri, William Speiden, Jr. of the flotilla of Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) was surprised at the contrast it offered with other parts of Okinawa.

[Henry Thoreau](#) left at noon to visit [H.G.O. Blake](#) in [Worcester](#).



Jan. 23. Love tends to purify and sublime itself. It mortifies and triumphs over the flesh, and the bond of its union is holiness.

The increased length of the days is very observable of late. What is a winter unless you have risen and gone abroad frequently before sunrise and by starlight? Varro speaks of what he calls, I believe, before-light (*antelucana*) occupations in winter, on the farm. Such are especially milking, in this neighborhood.¹²⁵

If one may judge from [Josselyn](#), they began to be weather-wise very early in New England. He says: “The obscuring of the smaller stars is a certain sign of tempests approaching.... The resounding of the sea from the shore, and murmuring of the winds [*sic* in Josselyn] in the woods without apparent wind, sheweth wind to follow.... The redness of the sky in the morning, is a token of winds, or rain, or both,” etc., etc. “If the white hills look clear and conspicuous, it is a sign of fair weather; if black and cloudy, of rain; if yellow, it is a certain sign of snow shortly to ensue,” etc. *Vide* his “Two Voyages.” He speaks of “the Earth-nut bearing a princely flower, the beautiful leaved Pirola,” etc. Is n’t this the glossy-leaved wintergreen?

At noon, go to Worcester.



125. Speaking of the rustic villa, you must see that the kitchen is convenient, “because some things are done there in the winter before daylight (*antelucanis temporibus*); food is prepared and taken.” In the study are not some things to be done before daylight, and a certain food to be prepared there?



1853-1854

1853-1854



January 24, Tuesday: [Salmon Portland Chase](#)'s abolitionist appeal was published in the [New-York](#) Daily Times.

[Henry Thoreau](#) and [H.G.O. Blake](#) walked about 6 miles from [Worcester](#) into Holden and returned via Stonehouse Hill. In his journal entry for this date Thoreau mentioned that he had not yet had an opportunity to peruse the latest volumes of the writings of [Thomas De Quincey](#) published in the previous year in Boston and available at the Concord Town Library.

HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL I

HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL II



Jan. 24. In Worcester.

From 9 A.M. to 4 P.M., walked about six miles northwest into Holden with Blake, returning by Storehouse Hill. A very bold day. Less forest near Worcester than in Concord, and that hardwood. No dark pines in the horizon. The evergreen laurel is a common underwood, contrasting agreeably with the snow. Large, broad-backed hills. De Quincey's "Historical and Critical Essays" I have not read (2 vols.). Saw a red squirrel out.

1853-1854

1853-1854



January 25, Wednesday: The flotilla of Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) experimented with a new oven and found that 100 pounds of flour yielded 39 loaves of bread weighing a total of 106 pounds. These loaves were distributed to officers' messes and to the sick, aboard the various ships.

The day was so cold that [Henry Thoreau](#)'s driver in [Worcester, Massachusetts](#) mentioned that, although he drove in the mornings, he did not wear gloves or mittens — except that very morning. “He had a very large hand, one of his fingers as big as three of mine. But this morning he had to give up.” Thoreau returned to [Concord](#) at noon.



Judge Alexander Hamilton formally deferred implementation of the negative ruling of the Missouri Supreme Court, that the Scotts still were enslaved, pending an opportunity for the US Supreme Court determine whether or not it desired to intercede in the case.

[DRED SCOTT](#)

[HARRIET ROBINSON SCOTT](#)

[MRS. IRENE EMERSON](#)

[Lucy Stone](#) delivered a lecture at the Reverend [Henry Ward Beecher](#)'s Tabernacle, suggesting that no matter how contemptuous the abolitionists were of such a person as Mitchel, “the slaveholders themselves” would “dump on him more contempt” even than that. [John Mitchel](#) was in the gallery to hear himself being denounced by a woman from the pulpit, and commented afterward that not having ever experienced before a

1853-1854

1853-1854

woman speaking in such a manner in public, he had been surprised to find himself “listening with respectful attention, for more than an hour.” He found Lucy “very intelligent” and “unaffected” and “young.” He had attended this meeting, he said, for the good of his health, “as a Russian after a hot bath goes out and rolls himself in the snow.”



At the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, [William Lloyd Garrison](#) proposed, and the meeting accepted, a resolution that “John Mitchel has revealed himself to be a braggart patriot, and a thoroughly unprincipled man, utterly recreant to all his professions of liberty.” (Mitchel would respond that if he was a “braggart patriot,” Garrison was an “ass.” Then [Wendell Phillips](#) took the floor, and characterized Mitchel as being a product of “British tyranny,” from whom the life had been crushed through its persecution. The British “had sent him to us, the poorest and meanest Slave he had ever heard of.”



Jan. 25. At noon return to Concord.


A very cold day.

Satin a man in Worcester this morning who took a pride in never wearing gloves or mittens. Drives in the morning. Said he succeeded by keeping his arm and wrist well covered. He had a large hand, one of his fingers as big as three of mine. But this morning he had to give up. The 22d, 23d, 24th, and 25th of this month have been the coldest spell of weather this winter.

Clear and cold and windy.

1853-1854


1853-1854

 January 26, Thursday, early morning: The [Kip](#) family boarded the steamer *Columbia* to complete their voyage to San Francisco, [California](#). This steamer was greatly overloaded and during the dark boarding, one of the passengers fell down an open hatch, suffering injuries that would prove fatal.

[Henry Thoreau](#) spent the day in court in Cambridge.



Jan. 26. All day at court at Cambridge.

 January 27, Friday: In the [New-York Daily Tribune](#) appeared an article, presumably by [Horace Greeley](#), describing [John Mitchel](#) as an isolated case. The man had “severed himself from every advocate of [Irish](#) emancipation in this country, whose sympathy is in the lest degree vital, or at all worth having.”

1853-1854

1853-1854



January 27, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) attended the auction of the effects of Deacon R. Brown.¹²⁶ He made an entry in his journal that indicates that he had been reading in [Lemuel Shattuck](#)'s 1835 [A HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF CONCORD;...](#) (Boston MA: Russell, Odiorne, and Company; Concord MA: [John Stacy](#), 1835). At the auction Thoreau noted an account book from 1742 found in the Deacon's attic. Thoreau made an entry in his journal that he was later to copy into his early lecture "[WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT](#)" It would be combined with an entry made on April 8, 1854 and an entry made on March 23, 1853 to form the following:

[Paragraph3] At a lyceum, not long since, I felt that the lecturer had chosen a theme too foreign to himself, and so failed to interest me as much as he might have done.¹ He described things not in or near to his heart, but toward his extremities and superficialities. There was, in this sense, no truly central or centralizing thought in the lecture. I would have had him deal with his privatest experience, as the poet does. The greatest compliment that was ever paid me was when one asked me what **I thought**, and attended to my answer. I am surprised, as well as delighted, when this happens, it is such a rare use he would make of me, as if he were acquainted with the tool. Commonly, if men want anything of me, it is only to know how many acres I make of their land,—since I am a surveyor,—or, at most, what trivial news I have burdened myself with. They never will go to law for my meat; they prefer the shell. A man once came a considerable distance to ask me to lecture on Slavery; but on conversing with him, I found that he and his clique expected seven-eighths of the lecture to be theirs, and only one-eighth mine; so I declined. I take it for granted, when I am invited to lecture anywhere, that there is a desire to hear what I think on some subject, though I may be the greatest fool in the country,—and not that I should say pleasant things merely, or such as the audience will assent to; and I resolve, accordingly, that I will give you a strong dose of myself.² You have sent for me, and engaged to pay for me, and I am determined that you shall have me, though I bore you beyond all precedent.³

BRAD DEAN'S
COMMENTARY

1. Thoreau drew this and the following three sentences from his journal entry of April 8, 1854. Three days earlier Waldo Emerson had lectured at the Concord Lyceum on the "foreign" subject of "France."
2. On authority of the Nantucket [Inquirer](#), Bradley P. Dean has emended the essay copy-text by omitting "—for I have had a little experience in that business,—" which follows "lecture anywhere,"; and by changing "them" to "you".
3. On authority of the Nantucket [Inquirer](#), I emend the essay copy-text by changing the three plural pronouns in this sentence from the third to the second person.



Jan. 27. I have an old account-book, found in Deacon R. Brown's garret since his death. The first leaf or two is gone. Its cover is brown paper, on which, amid many marks and scribblings, I find written: —

"Mr. Ephraim Jones
His Wast Book
Anno Domini
1742"

It extends from November 8th, 1742, to June 20th, 1743 (inclusive). It appears without doubt from the contents

126. Would this be the same person as the Reuben Brown for whom he had surveyed Fair Haven Hill on October 20-22, 1851? [Henry Thoreau](#) had recorded a talk with Deacon R. Brown on November 18, 1851.



1853-1854

1853-1854

of this book that he is the one of whom Shattuck writes in his history that he “married Mary Hayward, 1728, and died November 29th, 1756, aged 51; having been captain, town-clerk, and otherwise distinguished.” His father’s name was Ephraim, and he had a son Ephraim. The entries are made apparently by himself, or a boy, or his wife, or some other when he was out. The book is filled with familiar Concord names, the grandfathers and great-grandfathers of the present generation. Dr. Hartshorn — he lived to be ninety-two — and Dr. Temple send to the store once or twice. It is more important now what was bought than who bought it.

The articles most commonly bought were mohair (commonly with buttons) (a kind of twist to sew on buttons with), rum (often only a gill to drink at the store), — more of these than anything; salt, molasses, shalloon, fish, calico, some sugar, a castor hat, almanac, psalter (and sometimes primer and testament), paper, knee-buckles and shoe-buckles, garters and spurs by the pair, deer skins, a fan, a cart whip, various kinds of cloth and trimmings, — as half -thick, osnaburg, a very little silk, ferret, quality, serge for breeches, etc., etc., — gloves, a spring knife, an ink-horn, a gun, cap, spice, a pocket case, timber, iron, etc., earthenware; no tea (?) (I am in doubt about one or perhaps two entries), nor coffee, nor meal, nor flour. Of the last two they probably raised all they wanted. Credit is frequently given for timber and once for cloth brought to the store.

On the whole, it is remarkable how little provision was sold at the store. The inhabitants raised almost everything for themselves. Chocolate is sold once. Rum, salt, molasses, fish, a biscuit with their drink, a little spice, and the like are all that commonly come under this head that I remember.

On a loose piece of paper is a bill for “today,” “a bowl of punch,” etc., and on another piece is Jonathan Dwight’s (innholder’s?) bill against the Estate of Capt. Ephraim Jones for entertainment, etc., etc. (apparently he treated his company) at divers times for half a dozen years, amounting to over £146. One entry is “Dea Brown to flip & rum.”

The people apparently made their own cloth and even thread, and hence for the most part bought only buttons and mohair and a few trimmings.

Feb. 1, 1742. “Town of Concord Dr to sundry for the funerel of Widow Williams daughter to 5 pr gloves @ 1/9 1 D P. @ 2/1 ½	0-10-10½ ”
Jan. 10, 1742 (3). “Jon ^a Edes to 3 Raccoon skins @ 2/9 2 minks @ 1/6 4 musquash @ 1/3 ½	0-12-5 ”
Jan. 18, 1742 (3). “John Melven Cr by 1 Grey fox	0- 2- 3 ”
Feb. 14. 1742 (3). “Aaron Parker Cr by 100 squirell skins	0- 6- 3 ”

Deer skins were sold at from ten to seventeen shillings. Sometimes it is written “old” or “new tenor.”

Many of the customers came from as far as Harvard, or much farther.

A fan, a jack-knife, or a pair of garters are much more important relatively to the other goods sold than now.

No butter, nor rice, nor oil, nor candles are sold. They must have used candles [of their own making], made their own butter, and done without rice. There is no more authentic history of those days than this “Wast Book” contains, and, being money matters, it is more explicit than almost any other statement; something must be said. Each line contains and states explicitly a fact. It is the best of evidence of several facts. It tells distinctly and authoritatively who sold, who bought, the article, amount, and value, and the date. You could not easily crowd more facts into one line. You are warned when the doctor or deacon had a new suit of clothes, by the charge for mohair, buttons, and trimmings, or a castor hat; and here also is entered the rum which ran down their very throats.

Attended the auction of Deacon Brown’s effects a little while to-day, — a great proportion of old traps, rubbish, or trumpery, which began to accumulate in his father’s day, and now, after lying half a century in his garret and other dust-holes, is not burned, but surviving neighbors collect and view it, and buy it, and carefully transport it to their garrets and dust-holes, to lie there till their estates are settled, when it will start again.

Among his effects was a dried tapeworm and various articles too numerous and worthless to mention. A pair of old snow-shoes is almost regularly sold on these occasions, though none of this generation has seen them worn here.

I have some good friends from whom I am wont to part with disappointment, for they neither care what I think nor mind what I say. The greatest compliment that was ever paid me was when one asked me what I *thought*, and attended to my answer.

We begin to die, not in our senses or extremities, but in our divine faculties. Our members may be sound, our sight and hearing perfect, but our genius and imagination betray signs of decay. You tell me that you are growing old and are troubled to see without glasses, but this is unimportant if the divine faculty of the seer shows no signs of decay.

Cut this afternoon a cake of ice out of Walden and brought it home in a pail, another from the river, and got a third, a piece of last year’s ice from Sam Barrett’s Pond, at Brown’s ice-house, and placed them side by side. These lumps are not large enough to show the color. Walden ice has a green tint close by, but is distinguished by its blueness at a distance. The river ice inclines to a more opaque white. Comparing the lumps, Walden ice

1853-1854

1853-1854

was, you might say, more crystalline than the river, but both showed the effect of heat more than the Barrett ice of last year, the bubbles being very much elongated and advanced toward the honeycomb stage, while in the Barrett ice they were spherical and there were wide clear spaces. This looked as if it would keep best.

[Varro](#), on grafting, says when the wood is of a close and dry texture they tie a vessel over it from which water drops slowly, that the shoot may not dry up before it coalesces; also “by the turning of some leaves you can tell what season (*tempus*) of the year it is, as the olive and white poplar, and willow. For when their leaves turn, the solstice is said to be past.” They had not such a brilliant change of the leaf as we.

Speaking of the nursery, he says: “Herbaeque elidendae, et dum tenerae sunt vellendae, prius enim aridae factae rixantur, ac celerius rumpuntur, quam sequuntur (and the weeds are to be levelled and, while they are tender, pulled up, for if they have first grown tough they resist and break sooner than come up)... Contra herba in pratis ad spem foeniciscae nata, non modo non evellenda in nutricatu, sed etiam non calcanda. Quo pecus a prato ablegandum, et omne jumentum, ac etiam homines. Solum enim hominis exitium herbae, et semitae fundamentum. (On the other hand, grass in grass-ground, raised with a view to hay, not only is not to be pulled up while it is growing, but is not even to be trodden upon. Wherefore the cattle are to be driven from the mowing, and every beast of burden, and even men. For the sole (track?) of a man’s foot is the destruction of the grass, and the foundation of a (foot)path.)” Even so early did the farmers raise this hue and cry about your treading down or going through their grass.



January 28, Saturday: Confirming [Horace Greeley](#)’s evaluation of him as a self-isolated advocate of [Irish](#) emancipation “severed” from every advocate of Irish emancipation in this country “whose sympathy is in the least degree vital, or at all worth having,” [John Mitchel](#) wrote in [The Citizen](#) that his belief in human slavery was justified by the Holy Bible itself — and cited proof texts. Chris L. Nesmith has alleged that “It is impossible to say exactly why Mitchel defended slavery so vehemently,” but isn’t this rather disingenuous? Mitchel was an Irish American in a period during which the Irish Americans and the American blacks were at one another’s throats. For the Irish Americans of that period, such as Mitchel, the only thing worse than a slave was a free negro. Contempt was flowing freely both ways, as witness Frederick Douglass’s many rancid remarks about drunken Irishmen. In positioning his newspapers in favor of American slavery, Mitchel wasn’t doing anything mysterious or incomprehensible, but on the contrary, was doing something entirely predictable and understandable. Mitchel was giving voice to one of the primary prejudices of his constituency.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR JANUARY 28TH]



January 29, Sunday, morning: The steamer *Columbia* delivered the [Kip](#) family to its [California](#) destination, the community of San Francisco.

William Speiden, Jr. of the flotilla of Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) and a friend Arthur Sinclair, Jr., a captain’s clerk from the *Supply*, made the serious social blunder, seemingly to the amusement of the natives, of engaging local children in play-marching — until this provoked an intervention.

It was 18 below zero, Fahrenheit. In Boston, the Reverend [Alexander Young](#) preached his last sermon (because soon after, he would catch a cold that would turn into pleurisy). In Concord, [Henry Thoreau](#) stayed home and read [Marcus Terentius Varro](#).



Jan. 29. A very cold morning. Thermometer, or mercury, 18° below zero.

[Varro](#) says that *gluma* seems to be *a glubendo* because the grain is shelled from its follicle (*deglubitur*). *Arista*, the beard of grain, is so called because it dries first (*quod arescit prima*). The grain, *granum*, is a *gerendo*, for

this is the object of planting, that this maybe borne. "But the *spica* (or ear), which the rustics call *speca*, as they have received it from their forefathers, seems to be named from *spes* (hope), since they plant because they *hope* that *this* will be hereafter (*cam enim quod sperant fore*)."

The village is the place to which the roads tend, a sort of expansion of the highway, as a, lake of a river, the thoroughfare and ordinary of travellers, a trivial or quadrivial place. It is the body of which roads are the arms and legs. It is from the Latin *villa*, which, together with *via* (a way), or more anciently *vea* and *vella*, Varro derives from *veho* (to carry), because the villa is the place to and from which things are carried. The steward or overseer of the villa was a *vilicus*, and those who got their living by teaming (?) (*vecturis*) were said *vellaturam facere*. And whence the Latin *vilis* and our word *villain* (?). The inhabitants are way-worn by the travel that goes by and over them without travelling themselves.



January 30, Monday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked up the river on the ice and snow to Fair Haven Pond. He wrote in his journal: I knew a crazy man who walked into an empty pulpit one Saturday and, taking up a hymn-book, remarked: "We have had a good fall for getting in corn and potatoes. Let us sing Winter." So I say, "Let us sing winter." What else can we sing, and our voices be in harmony with the season?

For ever so many years [Samuel F.B. Morse](#) had been bedeviled by [Dr. Charles T. Jackson](#) who had a fundamental problem, that he didn't understand what capitalism is all about. Capitalism simply is not about earning other people's respect, respect being what [Dr. Jackson](#) needed, but about obtaining other people's money. The patent system, an expression of capitalism, is not about getting credit for being the 1st to have had a great new idea, it isn't about dinner-table conversation, but is instead about gaining the government's protection and monopoly entitlement while applying some great new idea in a pursuit of massive amounts of income. To obtain a patent one needs to apply for a patent, so [Dr. Jackson](#) never had a patent. To obtain a patent one needs to by experimentation develop a device that can secure patent protection, and [Dr. Jackson](#) had never done experimentation or developed such a patentable device. If anyone should understand all this, it should be [Morse](#), after having been bedeviled in this manner for so many years by [Dr. Jackson](#). On this day, however, Chief Justice Roger B. Taney of the US Supreme Court needed to advise [Morse](#) in the case of O'Reilly v. Morse, that the majority of the justices did not side with his patent claims, which were over-broad. It is simply not enough, the Supremes had to point out to Morse, to have merely had a grand idea. Some abstract conceit that somebody might form in one's mind is never to be entitled to any US patent protection, unless and until it be implemented. It has to amount to something. And then it only applies to what it amounts to. The decision of the Supremes turned on the fact that, as an electric current travels along a long wire, it inevitably becomes gradually weaker and weaker until the signal it is carrying is overcome by incidental static. Any such communication scheme, therefore, in order to be effective over long distances, requires re-amplification after re-amplification of the initial signal carrier current. Morse's plan, his patent application had said, had involved "combining two or more electric or galvanic circuits, with independent batteries for the purpose of overcoming the diminished force of electromagnetism in long circuits." He had mentioned an incorporation of "relays" or "repeaters" every 15 or 20 miles or thereabouts in order to keep restoring the carrier current so that it could convey its unambiguous signals "at any distances." Although in his patent application he had laid claim to the exclusive right to every improvement where the motive power was the electric or galvanic current and the result was the marking or printing intelligible characters, signs, or letters at a distance, in fact he had not devised the sole manner in which such an electric or galvanic current could be made to print at a distance. As it turns out, there are other ways to accomplish this phenomenon, other ways that might in some cases prove cheaper, or work better. But Morse's [electromagnetic telegraph](#) patent applied only to the particular manner in which he had actually accomplished this effect, rather than to all conceivable manners in which one might accomplish this effect: "The court is of opinion that the claim is too broad, and not warranted by law."



Jan. 30. Another cold morning. Mercury down to 13° below zero.

Frank showed me last night a white hare he had killed. It was frozen stiff, weighed four pounds, and was nearly three feet long. Its hind feet made soft brushes, which painters use in graining doors, etc. The plumage of partridges is most perfect nowadays. The white hare is a dirty white in winter, grayish (?) or brownish in

1853-1854

1853-1854

summer; has peculiar puss-like expression in profile. This was frozen in the attitude of running, careering with elastic bound over the snow and amid the bushes. Now, dead, it is the symbol of that speed it was capable of. Frozen as it was, it nearly spanned one breadth of the carpet, or three feet. This morning, though not so cold by a degree or two as yesterday morning, the cold has got more into the house, and the frost visits nooks never known to be visited before. The sheets are frozen about the sleeper's face; the teamster's beard is white with ice. Last night I felt it stinging cold as I came up the street at 9 o'clock; it bit my ears and face, but the stars shone all the brighter. The windows are all closed up with frost, as if they were ground glass.


The greater part of last week there was no melting in the roads nor on roofs. No more yesterday and to-day. The snow is dry and squeaks under the feet, and the teams creak as if they needed greasing, — sounds associated with extremely cold weather.

P.M. — Up river on ice and snow to Fair Haven Pond.

There is a few inches of snow, perfectly level, which now for nearly a week has covered the ice. Going toward the sun you are snow-blinded. At each clump of willows on the meadow, it looks as if there were a hillock, out of which they grow. This appearance is produced by the willow twigs holding up the ice to [the] height at which it was frozen after the last thaw, about two feet above the present level. It forms a regularly rounded hillock. We look at every track in the snow. Every little while there is the track of a fox — maybe the same one — across the river, turning aside sometimes to a muskrat's cabin or a point of ice, where he has left some traces, and frequently the larger track of a hound, which has followed his trail. It is much easier and pleasanter to walk thus on the river, the snow being shallow and level, and there is no such loud squeaking or crunching of the snow as in the road, and this road is so wide that you do not feel confined in it, and you never meet travellers with whom you have no sympathy.

The winter, cold and bound out as it is, is thrown to us like a bone to a famishing dog, and we are expected to get the marrow out of it. While the milkmen in the outskirts are milking so many scores of cows before sunrise these winter mornings, it is our task to milk the winter itself. It is true it is like a cow that is dry, and our fingers are numb, and there is none to wake us up. Some desert the field and go into winter quarters in the city. They attend the oratorios, while the only music that we countrymen hear is the squeaking of the snow under our boots. But the winter was not given to us for no purpose. We must thaw its cold with our genialness. We are tasked to find out and appropriate all the nutriment it yields. If it is a cold and hard season, its fruit, no doubt, is the more concentrated and nutty. It took the cold and bleakness of November to ripen the walnut, but the human brain is the kernel which the winter itself matures. Not till then does its shell come off. The seasons were not made in vain. Because the fruits of the earth are already ripe, we are not to suppose that there is no fruit left for winter to ripen. It is for man the seasons and all their fruits exist. The winter was made to concentrate and harden and mature the kernel of his brain, to give tone and firmness and consistency to his thought. Then is the great harvest of the year, the harvest of thought. All previous harvests are stubble to this, mere fodder and green crop. Now we burn with a purer flame like the stars; our oil is winter-strained. We are islanded in Atlantic and Pacific and Indian Oceans of thought, Bermudas, or Friendly or Spice Islands.

Shall we take refuge in cities in November? Shall the nut fall green from the tree? Let not the year be disappointed of its crop. I knew a crazy man who walked into an empty pulpit one Sunday and, taking up a hymn-book, remarked: "We have had a good fall for getting in corn and potatoes. Let us sing Winter." So I say, "Let us sing winter." What else can we sing, and our voices be in harmony with the season?

As we walked up the river, a little flock of chickadees [**Chicadee, Black-capped**  **Parus atricapillus** ~~Titmouse, Titmice~~] (apparently) flew to us from a wood-side fifteen rods off, and uttered their lively *day day day*, and followed us along a considerable distance, flitting by our side on the button-bushes and willows. It is the most, if not the only, sociable bird we have.

Now is the time to fill ice-houses, for fear they may not have another chance for solid ice. Brown filled his last week.


I will be a countryman. I will not go to the city, even in winter, any more than the sallows and sweet-gale by the river do. I see their yellow osiers and freckled, handsomely imbricated buds, still rising above the ice and snow there, to cheer me.

The white rabbit is a large fellow, well furred. What does he get to eat, being a vegetable lover? He must be hardy and cunning in his way. His race have learned by long practice to find their food where a newcomer would inevitably starve.

How retired an otter manages to live! He grows to be four feet long without any mortal getting a glimpse of him, as long as a boy.

Sometimes one of those great cakes of green ice from Walden or Sam Barrett's Pond slips from the ice-man's sled in the street and lies there like a great emerald, an object of interest to all travellers.

The hips of the late rose are still abundant and perfect, amid the button-bushes.

 January 31, Tuesday: [Silvio Pellico](#) died.

Novellen op.146, a waltz by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#), was performed for the initial time, in the Sophiensaal, Vienna.


[Henry Thoreau](#) continued to read [Marcus Terentius Varro](#). He walked to Great Meadows by way of Oak Island, and then went to Beck Stow's.



Jan. 31. P.M. —To Great Meadows and Beck Stow's.

The wind is more southerly, and now the warmth of the sun prevails, and is felt on the back. The snow softens and melts. It is a beautiful clear and mild winter day. Our washwoman says she is proud of it. Any clear day, methinks, the sun is ready to do his part, and let the wind be right, and it will be warm and pleasant-like, at least now that the sun runs so high a course. But I do not melt; there is no thaw in me; I am bound out still.

I see the tree sparrows, one or two at a time, now and then, all winter, uttering a faint note, with their bright-chestnut crown and spot on breast and barred wings. They represent the sparrows in the winter. Went to the Great Meadows by the Oak Island. The maples along the edge of the meadow, which all winter have been perfectly leafless, have an agreeable mixed, slightly pepper-and-salt look, spotted or barred with white lichens. It is an agreeable maze to the eye, so thick their bare and clean gray limbs.

Many tracks of partridges [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] there along the meadowside in the maples, and their droppings where they appear to have spent the night about the roots and between the stems of trees. I think they eat the buds of the azalea. And now, with a mew, preludeing a whir, they go off before me. Coming up, I follow her tracks to where she eased herself for lightness, and immediately after are five or six parallel cuts in the snow, where her wing struck when she lifted herself from the ground, but no trace more.

[Transcript]




I pass the woodchoppers, busily felling trees cutting up those which they have felled. One is measuring his lengths with his axe-helve and does not see me.

The pitch pines are yellowish, the white incline to bluish. In the winter, when there are no flowers and leaves are rare, even large buds are interesting and somewhat exciting. I go a-budding like a partridge. I am always attracted at this season by the buds of the swamp-pink, the poplars, and the sweet-gale.

A hundred years ago, as I learned from Ephraim Jones's ledger, they sold bark in our street. He gives credit for a load. Methinks my genius is coeval with that time. That is no great wildness or *selvaggia* that cannot furnish a load of bark, when the forest has lost its shagginess. This is an attempt to import this wildness into the cities in a thousand shapes. Bark is carried thither by ship and by cartloads. Bark contains the principle of tannin, by which not only the fibre of skins but of men's thoughts is hardened and consolidated. It was then that a voice was given to the dog, and a manly tone to the human voice. Ah! already I shudder for these comparatively degenerate days of the village, when you cannot collect a load of bark of good thickness.

[Varro](#) thinks that when man reached the pastoral or second stage and domesticated animals (*pecus*), "primum non sine causa putant oves assumptas, et propter utilitatem, et propter placiditatem" (they think not without reason that sheep were first taken, both on account of their usefulness and on account of their gentleness); for, as he says, they furnish milk, cheese, their fleece, and skin. It looks to me as if the sheep had been supplied with a superfluity of clothing that it might share it with man, and, as [Varro](#) suggests, did not this fleece, on account of its value, come to be called golden? was not this the origin of the fable?

We too have our thaws. They come to our January moods, when our ice cracks, and our sluices break loose. Thought that was frozen up under stern experience gushes forth in feeling and expression. There is a freshet which carries away dams of accumulated ice. Our thoughts hide unexpressed, like the buds under their downy or resinous scales; they would hardly keep a partridge [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] from starving. If you would know what are my winter thoughts look for them in the partridge's crop. They are like the laurel buds, - some leaf, some blossom buds,-which, though food for such indigenous creatures, will not expand into leaves and flowers until summer comes.

"Et primitus oritur herba imbribus primoribus evocata," says [Varro](#).



HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

1853-1854

1853-1854

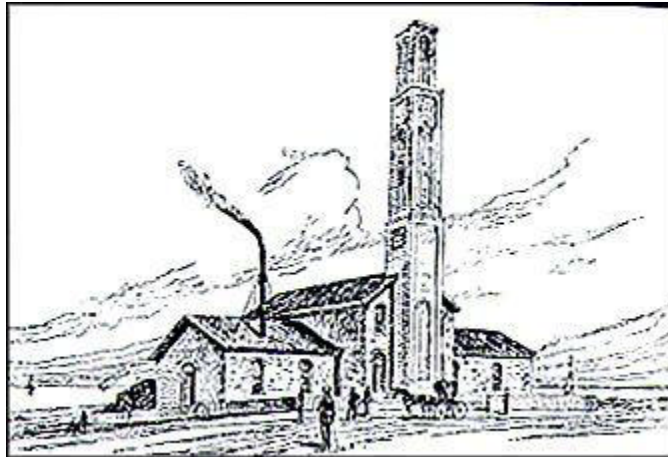
FEBRUARY 1854

February: This month's issue of [Harper's New Monthly Magazine](#).

CONSULT THIS ISSUE

February: [Francis Trevelyan Buckland](#) was elected to the Athenaeum Club. Later in the year he would be gazetted as Assistant Surgeon to the Second Life Guards of the British Army, a position he would hold until 1863.

February: The 1st water-pumping station for the city of [Chicago](#):



From this point forward this city's water was going to be clean.

(Not.)

1853-1854

1853-1854



February: According to [Anita Haya Patterson](#)'s FROM EMERSON TO KING: DEMOCRACY, RACE, AND THE POLITICS OF PROTEST (NY: Oxford UP, 1997, page 132), at about this point [Waldo Emerson](#)'s journal indicates the manner in which Emerson was exulting in the eventual victory of the biologically superior race (his own, of course):

The Unitarians, you say, are a poor skeptical egotistic shopping sect. The Calvinists serious, still darkened over by their Hebraistic dream. The Saxon race has never flowered into its own religion, but has been fain to borrow this old Hebraism of the dark race. The Latin races are at last come to a stand, & are declining. Merry England & saucy America striding far ahead. The dark man, the black man declines. The black man is courageous, but the white men are the children of God, said Plato. It will happen by & by, that the black man will only be destined for museums like the Dodo. Alcott compassionately thought that if necessary to bring them sooner to an end, polygamy might be introduced & these made the eunuchs, polygamy, I suppose, to increase the white births.

RACE POLITICS



I myself consider (something which Patterson does not consider) that in this context Emerson was hinting that he and [Bronson Alcott](#) had been scheming to accelerate the disappearance of the black race in America through forced miscegenation, by a wet-dream final solution for the American race problem in which white owners were to geld all black men so that they themselves as white superiors would be the only males who might



1853-1854

1853-1854

fecundate the black women of America. Of course, in recollecting such a conversation, Emerson would need as above to make Alcott bear the brunt of the responsibility for such musings, and, of course, in recollecting such a conversation, Emerson would need as above to characterize the affect as compassion rather than as viciousness.¹²⁷ Patterson merely goes on to point up the fact that although Emerson, like so many of his contemporaries who were presuming their own race to be inherently and intrinsically superior, was wont to speculate bloodily that the inferior races would most likely be exterminated, this is far from all the information and guidance that we might extrapolate from these foul droppings of his pen¹²⁸ — if we can bring ourselves to pay careful attention:

127. While I was a pubescent, after WWII during the occupation of [Japan](#), there was talk of this in regard to the Japanese population. Perhaps I heard this as idle “guy talk” in my uncle Frosty’s barbershop in Cory, Indiana. Kill all the men and fuck all the women. What I have to confess is that this sort of wet-dream final solution then became a fertile source of sexual fantasies for me. It is probably just as well I wasn’t Ruler of the Universe at that time, or President or something, and probably just as well that nobody was looking to me for good advice. So I suppose that here, since I sense a similar strain of thought in these journal musings of Emerson, I should feel a special empathy for him and for Alcott, the Sage and the Saint. But I don’t. Somehow I don’t feel they were one bit better informed, or more highly spirited, than that pubescent Indiana boy with whom I can hardly any longer identify.

128. A suspicion has been raised, on the internet, in regard to our 2005 horror at Emerson’s and Alcott’s 1854 discussion of the desirability of a proposal to castrate all black American males, that our horror may be due to the error “presentism,” the historic error of retrojecting into the past an attitude that could only pertain to today and to 2005’s relative condition of enlightenment. Back in 1854, the concept of “genocide” having not yet been created, how do we dare to stand on our mount of enlightenment and fault Emerson and Alcott for thinking thoughts back then that today would be considered genocidal? I responded that [Frederick Douglass](#) was not a man of today, but was a man of yesterday. Nevertheless, had he been privy, in 1854, to this privileged conversation between the white man Emerson and the white man Alcott, a privileged conversation in which they were toying with the idea of castrating him so that he would be able to produce no children, and castrating every other man who was like him, every other colored man, so that none of them would ever be able to have a home and family with children of their own — he would unquestionably have been offended, he would have been horrified, he would have been denunciatory, he would have been outraged, etc. Perhaps the only thing he might not have been, is, he might not have been surprised. —He would have had that sort of attitude and, guess what, it would have been an 1854 attitude. Since he could not have been guilty of a “presentism,” since he in 1854 would not have been guilty of the historic error of retrojection into his own era of an attitude that could only pertain to 2005’s relative condition of enlightenment, we in 2005 are not guilty of a presentism, in reconstructing and embracing what would have been his 1854 attitude.

The sheer weight of evidence that proves the fact of [Waldo Emerson's racism](#) is disturbing. However, we would miss the focus of this discussion -namely, the historical **function** of racism in Emerson's writings- were we simply to dismiss him for exhibiting the racist perceptions of his time.... Emerson's racism is central to his vision of American nationality - a compelling, myopic vision that must be viewed in the context of a violent policy of westward expansion that prevailed in nineteenth-century America. In NATURE, Emerson's unmistakable reference to the raciality of the American self allows him to situate that self at the brink of egocentric absolutism: at the same time he expresses a near disavowal of human society represented by ties to the liberal-democratic state in NATURE, Emerson's racist imagination of the white, male body of Columbus is a framework for social cohesion. For Emerson, race functions to express both a threat to and an affirmation of social order. Generally speaking, Emerson's racist vision of the representative self is essential for his articulation of a call to revolution - what [Henry Thoreau](#) (and, much later, [the Reverend] [Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)) would designate as "civil disobedience."

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS



RESISTANCE TO CIVIL GOVERNMENT



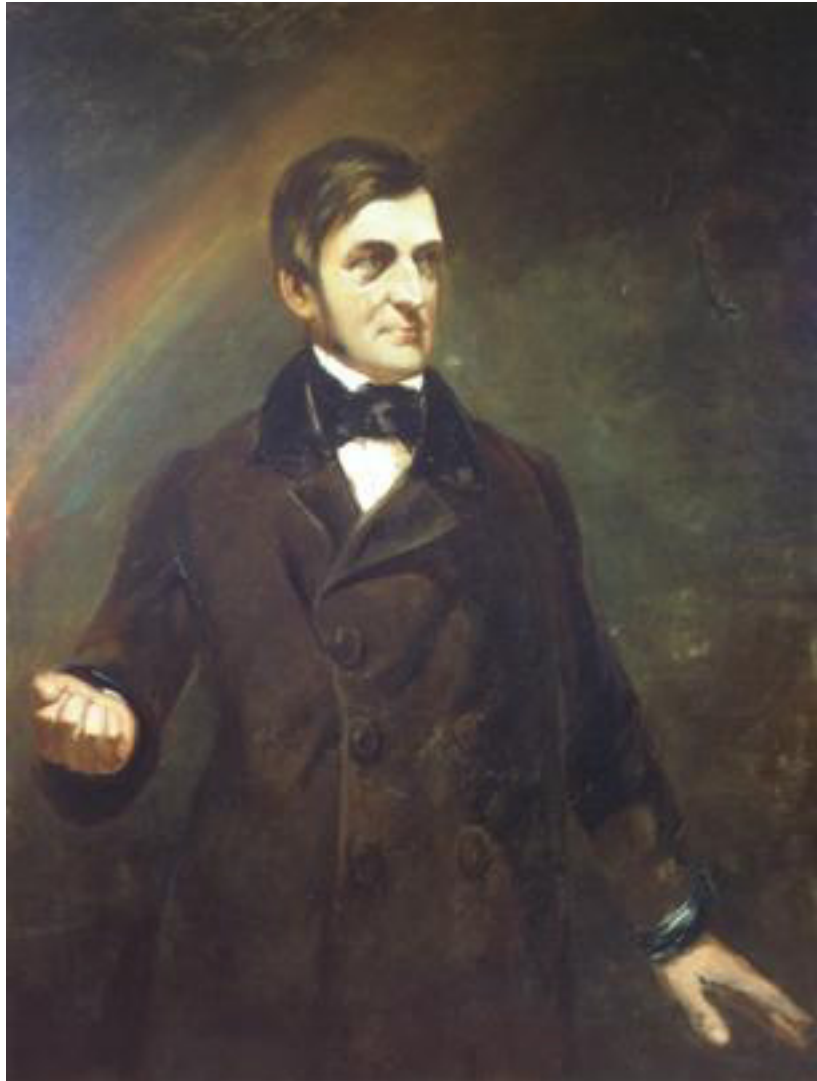
"[Waldo Emerson's](#) profound [racism](#) abated over time, but it never disappeared, always hovering in the background and clouding his democratic vision. Like all too many of his fellow intellectuals, throughout his life and works Emerson remained convinced that the characteristics that made the United States, for all its flaws, the great nation of the world were largely the product of its Saxon heritage and history. Here, alas, Ralph Waldo Emerson's democratic imagination largely failed him."



- [Peter S. Field](#)

1853-1854

1853-1854



YOU SEE, I'M A WHITE MAN

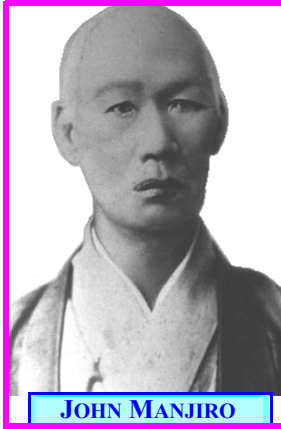
[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

1853-1854

1853-1854



February: The US naval force under the command of Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) that had landed in [Nagasaki](#) in 1853, at this point returned to Japanese waters, this time with 7 ships (4 sailing vessels and 3 steamships) and 1,600 men, demanding that they were going to open trade with [Japan](#) or know the reason why. After a standoff, the Commodore would be able to land and begin peace and trade talks on March 8th, 1854. Nakahama Manjiro, known to us as [John Manjiro](#), was granted a rather minor samurai title and given the family name of Nakahama, after the village Nakanohama in which he had grown up, and was employed as an interpreter for the Shogunate in dealing with Commodore Matthew Perry's "four black ships."



JOHN MANJIRO

As Nakahama Manjiro he would teach naval science, ship-building, and navigation.

Aboard the USS *Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry*, or on the beach, a trade treaty to be known as the Treaty of Kanagawa was signed with a Japanese delegation. The Japanese put on a demonstration of sumo wrestling and in return the American sailors gave a minstrel show starring "Bones" and "Tambourine"

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**1853-1854****1853-1854**

(the Japanese fascination with black Americans, noticeable even today, began here).

**ME HAPPY SO ME SING****THE MINSTREL SHOW**

By the way, this was the year in which, back home, Stephen Collins Foster was writing “Jeannie With the Light Brown Hair.”

I dream of Jeanie with the light brown hair,
Borne, like a vapor, on the summer air;
I see her tripping where the bright streams play,
Happy as the daisies that dance on her way.
Many were the wild notes her merry voice would pour,
Many were the blithe birds that warbled them o'er:
Oh! I dream of Jeanie with the light brown hair,
Floating, like a vapor, on the soft summer air.

I long for Jeanie with the daydawn smile,
Radiant in gladness, warm with winning guile;
I hear her melodies, like joys gone by,
Sighing round my heart o'er the fond hopes that die:-
Sighing like the night wind and sobbing like the rain,-
Wailing for the lost one that comes not again:
Oh! I long for Jeanie, and my heart bows low,
Never more to find her where the bright waters flow.

I sigh for Jeanie, but her light form strayed
Far from the fond hearts round her native glade;
Her smiles have vanished and her sweet songs flown,
Flitting like the dreams that have cheered us and gone.
Now the nodding wild flowers may wither on the shore
While her gentle fingers will cull them no more:
Oh! I sigh for Jeanie with the light brown hair,
Floating, like a vapor, on the soft summer air.

POPULAR SONGS

1853-1854

1853-1854

February/March to April/May: Henry Thoreau was working on his 8th draft of WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS, the G copy that was sent to the typesetter which evidently the printer threw away after the setting of the type. The paragraph about being able to live in the present always, about how this capability constitutes a "blessing," the paragraph which now appears on page 314, underwent radical condensation and focusing so that there could no longer be any misreading that sometimes things can be very nice for us, and that when things are nice, such as on sunny days, we should hedonistically pay attention to this transitory niceness of nature:



We should be blessed if we lived in the present always, and took advantage of every accident that befell us, like the grass which confesses the influence of the slightest dew that falls on it; and did not spend our time in atoning for the neglect of past opportunities, which we call doing our duty. We loiter in winter while it is already spring.



TIMELINE OF WALDEN
WALDEN A → G

Likewise the phrase I have emphasized in the material from WALDEN which follows, evidently added to the "Bean-Field" chapter of the manuscript by Thoreau at the last because it is not to be found in any existing draft despite the fact that the paragraph that precedes this material had been in the manuscript from the very beginning. This phrase is a paraphrase from Mrs. Felicia Hemans's popular poem "The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers in New England," which Thoreau had already accessed for A WEEK:



1853-1854

1853-1854



WALDEN: On gala days the town fires its great guns, which echo like popguns to these woods, and some waifs of martial music occasionally penetrate thus far. To me, away there in my bean-field at the other end of the town, the big guns sounded as if a puff ball had burst; and when there was a military turnout of which I was ignorant, I have sometimes had a vague sense all the day of some sort of itching and disease in the horizon, as if some eruption would break out there soon, either scarlatina or canker-rash, until at length some more favorable puff of wind, making haste over the fields and up the Wayland road, brought me information of the "trainers." It seemed by the distant hum as if somebody's bees had swarmed, and that the neighbors, according to Virgil's advice, by a faint *tintinnabulum* upon the most sonorous of their domestic utensils, were endeavoring to call them down into the hive again. And when the sound died quite away, and the hum had ceased, and the most favorable breezes told no tale, I knew that they had got the last drone of them all safely into the Middlesex hive, and that now their minds were bent on the honey with which it was smeared.

I felt proud to know that the liberties of Massachusetts and of our fatherland were in such safe keeping; and as I turned to my hoeing again I was filled with an inexpressible confidence, and pursued my labor cheerfully with a calm trust in the future.

When there were several bands of musicians, it sounded as if the village was a vast bellows, and all the buildings expanded and collapsed alternately with a din. But sometimes it was a really noble and inspiring strain that reached these woods, and the trumpet that sings of fame, and I felt as if I could spit a Mexican with a good relish, -for why should we always stand for trifles?- and looked round for a woodchuck or a skunk to exercise my chivalry upon. These martial strains seemed as far away as Palestine, and reminded me of a march of crusaders in the horizon, with a slight tantivy and tremulous motion of the elm-tree tops which overhang the village. This was one of the *great* days; though the sky had from my clearing only the same everlastingly great look that it wears daily, and I saw no difference in it.

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

VIRGIL

FELICIA DOROTHEA HEMANS

WAR ON MEXICO

1853-1854

1853-1854

The breaking waves dashed high
On a stern and rock-bound coast;
And the woods against a stormy sky,
Their giant branches tossed;
And the heavy night hung dark
The hills and waters o'er
When a band of exiles moored their bark
On a wild New England shore.
Not as the conqueror comes,
They, the true-hearted, came;
Not with the roll of stirring drums,
And the trumpets that sing of fame;
Not as the flying come,
In silence and in fear;
They shook the depths of the desert's gloom
With their hymns of lofty cheer.
Amidst the storm they sang,
And the stars heard, and the sea!
And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang
To the anthem of the free;
The ocean eagle soared
From his nest by the white wave's foam,
And the rocking pines of the forest roared:
This was their welcome home!
There were men with hoary hair
Amidst that pilgrim band;
Why had they come to wither there,
Away from their childhood's land?
There was woman's fearless eye,
Lit by her deep love's truth;
There was manhood's brow serenely high,
And the fiery heart of youth.
What sought they thus afar?
Bright jewels of the mine?
The wealth of seas? the spoils of war?
They sought a faith's pure shrine!
Aye, call it holy ground,
The soil where first they trod!
They left unstained what there they found
Freedom to worship God!



1853-1854

1853-1854

Every morning was a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity, and I may say innocence, with Nature herself. I have been as sincere a worshipper of Aurora as the Greeks. I got up early and bathed in the pond; that was a religious exercise, and one of the best things which I did. They say that characters were engraven on the bathing tub of king Tching-thang to this effect: "Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again, and forever again." I can understand that. Morning brings back the heroic ages. I was as much affected by the faint hum of a mosquito making its visible and unimaginable tour through my apartment at earliest dawn, when I was sitting with door and windows open, as I could be by **any trumpet that ever sang of fame**. It was Homer's requiem; itself an Iliad and Odyssey in the air, singing its own wrath and wanderings. There was something cosmical about it; a standing advertisement, till forbidden, of the everlasting vigor and fertility of the world. The morning, which is the most memorable season of the day, is the awakening hour. Then there is least somnolence in us; and for an hour, at least, some part of us awakes, which slumbers all the rest of the day and night. Little is to be expected of that day, if it can be called a day, to which we are not awakened by our Genius, but by the mechanical nudgings of some servitor, are not awakened by our own newly-acquired force and aspirations from within, accompanied by the undulations of celestial music, instead of factory bells, and a fragrance filling the air -to a higher life than we fell asleep from; and thus the darkness bear its fruit, and prove itself to be good, no less than the light. That man who does not believe that each day contains an earlier, more sacred, and auroral hour than he has yet profaned, has despaired of life, and is pursuing a descending and darkening way. After a partial cessation of his sensuous life, the soul of man, or its organs rather, are reinvigorated each day, and his Genius tries again what noble life it can make. All memorable events, I should say, transpire in morning time and in a morning atmosphere. The Vedas say, "All intelligences awake with the morning." Poetry and art, and the fairest and most memorable of the actions of men, date from such an hour. All poets and heroes, like Memnon, are the children of Aurora, and emit their music at sunrise. To him whose elastic and vigorous thought keeps pace with the sun, the day is a perpetual morning. It matters not what the clocks say or the attitudes and labors of men. Morning is when I am awake and there is a dawn in me. ...

1853-1854

1853-1854

Draft G of the 3d paragraph of the [Hollowell Farm](#) ruminations, destined for the 2d chapter of [WALDEN](#):

The real attractions of the Hollowell farm, to me, were; ^{1st} its complete retirement, being about two miles from the village, half a mile from the nearest neighbor, and separated from the highway by a broad field; ^{2ndly} its bounding on the river, [^]which the owner said ~~by its fogs~~ protected it [^]by its fogs from frosts in the spring, [^]though that was nothing to me ~~but his words suggested more than was meant~~ [^]other values [?] than he suspected; ^{3rdly} the gray color and ~~pleasing ruin~~ [^]ruinous state of the house and barn, ~~putting such an interval between me and the last occupant~~ and the dilapidated ~~& picturesque~~ fences, [^]which put such an interval between me and the last occupant; ^{4thly} the hollow and lichen-covered apple trees, gnawed by rabbits, ~~proving that there were rabbits there to gnaw them~~ [^]suggesting [^]showing what kind of neighbors I should have; but ^{5thly &} above all, the recollection I had of it from my earliest voyages up the river, when the house was concealed behind a dense grove of red maples ~~which stood between it & the river~~ [^]water, through which I heard the house-dog bark. ~~Though it afforded no western prospect~~ I was in haste to buy it, before the proprietor finished getting out ~~the~~ [^]some rocks, cutting down the hollow apple trees, and grubbing up some young birches which had sprung up in the pasture, or, in short, had made any more of his improvements.

Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for February 1854 \(æf. 36\)](#)



1853-1854

1853-1854



February 1, Wednesday: Railroad passengers rode on narrow gauge tracks for the 1st time, between Buffalo, [New York](#) and Erie, Pennsylvania.

HISTORY OF RR

The [U.S. Marine](#) guard of the flotilla of Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) engaged in drills on the [Okinawa](#) shore (we have no preserved record of whether these island foreigners were in any way impressed or intimidated).

[Professor Henri-Frédéric Amiel](#), who would be referred to as the “Swiss [Thoreau](#),” wrote in his [JOURNAL INTIME](#): “A walk. The atmosphere incredibly pure, a warm caressing gentleness in the sunshine — joy in one’s whole being. Seated motionless upon a bench on the Tranchées, beside the slopes clothed with moss and tapestried with green, I passed some intense delicious moments, allowing great elastic waves of music, wafted to me from a military band on the terrace of St. Antoine, to surge and bound through me. Every way I was happy, as idler, as painter, as poet. Forgotten impressions of childhood and youth came back to me — all those indescribable effects wrought by color, shadow, sunlight, green hedges, and songs of birds, upon the soul just opening to poetry. I became again young, wondering, and simple, as candor and ignorance are simple. I abandoned myself to life and to nature, and they cradled me with an infinite gentleness. To open one’s heart in purity to this ever pure nature, to allow this immortal life of things to penetrate into one’s soul, is at the same time to listen to the voice of God. Sensation may be a prayer, and self-abandonment an act of devotion.”

[Henry Thoreau](#) continued with extensive surveys of the Bedford Road begun in July 1853 which show the Middlesex Agricultural Society, Reuben Brown’s farm with its Sleepy Hollow (the region that would become [Sleepy Hollow](#) Cemetery), and all of the existing houses to the [Charles Gordon](#) and William Pedrick farms on Old Bedford Road to Bedford.



View [Henry Thoreau](#)’s personal working drafts of his surveys courtesy of AT&T and the Concord Free Public Library:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/Thoreau_Surveys.htm

(The official copy of this survey of course had become the property of the person or persons who had hired this Concord town surveyor to do their surveying work during the 19th Century. Such materials have yet to be recovered.)

View this particular personal working draft of a survey in fine detail:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/94a.htm



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR FEBRUARY 1ST]



February 2, Thursday: The Reverend [Henry Ward Beecher](#) wrote in [The Independent](#) that since the Old Testament amounted to “records of rude society four thousand years ago,” it should not determine our present-day attitudes toward a wrong such as human slavery:

The question between you and the public is not whether Hebrew slavery was right. Nor whether Roman slavery was right. Nor even whether American slavery is right. The question is simply this: Can [John Mitchel](#) be an American slaveholder without apostasy from the grounds which he took against the English

1853-1854

1853-1854

government?... Please let Moses sleep; and come back from your retreat behind the dust of 4000 years."

[Henry Thoreau](#) and a companion, presumably [Ellery Channing](#), walked in the cold and snow up the river to Clematis Brook, then up Corner Road and on the ice at Potter's Meadow. They noticed it was comparatively very warm under the south side of Bittern Cliff and stopped for awhile there.

JONAS POTTER



Feb. 2: Up river on ice to Clematis Brook.

Another warm, melting day, like yesterday. You can see some softening and relenting in the sky. Apparently the vapor in the air makes a grosser atmosphere, more like that of a summer eve. We go up the Corner road and take the ice at Potter's Meadow. The Cliff Hill is nearly bare on the west side, and you hear the rush of melted snow down its side in one place. Here and there are regular round holes in the ice over the meadow, two or three feet in diameter, where the water appears to be warmer,—perchance there is a spring there,—and therein, in shallow water, is seen the cress and one or two other plants, still quite fresh. The shade of pines on the snow is in some lights quite blue.

We stopped awhile under Bittern Cliff, the south side, where it is very warm. There are a few greenish radical leaves to be seen,—primrose and Johnswort, strawberry, etc., and spleenwort still green in the clefts. These sunny old gray rocks, completely covered with white and green lichens and overrun with ivy, are a very cozy place. You hardly detect the incited snow swiftly trickling down them until you feel the drops on your cheek. The winter gnat is seen in the warm air before the rock. In the clefts of these rocks are the latebræ of many insects, spiders, etc. Were they not sowbugs I found under the *Marchantia polymorpha*(?)? The ice is about eighteen inches thick on Fair Haven. Saw some pickerel just caught there, with a fine lustre to them. Went to the pond in the woods which has an old ditch dug from it near Clematis Brook. The red twigs of the cornets and the yellow ones of the salallows surrounding it are interesting at this season. We prize the least color now. As it is a melting day, the snow is everywhere peppered with snow-fleas, even twenty rods from the woods, on the pond and meadows. The scream of the jay [[Blue Jay](#) [Cyanocitta cristata](#)] is a true winter sound. It is wholly without sentiment, and in harmony with winter. I stole up within five or six feet of a pitch pine behind which a downy woodpecker [[Downy Woodpecker](#) [Picoides pubescens](#)] was pecking. From time to time he hopped round to the side and observed me without fear. They are very confident birds, not easily scared, but incline to keep the other side of the bough to you, perhaps.

Already we begin to anticipate spring, and this is an important difference between this time and a month ago. We begin to say that the day is springlike.

Is not January the hardest month to get through? When you have weathered that, you get into the gulf-stream of winter, nearer the shores of spring.

ROSS/ADAMS
COMMENTARY



February 3, Friday: William Speiden, Jr. was with the landing party that accompanied Commodore Perry on his visit to the Prince Regent at the palace at Shuri. He noted in his journal that the Prince Regent of Lew Chew, Sho Tai, being still but a small child, actually it was his Regent with whom the Commodore was meeting (Sho Tai would serve as the last King of the Ryukyu Kingdom, which would end with the creation in 1879 of the [Okiwana](#) Prefecture).

[Henry Thoreau](#) mused about the attractions of the [Hollowell Farm](#) he had once schemed to purchase:



Feb. 3. A driving snow-storm again.

The attractions of the Hollowell Farm were; its complete retirement, being at least two miles from the village, half a mile from any neighbor, and separated from the highway by a broad field; its bounding on the river; the pleasing ruin of the house and barn; the hollow and lichen-covered apple trees gnawed by rabbits; above all the recollection I had of it from my earliest voyages up the river, when the house was concealed behind a dense grove of red maples, which then stood between it and


1853-1854

1853-1854

the river, through which I once heard the house-dog bark; and in general the slight improvements that had been made upon it. These were the motives that swayed, though I did not mention there to the proprietor. To enjoy these things I was ready to carry it on and do all those things which I now see had no other motive or excuse but that I might pay for it and be unmolested in my possession of it; though I knew all the while that it would yield the most abundant crop of the kind I wanted if I could only afford to let it alone. Though it afforded no western prospect, the dilapidated fences were picturesque. I was in some haste to buy, before the proprietor finished getting out some rocks, cutting down sonic hollow apple trees, and grubbing up some voting birches which had sprung up in the pasture, all which in my eyes very much enhanced its value.


Varro speaks of two kinds of pigeons, one of which was wont to alight “on the (*columinibus villae*) columns of a villa (*a quo appellatae columbae*), from which they were called *columbae*, which on account of their natural timidity (*summa loca in tectis captant*) delight in the highest places on the roofs (?) (or under cover?).”

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

 February 4, Saturday: In the morning, [Henry Thoreau](#) went over to the Hemlocks on the [Assabet River](#). That afternoon Frank Brown, the son of [Mrs. Lucy Cotton Jackson Brown](#), showed him a gray hare, a gray squirrel, and a red squirrel shot on Thursday.

The sort of hinged luggage now known as the Gladstone bag was patented by Edward Cole, a leather case maker of No. 9 Hemmings Row in Westminster: “An Improvement In The Frames Of Traveling Bags.”



Feb. 4. F. Brown showed me this afternoon his game killed day before yesterday, —a gray hare, a gray squirrel, and a red squirrel. The red squirrel was peeping out of his nest in a tree. The gray was a fine large fellow in good condition; weighed one pound and a quarter, more than half as heavy as the hare, and his tail still perfectly and beautifully curved over his back. It recovered its place when you stroked it, as if it were full of electricity. All were frozen, the hare, as usual, in the attitude of running. The gray squirrel’s ears were white above, edged with tawny brown. He thought that my marsh peep of the fall might [be] the ash-colored sandpiper . John Moore and Company got about fifty weight of fish at Flint’s Pond the same day. Two pickerel weighed nine pounds.

I went over to the Hemlocks on the Assabet this morning. Saw the tracks, I think of a mink, in the shallow snow along the edge of the river, looking for a hole in the ice. A clear, cold morning. The smokes from the village chimneys are quickly purified and dissipated, like vapor, in the air. They do not stream high.

Varro says *Africanae bestiae* for savage or ferocious beasts. Is this a difference of climate merely? Are not some quarters of the globe thus better fitted for the habitation of man for other reasons?

We have not much that is poetic in the accompaniments of the farmer’s life. Varro speaks of the swineherd accustoming the swine or boars to come at the sound of a horn when he fed them with acorns. I remember that my grandmother used to call her cow home at evening from a near pasture to be milked by thumping on the mortar which held her salt. The tinkling cow-bell cannot be spared. Ever what most attracts us in the farmer’s life is not its profitableness. We love to go after the cow, not for the sake of her milk, or her beef, or the money they yield, but perchance to hear the tinkling of the cow-bell; and we would fain keep a herd of pigs, not because of the profit there is in bacon, but because we have dreamed of hearing the swineherd’s horn. We would keep hens, not for eggs, but to hear the cocks crow and the hens cackle.

As for the locality of beehives, Varro says that they must be placed near the villa, “potissimum ubi non resonent imagines, hic enim sonus harum fugae causa existimatur esse” (especially where there are no echoes, for this sound is thought to be the cause of their flight).



February 5, Sunday: An earthquake shock was felt in [San Francisco](#).

In the morning, [Henry Thoreau](#) was looking at some old account books from 1741-1750 kept by the storekeeper [Ephraim Jones](#).

WRIGHT TAVERN

In the afternoon he walked in Hubbard's blueberry swamp woods [Ebenezer or George Hubbard??] and James P. Brown's woods. [William M. White](#)'s version of a journal entry is:

*Shall we not have sympathy with the muskrat
Which gnaws its third leg off,
Not as pitying its sufferings,
But through our kindred mortality,
Appreciating its majestic pains and its heroic virtue?
Are we not made its brothers by fate?*

*For whom are psalms sung and mass said,
If not for such worthies as these?*

*When I hear the church organ peal,
Or feel the trembling tones of the bass viol,
I see in imagination the musquash gnawing off his leg,
I offer up a note that his affliction may be sanctified
To each and all of us.*



Feb. 5. Have two more old account-books of Ephraim Jones, running from 1741 to 1750 and further, — what are called ledgers, I think. Some of the items of the waste-book are here collected, each man's purchases and credit brought together.

I think he must have kept in the store which Goodnow & How first kept in. Some remember when an Ephraim Jones, probably his grandson, kept there. There appears to have been an Ephraim Jones keeping the jail then (probably a son of the first), in the Revolution. There is said to have been a public house with the sign of a black horse where Mr. Brooks's house stands, and hence the society that worshipped there were called the Black Horse Church.

He sold a few religious books as well as almanacs and primers. In 1745, "to Inchwoods Glimpse of Glory and Mr. (or Wm.) Row's Meditation well Bound," so much. In another place, "to Glimpse of Glory and sundry." Sometimes "a sermon book."

Whitefield was here first in 1741, and there were exciting revivals under Mr. Bliss at this time, says the History. Yet it is a dreary and ghastly life suggested, when you come upon a man's bill for a lock to the Burying Gate, and that is so nearly all that has come down. I picture to myself a rude, straggling village with a wide-open burying-ground gate.

Hezekiah Stratton has credit in 1743, "Feb. 7 by ½ a Catt skin 0-1-4½," — of course a wildcat. Gingerbread is bought several times, flour once or twice, and credit given for butter once or twice. Several times one nutmeg is bought. Credit given for weaving; also for a load of bark and tar and turpentine from Groton. The lime-kiln and iron mine are frequently named. Credit given for so much

1853-1854

1853-1854

“mine,” meaning apparently iron ore.

Stephen Parks has credit in 1746, “Aug 2. Cr by one wampum belt 0-15-0.” To another, in 1744, “Cr by Dressing 50 squirrel skins 0-6-3.” Credit is also given for fox skins and a few deer skins. But above all Jones gives credit for timber brought to the store, or, more commonly, carted to Menotomy, Mistick, Medford, or Charlestown. Some customers live in Nisstissit (?). Credit is given by “digging mine.” (Probably iron, after called “mine.”)

For example of the quantity of rum and the like bought, *vide* pages 128-193 of No. 2. Long columns run down the page, of nothing but flip, flip, mug flip, mug flip, toddy, toddy, punch, punch, bowl of toddy, brandy punch, etc., etc.; sometimes charges for the breaking of the glass, also for sugar and limes and flip for himself and company. Jones appears to have kept a public house, for he frequently charges for entertainment.

The animal merely makes him a bed, which he warms with his body in a sheltered place. He does not make a house. But man, having discovered fire, warms a spacious apartment up to the same temperature with his body, and without robbing it, so that he can divest himself of cumbersome clothing, — not keeping his bed, — maintain a kind of summer in the midst of winter, and, by means of windows, even admit the light. It was his invention to box up some air and warm it, make that his bed, and in this live and move and have his being still, and breathe as in a congenial climate or summer, without taking to his bed. Thus he goes a step or two beyond instinct and secures a little time for the fine arts.

Though I began to grow torpid when exposed a long time to the pinching winter air, — my hands and feet grew numb, and my ears and face stiffened, — when I had reached the genial atmosphere of my house, I soon recovered my faculties. I did not squat in a form, or lie in a burrow or ensconced in a nest of leaves or grass, like the squirrels, nor become quite dormant in any hole, like the woodchuck. I ameliorated the winter climate with fire, and lengthened out the day with a lamp.

Even [Varro](#), to prove that the ancients did not shave (or that there were no barbers), is obliged to refer his readers to their bearded statues. “Olim tonsores non fuisse adsignificans antiquorum statuae, quod pleraeque habent capillum, et barbam magnam.” Yet it was true of the old statues only “for the most part.”

P.M. — To walk.

Begins to snow.

At Hubbard’s blueberry swamp woods, near the bathing-place, came across a fox’s track, which I think was made last night or since. The tracks were about two inches long, or a little less, by one and a half wide, shaped thus where the snow was only half an inch deep on ice:



generally from nine to fifteen inches apart longitudinally and three to four inches apart transversely. It came from the west. I followed it back. At first it was difficult to trace, to *investigate* it, amid some rabbit tracks, of which I did not know whether they had been made before or since. It soon led out of the woods on to the ice of the meadow to a slight prominence, then turned and followed along the side of the wood, then crossed the meadow directly to the riverside just below the mouth of Nut Meadow Brook, visited a muskrat-house there and left its mark, — watered, — for, dog-like, it turned aside to every muskrat-house or the like prominence near its route and left its mark there. You could easily scent it there. It turned into the meadow eastward once or twice as it went up the riverside, and, after visiting another muskrat’s house, where it left its manure, large and light-colored, as if composed of fir, crossed the river and John [Hosmer](#)’s meadow and potato-field and the road south of Nut Meadow Bridge. (If it had been a dog it would have turned when it reached the road.) It was not lost then, but led straight across, through J. Hosmer’s field and meadow again, and over ditch and up sidehill in the woods; and there, on the side of the hill, I could see where its tail had grazed the snow. It was then mixed with rabbit-tracks, but was easily unravelled. Passed out of the wood into J.P. Brown’s land, over some mice or mole tracks, then over the middle of Brown’s meadows westward, to Tarbell’s meadows, till at last, by the brook, I found that it had had a companion up to that point, which turned off. Then I saw the large tracks of hounds on the trail. Still



1853-1854

1853-1854

it held on, from straight across the road again, some way on an old dog's trail; had trodden and nosed very much about some hardbacks in the field beyond, where were a few mice-tracks, as if for food, the hound's tracks numerous with it; and so I traced it into the Ministerial Swamp, where, the snow-storm increasing; I left it, having traced it back more than a mile westward in a pretty direct course. What expeditions they make in a night in search of food! No doubt the same one crosses the river many times.

Shall we not have sympathy with the muskrat which gnaws its third leg off, not as pitying its sufferings, but, through our kindred mortality, appreciating its majestic pains and its heroic virtue? Are we not made its brothers by fate? For whom are psalms sung and mass said, if not for such worthies as these? When I hear the church organ peal, or feel the trembling tones of the bass viol, I see in imagination the musquash gnawing off his leg, I offer up a note that his affliction may be sanctified to each and all of us. Prayer and praise fitly follow such exploits. I look round for majestic pains and pleasures. They have our sympathy, both in their joys and in their pains. When I think of the tragedies which are constantly permitted in the course of all animal life, they make the plaintive strain of the universal harp which elevates us above the trivial. When I think of the muskrat gnawing off his leg, it is as the plectrum on the harp or the bow upon the viol, drawing forth a majestic strain or psalm, which immeasurably dignifies our common fate. Even as the worthies of mankind are said to recommend human life by having lived it, so I could not spare the example of the muskrat.

That sand foliage! It convinces me that Nature is still in her youth, -that florid fact about which mythology merely mutters, -that the very soil can fabulate as well as you or I. It stretches forth its baby fingers on every side. Fresh curls spring forth from its bald brow. There is nothing inorganic. This earth is not, then, a mere fragment of dead history, strata upon strata, like the leaves of a book, an object for a museum and an antiquarian, but living poetry, like the leaves of a tree, — not a fossil earth, but a living specimen. You may melt your metals and cast them into the most beautiful moulds you can; they will never excite me like the forms which this molten earth flows out into. The very earth, as well as the institutions upon it, is plastic like potter's clay in the hands of the artist. These florid heaps lie along the bank like the slag of a furnace, showing that nature is in full blast within; but there is no admittance except on business. Ye dead and alive preachers, ye have no business here. Ye will enter only to your tomb.

I fear only lest my expressions may not be extravagant enough, — may not wander far enough beyond the narrow limits of our ordinary insight and faith, so as to be adequate to the truth of which I have been convinced. I desire to speak somewhere without bounds, in order that I may attain to an expression in some degree adequate to truth of which I have been convinced. From a man in a waking moment, to men in their waking moments. Wandering toward the more distant boundaries of a wider pasture. Nothing is so truly bounded and obedient to law as music, yet nothing so surely breaks all petty and narrow bonds. Whenever I hear any music I fear that I may have spoken tamely and within bounds. And I am convinced that I cannot exaggerate enough even to lay the foundation of a true expression. As for books and the adequateness of their statements to the truth, they are as the tower of Babel to the sky.

In Jones's account there is a paper headed —
“funerel Charges.

4 P Shug...

¼ of alspice

tobackoo

11 yd Cyprus

4 goze; hankerchiefs

4 Par of women black gloves

1 ½ yd Lutestring

silk feret

12 pair of mens white gloves

6 yards of allomode

silk”

There was plainly much coopering done in those days.

How dangerous to the foxes and all wild animals is a light snow, accompanied and succeeded by calm weather, betraying their course to the hunters! Here was one track that crossed the road, — did not turn in it like a dog, — track of a wilder life. How distinct from the others! Such as was made

The prices mostly cut off.

1853-1854

1853-1854

before roads were, as if the road were [a] more recent track. This traveller does not turn when he strikes the trail of man. The fox that invaded the farmer's poultry-yard last night came from a great distance.

I followed on this trail so long that my thoughts grew foxy; though I was on the back track, I drew nearer and nearer to the fox each step. Strange as it may seem, I thought several times that I scented him, though I did not stoop.



February 6, Monday: The *Amanda* was arriving in Boston Bay from Smyrna in the Ottoman Empire when it was driven ashore and wrecked at Marshfield, Massachusetts.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked to Fair Haven Cliff and [Walden Pond](#).



Feb. 6. The weather has been very changeable for some weeks. First it is warm and thawing, sloshy weather; then the thermometer goes down to 1.9° below zero, and our shoes squeak on the snow; then, perhaps, it moderates and snows; then is mild and pleasant again and good sleighing; then we wake to find a drifted snow upon the last and a bleak, wintry prospect.

P.M. — To Cliffs and Walden.

It is a very light snow and, though seven or eight inches deep, but a slight obstacle to walking. Its surface in the woods is everywhere creased and scored by the flitting leaves and the snow that has fallen from the trees. For a drifting wind has followed fast upon the snow, shaking it off the trees, and there is a new fall of withered leaves. Probably these leaves decay the faster for being deposited thus in successive layers, alternating with the snow.

From the Cliff Hill the landscape looks very bleak and Nova-Zernbla-like. A cold, drifting wind sweeps from the north; the surface of the snow is imbricated on a great scale, being very regularly blown into waves, alike over the high road and the railroad, concealing the tracks and the meadow and the river and the pond. It is all one great wintry-looking snow-field, whose surface consists of great wave-like drifts, maybe twenty feet wide with an abrupt edge on the south. It is like a scaly armor drawn alike over the meadow and the pond. We need not trouble ourselves to speculate how the human race on this globe will be destroyed at last, whether by fire or otherwise. It would be so easy to cut their threads any time with a little sharper blast from the north. We go on dating from the Cold Fridays and the [Great Snows](#) and the September gales, but a little colder Friday, or greater snow, or more violent gale would put a period to man's existence on the globe.

I see great shadows on the northeast sides of the mountains, forty miles off, the sun being in the southwest. The snow is so light that few animals have been out. I see the track of a rabbit about the Cliff; there are hollows in the snow on the tops of the rocks, shaped like a milk-pan and as large, where he has squatted or whirled round. I also see the tracks of a few mice or moles. The squirrel, too, has been out. Hear the old owl at 4.30 P.M. Crossing Walden where the snow has fallen quite level, I perceive that my shadow [is of] a delicate or transparent blue rather than black.

Price on the Picturesque says, "The midsummer shoot is the first thing that gives relief to the eye, after the sameness of color which immediately precedes it; in many trees, and in none more than the oak, the effect is singularly beautiful; the old foliage forms a dark background, on which the new appears, relieved and detached in all its freshness and brilliancy: it is spring engrafted upon summer." Is not this the effect which I noticed by Fair Haven side last summer or autumn, toward night, — that watered and variously shaded foliage?

As for autumn, he speaks of "the warm haze, which, on a fine day in that season, spreads the last varnish over every part of the picture."

[Gilpin](#) talked as if there was some food for the soul in mere physical light and shadow, as if, without the suggestion of a moral, they could give a man pleasure or pain!



1853-1854

1853-1854



WALDEN: Though, when I had been exposed to the rudest blasts a long time, my whole body began to grow torpid, when I reached the genial atmosphere of my house I soon recovered my faculties and prolonged my life. But the most luxuriously housed has little to boast of in this respect, nor need we trouble ourselves to speculate how the human race may be at last destroyed. It would be easy to cut their threads any time with a little sharper blast from the north. We go on dating from Cold Fridays and Great Snows; but a little colder Friday, or greater snow, would put a period to man's existence on the globe.

THE GREAT SNOW

HENRY OFTEN
MENTIONS THE
GREAT SNOW



1853-1854

1853-1854



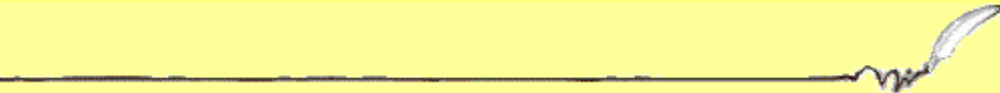
February 7, Tuesday: Marianne Marschner, 3d wife of Heinrich August Marschner, dies in Berlin, probably of pneumonia. She was 50 years old.

Schallwellen op.148, a waltz by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#), was performed for the initial time, in the Sphiensaal, Vienna.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked down river with [Ellery Channing](#) and they made a fire on the snow-covered ice half a mile below Ball's Hill. It was an excellent day to look out across Concord's Great Meadows.

Long before Thoreau's lifetime, the alluvial plain of the Concord Valley lay at the bottom of a gray glacial lake. This beaded ribbon of turbid water extended the whole length of the valley, widening over bedrock basins that would later become meadows, and narrowing in bedrock constrictions. In Thoreau's epoch, every strong flood recreated the moccasin footprints of this ancient glacial lake at a lower level. The result was a "chain of handsome lakes" that was made higher, more frequent, and more long-lasting by the direct and indirect effects of the [Billerica dam](#). He described the largest lake, over the [Sudbury Meadows](#), as a "smaller Lake Huron," more than a mile across in every direction. Next in size was that over the [Great Meadows](#) of Concord, more than two miles long and half a mile wide. Both of these transient lakes could last for weeks at a time, which was long enough for him to be surprised when they finally disappeared. During floods, the already wide Carlisle reach expanded to resemble one of New York's smaller Finger Lakes.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, pages 120-121



Arguments were heard before the Supreme Court in the case of Isaac N. Thorne against the City of San Francisco, over land grants.

CALIFORNIA



Feb. 7: Under the waves of the snowy ocean yesterday, roads and rivers, pastures and cultivated fields, all signs of man's occupancy of the globe were for the most part concealed. Water and sand also assume this same form under the influence of wind. And I have seen, on the surface of the Walden ice, great sweeping, waving lines, somewhat like these. It is the track of the wind, the impress which it makes on flowing materials.


1853-1854

1853-1854

P.M. — Down river with C.

"Downriver," "To Great Meadow," and "To Hill" signified a northward trip down the Concord River below the triple point of the confluence. After passing through a straight reach aligned by the local bedrock strike, arched by two bridges, and flanked by gravel bars of historic sediment that were repeatedly dredged, he entered the north side of Great Meadow. Bounded by the site of the Old North Bridge to the southwest and Ball's Hill to the northeast, it was two miles long and half a mile across. When in flood, the meadow was his favorite inland sea to sail upon because the wind was least impeded and the waves were highest.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 11

The river has not been so concealed by snow before. The snow does not merely lie level on it and on the land, so many inches deep, but great drifts, perchance beginning on the land, stretch quite across it, so that you cannot always tell where it is, for there is no greater levelness than elsewhere to betray it. In some places, where the ice is exposed, little bunches of hoar frost have formed, with perfect ribbed leaves one inch in diameter. This morning was one of the coldest in the winter. Does the whistle of the locomotive sound differently, tear the air any more, this weather? I see the prinos berries turned now a dark, coppery brown, looking blackish at a little distance. We crossed the Great Meadows lengthwise, a broad level plain, roughened only by snowy waves, about two miles long and nearly half as wide. Looking back over it made me think of what I have read of Arctic explorers traveling over snow-covered ice. Saw a few crows [[Crow, American](#)  [Corvus brachyrhynchos](#)]. Some green-briar berries quite fresh.

Made a fire on the snow-covered ice half a mile below Ball's Hill. Cut first a large bundle of green oak twigs with leaves on them, laid them on sticks, then sprinkled on fine dead maple and alder and poplar twigs, and then dry cat-sticks of the same material. We broke up some larger pine trees by striking them on the ice, at the same time letting go to save our hands. Made a large warm fire, whose flame went up straight, there being no wind, and without smoke. Stayed half an hour, and when we took our departure, felt as if we had been in a house all the while, for we had been warm and had looked steadily at the fire instead of looking off. The fire made a large circular cavity in the snow and ice, three feet in diameter and four or five inches deep, with water at the bottom. We had often sailed over this very spot. Sticks in a circle on their ends and slanted over a common centre make a perfect fire. Such is the earliest hearth, with a hole in the roof above it. Our chimney fires are only semicircles or half-fires, or what is worse, oblong squares, or, in the case of stoves, mere boxes full of fire, without symmetry or form.

Observed in some large cakes of ice left on the river, I thought, the faintest possible tinge of green, also a white, leafy internal frostwork along the planes of the irregular flaring cleavages, — or call them deep conchoidal sometimes.

These afternoons the shadows of the woods have already a twilight length by 3 or 4 P.M. We made our fire in the shadow of a wood rather than in the sun, that the flame might show better, and the sun went down before we left it. Not till we had left our fire many rods behind did we observe the narrow column of blue smoke rising straight from it against the wood. It had appeared to its pure flame, producing merely that boiling of the air above it through which you see objects confusedly.



February 8, Wednesday: The clipper *San Francisco* was wrecked when it arrived from New-York in San Francisco Bay, California.

[Henry Thoreau](#) made extracts from [Marcus Porcius Cato](#) the Censor, [Marcus Terentius Varro](#), and from page 118 of [John Josselyn](#)'s AN ACCOUNT OF TWO VOYAGES TO NEW ENGLAND.



Feb. 8. The poets, philosophers, historians, and all writers have always been disposed to praise the life of the farmer and prefer it to that of the citizen. They have been inclined to regard trade and commerce as not merely uncertain modes of getting a living, but as running into the usurious and disreputable. And even at the present day the trader, as carrier or go-between, the speculator, the forestaller, and corporations do not escape a fling. Trade has always been regarded to some extent as a questionable mode of getting a livelihood. Cato says: "Et virum bonum cum laudabant, ita laudabant, bonum agricolam, bonumque colonum. Amplissime laudari existimabatur, qui ita laudabatur. Mercatorem autem strenuum studiosumque rei quaerendae existimo; verum ... periculosum et calamitosum. At ex agricolis et viri fortissimi, et milites strenuissimi gignuntur, maximeque pius quaestus, stabilissimusque consequitur, minimeque invidiosus: minimeque male cogitantes sunt, qui in eo studio occupati sunt." That is: "when they [i.e. our ancestors] praised a good man, they called him a good farmer and a good husbandman (settler?). He was thought to be most amply praised who was so praised. However, I think that the merchant is energetic and studious to make money, but his business is dangerous and liable to misfortunes. But from the cultivators of the soil, both the men of most fortitude and the hardest soldiers are descended, and theirs is a gain particularly just (honest, pious) and stable, and least of all the subject of envy: and they are the least of all thinking evil who are engaged in this pursuit."

And [Varro](#) says: "Viri magni nostri majores non sine causa praeponerent rusticos Romanos urbanis. Ut ruri enim, qui in villa vivunt ignaviores, quam qui in agro versantur in aliquo opere faciundo; sic qui in oppido sederent, quam qui rura colerent, desidiosiores putabant." That is: "Great men, our ancestors, preferred Romans who had lived in the country to those who lived in the city. For, as in the country, they who live in the villa are idler than they who are employed in the field doing some work, so they thought that those who sat in a town were more slothful than they who cultivated the fields." And he says that they did not need the gymnasia of the Greeks, but now one does not think that he has a villa unless he has many places with Greek names in it, and, having stolen into the city, instead of using their hands in swinging (?) a scythe or holding a plow they move them in the theatre and circus and have forgotten husbandry.

And in another place [V.](#) boasts of the antiquity of rustic life, saying that "there was a time when men cultivated the fields, but had no city (fuit tempus, cum rura colerent homines, neque urbem haberent)." And again: "Immani numero annorum urbanos agricolae praestant. Nec mirum, quod divina natura dedit agros, ars humana aedificavit urbes. (That is: Cultivators of the soil precede citizens by a vast number of years. Nor is it to be wondered at, for divine Nature gave fields, human art built cities.) ... Nec sine causa Terram candem appellabant matrem, et Cererem, et qui cam colerent, piam et utilem agere vitam credebant, atque eos solos reliquos esse ex stirpe Saturni regis. (That is: Nor without reason did they [our ancestors] call the same Earth mother and Ceres, and thought that they who cultivated it led a pious and useful life, and that they alone were left of the race of King Saturn.)"

But now, by means of railroads and steamboats and telegraphs, the country is denaturalized, the old pious, stable, and unenvied gains of the farmer are liable to all the suspicion which only the merchant's formerly excited. All milk-farms and fruit-farms, etc., are so many markets with their customs in the country.

Consider the deformities to which the farmer is liable, — the rustic, the clown (*a colono?*), the villain, etc., etc.

[Josselyn](#), speaking of crickets, says, "The Italian who hath them cryed up and down the streets (*Grille che cantelo*) and buyeth them to put into his Gardens, if he were in New England would gladly be rid of them, they make such a dinn in an Evening." I am more charmed by the Italian's taste than by [Josselyn](#)'s impatience.

Ann, the Irishwoman who has lived with Deacon Brown so long, says that when he had taken to his

1853-1854

1853-1854

bed with his last illness, she was startled by his calling, "Ann, Ann," "the bitterest Ann you ever heard," and that was the beginning of his last illness.

On the 2d I saw the sand foliage in the Cut; pretty good. This is the frost coming out of the ground; this is spring. It precedes the green and flowery spring, as mythology does ordinary literature and poetry.

P.M. — Rain, rain, rain, carrying off the snow and leaving a foundation of ice. The wind southeasterly.



February 9, Thursday: James Jackson Cabot was born in Boston, the 4th child of [Dr. Samuel Cabot III](#) with Hannah Lowell Jackson Cabot.

Because of tensions between France and Russia, [Giacomo Meyerbeer](#) and Eugène Scribe were forced to make minor changes in the text of their upcoming opera, *L'étoile du nord*.

[Henry Thoreau](#) went to Pine Hill at 9 AM. He read [Marcus Terentius Varro](#), [Lucius Junius Moderatus Columella's](#) *DE RE RUSTICA*,

REI RUSTICAE AUCTORES...

and [William Howitt's](#) *THE BOOK OF THE SEASONS; OR, THE CALENDAR OF NATURE*.

There were a great many holidays at Plumfield, and one of the most delightful was the yearly apple-picking, — for then the Marches, Laurences, Brookes, and Bhaers turned out in full force, and made a day of it. Five years after Jo's wedding, one of these fruitful festivals occurred. — A mellow October day, when the air was full of an exhilarating freshness which made the spirits rise and the blood dance healthily in the veins. The old orchard wore its holiday attire; golden-rod and asters fringed the mossy walls; grasshoppers skipped briskly in the sere grass, and crickets chirped like fairy pipers at a feast. Squirrels were busy with their small harvesting; birds twittered their *adieux* from the alders in the lane; and every tree stood ready to send down its shower of red or yellow apples at the first shake. Everybody was there, — everybody laughed and sang, climbed up and tumbled down; everybody declared that there never had been such a perfect day or such a jolly set to enjoy it, — and every one gave themselves up to the simple pleasures of the hour as freely as if there were no such things as care or sorrow in the world.

Mr. March strolled placidly about, quoting Tusser, Cowley, and Columella to Mr. Laurence, while enjoying

"The gentle apple's winey juice."

ABRAHAM COWLEY

COLUMELLA

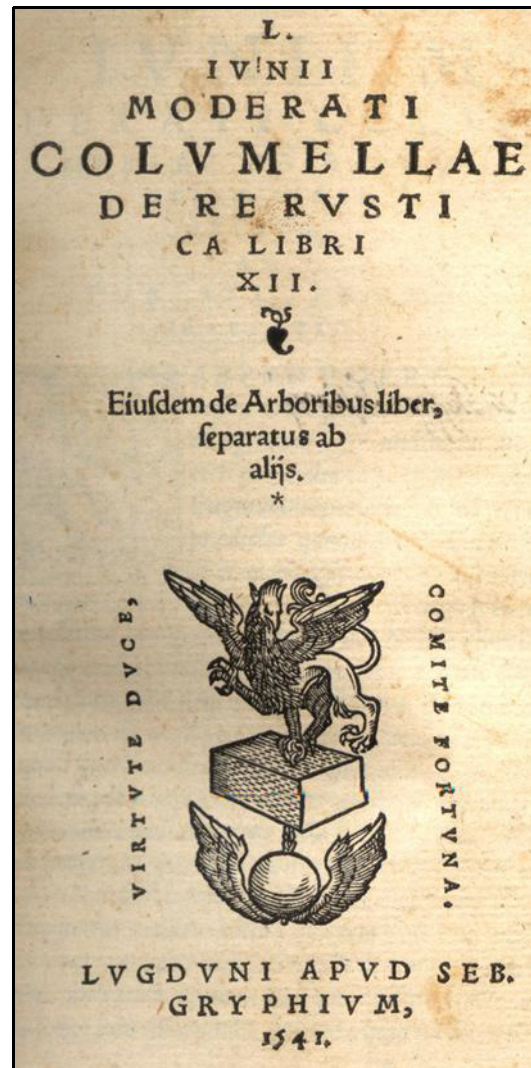


Feb. 9. High wind in the night and now, the rain being over. Does it not usually follow rain-storms at this season, to dry up the water? It has cleared off very pleasant and is still quite warm.

9 A.M. — To Pine Hill.

1853-1854

1853-1854



Some of these thaws succeed suddenly to intensely cold weather, and the sky that was tense like a bow that is bent is now relaxed. There is a peculiar softness and luminousness in the air this morning, perhaps the light being diffused by vapor.


It is such a warm, moist, or softened, sunlit air as we are wont to hear the first bluebird's [Bluebird, Eastern █ *Sialia sialis*] warble in. And the brightness of the morning is increased tenfold by the sun reflected from broad sheets of rain and melted snow-water, and also, in a peculiar manner, from the snow on the sides of the Deep Cut. The crowing of cocks mid the voices of the school-children sound like spring. I hear the sound of the horses' feet on the bared ice as on pavements; and the sun is reflected from a hundred rippling sluices of snow-water finding its level in the fields. Are not both sound and light condensed or contracted by cold?

The jays [Blue Jay █ *Cyanocitta cristata*] are more lively than usual. That lichen with a white elastic thread for core is like a tuft of hair on the trees, sometimes springing from the centre of another, larger, flat lichen. There are show-fleas, quite active, on the half-melted snow on the middle of Walden. I do not hear Therien's axe far of late. The moment I came on his chopping-ground, the chickadees [Black-capped Chickadee █ *Parus atricapillus* (Titmouse, Titmice)] flew to me, as if glad to see me. They are a peculiarly honest and sociable little bird. I saw them go to his pail repeatedly and peck his bread and butter. They came and went a dozen times while I stood there. He

CHANTICLEER

1853-1854

1853-1854

said that a great flock of them came round him the other day while he was eating his dinner and lit on his clothes "just like flies." One roosted on his finger, and another pecked a piece of bread in his hand. They are considerable company for the woodchopper. I heard one wiry phe-be [**Eastern Phoebe**  *Sayornis phoebe* (Bridge Pewee)]. They love to hop about wood freshly split. Apparently they do not leave his clearing all day. They were not scared when he threw down wood within a few feet of them. When I looked to see how much of his bread and butter they had eaten, I did not perceive that any was gone. He could afford to dine a hundred.

I see some chestnut sprouts with leaves on them still. The hollows about Walden, still bottomed with snow, are filled with greenish water like its own. I do not find any willow catkins started, though many have lost their scales. I have brought home some alder and sweet-gale and put them in water. The black birch has a slender sharp bud, much like the shadbush. In Stow's meadow by railroad causeway, saw many dusky flesh-colored, transparent worms, about five eighths of an inch long, in and upon the snow, crawling about. These, too, must be food for birds.

I have seen two red squirrels and heard a third since the snow covered the ground. I have seen one gray one, but traces of many.

After "putabant" in [Varro](#), four pages back, comes "Itaque annum ita diviscrunt, ut nonis modo diebus urbanas res usurparent, reliquis VII ut rura colerent. (Therefore they so divided the year as to attend to town affairs on the ninth day only, that they might cultivate the fields on the other days)." Hence *nundinae* means a fair, and *oppidam nundinariam* (a ninth-day town) is a market town, and *forum numlinarium* is the market-place.

Columella, referring to [Varro](#), gives the same reason for the setting aside of the ninth day only, and adds: "Illis enim temporibus proceres civitatis in agris morabantur; et cum consilium publicum desiderabatur, a villis arcessebantur in senatum. Ex quo qui eos evocabant, Viatores nominati sunt. (For in those days the chief men of the state stayed on their farms; and when a public council was wanted they were sent for from their villas to the senate. Whence they who called them out were named Road-men.)" These were the times which all Romans loved to praise. But now, so far as the rulers of the State are concerned, the city for the most part, instead of being a ninth-day town, gets six days, while the country gets only one day and the nights at most. We go to market every day. The city is not a ninth-day place but an every-day place, and the country is only a night or Sunday place. In a Yankee's estimation, it is perhaps the greatest satire on a New England country village to say that it has an air of quietness which reminds him of the Sabbath. He loves the bustle of a market, where things are bought and sold, and sometimes men among the rest. The boys swap jack-knives on Sunday, and their fathers, perchance, barter their own souls.

[Howitt](#) describes the harvest moon in August. Did I not put it in September? He speaks of "willow-holts on the banks of rivers." Bailey defines "holt, — small wood or grove." Does not our "holt" on the river answer to this? It is in this case a poke-logan.

NATHAN BAILEY

THE BOOK OF THE SEASONS

My ink was frozen last month, and is now pale.

[Howitt](#) says that in Britain the law "is opposed to tracking game in a snow." I feel some pity for the wild animals when I see how their tracks betray them in calm weather after a snow-storm, and consider what risks they run of being exterminated.

Is not January alone pure winter? December belongs to the fall: is a wintry November: February, to the spring: it is a snowy March.

The water was several inches deep in the road last evening, but it has run nearly dry by morning. The illustrious farmer Romans who lived simply on their land, to whom Columella refers, are Q. Cincinnatus, C. Fabricius, and Curius Dentatus.

BAILEY'S DICTIONARY



1853-1854

1853-1854



February 10, Friday: The steamboat *James Niles* sank in the Ohio River at Louisville, Kentucky with loss of life.

A Democratic newspaper of Detroit, Michigan, the Free Press, posted a column headed “A Little Strange” in which their conclusion was that antislavery [white] Americans could only be hypocrites:

Is it not a little strange that that class of people who have hitherto scouted at the idea of “compromising with slavery” — who have always fought against adhering in good faith to the Missouri line, and extending it to the Pacific — and with whom the Wilmot proviso has been a *sine qua non* — should suddenly have become sticklers for the Missouri compromise; a measure which, if they had the power, they would sweep from the statute book at a single dash, and erect upon its ruins a Wilmot proviso covering the whole territory of the Union?

Let not abolitionists talk to us of the sacredness of compromises! Nothing is sacred with them. Their professions are false as hell itself. Openly and boastingly they violate the Fugitive Slave Law, one of the compromise measures of 1850, and then have the audacity to turn around, and, with ill-concealed hypocrisy, prate about the sacredness of the Missouri act! Out upon such villainy. Out upon men who daily commit moral treason against their country. Sacredness of compromises, indeed!

In the afternoon Henry Thoreau walked up the railroad to Assabet, returning by way of the Hollowell Farm.

Thoreau wrote in his journal “P. M. — Up railroad to Assabet and return via Hollowell place... The sturdy white oak near the Derby railroad bridge has been cut down....” He wrote to Harvard Library Librarian Thaddeus William Harris.



Feb. 10. P.M. — Up railroad to Assabet and return via Hollowell place.

The river has risen again, and, instead of ice and snow, there is water over the ice on the meadows. This is the second freshet since the snows. The ice is cracked, and in some places heaved up in the usual manner. The sturdy white oak near the Derby railroad bridge has been cut down. It measures five feet and three inches over the stump, at eighteen inches from the ground. I observe the great well-protected buds of the balm-of-Gilead spear-head-like. There is no shine to them now, and their viscidness is not very apparent. A great many willow catkins show a little down peeping from under the points of the scales, but I have no doubt that all this was done last fall. I noticed it then.



February 11, Saturday: [Henry Thoreau](#) noted at 7:30 AM that on the ice which had frozen the previous night, the snow fleas were lying in dark patches 3-4 inches in diameter about the grass-stems or willows.

[John Mitchel](#) wrote in his [The Citizen](#) that abolitionism was an English import, with on it “the slime and trail of Exeter Hall” (a large antislavery rally had been held in a hall of that name in London in 1841). He responded the Reverend [Henry Ward Beecher](#)’s remarks about him that “You belong to a sect and a school of social reformers that I have always kept at arm’s length.”

On this night the [San Francisco](#) Gas Company turned on the 1st coal gas lamps. The occasion was celebrated at a grand banquet at the Oriental Hotel — the coal gas illuminated 86 lamps, and also the Metropolitan Theatre.

The Placer, [California Herald](#) reported that since the introduction of water into Michigan City, there had been favorable reports. The large claim of Stoor, Carr & Co. had been paying per day 2 ounces to the hand. Meanwhile the [California](#) gazette [Sierra Citizen](#)¹²⁹ was reporting that, the damage of the late rains having been repaired, operations had recommenced at Downieville. In visiting the numerous drifts and examining the machinery, they noted that there had been great improvements since the same ground had previously been worked over, using rockers and pans. Numerous sluices were in operation in the vicinity of town — but there had not been news of any unusual strikes. Mr. Totten of Eureka North had visited the office of the gazette a few days earlier and related that for a long time the miners there had been unable to do more than drift, leaving the dirt to be washed when the ditches afforded sufficient water. Now the company with which he was connected had water in abundance — and in 2 days they had managed to wash out \$500. Last week the Pickup & Company at South Diggings took out 360 ounces. The Baldwin claims there yielded in one day 20 ounces, their normal average being from \$15 to \$20 per day. New diggings have been discovered in that vicinity, and some 18 tunnels had been opened with prospects of success. At the Monte Christo diggings near Oak Ranch between Downieville and Canyon Creek, where some time since gold had been discovered, some 20 men had been drifting into the hill. Although little washing of the dirt had been done, gold had been found in sufficient quantities to warrant the prosecution of this work. The editor of the gazette had conversed with several gentlemen from Forest City, who had represented the prospects of the gold diggers there as very flattering. They complained of his previous neglect of their district and assured him that theirs was in truth one of the most important mining districts in the mountains. There were quite a number of gold diggers at work in and around Jim Crow’s Canyon, with what success the gazette had not recently heard — all that had been heard at the gazette was that a couple of men had frozen to death while on their way from Galloway’s Ranch to this canyon. The thriving village of Minnesota has become noted in mountain geography, but the editor had heard of no extraordinary discoveries in the tunneling that was there being carried on extensively. The editor had never visited these Minnesota diggings but, from the amount of gold dust passing through the Express lines, it could be inferred to be an exceedingly rich district. Mr. Beck, the regular Expressman from Downieville to Sears’ Gibsonville, Sear’s Diggings, etc., informed the gazette that since the rains had commenced all the little villages along his route had been presenting a very animated appearance. The trades have ceased to apprehend a failure in business on account of having credited out their goods in the expectation of work commencing at the usual time. In St. Louis, several dealers supplied the miners with provisions, to guard against a scarcity during the winter, having learned from experience the importance of being so prepared.



Feb. 11: 7.30 A.M. — Snow-fleas lie in black patches like some of those dark rough lichens on rocks, or like ink-spots three or four inches in diameter, about the grass-stems or willows, on the ice which froze last night. When I breathe on them I find them all alive and ready to skip. Also the water, when I break the ice, arouses them. I saw yesterday, in a muddy spring in Tarbell’s meadow, many cockle-shells on the bottom, with their feet out, and marks as if they had been moving. When I read of the catkins of the alder and the willow, etc., scattering their yellow pollen, they

129. On this day the [California](#) gold-country gazette [Mountain Echo](#) changed the name on its masthead to [Sierra Citizen](#).

impress me as a vegetation which belongs to the earliest and most innocent dawn of nature; as if they must have preceded other trees in the order of creation, as they precede them annually in their blossoming and leafing. In the winter we so value the semblance of fruit that even the dry black female catkins of the alder are an interesting sight, not to mention, on shoots rising a foot or two above these, the red or mulberry male catkins, in little parcels, dangling at a less than right angle with the stems, and the short female ones at their bases. For how many æons did the willow shed its yellow pollen annually before man was created!

Apparently I read Cato and Varro from the same motives that Virgil did, and as I read the almanac, *New England Farmer*, or *Cultivator*, or Howitt's "Seasons."



February 12, Sunday: [Robert Schumann](#) was suffering constant hallucinations, hearing heavenly instruments and J.S. Bach's "Ein feste Burg."

William Speiden, Jr. reported that the *Mississippi*, *Lexington*, and *Vandalia* were at anchor in the Bay of Haw-wat-su. The US frigates had come upon the *Macedonian* aground there and came to her aid, hauling off with steam power and towing her to safe anchorage.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked on the ice and snow of the river to the mouth of Swamp Bridge Brook, and there put on his skates and skated to Pantry Brook.



Feb. 12: Another cold morning. The patches of snow-fleas on the ice are now much reduced, but still, when I kneel and breathe on them, they begin to skip, though the last two nights and all day yesterday have been severely cold. They look like little patches of rust on the ice.

At first, in clear cold weather, we may be walking on dry snow, which we crunch with squeaking sound under our feet. Then comes a thaw, and we slump about in slosh half a foot deep. Then, in a single night, the surface of the earth is all dried and stiffened, and we stagger over the rough, frozen ground and ice on which it is torture to walk. It becomes quite a study how a man will shoe himself for a winter. For outdoor life in winter, I use three kinds of shoes or boots: first and chiefly, for the ordinary dry snows or bare ground, cowhide hoots; secondly, for shallow thaws, half-shoe depth, and spring weather, light boots and india-rubbers; third, for the worst sloshy weather, about a week in the year, india-rubber boots.

P.M. —Skate to Pantry Brook.

Put on skates at mouth of Swamp Bridge Brook. The ice appears to be nearly two inches thick. There are many rough places where the crystals are very coarse, and the old ice on the river (for I spoke of a new ice since the freshet) is uneven and covered, more or less, with the scales of a thin ice whose water is dried up. In some places, where the wind has been strong, the foam is frozen into great concentric ridges, over which with an impetus I dash. It is hobbling and tearing work.

Just beyond the bathing-place, I see the wreck of an ice-fleet, which yesterday morning must have been very handsome. It reminds me of a vast and crowded fleet of sloops with large slanting sails all standing to the north. These sails are, some of them, the largest specimens of the leaf-structure in ice



that I have seen, eight or nine inches long. Perhaps this structure is more apparent now they have wasted so much. Their bases can be seen continuing quite through the level ice which has formed about them, as if the wind and waves, breaking up a thin ice, had held it in that position while it froze in.

One accustomed to glide over a boundless and variegated ice floor like this cannot be much attracted by tessellated floors and mosaic work. I skate over a thin ice all tessellated, so to speak, or in which you see the forms of the crystals as they shot. This is separated by two or three feet of water from

1853-1854

1853-1854


the old ice resting; on the meadow. The water, consequently, is not dark, as when seen against a muddy bottom, but a clear yellow, against which the white air-bubbles in and under the ice are very conspicuous.

Landed at Fair Haven hill. I was not aware till I came out how pleasant a day it was. It was very cold this morning, and I have been putting [on] wood in vain to warm my chamber, and lo! I come forth, and surprised to find it warm and pleasant. There is very little wind, here under Fair Haven especially. I begin to dream of summer even. I take off my mittens.

Here is a little hollow which, for a short time every spring, gives passage to the melting snow, and it was consequently wet there late into the spring. I remember well when a few little alder bushes, encouraged by the moisture, first sprang up in it. They now make a perfect little grove, fifteen feet high, and maybe half a dozen rods long, with a rounded outline, as if they were one mass of moss, with the wrecks of ferns in their midst and the sweet-fern about its edge. And so, perchance, a swamp is beginning to be formed. The shade and the decaying vegetation may at last produce a spongy soil, which will supply a constant rill. Has not something like this been the history of the alder swamp and brook a little further along? True, the first is on a small scale and rather elevated, part way up the hill; and ere long trout begin to glance in the brook, where first was merely a course for melted snow which turned the dead grass-blades all one way, — which combed the grassy tresses down the hill.

This is a glorious winter afternoon. The clearness of a winter day is not impaired, while the air is still and you feel a direct heat from the sun. It is not like the relenting of a thaw with a southerly wind. There is a bright sheen from the snow, and the ice booms a little from time to time. On those parts of the Trill which are bare, I see the radical leaves of the buttercup, mouse-ear, and the thistle.

Especially do gray rocks or cliffs with a southwest exposure attract us now, where there is warmth and dryness. The gray color is nowhere else so agreeable to us as in these rocks in the sun in this season, where I hear the trickling of water under great ice organ-pipes. What a floor it is I glide thus swiftly over! It is a study for the slowest walker. See the shells of countless air-bubbles within and beneath it, some a yard or two in diameter. Beneath they are crowded together from the size of a dollar downward. They give the ice a white-spotted or freckled appearance. Specimens of every coin (*numismata*) from the first minting downward. I hear the pond faintly boom or mutter in a low voice, promising another spring; to the fishes. I saw yesterday deeply scalloped oak leaves which had sunk nearly an inch into the ice of Walden, making a perfect impression of their forms, on account of the heat then absorbed. Their route is thus downward to dust again, through water and snow and ice and every obstacle. This thick meadow ice with yellow water under it yields a remarkable hollow sound, like a churn, as I rip over it, as if it were about to give way under me, — some of that gong-like roar which I have described elsewhere, — the ice being tense. I crossed the road at Bidens Brook. Here the smooth ice was dusty (from the road) a great distance, and I thought it would dull my skates.

To make a perfect winter day like this, you have a clear, sparkling air, with a sheen from the snow, sufficient cold, little or no wind; and the warmth must come directly from the sun. It must not be a thawing warmth. The tension of nature must not be relaxed. The earth must be resonant if bare, and you hear the lisp tinkle of chickadees from time to time and the unrelenting steel-cold scream of a jay [Blue Jay  *Cyanocitta cristata*], unmelted, that never flows into a song, a sort of wintry trumpet, screaming cold; hard, tense, frozen music, like the winter sky itself; in the blue livery of winter's band.¹³⁰ It is like a flourish of trumpets in the winter sky. There is no hint of incubation in the jay's scream. Like the creak of a cart-wheel. There is no cushion for sounds now. They tear our ears.

I frequently see three or four old white birches standing together on the edge of a pond or meadow, and am struck by the pleasing manner in which they will commonly be grouped, — how they spread so as must to make room for each other, and make an agreeable impression on the eye. Methinks I have seen groups of three in different places arranged almost exactly alike. I saw these near Lily Bay: the third upright one is lapped over and partly twined round the middle one at base.



Returning, I overhauled a muskrat-house by Bidens Brook. For want of other material, it was

1853-1854

1853-1854

composed of grass, flags, and in a great measure (half) of twigs and sticks, mostly sweet-gale, both dead and alive, and roots, from six inches to two feet in length. These were, in fact, the principal material of it, and it was a large one, two feet above the ice. — I was surprised to find that these sticks, both green and dead, had, the greater part of them, been gnawed off by the rat, — and some were nearly half an inch in diameter. They were cut off, not at a right angle with a smooth cut, but by successive cuts, smooth as with a knife, across, at the same time bending the twig down, which produced a sloping and, so to speak, terraced surface.



I did not know before that they resembled the beaver in this respect also. It was chiefly the sweet-gale thus cut, commonly the top left on, two feet long, but sometimes cut off six inches long, thus:



The bottom of its chamber was barely raised above the water, and the roof was hung with icicles from rain or frost. The sun being low, I see as I skate, reflected from the surface of the ice, flakes of rainbow somewhat like cobwebs, where the great slopes of the crystallization fall at the right angle, six inches or a foot across, but at so small an angle with the horizon that they had seemed absolutely flat and level before. Think of this kind of mosaic and tessellation for your floor! A floor made up



of surfaces not absolutely level, — though level to the touch of the feet and to the noonday eye, — composed of crystals variously set, but just enough inclined to reflect the colors of the rainbow when the sun gets low.

See where a muskrat yesterday brought up clams through a hole in the ice over the middle of the river, and left their great violet-tinted shells on the edge of the ice. Sometimes they break the hinge. Cold as this morning has been, I find the water, as usual, overflowing the ice along the shore and about the willows and button-bushes. Apparently when the river freezes up thus tensely, the ice compresses it, and where the ice is held down near the shore and by the bushes, not being able to rise when the sun comes to warm the water, it bursts out and overflows in such places even in very cold

130. [William M. White](#)'s version of the journal entry is:

*To make a perfect winter day like this,
You must have a clear, sparkling air,
With a sheen from the snow,
Sufficient cold,
Little or no wind;
And the warmth must come directly from the sun.*

*It must not be a thawing warmth.
The tension of nature must not be relaxed.*

*The earth must be resonant if bare,
And you hear the lispng tinkle of chickadees
From time to time
And the unrelenting steel-cold scream of a jay,
Unmelted,
That never flows into a song,
A sort of wintry trumpet, screaming cold;
Hard, tense, frozen music,
Like the winter sky itself;
In the blue livery of winter's band.*

1853-1854

1853-1854

weather. At last, in warmer weather still, it is difficult to get on or off on this account. The pond does not thunder every night, and I do not learn its law, exactly. I cannot tell surely where to expect its thundering, for it feels scarcely perceptible changes in the weather. Who would have suspected so large and cold and thick-skinned a thing to be so sensitive. Yet it has its law to which [it] thunders obedience when it should, as surely as the buds expand in the spring. For the earth is all alive and covered with feelers of sensation, *papillæ*. The hardest and largest rock, the broadest ocean, is as sensitive to atmospheric changes as the globule of mercury in its tube. Though you may perceive no difference in the weather, the pond does. So the alligator and the turtle, with quakings of the earth, come out of the mud.

WALDEN: The phenomena of the year take place every day in a pond on a small scale. Every morning, generally speaking, the shallow water is being warmed more rapidly than the deep, though it may not be made so warm after all, and every evening it is being cooled more rapidly until the morning. The day is an epitome of the year. The night is the winter, the morning and evening are the spring and fall, and the noon is the summer. The cracking and booming of the ice indicate a change of temperature. One pleasant morning after a cold night, February 24th, 1850, having gone to Flint's pond to spend the day, I noticed with surprise, that when I struck the ice with the head of my axe, it resounded like a gong for many rods around, or as if I had struck on a tight drum-head. The pond began to boom about an hour after sunrise, when it felt the influence of the sun's rays slanted upon it from over the hills; it stretched itself and yawned like a waking man with a gradually increasing tumult, which was kept up three or four hours. It took a short siesta at noon, and boomed once more toward night, as the sun was withdrawing his influence. In the right stage of the weather a pond fires its evening gun with great regularity. But in the middle of the day, being full of cracks, and the air also being less elastic, it had completely lost its resonance, and probably fishes and muskrats could not then have been stunned by a blow on it. The fishermen say that the "thundering of the pond" scares the fishes and prevents their biting. The pond does not thunder every evening, and I cannot tell surely when to expect its thundering; but though I may perceive no difference in the weather, it does.

WALDEN: Every incident connected with the breaking up of the rivers and ponds and the settling of the weather is particularly interesting to us who live in a climate of so great extremes. When the warmer days come, they who dwell near the river hear the ice crack at night with a startling whoop as loud as artillery, as if its icy fetters were rent from end to end, and with in a few days see it rapidly going out. So the alligator comes out of the mud with quakings of the earth.



1853-1854

1853-1854



February 13, Monday: The squadron of Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) moved up Edo Bay, with the *Susquehanna*, *Powhatan*, and *Mississippi* towing the *Lexington*, *Vandalia*, and *Macedonian*. William Speiden, Jr. went on deck and sighted [Mount Fuji](#) covered in snow. The squadron reached anchor near Uraga, where Japanese authorities boarded the *Powhatan* and Captain of the Fleet Henry A. Adams engaged in cultural exchange.

[Henry Thoreau](#) walked to [Walden Pond](#) at 7 AM to [skate](#). In the afternoon the snow prevented further [skating](#).




Feb. 13: Monday. 7 A.M. — To Walden.

A warm morning, overcast. The ice does not ring when I strike it with an axe. Tried to drive a stake in two places outside a wood, but found it frozen. Failed also in two places within the wood, but succeeded in a third.

P.M. — It snows again, spoiling the skating, which has lasted only one day. I do not remember the winter when the ice remained uncovered a week.

1853-1854

1853-1854

 February 14, Tuesday: Bürger-Ball-Polka op.145 by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#) was performed for the initial time, in the Redoutensaal, Vienna. Also premiered was Strauss' Musen-Polka op.147.

Louis Moreau Gottschalk arrived in [Havana](#) for a concert tour.

When [Japanese](#) officials visiting the *Powhatan* expressed their appreciation for the terms of [President Millard Fillmore](#)'s letter asking for greater cooperation between the nations on matters of interaction and trade, according to William Speiden, Jr. they also commented that although our "President's letter said that we had come for amiable purposes," they were noticing that peculiarly we never acceded to any of their requests. Then, when the Americans requested permission to survey the bay and erect signal staffs on shore, the Japanese delegation courteously responded that they hoped the Americans would refrain from any such surveying until preliminary negotiations regarding the presidential letter had been completed. Um....

In the afternoon, [Henry Thoreau](#) walked down the railroad tracks and noted that the telegraph's aeolian harp was resounding at every post. "It is a harp with one string, —the first strain from the American lyre." Here are the sorts of insulating hooks from which the wires of this period most likely were being hung from the [telegraph](#) posts:





AEOLIAN HARP

On this day and the following one [Sam Houston](#) was delivering a major speech on the floor of the US Senate, opposing the [Kansas/Nebraska Bill](#).






Feb. 14. P.M. — Down railroad.

A moist, thawing, cloudy afternoon, preparing to rain. The telegraph resounds at every post. It is a harp with one string, — the first strain from the American lyre. In Stow's wood, by the Deep Cut, hear the *gnah gnah* of the white-breasted, black-capped nuthatch [[White-breasted Nuthatch](#)  [Sitta carolinensis](#) (~~White-bellied Nuthatch~~)]. I went up the bank and stood by the fence. A little family of titmice [[Chicadee](#), [Black-capped](#)  [Parus atricapillus](#) (~~Titmouse, Titmice~~)] gathered about me, searching for their food both on the ground and on the trees, with great industry and intentness, and now and then pursuing each other. There were two nuthatches at least, talking to each other. One hung with his head down on a large pitch pine, pecking the bark for a long time, — leaded blue above, with a black cap and white breast. It uttered

1853-1854

1853-1854

almost constantly a faint but sharp *quivet* or creak, difficult to trace home, which appeared to be answered by a baser and louder *gnah gnah* from the other. A downy woodpecker [**Downy Woodpecker**  *Picoides pubescens*] also, with the red spot on his hind head and his cassock open behind, showing his white robe, kept up an incessant loud tapping on another pitch pine. All at once an active little brown creeper [**Brown Creeper**  *Certhia americana*] makes its appearance, a small, rather slender bird, with a long tail and sparrow-colored back, and white beneath. It commences at the bottom of a tree and glides up very rapidly, then suddenly darts to the bottom of a new tree and repeats the same movement, not resting long in one place or on one tree. These birds are all feeding and flitting along together, but the chickadees are the most numerous and the most confiding. I observe that three of the four thus associated, viz. the chickadee, nuthatch, and woodpecker, have black crowns, at least the first two, very conspicuous black caps. I cannot but think that this sprightly association and readiness to burst into song has to do with the prospect of spring, — more light and warmth and thawing weather. The titmice keep up an incessant faint tinkling *tchip*; now and then one utters a lively *day day day*, and once or twice one commenced a gurgling strain quite novel, startling, and springlike. Beside this I heard the distant crowing of cocks and the divine harmony of the telegraph, — all spring-promising sounds. The chickadee has quite a variety of notes. The *phebe* [**Eastern Phoebe**  *Sayornis phoebe*] one I did not hear to-day. I perceive that some of these pools by the Walden road which on the 6th looked so green have frozen blue.

CHANTICLEER

This greater liveliness of the birds methinks I have noticed commonly in warm, thawing days toward spring. F. Brown, who has been chasing a white rabbit this afternoon with a dog, says that they do not run off far, — often play round within the same swamp only, if it is large, and return to where they were started. Spoke of it as something unusual that one ran off so far that he could not hear the dogs, but he returned and was shot near where he started. He does not see their forms, nor marks where they have been feeding.



February 15, Wednesday: [Robert Schumann](#) told Clara that if the music he had been hearing for 4 days did not stop he would go mad. She summoned a doctor.

On this day the French Navy launched at Lorient the 90-gun *Suffren*-class steamship *Donawerth*, as a ship of the line of the French Navy. It would serve during the Crimean War as a transport.


The *Mary* hit ice in the Atlantic Ocean while on its way from Liverpool, Lancashire to Boston, Massachusetts, losing one sailor (the other crewmen took refuge in the longboat and would 5 days later be rescued).



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR FEBRUARY 15TH]

1853-1854

1853-1854

 February 16, Thursday: [Francis Sales](#) died, leaving his daughter Mary Catherine Sales.¹³¹

On the birthday of the Dowager, Grand Duchess, Franz Liszt's symphonic poem Orpheus was performed for the initial time, in Weimar, conducted by the composer, as an introduction to a production of Gluck's Orfeo ed Euridice.

L'étoile du nord, an opéra comique by [Giacomo Meyerbeer](#) to words of Scribe, was performed for the initial time, at the Théâtre Favart, Paris, in the presence of the imperial family. This was a fantastic success and the opera would receive 100 performances in its 1st year at the Opéra-Comique.

[Henry Thoreau](#) was reading [Lucius Junius Moderatus Columella](#)'s *DE RE RUSTICA*.

REI RUSTICAE AUCTORES...

In the afternoon he walked to [Walden Pond](#) and Flint Pond, returning home on the turnpike.

There were a great many holidays at Plumfield, and one of the most delightful was the yearly apple-picking, — for then the Marches, Laurences, Brookes, and Bhaers turned out in full force, and made a day of it. Five years after Jo's wedding, one of these fruitful festivals occurred. — A mellow October day, when the air was full of an exhilarating freshness which made the spirits rise and the blood dance healthily in the veins. The old orchard wore its holiday attire; golden-rod and asters fringed the mossy walls; grasshoppers skipped briskly in the sere grass, and crickets chirped like fairy pipers at a feast. Squirrels were busy with their small harvesting; birds twittered their *adieux* from the alders in the lane; and every tree stood ready to send down its shower of red or yellow apples at the first shake. Everybody was there, — everybody laughed and sang, climbed up and tumbled down; everybody declared that there never had been such a perfect day or such a jolly set to enjoy it, — and every one gave themselves up to the simple pleasures of the hour as freely as if there were no such things as care or sorrow in the world.

Mr. March strolled placidly about, quoting Tusser, Cowley, and Columella to Mr. Laurence, while enjoying

“The gentle apple's winey juice.”

ABRAHAM COWLEY

COLUMELLA

The New-York [Daily Times](#) reported an address by [Lt. Matthew Fontaine Maury](#) before the Geographical and Nautical Society. [Thoreau](#) would copy from this article into his Fact Book.







Feb. 16: By this time in the winter I do not look for those clear, sparkling mornings and delicate leaf frosts, which, methinks, occur earlier in the winter, as if the air of winter was somewhat tarnished and debauched, — had lost its virgin purity.

Every judgment and action of a man qualifies every other, *i.e.* corrects our estimate of every other, as, for instance, a man's idea of immortality who is a member of a church, or his praise of you coupled with his praise of those whom you do not esteem. For in this sense a man is awfully

131. Sales's papers have migrated to the Harvard Library (HUG1763). The “Sales Prize” of \$60 is awarded to Harvard students “who shall have commenced the study of that language at Harvard College and whose scholarship shall be determined by his proficiency in Spanish Composition.” This award is made possible out of income from his bequest.

consistent, above his own consciousness. All a man's strength and all his weakness go to make up the authority of any particular opinion which he may utter. He is strong or weak with all his strength and weakness combined. If he is your friend, you may have to consider that he loves you, but perchance he also loves gingerbread.


It must [be] the leaves of the *Chimaphila umbellata*, spotted wintergreen, which Channing left here day before yesterday.

I have not seen *F. hyemalis* [~~Dark-eyed Junco~~  *Junco hyemalis* (Slate-colored Sparrow or Snow-bird)] since last fall, the snow buntings [~~Snow Bunting~~  *Plectrophenax nivalis* (Snow-bird, Arctie)] only during the great and severe snow-storm, no pine grosbeaks [~~Pine Grosbeak~~  *Pinicola enucleator*] nor *F. linaria* [~~Common Redpoll~~  *Carduelis flammea* (Red-crown (*linaria* or *Fringilla* (or *F.*) *linaria* or Lesser Redpoll))] this winter.

Snows again this morning. For the last month the weather has been remarkably changeable; hardly three days together alike.

That is an era not yet arrived, when the earth, being partially thawed, melts the slight snows which fall on it.

P.M. — To Walden and Flint's; return by Turnpike.

Saw two large hawks  circling over the woods by Walden, hunting, — the first I have seen since December 15th. That Indian trail on the hillside about Walden was revealed with remarkable distinctness to me standing on the middle of the pond, by the slight snow which had lodged on it forming a clear white line underscored by weeds and twigs. (For snow is a great revealer not only of tracks made in itself, but even in the earth before it fell.) It was quite distinct in many places where you would not have noticed it before. A light snow will often reveal a faint foot or cart track in a field which was hardly discernible before, for it reprints it, as it were, in clear white type, alto-relievo. Went to the locality of the *Chimaphila maculata* by Goose Pond.

Columella, after saying that many authors had believed that the climate (“qualitatem caeli statumque”) was changed by lapse of time (“longo aevi situ”), refers to *Hipparchus* as having given out that the time would be when the poles of the earth would be moved from their place (“tempus fore, quo cardines mundi loco moverentur”); and, as confirmatory of this, he (*C.*) goes on to say that the vine and olive flourish now in some places where formerly they failed.

He gives the names of about fifty authors who had treated *de rusticis rebus* before him.



February 17, Friday: *Robert Schumann* composed a melody which, he informed his wife, had been sung to him by angels.

In Placerville, *California* a gold-mining gazette began, with the masthead *Mountain Democrat*.

In the afternoon *Henry Thoreau* walked to Gowing's Swamp and looked at animal tracks in the snow.



Feb. 17. P.M. — To Gowing's Swamp.

On the hill at the Deep Cut on the new road, the ground is frozen about a foot deep, and they carry off lumps equal nearly to a cartload at a time. Moore's man is digging a ditch by the roadside in his swamp. I am surprised to see that the earth there — under some snow, it is true — is frozen only about four inches. It may be owing to warm springs beneath. The hill was comparatively bare of snow (and of trees there) and was more exposed. The Irishman showed me small stumps, — larch, methinks, — which he dug and cut out *from the bottom* of the ditch, — very old ones. At Gowing's Swamp I see where some one hunted white rabbits yesterday, and perhaps the day before, with a dog. The hunter has run round and round it on firm ground, while the hare and dog have cut across and circled about amid the blueberry bushes. The track of the white rabbit is gigantic compared with that of the gray one. Indeed few, if any (?), of our wild animals make a larger track with their feet alone. Where I now stand, the track of all the feet has an expanse of seven to fifteen inches, — this at



1853-1854

1853-1854

intervals of from two to three feet, — and the width at the two fore feet is five inches. There is a considerable but slighter impression of the paw behind each foot. The mice-tracks are very amusing. It is surprising how numerous they are, and yet I rarely ever see one. They must be nocturnal in their habits. Any tussocky ground is scored with them. I see, too, where they have run over the ice in the swamp, — there is a mere sugaring of snow on it, — ever trying to make an entrance, — to get beneath it. You see deep and distinct channels in the snow in some places, as if a whole colony had long travelled to and fro in them, — a highway, a well-known trail, — but suddenly they will come to an end; and yet they have not dived beneath the surface, for you see where the single traveller who did it all has nimbly hopped along as if suddenly scared, making but a slight impression, squirrel-like, on the snow. The squirrel also, though rarely, will make a channel for a short distance. These mice-tracks are of various sizes, and sometimes, when they are large and they have taken long and regular hops nine or ten inches apart in a straight line, they look at a little distance like a fox-track. I suspect that the mice sometimes build their nests in bushes from the foundation, for, in the swamp-hole on the new road, where I found two mice-nests last fall, I find one begun with a very few twigs and some moss, close by where the others were, at the same height and also on prinus bushes, — plainly the work of mice wholly. In the open part of Gowing's Swamp I find the *Andromeda Polifolia*. Neither here nor in Beck Stow's does it grow very near the shore, in places accessible in wet weather. Some larch cones are empty, others contain seeds. In these swamps, then, you have three kinds of andromeda. The main swamp is crowded with high blueberry, panicled andromeda, prinus, swamp-pink, etc., etc. (I did not examine them particularly), and then in the middle or deepest part will be an open space, not yet quite given up to water, where the *Andromeda calyculata* and a few *A. Polifolia* reign almost alone. These are pleasing gardens.

In the early part of winter there was no walking on the snow, but after January, perhaps, when the snow-banks had settled and their surfaces, many times thawed and frozen, become indurated, in fact, you could walk on the snow-crust pretty well.



February 18, Saturday: The angels heard by [Robert Schumann](#) on the previous day have been transformed into demons come to carry him off to hell. It required a couple of doctors to hold him down.

Stanislaw Moniuszko's opera *Halka* to words of Wolski after Wojcicki, was staged for the initial time, in Vilnius.

Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) hauled down his Broad Pennant from the *Susquehanna* and hoisted it on board the *Powhatan*. The Americans continued to survey the [Japanese](#) bay.

The [California](#) gazette [Sierra Citizen](#)¹³² delivered words of hardy insight:

MINES AND MINING IN SIERRA COUNTY. — Perhaps in no part of the State have such changes taken place as on the head waters of the several branches of the Yuba. Soon after the tide of emigration, began to roll into this country some adventurous individuals not satisfied with the riches of the bars below followed the course of the river farther and farther until at length they arrived at the Forks, which was then considered almost equal to the achievement of Mungo Park. After the approach of winter they returned to the lower settlements, with such bewildering stories of whole pans full of gold that could be had for the digging, that in the following spring every steamboat and ox-wagon was freight with all sorts of people, with all sorts of indescribably apparatus, with which they confidently expected

132. Previously known as the [Mountain Echo](#).



1853-1854

1853-1854

to exhaust the resources of the Yuba in an incredibly short space of time.

The fame of the Yuba spread far and wide, and then commenced a general rush to its head waters. No matter how rich the claim might be on the bars below, it was abandoned under the impression, that if the river was rich so low down there must be mountains of gold at its source.

The general idea, then, was that the thin scales found below had been washed down from some monstrous gold hill above, hence everyone was desirous of pushing as far as possible into the mountains, thinking that the further he could get the better would be the opportunity of realizing the extravagant visions that half demented him. Since then one cannot travel in any direction without meeting prospecting parties, some looking for Gold Lake, some burrowing in the hill side, while under the nearest tree another party, half discouraged, half hopeful, are smoking their pipes around a camp-fire, trying to solve the perplexing question, whether it is better to continue wandering through the mountains and take the chances, or to return to the river and work for five dollars a day.

Within the last four years the restless, untiring energy of the miners have been gradually developing the resources of this region. Instead of the mines being exhausted in two or three years, as many wise-acres predicted, they are now in a more prosperous condition than they ever were. It is true, that the richest surface deposits have been exhausted, and in the most practicable places the bed of the river has been worked. But attention has been turned to the unexhaustible treasures of the hills, which for several years were neglected.

The day has gone by, for amateur miners to lay down the law-book, the scalpel, or the pen, make a flying visit to the mines and return with both pockets full of gold. It now requires the strong arm and iron will, to dig deep in the bowels of the earth. For this the professional gentleman and the man of leisure are not prepared.

[Henry Thoreau](#) was reading some congressional speeches about the Nebraska Bill.

To take Thoreau's own word for it, after finishing [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) he was only marginally interested in the politics of the idea palaces of our nation:

I read some of the speeches in Congress about the Nebraska Bill, — a thing the like of which I have not done for a year. What trifling upon a serious subject! while honest men are sawing wood for them outside. Your Congress halls have an ale-house odor, — a place for stale jokes and vulgar wit. It compels me to think of my fellow-creatures as apes and baboons.

**ROSS/ADAMS
COMMENTARY**

1853-1854

1853-1854

In the afternoon he walked to Yellow Birch Swamp, which he found more to his liking.

Bear in mind, when you read in [Thoreau](#)'s journal below, "But the last part of January and all February thus far have been alternate thaw and freeze and snow. It has more thaws, even as the running "r" (root of $\rho\acute{\epsilon}\omega$) occurs twice in it and but once in January. I do not know but the more light and warmth plainly accounts for the difference. It does not take so much fuel to keep us warm of late." — that [Gordon V. Boudreau](#), on page 95 his 1990 *THE ROOTS OF WALDEN AND THE TREE OF LIFE* (Nashville TN: Vanderbilt UP), was of the considered judgment that Thoreau must have had "a speech 'defect' that gave a peculiar sort of 'burr' sound to the letter r, thus the terminal syllable of each '-ber' month would elicit an equivalent shiver from him." He justifies such an inference in Footnote #6 on page 215. His justification totally is that he is an uninventive copyist: he had merely lifted this without consideration from page 346 of [Professor Walter Roy Harding](#)'s 1965 *THE DAYS OF HENRY THOREAU* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf), whereas this professor had uninventively merely lifted it without consideration from page 2 of [William Ellery Channing](#)'s 1873 *THOREAU, THE POET-NATURALIST / WITH MEMORIAL VERSES* (Boston: Roberts Brothers).¹³³

[Professor Henri-Frédéric Amiel](#), who would be referred to as the "Swiss [Thoreau](#)," wrote in his *JOURNAL INTIME*: "Everything tends to become fixed, solidified, and crystallized in this French tongue of ours, which seeks form and not substance, the result and not its formation, what is seen rather than what is thought, the outside rather than the inside.

We like the accomplished end and not the pursuit of the end, the goal and not the road, in short, ideas ready-made and bread ready-baked, the reverse of Lessing's principle. What we look for above all are conclusions. This clearness of the "ready-made" is a superficial clearness — physical, outward, solar clearness, so to speak, but in the absence of a sense for origin and genesis it is the clearness of the incomprehensible, the clearness of opacity, the clearness of the obscure. We are always trifling on the surface. Our temper is formal — that is to say, frivolous and material, or rather artistic and not philosophical. For what it seeks is the figure, the fashion and manner of things, not their deepest life, their soul, their secret."



Feb. 18. P.M. — To Yellow Birch Swamp.

As I remember January, we had one (?) great thaw, succeeded by severe cold. It was harder getting about, though there may have been no more snow because it was light, and there was more continuous cold and clear sparkling weather. But the last part of January and all February thus far have been alternate thaw and freeze and snow. It has more thaws, even as the running "r" (root of $\rho\acute{\epsilon}\omega$) occurs twice in it and but once in January. I do not know but the more light and warmth plainly accounts for the difference. It does not take so much fuel to keep us warm of late. I begin to think that my wood will last. We begin to have days precursors of spring.

I see oil ice by the riverside, front of N. Barrett's, very slender insects a third of an inch long, with grayish folded wings reaching far behind and two antennæ. Somewhat in general appearance like the long wasps. At the old mill-site, saw two pigeon woodpeckers dart into and out of a white oak. Saw the yellow under sides of their wings. It is barely possible I am mistaken, but, since Wilson makes them common in Pennsylvania in winter, I feel pretty sure. Such sights make me think there must be bare ground not far off south. It is a little affecting to walk over the hills now, looking at the reindeer lichens here and there amid the snow, and remember that ere long we shall find violets also in their midst. What an odds the season makes! The birds know it. Whether a rose-tinted water lily is sailing amid the pads, or Neighbor Hobson is getting out his ice with a cross-cut saw, while his oxen are eating their stalks. I noticed that the ice which Garrison cut the other day contained the lily pads and stems within it. How different their environment now from when the queenly flower, floating on the trembling surface, exhaled its perfume amid a cloud of insects! Hubbard's wooded hill is now almost bare of trees. Barberries still hang on the bushes, but all shrivelled. I found a bird's nest of grass and

133. Thus doth worshipful footnoting make exaggerating idiots of us all! — Had Thoreau actually had any kind of noticeable speech "defect" there would of course have been hundreds of inane lyceum attenders who could not have failed to make a note of such in their dear 19th-Century diaries. Channing also described Thoreau as blue-eyed — among a bunch of other stuff that he simply made up in order to garner some jingling coin from the trade press.

1853-1854

1853-1854

mud in a barberry bush filled full with them. It must have been done by some quadruped or bird. The curls of the yellow birch bark form more or less parallel straight lines up and down on all sides of the tree, like parted hair blown aside by the wind, or as when a vest [*sic*] bursts and blows open. Rabbit-tracks numerous there, sometimes quite a highway of tracks over and along the frozen and snow-covered brook. How pleasant the sound of water flowing with a hollow sound under ice from which it has settled away, where great white air bubbles or hollows, seen through the ice and dark water, alternately succeed each other. The *Mitchella repens* berries look very bright amid the still fresh green leaves. In the birch swamp west of this are many red (?) squirrel nests high in the birches. They are composed within of fibres of bark. I see where the squirrels have eaten walnuts along the wall and left the shells on the snow.

Channing has some microscopic reading these days. But he says in effect that these works are purely material. The idealist views things in the large.

I read some of the speeches in Congress about the Nebraska Bill, — a thing the like of which I have not done for a year. What trifling upon a serious subject! while honest men are sawing wood for them outside. Your Congress halls have an ale-house odor, — a place for stale jokes and vulgar wit. It compels me to think of my fellow-creatures as apes and baboons.

What a contrast between the upper and under side of many leaves, — the indurated and colored upper side and the tender, more or less colorless under side, — male and female, — even where they are almost equally exposed! The under side is commonly white, however, as turned away from the light toward the earth. Many in which the contrast is finest are narrow, revolute leaves, like the delicate and beautiful *Andromeda Polifolia*, the ledum, *Kalmia glauca*. De Quincey says that “the ancients had no experimental knowledge of severe climates.” Neither have the English at home as compared with us of New England, nor we, compared with the Esquimaux.

This is a common form of the birch scale, — black, I think, — not white, at any rate.



The handsome lanceolate leaves of the *Andromeda Polifolia*, dark. but pure and uniform dull red above, strongly revolute, and of a delicate bluish white beneath, deserve to be copied on to works of art.



February 19, Sunday: This is the day when, very likely, [Anthony Burns](#), all six foot of him, crept from his place of hiding in the cargo of the ship in [Boston Harbor](#) and entrusted himself to freedom.

Officials visited the *Powhatan* bearing gifts of fresh produce, etc., to convey a message that “the Mandarin who was at Uraga was prepared to hand over the [Japanese](#) Emperor’s response to [President Millard Fillmore](#)’s letter and had full power to negotiate in regard to anything it contained.” They hoped Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) would come ashore to participate in such a negotiation.

[William Cooper Nell](#) became editor of the [Literary Society](#).

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked on the ice of the river to Fair Haven, returning on the railroad tracks.



Feb. 19: Many college text-books which were a weariness and a stumbling-block, when *studied*, I have since read a little in with pleasure and profit. For several weeks the fall has seemed far behind, spring comparatively near. Yet I cannot say that there is any positive sign of spring yet; only we feel that we are sloping toward it. The sky has sometimes a warmth in its colors more like summer. A few birds have possibly strayed northward further than they have wintered.

1853-1854


1853-1854

P.M. — To Fair Haven by river, back by railroad. Though the wind is cold, the earth feels the heat of the sign higher in the heavens and melts in plowed fields. The willow twigs rise out of the ice beside the river, the silvery down of each catkin just peeping from under each scale in some places, — the work probably of last fall's sun, — like a mouse peeping from under its covert. I incline to walk now in swamps and on the river and ponds, where I cannot walk in summer. I am struck by the greenness of the green-briar at this season, still covering the alders, etc., twelve feet high and full of shining and fresh berries. The greenness of the sassafras shoots makes a similar impression.

The large moths apparently love the neighborhood of water, and are wont to suspend their cocoons over the edge of the meadow and river, places more or less inaccessible, to men at least. I saw a button-bush with what at first sight looked like the open pods of the locust or of the water asclepias attached. They were the light ash-colored cocoons of the *A. Promethea*, four or five, with the completely withered and faded leaves wrapped around them, and so artfully and admirably secured to the twigs by fine silk wound round the leaf-stalk and the twig, — which last add nothing to its strength, being deciduous, but aid its deception, — they are taken at a little distance for a few curled and withered leaves left on. Though the particular twigs on which you find some cocoons may never or very rarely retain any leaves, — the maple, for instance, — there are enough leaves left on other shrubs and trees to warrant their adopting this disguise. Yet it is startling to think that the inference has in this case been drawn by some mind that, as most other plants retain some leaves, the walker will suspect these also to. Each and all such disguises and other resources remind us that not some poor worm's instinct merely, as we call it, but the mind of the universe rather, which we share, has been intended upon each particular object. All the wit in the world was brought to bear on each case to secure its end. It was long ago, in a full senate of all intellects, determined how cocoons had best be suspended, — kindred mind with mine that admires and approves decided it so. The hips of the late rose, though more or less shrivelled, are still red and handsome. It outlasts other hips. The sweet-briar's have lost their color and begun to decay. The former are still very abundant and showy in perfect corymbs of a dozen or so amid the button-bushes. It might be called the water-rose. The trees in the maple swamp squeak from time to time like the first fainter sounds made by the red squirrel. I have little doubt the red squirrel must lay up food, since I see them so rarely abroad. On the cherry twigs you see the shining clasp of caterpillars' eggs. The snow not only reveals a track but sometimes hands it down to the ice that succeeds it. The sled-track which I saw in the slight snow over the ice here February 2d, though we have had many snows since and now there is no snow at all, is still perfectly marked on the ice.


Much study a weariness of the flesh, eh? But did not they intend that we should read and ponder, who covered the whole earth with alphabets, — primers or bibles, — coarse or fine print? The very débris of the cliffs — the stivers [?] of the rocks — are covered with geographic lichens: no surface is permitted to be bare long. As by an inevitable decree, we have come to times at last when our very waste paper is printed. Was not He who creates lichens the abettor of Cadmus when he invented letters? Types almost arrange themselves into words and sentences as dust arranges itself under the magnet. Print! it is a close-hugging lichen that forms on a favorable surface which paper offers. The linen gets itself wrought into paper that the song of the shirt may be printed on it. Who placed us with eyes between a microscopic and a telescopic world?

There are so many rocks under Grape-vine Cliff that apparently for this reason the chopper saws instead of cuts his trees into lengths. The wood fern (*Dryopteris marginalis*?) still green there. And are they not small saxifrages so perfectly green and fresh, as if just started, in the crevices? I wait till sundown on Fair Haven to hear it boom, but am disappointed, though I hear much slight crackling. But, as for the previous cracking, it is so disruptive and produces such a commotion that it extends itself through snowdrifts six inches deep, and is even more distinct there than in bare ice, even to the sharpest angle of its forking. Saw an otter-track near Walden.

 February 20, Monday: [Robert Schumann](#) was well enough to finish proofs of his Cello Concerto.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) and [Ellery Channing](#) skated to Fair Haven Pond and made a fire on the south side of the pond, using canoe birch bark and oak leaves for kindling. When they skated home at dusk, the odor of smoke in their clothing was noticeable.




Feb. 20: Channing saw yesterday three little birds olive-green above, with yellowish-white breasts and, he thinks, bars on wings. Were they goldfinches [**American Goldfinch**  *Carduelis tristis*]?

P.M. — Skating to Fair Haven Pond.

Made a fire on the south side of the pond, using canoe birch bark and oak leaves for kindlings. It is best to lay down first some large damp wood on the ice for a foundation, since the success of a fire depends very much on the bed of coals it makes, and, if these are nearly quenched in the basin of melted ice, there is danger that it will go out. How much dry wood ready for the hunter, inviting flames, is to be found in every forest, — dry bark fibres and small dead twigs of the white pine and other trees, held up high and dry as if for this very purpose! The occasional loud snapping of the fire was exhilarating. I put on some hemlock boughs, and the rich salt crackling of its leaves was like mustard to the ears, — the firing of uncountable regiments. Dead trees love the fire.

We skated home in the dusk, with an odor of smoke in our clothes. It was pleasant to dash over the ice, feeling the inequalities which we could not see, now rising over considerable hillocks, — for it had settled on the meadows, — now descending into corresponding hollows.

We have had but one¹³⁴ (and that I think was the first) of those gentle moist snows which lodge perfectly on the trees and make perhaps the most beautiful sight of any. Much more common is what we have now, *i.e.* —

 February 21, Tuesday: Carnivals-Specktakel-Quadrille op.152 by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#) was performed for the initial time, in Schwender's Colosseum, Vienna.

In Placerville, [California](#) a gold-mining gazette had begun on February 17th, under the masthead Mountain Democrat. This new publication reported that it had been advised of a discovery: “new and extensive hill and surface diggings have recently been discovered in our immediate neighborhood. The diggings are richer, deeper and covers a greater extend of ground than any heretofore discovered. The lode was first open by a party who has been at work for some time past, 7 miles above this place, near the head of ‘Chunk Canyon’ a tributary of the North Branch of Weber creek, from which point the lode was traced down the divide, nearly forming a connection with the Coon Hollow Lode, which for richness stands unrivaled. Shafts have and after being opened which prospected from the surface three cents to the bucket and in some instances as high as 75 cents. Eight cents however is about the general average. Chunk Canyon and Iowa Ditch furnish water, but not sufficient for the demand.”

The *Vandalia* got underway and headed toward Uruga with Captain of the Fleet Henry A. Adams on board, to meet with [Japanese](#) officials from Edo.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked to Goose Pond by way of Tuttle Patch.



Feb. 21. A.M. — A fine, driving snow-storm.



1853-1854

1853-1854

Have seen no good samples of the blue in snow this winter. At noon clears up.

P.M. — To Goose Pond by Tuttle Path.

A little snow, lodged on the north side of the woods, gives them a hoary aspect, — a mere sugaring, however. The snow has just ceased falling — about two inches deep, in the woods, upon the old and on bare ground; but there is scarcely a track of my animal yet to be seen, except here and there the surface of the snow has been raised and broken interruptedly where some mouse came near the surface in its travels, and in one wood I see very numerous tracks, probably of red squirrels, leading to and from three or four holes in the earth close together, somewhat like those in an ant's nest, — quite a broad beaten path to some stumps with white pine cones on them and single tracks to the base of trees. It has now got to be such weather that after a cold morning it is colder in the house, — or we feel colder, — than outdoors, by noon, and are surprised that it is no colder when we come out. You cannot walk too early in new-fallen snow to get the sense of purity, novelty, and unexploredness. The snow has lodged more or less in perpendicular lines on the northerly sides of trees, so that I am able to tell the points of compass as well as by the sun. I guide myself accordingly. It always gladdens me to see a willow, though catkinless as well as leafless, rising above the new-fallen, untrodden snow, in some dry hollow in the woods, for then I feel nearer to spring. There are some peculiarly dry and late looking ones I see there, but it is enough that they are willows. The locust pods are open or opening. Little beans they hold. What delicate satin-like inside linings they have!

The difference between the white and black (?) birch scales (*Vide* [p. 130]) is that the wings of the first are curved backward like a real bird's. The seeds of this also are broadly winged like an insect will, two little



antennæ. The ice in the fields by the poorhouse road — frozen puddles — amid the snow, looking westward now while the sun is about setting, in cold weather, is green.

Montanus in his account of New Netherland (Amsterdam, 1671), speaking of the beaver, says, “The wind-hairs which rise glittering above the back fall off in the summer and grow again in the fall.”



February 22, Wednesday: Captain of the American Fleet Henry A. Adams landed at Uraga and met with [Japanese](#) dignitaries including Hayashi, prince counselor of Daigaku (Hayashi-Daigaku-no-kami). Their discussion was carried on with the aid of interpreters, in simultaneous Japanese, English, and Dutch translation.

Track was laid to Rock Island, Illinois, thus making the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad the 1st rail link between the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes.

[HISTORY OF RR](#)

[Henry Thoreau](#) noted that the ground at the deep cut on the new Bedford road was frozen more than 18 inches deep at the top of the incline but less than 18 inches deep at the bottom.

In the evening at the [Concord Lyceum](#), Edward Banks lectured on “Dead Cities” (we know nothing about who this person was, except that he was known to Emerson; Emerson had written to Mrs. Emerson giving instructions that, were he himself unable to make it back home by that evening, she was to arrange for Thoreau to receive Mr. Banks at the Emerson home).




Feb. 22. I measured the thickness of the frozen ground at the deep cut on the new Bedford road, about half-way up the hill. They dig under the frozen surface and then crack it off with iron wedges, with much labor, in pieces from three to six feet square. It was eighteen inches thick and more there — thicker higher up, not so thick lower down the hill.

Saw in Sleepy Hollow a small hickory stump, about six inches in diameter and six inches high, so completely, regularly, and beautifully covered by that winkle-like fungus in concentric circles and successive layers that the

core was concealed and you would have taken it for some cabbage-like plant.



This was the way the wound was healed. The cut surface of the stirrup was completely and thickly covered. Our neighbor Wetherbee was J. Moore's companion when he took that great weight of pickerel this winter. He says it was fifty-six pounds in Flint's, in one day, and that four of them weighed eighteen pounds and seven ounces. My alder catkins in the pitcher have shed their pollen for a day or two, and the willow catkins have pushed out half an inch or more and show red and yellowish.

 February 23, Thursday: Les Préludes, a symphonic poem by Franz Liszt, was performed for the initial time, in Wiemar, directed by the composer.

By the Convention of Bloemfontein, Great Britain agreed to vacate territory north of the Orange River, thus allowing for the creation of the Orange Free State.

La Viennoise op.144, a polka-mazurka by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#), was performed, in the Sperl Ballroom of Vienna, for the initial time.

A [steamer](#) from Stonington, Connecticut entered [New-York](#) harbor after having been frozen in the ice for 3 days.

[Henry Thoreau](#) was being written to by Thomas B. Smith, a printer in New-York, ordering 5 pounds of plumbago and a small quantity of black lead.¹³⁵

*From THOMAS B. SMITH
Mr Henry Thoreau
New York Feb^y 23/54
Dear Sir
Enclosed I send Ten Dollars for which send me 5 pounds best Plum-
bago for Electrotpe purposes. The pound you sent before I found
very good. Please send me a small quantity of the \$1.50 per pound
Black Lead that I may try it.*



Feb. 23. A.M. — The snow drives horizontally from the north or northwesterly, in long waving lines like the outline of a swell or billow. The flakes do not fall perceptibly for the width of a house.

P.M. — Saw some of those architectural drifts forming. The fine snow came driving along over the field like steam curling from a roof. As the current rises to go over the wall, it produces a lull in the angle made by the wall and ground, and accordingly just enough snow is deposited there to fill the triangular calm, but the greater part passes over and is deposited in the larger calm. A portion of the



wind also apparently passes through the chinks of the wall and curves upward against the main drift,

1853-1854

1853-1854

appearing to carve it and perforate it in various fashion, holding many snowy particles in suspension in vertical eddies. I am not sure to what extent the drift is carved and perforated, and to what originally deposited, in these forms. How will it look behind a tight fence?

Not that ornamental beauty is to be neglected, but, at least, let it first be inward-looking and essential, like the lining of a shell, of which the inhabitant is unconscious, and not mere outside garnishing.


This forenoon a driving storm, very severe. This afternoon fair, but high wind and drifting snow.

135. Thomas B. Smith was born in 1815 on Long Island. His father had died in 1821 while he was 6 years of age. In 1831 when he was 16, he had apprenticed himself to a master builder. He became New-York's Superintendent for Buildings. He designed a house in the Bronx resembling an English castle, for the actor Edwin Forrest. He ran the Thomas B. Smith Stereotype foundry at 216 William Street in New-York and his residence was at 54 Lawrence Street in Brooklyn. Later his firm became Thomas B. Smith and Son, at another New-York street address. After the Civil War he would take possession of the a small abandoned and dismantled single-kiln porcelain factory in the "Pottery Hill" neighborhood of Greenpoint, Brooklyn, as partial satisfaction of debt. This firm had been fabricating doorknob handles and other such items out of a mixture of kaolin with phosphate of lime, that were considered less than entirely satisfactory. At 300 Eckford Street he would create the Union Porcelain Works, and would travel to Sevres in France and Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire in England in order to inspect the manner in which they were mixing and firing their porcelain. He would put a "hard" American porcelain on the market for use in vases and platters, and also as doorknobs, castor wheels, and insulators. This would sell well, even to the White House in Washington DC, and some of the quality items he manufactured are now to be seen in the Metropolitan Museum of New York and the Brooklyn Museum. By 1867 he would become wealthy enough to design for himself a house at 136 Milton Street (this now houses the Greenpoint Reformed Church; not only this particular structure, but a number of other houses on Milton Street were designed by him). He would die in 1901 and the pottery work would cease during the 1920s. In the parlor of his house, a tile would be belatedly discovered in the back wall of the fireplace. The tile appears to have been made in the 1870s and appears to portray the Robert Fulton who devised the first practical submarine, and seems to have been made for Fulton's business partner Robert Livingston on behalf of the Emperor Napoleon:



1853-1854

1853-1854

 February 24, Friday: [Robert Schumann](#) told Ruppert Becker, concertmaster of the Düsseldorf orchestra, that [Franz Schubert](#) had appeared to him and provided him with a melody.

[Henry Thoreau](#) measured the thickness of the ice at [Walden Pond](#) and on Fair Haven Bay.


A couple of bridge workers fell to their deaths from a suspension bridge being erected at [Niagara Falls](#).


[Walter Savage Landor](#)'s sister Elizabeth Savage Landor died at the age of 77 (the body would be interred on March 2d in St. Chad's Churchyard, Bishops Tachbrook, Warwick District, Warwickshire).

William Speiden, Jr. observed the busy boat traffic in Edo harbor, Japan.




Feb. 24. P.M. — To Walden and Fair Haven.

In Wheeler's Wood by railroad. Nuthatches [[White-breasted Nuthatch](#)  [Sitta carolinensis](#) (~~White-bellied Nuthatch~~)] are faintly answering each other, — tit for tat, — on different keys, — a faint creak. Now and then one utters a loud distinct *gnah*. This bird more than any I know loves to stand with its head downward.

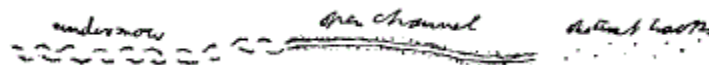
Meanwhile chickadees [[Black-capped Chickadee](#)  [Parus atricapillus](#) (~~Titmouse, Titmice~~)], with their silver tinkling, are flitting high above through the tops of the pines. Measured the ice of Walden in three places, —

One about 10 rods from the shore, $16\frac{7}{8}$ inches thick
 25 rods from the shore, " " "
 In middle $17\frac{1}{4}$ " "

Call it then 17 inches on an average. On Fair Haven, in the only place tried, it was 21 inches thick. The portion of the ice in Walden above water was *about* $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches, in Fair Haven *about* $1\frac{3}{4}$. This part then equals $\frac{1}{13}$ + and $\frac{1}{12}$ respectively.

Tried the frost in five different and very distant woods in my walk. Found that though the ground is frozen more than 18 inches — from 18 [inches] to $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet — thick on the open hillside on the new Bedford road, notwithstanding some snow on it, I can drive a stake without any trouble in the midst of ordinary level mixed pine and oak woods where the snow is a foot deep, in *very thick* pine and oak woods where the snow is only one inch thick or none at all, and the ground does not slope to the north and east, and probably the northwest, and in sprout-lands where it is 20 inches thick in some places, and in springy meadows. In Moore's Swamp it is frozen about 4 inches deep in open land. I think that in an average year the ice in such a pond as Fair Haven attains a greater thickness than the snow on a level. The other day I thought that I smelled a fox very strongly, and went a little further and found that it was a skunk. May not their odors differ in intensity chiefly? Observed in one of the little pond-holes between Walden and Fair Haven where a partridge [[Ruffed Grouse](#)  [Bonasa umbellus](#)] had travelled around in the snow amid the bordering bushes twenty-five rods, had pecked the green leaves of the lambkill and left fragments on the snow, and had paused at each high blueberry bush, fed on its red buds and shaken down fragments of its bark on the snow. These buds appeared its main object. I finally scared the bird.

I see such mice or mole tracks as these:—



The frozen earth at the new road cut is hauled off twenty rods by chains hooked round it, and it lies like great blocks of yellow sandstone for building, cracked out exactly square by wedges. The sexton tells me that he had to dig the last grave through two feet of frozen ground. I measured a block today two feet five inches thick after being dragged a dozen rods.



1853-1854

1853-1854



February 25, Saturday: The American squadron gathered near Yokohama, [Japan](#). The *Vandalia* returned from Uraga with Captain of the American Fleet Henry A. Adams on board. The functionaries invited Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) to visit Uraga personally, to be handed a letter from the Japanese Emperor to the American President. William Speiden, Jr. noted that “Capt. A was told ... that it had been the custom of the Japanese for many years past to hold no intercourse with any other people than the Dutch, and that with them it was very limited, but that while we were away the Emperor had called a meeting of the principal great men of the Empire, and had taken the vote, whether the Americans should be received and treated as friends or not. They accordingly agreed that the Americans should be received and treated as friends” (meanwhile some Russians were allegedly being warned to “leave Japan immediately”).

Sacramento became the capital of [California](#).

In [California](#), the [Sierra Citizen](#) reported that a Mr. McMillen of the gold-mining camp known as Minnesota, who was one of the “oldest inhabitants” of that settlement, had furnished them with the following statement:

The North Fork Tunnel, during the last two weeks yielded nearly \$5,000. The company have been engaged in constructing sluices and mining machinery, which when completed will enable them to work to better advantage. The claims in this company are valued at from \$2,200 to \$2,600 each. Some time since they found a slug weighing 12 ounces. Some six weeks ago a mass of quartz and gold was taken from the Blue Tunnel, for which \$1,900 was offered and refused. Some of the drifts run into the hill from six to eight hundred feet, with side-drifts running in every direction so that several acres in the vicinity of the town have been excavated and are supported by timbers.

The distance to the bed rock in some places is 150 feet and at the bottom a stratum of cement is found extremely hard, so much so that the miner cannot drift more than from six inches to a foot in a day. Immediately under this cement the gold is generally found. In the neighborhood of the diggings now being worked, there are numerous ravines which will be worked as soon as the water-ditches now in progress shall have been completed.

SMITH'S DIGGINGS. — A few days since a boulder as found at this place supposed to be worth from five to six thousand dollars. It is a mass of quartz rock with veins of gold running through it, the exact value cannot be ascertained until broken to pieces. The rock is some eighteen inches in diameter. Large rocks containing gold in the crevices and on the surface, are frequently found in this section, giving rise to false report, which are seized upon and embellished by the lovers of the marvelous.

CHIP'S DIGGINGS. — Since finding the large quartz boulder reported in our last week's paper, nothing of special interest has been communicated. These diggings have been less worked than any other on the Minnesota range. Active operations are now carried on and the tunnels which have been cut through the rim of the basin into the main deposit are paying well. Claims here are valued at from two to five thousand dollars, though here, as in all other mining districts, there are many claims worth nothing at all.

CRAIG'S FLAT. — During the past year the American Company have expended large sums in digging ditches and constructing flumes in which the water of Little Canyon are conveyed to Craig's Flat.



1853-1854

1853-1854

Since the spring some \$23,000 have been invested in this work, which is considered one of the most valuable ditches in the county.

WATER COMPANIES. — There is no enterprise fraught with so much interest to the Northern Mining Districts, as that of supplying the hill and gulch diggings with a sufficiency of water to work during the dry season. Hitherto the miners have had to depend on the little wet-weather streams that only flow while the ground is saturated with water and while the weather is too stormy to work; and just at the time when everything is in readiness to operate successfully, the water fails and the miner is either compelled to abandon his claim altogether or remain on the ground six of eight months, expending the little money he had saved during the raining season.

It is but lately that attention has been directed to the dry diggings on the dividing ridges between the different tributaries of the Yuba. Formerly, little parties of from two to six men, with rockers and pans, might be seen pitching their tents on the hill-side and making preparations for what they considered extensive operations. But after a couple of days unsuccessful labor in the adjacent ravine the camp would be deserted, the little party scattered in every direction, and the rich diggings that were going to be discovered were forgotten in the pursuit of something else.

Continued failures of this kind induced people to believe that the palmy days of this region were over. The bed of the river had been flumed and the rich crevices worked out, and the rich little bars entirely washed away. Then absolute necessity compelled the miners to look elsewhere. Some went to the Southern Mines, but in a few months returned poorer than when they left; others returned to places where they had worked for a few days, during a prospecting expedition, and commenced sinking shafts and opening tunnels, which resulted in the most extensive dry diggings in the State.

But one great obstacle remained to be overcome, the want of water. Gold could be found in many places, but not in quantities sufficient to be profitably worked with the primitive apparatus used for washing on the river. Sluices were constructed and kept in readiness for the commencement of the rainy season, but when that time came the deep snows and stormy weather prevented the miners from improving the time.

At Sear's Diggings, ditches have been dug and flumes have been constructed, which have already made that district one of the most important in the Northern Mines, though on account of the smallness of the streams, water cannot be obtained during the driest part of the season. Thrifty little towns are springing up in all directions on the line of these ditches, which are every year receiving additions of intelligent and industrious citizens.

[Jerome Van Crowninshield Smith](#) wrote from Boston to Abel Munroe and other members of a Committee of the Citizen's Union, assuring the committee that he was aware of their principles.

[Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to his cousin [George Thatcher](#) in Maine:





1853-1854

1853-1854

Concord Feb. 25th '54
 Dear Cousin,
 I should have answered you earlier if a wood-merchant whom I engaged had kept his appointment. Measuring on Mr. Hubbard's plans of '36 and '52, which I enlarged, I make the whole area wanted for a cemetery 16 acres & 114 rods. This includes a path one rod wide on the north side of the wood next the meadow, and is all of the Brown Farm north of the New Road, except the meadow of about 7 acres and a small triangle of about a dozen rods next the Agricultural Land. The above result is probably accurate within half an acre; nearer I cannot come with certainty without a resurvey. 9 acres & 9 rods are woodland, whose value I have got Anthony Wright, an old Farmer & now measurer of wood at the Depot,

Page 2
 to assist me in determining. This is the result.

Oak chiefly 4A 53 rd 156 Cords at \$2.75 ^{pr}	cord standing	small
429	large &	
[Whit]e & Pitch Pine 3A 30rd	143½ Cords 2	287
Pitch Pine 146rd	16½ Cords 2	41.25
Young P. Pine 100rd	5 cord 2	10.
—		<hr/>
25		\$767.

Merchantable green oak wood, piled on the cars, brings here \$4.75 pr cord.
 Pitch Pine 4.25
 White 2.50

An acquaintance in Boston applied to me last October for a small farm in Concord, but the small amount of land & the want of a good house may prevent his thinking of the Dutch House place, & beside circumstances have transpired which I fear will prevent his coming here; however I will inform him at once that it is on the market. I do not know about the state of his funds, only that he was in no hurry, though in earnest, & limited me to \$2000.
 All well-
 Yrs
 Henry D. Thoreau

Page 3
 Postage: pd
 PAID
 3
 Postmark: CONCORD
 MASS
 Address: Geo. A. Thatcher
 Bangor



1853-1854

1853-1854

ME

(Miss Sarah Bartlett of the Concord Free Public Library indicated, in the 20th Century, that the land Thoreau surveyed was probably land intended for Sleepy Hollow Cemetery and that it was probably the plan of Cyrus Hubbard that Thoreau had accessed. She indicated that the farm in question was that of Deacon Reuben Brown.)



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR FEBRUARY 25TH]

IT IS NO COINCIDENCE THAT IT IS MORTALS WHO CONSUME OUR HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS, FOR WHAT WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO DO IS EVADE THE RESTRICTIONS OF THE HUMAN LIFESPAN. (IMMORTALS, WITH NOTHING TO LIVE FOR, TAKE NO HEED OF OUR STORIES.)

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

1853-1854

1853-1854



February 26, Sunday: Fearful that he might be a threat to his wife, [Robert Schumann](#) asked to be taken to a lunatic asylum — but was persuaded by Clara and a doctor to go to bed.

[Henry Thoreau](#) was reading about [Dr. Elisha Kent Kane](#)'s expedition to find the remains of the expedition of [Sir John Franklin](#) in the Arctic.



U.S. GRINNELL EXPEDITION

THE FROZEN NORTH

In the afternoon he walked in the rain to [Martial Miles](#)'s. Miles told him he thought he had heard a bluebird.

1853-1854

1853-1854



WALDEN: What does Africa, -what does the West stand for? Is not our own interior white on the chart? black though it may prove, like the coast, when discovered. Is it the source of the Nile, or the Niger, or the Mississippi, or a North-West Passage around this continent, that we would find? Are these the problems which most concern mankind? Is Franklin the only man who is lost, that his wife should be so earnest to find him? Does Mr. Grinnell know where he himself is? Be rather the Mungo Park, the Lewis and Clarke and Frobisher, of your own streams and oceans; explore your own higher latitudes, -with shiploads of preserved meats to support you, if they be necessary; and pile the empty cans sky-high for a sign. Were preserved meats invented to preserve meat merely? Nay, be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought. Every man is the lord of a realm beside which the earthly empire of the Czar is but a petty state, a hummock left by the ice. Yet some can be patriotic who have no *self-respect*, and sacrifice the greater to the less. They love the soil which makes their graves, but have no sympathy with the spirit which may still animate their clay. Patriotism is a maggot in their heads. What was the meaning of that South-Sea Exploring Expedition, with all its parade and expense, but an indirect recognition of the fact, that there are continents and seas in the moral world, to which every man is an isthmus or an inlet, yet unexplored by him, but that it is easier to sail many thousand miles through cold and storm and cannibals, in a government ship, with five hundred men and boys to assist one, than it is to explore the private sea, the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean of one's being alone.-

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

“Erret, et extremos alter scrutetur Iberos.
Plus habet hic vitæ, plus habet ille viæ.”

Let them wander and scrutinize the outlandish Australians.
I have more of God, they more of the road.

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN
DR. ELISHA KENT KANE
LEWIS AND CLARK
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS
MUNGO PARK

Thoreau wrote [Elijah Wood](#) about beginning to forward to him $\frac{3}{4}$ ths of [Michael Flannery](#)'s wages. A comment made was that this was in repayment of “money lent him in some pinch.”

THOREAU ON THE IRISH

Mr Wood,
I mentioned to you that Mr. [Michael] [Flannery](#) had given me an order on you for $\frac{3}{4}$ of his wages. I have agreed with him that that arrangement shall not begin to take effect until the first of March 1854.

ys
Henry D. Thoreau



1853-1854

1853-1854

(Passage could be had at about this point in time, from Ireland to the port of Boston, for approximately \$20. The current [Flannery](#)-family calculations are that passage for the 3 persons, Ann Flannery, John Flannery, and Pat Flannery, would have amounted to slightly in excess of \$60.)

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**1853-1854****1853-1854**

In a few years, upon returning to a friend a copy of [Dr. Kane](#)'s ARCTIC EXPLORATIONS: *THE SECOND GRINNELL EXPEDITION* IN SEARCH OF SIR JOHN FRANKLIN, 1853, '54, '55, [Thoreau](#) would remark that "most of the phenomena therein recorded are to be observed about Concord":

**ARCTIC EXPLORATIONS, I****ARCTIC EXPLORATIONS, II**

Eventually Thoreau would obtain his own personal set of these volumes and would make notes in his Indian Notebooks #8 and #10 and his Fact Book.

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

1853-1854

1853-1854



E. A. Kane

1853-1854

1853-1854



There was one Philadelphian book of the fifties that lay on countless parlour tables, acclaimed by Irving, Bancroft, Prescott and Bryant, the ARCTIC EXPLORATIONS of Dr. Elisha Kent Kane, who had reached the highest latitude, the furthest north. A surgeon in the navy in Oriental waters, he had previously explored the Philippines in 1844 more extensively than any traveller before him; then he led one of the expeditions in search of the British explorer Franklin, who had vanished with his ship and crew in the northern ice-fields. He spent two winters in the arctic zone, encountering with his comrades the utmost of hardship and danger that men can endure, beset by darkness, cold, scurvy and rats and the perils of lockjaw and floating ice, subsisting on blubber and the beef of walrus and bear. Obligated at last to abandon their brig, the party escaped on sledges, having found what they thought was an open polar sea, and Dr. Kane's record of these adventures, describing their daily arctic life, revealed a world that was all but unknown and new. It abounded in pictures of Eskimo customs, seal-stalking and walrus-hunts, and Dr. Kane sketched landscapes that Dante might have conjured up, so mysterious, so inorganic and so desolate they were. They appeared to have been left unfinished when the earth was formed. The moonlight painted on the snow-fields fantastic profiles of crags and spires, and the firmament seemed to be close overhead with the stars magnified in glory in the awful frozen silence of the arctic night. One felt amid these night-scenes as if the life of the planet were suspended, its companionships and its colours, its movements and its sounds.



Feb. 26. Kane, ashore far up Baffin's Bay, says, "How strangely this crust we wander over asserts its identity through all the disguises of climate!"

Speaking of the effects of refraction on the water, he says: "The single repetition was visible all around us; the secondary or inverted image sometimes above and sometimes below the primary. But it was not uncommon to see, also, the uplifted ice-berg, with its accompanying or false horizon, joined at its summit by its inverted image, and then above a second horizon, a third berg in its natural position." He refers to Agassiz at Lake Superior as suggesting "that it may be simply the reflection of the landscape inverted upon the surface of the lake, and reproduced with the actual landscape;" though there there was but one inversion.

He says that he saw sledge-tracks of Franklin's party in the neighborhood of Wellington Sound, made on the snow, six years old, which had been covered by the aftersnows of five winters. This reminds me of the sled-tracks I saw this winter.

Kane says that, some mornings in that winter in the ice, they heard "a peculiar crisping or crackling sound." "This sound, as the 'noise accompanying the aurora,' has been attributed by Wrangell and others, ourselves among the rest, to changes of atmospheric temperature acting upon the crust of the snow." Kane thinks it is rather owing "to the unequal contraction and dilatation" of unequally presenting surfaces, "not to a sudden change of atmospheric temperature acting upon the snow." Is not this the same crackling I heard at Fair Haven on the 19th, and are not most of the arctic phenomena to be witnessed in our latitude on a smaller scale? At Fair Haven it seemed a slighter contraction of the ice, — not enough to make it thunder. This morning it began with snowing, turned

1853-1854

1853-1854

to a fine freezing rain producing a glaze, — the most of a glaze thus far, — but in the afternoon changed to pure rain.

P.M. — To Martial Miles's in rain.

The weeds, trees, etc., are covered with a glaze. The blue-curl cups are overflowing with icy drops. All trees present a new appearance, their twigs being bent down by the ice, — birches, apple trees, etc., but, above all, the pines. Tall, feathery white pines look like cockerels' tails in a shower. Both these and white [= pitch] pines, their branches being inclined downward, have sharpened tops like fir and spruce trees. Thus an arctic effect is produced. Very young white and pitch pines are most changed, all their branches drooping in a compact pyramid toward the ground except a single plume in the centre. They have a singularly crestfallen look. The rain is fast washing off all the glaze on which I had counted, thinking of the effect of to-morrow's sun on it. The wind rises and the rain increases. Deep pools of water have formed in the fields, which have an agreeable green or blue tint, — sometimes the one, sometimes the other. Yet the quantity of water which is fallen is by no means remarkable but, the ground being frozen, it is not soaked up. There is more water on the surface than before this winter.



February 27, Monday: While making a copy of some variations on a theme in Eb, [Robert Schumann](#) ran out of his Düsseldorf home to a bridge over the Rhine River and threw himself in headfirst. He was pulled from the water by fishermen who managed to bring him home despite his attempts to jump out of the boat. Doctors would not allow Clara to see him. Unable to live in the same house under those conditions, she moved to a friend's house.

Great Britain and France sent an ultimatum to Russia demanding that it evacuate all Turkish territories within 2 months.

Ballg'schichten op.150, a waltz by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#), was performed for the initial time, in the Sperl Ballroom, Vienna.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked to Flint's Pond.



Feb. 27. Morning.— Rain over; water in great part run off; wind rising; river risen and meadows flooded. The rain-water and melted snow have run swiftly over the frozen ground into the river, and raised it with the ice on it and flooded the meadows, covering the ice there which remains on the bottom; so that you have, on the male side, the narrow canal above the ice, then a floating ice everywhere bridging the river, and then a broad ineadowy flood above ice again.

Those blocks of frozen ca.rtli at the new road cut are in fact a sandstone whose cement is frost. They are dragged by chains about them (and no drag), without losing any appreciable part, for twenty rods, and have preserved their form — their right-angled edges — for a month, left to thaw on the sides of the New Road embankments.

I remarked yesterday the rapidity with which water flowing over the icy ground sought its level. All that rain would hardly have produced a puddle in midsummer, but now it produces a freshet, and will perhaps break up the river.

It looks as if Nature had a good deal of work on her hands between now and April, to break up and melt twenty-one inches of ice on the ponds, — beside melting all the snow, — and before planting-time to thaw from one to two and a half or three feet of frozen ground.

They who live in the outskirts of the town do not like to have woods very near their houses, but cut them down. They are more of a bugbear than an ornament in their eyes. They who live on the village street take still more pains to rear a pine grove about their houses.

The ground being frozen, I saw the rain yesterday dripping or streaming from the edge of the bank

1853-1854

1853-1854

at the base of the wooded hill beyond William Wheeler's as from the caves of a house, and to-day the bank is lined with icicles.



February 28, Tuesday: At a public house in New-York, Benjamin W. Kimball, proprietor, was arrested by Officer Wose of Cincinnati, assisted by Policeman Patterson of the Lower Police Court, on the authority of Governor Conner of Arkansas, for having been involved in the January 14th, 1852 burning of the steamer *Martha Washington* on the Mississippi River, during which some 15 people had lost their lives. The accusation was that the vessel had been intentionally burned by parties who had purchased her, in order to collect insurance money covering both the vessel and its cargo. The accused would be locked up on charges of murder, and conveyed to Arkansas.

At a meeting called in Ripon, Wisconsin to oppose the [Kansas/Nebraska Bill](#), the decision was reached to launch a new political party under John Fremont to take membership away from the Whigs. The host of this meeting, Alvan Bovay, motioned that the new party be denominated the [Republican Party](#) (the old Republican Party, also known as "Jeffersonian Republicans," having withered away after losing power in 1825 and had divided into the group that had become known as "Whigs" versus a group of "Democratic Republicans" who had during the regime of President Andrew Jackson assumed the name "Democratic Party") — and so it was.

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION



In [Havana](#), Spanish police boarded an American merchant ship, the *Black Warrior*, and imprisoned her crew under a charge of "violating customs regulations" (after appeals and demands by US authorities as high as President Franklin Pierce, the ship would be returned).¹³⁶



Feb 28. A pleasant morning.

What is the cause of that half ice, half water, along the edge of the river now, of the consistency of molasses or soft solder? I can think of no peculiarity in its formation mules that this water, the river

136. Clearly, there's a terminology problem here. In an effort to resolve this terminology issue, at the Republican National Convention in [New York](#) during August 2004 —at which the [Republican Party](#) would for four days make an effort to strip from its face its mask of hostility to the plight of the downtrodden and reveal its true countenance of benevolent conservatism and concern—these people would be sensitively referred to by a Hoosier Republican running for the US Senate as "involuntary immigrants."

So, perhaps, this is a good point at which to insert a story about involuntary immigrants that has been passed on to us by Ram Varmha, a retired IBM engineer whose father had briefly served as Maharaja after the independence of Cochin. He relates the story as narrated to him by his paternal grandmother who lived in Thripoonithura, Cochin: "When my grandmother (born 1882) was a young girl she would go with the elder ladies of the family to the Pazhayannur Devi Temple in Fort Cochin, next to the Cochin Lantha Palace built by the Dutch (Landers = Lantha), which was an early establishment of the Cochin royal family before the administration moved to Thripoonithura. My grandmother often told us that in the basement of the Lantha Palace, in a confined area, a family of Africans had been kept locked up, as in a zoo! By my Grandmother's time all the Africans had died. But, some of the elder ladies had narrated the story to her of 'Kappiries' (Africans) kept in captivity there. It seems visitors would give them fruits and bananas. They were well cared for but always kept in confinement. My grandmother did not know all the details but according to her, 'many' years earlier, a ship having broken its mast drifted into the old Cochin harbor. When the locals climbed aboard, they found a crewless ship, but in the hold there were some chained 'Kappiries' still alive; others having perished. The locals did not know what to do with them. Not understanding their language and finding the Africans in chains, the locals thought that these were dangerous to set free. So they herded the poor Africans into the basement of the Cochin Fort, and held them in captivity, for many, many years! I have no idea when the initial incident happened, but I presume it took place in the late 1700s or early 1800s. This points to the possibility that it was, in fact, a slave ship carrying human cargo from East Africa to either the USA or the West Indies. An amazing and rather bizarre story. Incidentally, this is not an 'old woman's tale'! Its quite reliable. My grandmother would identify some of the older ladies who had actually seen the surviving Kappiries."




1853-1854

1853-1854

rising, has flowed out over the ice in the night faster than it froze. Stirred with a stick, it shows a mass of crystals.


Probably you can study the habits of rabbits, partridges, etc., more easily in the winter, their tracks being revealed by the snow.

This is now another rise of the river. I see that the ice in hollows in the fields breaks up (partially) in the same manner with that on the river, viz. around the shore it is covered with water and rests on the bottom, while the middle is raised with the water, and hence a ridge is heaved up where the two ices meet. I am not certain how far this overflowing of the ice next the shore or on the meadows may be owing to the flood from the hills in the first instance running over, then under it and keeping it down, as well as to its adhesion to the bottom.


F. Brown tells me that he found a quantity of wintergreen in the crop of a partridge [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)]. I suggested that it might be lambkill.



MARCH 1854

 March: This month's issue of [Harper's New Monthly Magazine](#).

CONSULT THIS ISSUE

 March: [Cornelius Conway Felton](#) arrived back in Boston from his European tour. His letters written during this trip eventually would be published.

[Amiel Weeks Whipple](#), son of David Whipple and Abigail Brown Pepper Whipple, who had grown up in the north part of [Concord, Massachusetts](#) where his father owned the Whipple Tavern and had attended the [Concord Academy](#) before teaching at the district school at Nine Acre Corner in Concord, had graduated 5th in his class from the West Point Military Academy and had led an expedition through the western United States to survey a possible route for a proposed transcontinental railway, starting at Fort Smith, Arkansas and proceeding along the 35th parallel. During this month the party reached southern [California](#).

1853-1854

1853-1854



March: It was perhaps in this month that [Waldo Emerson](#) made a comment about time in his journal in a way which, had the author been [Henry Thoreau](#), would have most definitely been a *double entendre*:

Strychnine, prussic acid, tobacco, coffee, alcohol, are weak dilutions; the surest poison is time.

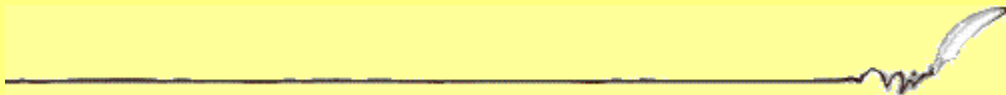


Had this been [Thoreau](#), the passage would surely have meant not only that we do get old and wrinkled and gray, and finally deteriorate and die, but also that the surest way to poison one's own life is to preoccupy it with anxiety about the loss and deterioration of it, an anxiety which we create and occasion through our improper reliance upon spatial metaphors for time. "NOW I see and hear the lark sitting with head erect." Since this is Emerson, however, we can see that not only is there no *double entendre* here, but also, the possibility of there being a *double entendre* here has not so much as entered the man's mind. Thoreau's seed has, to use a Biblical metaphor, fallen upon the rock. What we find in Emerson's journal of this date is merely a lament about physicality, and where we should expect to find a moral and spiritual dimension to his writing, he seems entirely unaware of its absence.

Also perhaps during this month, [Emerson](#) to his journal:

*H.D.T. charged [H.G.O.] Blake, if he could not do the hard tasks, to take the soft ones, & when he liked anything, if it was only a picture or a time, to stay by it, find out what he liked, & draw that sense or meaning out of it, & do **that**: harden it, somehow, & make it his own. Blake thought & thought on this, & wrote afterwards to Henry, that he had got his first glimpse of heaven.*

Henry was a good physician.




H.G.O. BLAKE

J. Wesley Jones had made some 1,500 daguerreotypes while on an 8,000-mile trek through the American westlands, and had developed a very attractive Pantoscope exhibit to show as accompaniment to his lectures. At this point he ran into financial difficulties and we lose track permanently of these daguerreotypes and of the paintings based upon them. —Will the materials ever again resurface?

1853-1854

1853-1854

 March: [James Redpath](#) began to travel in the South to examine slavery for himself, interviewing slaves and collecting material that he would in 1859 publish as THE ROVING EDITOR: OR, TALKS WITH SLAVES IN THE SOUTHERN STATES (his book's production costs would be covered by prominent antislavery philanthropist [Gerrit Smith](#)).



[Henry Thoreau](#) subscribed to the New-York [Semi-Weekly Tribune](#).

The 1st election for a territorial constitution took place in [Kansas](#).



People were having difficulty understanding how totally technology was changing their lives. As an illustration of this, it had been the custom in the days before the [telegraph](#), to report on departing ships in the newspapers, as they sailed out of port heading for foreign conflicts:

[A]fter all, the news could travel no faster than the ships themselves.... As troops departed for the [Crimean](#) peninsula following the declaration of war on Russia by France and Britain in March 1854, the War Ministry in London issued precise details of the number and nature of the forces being deployed.... [D]aily reports of the British plans, lifted from that day's copy of the [Times](#), could be telegraphed to Russia.



1853-1854

1853-1854



March: [Alfred Russel Wallace](#) secured a travel grant from the Royal Geographical Society and departed from England on a natural history collecting expedition in the Indonesian archipelago then known as “the Malay Archipelago.”

In a series of 10 sketches, [Herman Melville](#)'s “The Encantadas, or Enchanted Isles,” based upon the Galápagos Islands, would be appearing in [Putnam's Monthly Magazine](#)'s issues for March, April, and May:

Take five-and-twenty heaps of cinders dumped here and here in an outside city lot; imagine some of them magnified into mountains, and the vacant lot the sea; and you will have a fit idea of the general aspect of the Encantadas, or Enchanted Isles. A group rather of extinct volcanoes than of isles; looking much as the world at large might after a penal conflagration. It is to be doubted whether any spot on earth can, in desolation, furnish a parallel to this group.... But the special curse, as one may call it, of the Encantadas ... is that to them change never comes; neither the change of seasons nor of sorrows. Cut by the Equator, they know not autumn and they know not spring; while already reduced to the lees of fire, ruin itself can work little more upon them. The showers refresh the deserts, but in these isles, rain never falls.... Another feature in these isles is their emphatic uninhabitedness. It is deemed a fit type of all-forsaken overthrow, that the jackal should den in the wastes of weedy Babylon; but the Encantadas refuse to harbour even the outcasts of the beasts. Man and wolf alike disown them. Little but reptile life is here found: -tortoises, lizards, immense spiders, snakes, and the strangest anomaly of outlandish Nature, the *aguano*. No voice, no low, no howl is heard; the chief sound of life here is a hiss.... Tangled thickets of wiry bushes, without fruit and without a name, springing up among deep fissures of calcined rock, and treacherously masking them; or a parched growth of distorted cactus trees. In many places the coast is rock-bound, or more properly, clinker-bound; tumbled masses of blackish or greenish stuff like the dross of an iron-furnace, forming dark clefts and caves here and there, into which a ceaseless sea pours a fury of foam; overhanging them with a swirl of grey, haggard mist, amidst which sail screaming flights of unearthly birds heightening the dismal din. However calm the sea without, there is no rest for these swells and those rocks, they lash and are lashed, even when the outer ocean is most at peace with itself. On the oppressive, clouded days such as are peculiar to this part of the watery Equator, the dark vitrified masses, many of which raise themselves among white whirlpools and breakers in detached and perilous places off the shore, present a most Plutonian sight. In no world but a fallen one could such lands exist.

Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for March 1854 \(æf. 36\)](#)

1853-1854

1853-1854



March 1, Wednesday: On this day [Friedrich Eduard Beneke](#) disappeared (a couple of years later the remains of this post-Kantian philosopher would be found in a canal near Charlottenburg).

The *SS City of Glasgow* departed from Liverpool harbor with about 480 passengers and crewmembers and when its superstructure dropped below the horizon — would never again be seen.

The [California](#) Steam Navigation Company was organized.

There exists, among the papers of [Charles Wesley Slack](#), a list of contributors and a statement of purpose for a “Million Freedom Fund” of the American Anti-Slavery Society, dated on this day.

[Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to [Harvard Library](#) Librarian [Thaddeus William Harris](#). He was able to offer this “Politeness of Mr. Gerrish,” the deliverer of the books being Charles Pickering Gerrish of Harvard’s Class of 1854.



Dear Sir, I return here-with — three volumes viz. Price on the Picturesque 1st vol. M’Culloh’s Researches, and Josselyn’s Voyages.

Yrs
Henry D. Thoreau

1853-1854

1853-1854

JOHN JOSSELYN



In the afternoon [Thoreau](#) walked over to visit the [Waldo Emersons](#) and then went on to [Walden Pond](#). In reading the following entry in his journal, we need to bear in mind that “phlegm,” like “poison,” was during that period a pronouncedly ambivalent term. Just as “poison” might refer to a strong antidote or corrective, rather than to a murder device, as in Waldo Emerson’s phrase “the Thoreau poison, working for good or for ill,” so also “phlegm” might refer as it does now to bronchial mucus, an irritant to be coughed up and spit out and gotten rid of, or it might merely be a deployment of the archaic term for the distilled water which is used in chemical experiments in order to avoid prejudicing the outcome with distracting side reactions. By introducing such a term, Thoreau is suggesting that the description he is creating of his authorial process can be read in two distinct manners, that it can be read not only in a sense in which he is ruthlessly excising his writing mistakes, with sufficient **affect**, but also in a sense in which he is objectively re-evaluating and sifting previous materials, with dispassionate **judgment**:



March 1: In correcting my manuscripts, which I do with sufficient phlegm, I find that I invariably turn out much that is good along with the bad, which is then impossible for me to distinguish — so much for keeping

bad company; but after the lapse of time, having purified the main body and thus created a distinct standard for comparison, I can review the rejected sentences and easily detect those which deserve to be readmitted.

In the journal he spoke of this day as the beginning of spring, although that had not been the case per the previous year 1853's almanac:

BEGINNING AND LENGTH OF THE SEASONS.

Sun enters ♄ (Winter begins)	1852, Dec. 21st,	h. m.	} Mean Time at Washington Observatory.
“ “ ♃ (Spring “)	1853, March 20th,	10 8 M.	
“ “ ☊ (Summer “)	“ June 21st,	11 17 M.	
“ “ ♁ (Autumn “)	“ Sept. 22d,	8 16 M.	
“ “ ♄ (Winter “)	“ Dec. 21st,	10 29 A.	
		4 4 A.	




March 1. Here is our first spring morning according to the almanac. It is remarkable that the spring of the almanac and of nature should correspond so closely. The morning of the 26th was good winter, but there came a plentiful rain in the afternoon, and yesterday and today are quite spring like. This morning the air is still, and, though clear enough, a yellowish light is widely diffused throughout the east, now just after sunrise. The sunlight looks and feels warm, and a one vapor fills the lower atmosphere. I hear the phoebe or spring note of the chickadee, and the scream of the jay is perfectly repeated by the echo from a neighboring wood. For some days past the surface of the earth, covered with water, or with ice where the snow is washed off, has shone in the sun as it does only at the approach of spring, me thinks. And are not the frosts in the morning more like the early frosts in the fall, — common white frosts? As for the birds of the past winter: I have seen but three hawks, — one early in the winter and two lately; have heard the hooting owl pretty often late in the afternoon. Crows have not been numerous, but their cawing was heard chiefly in pleasanter mornings. Blue jays have blown the trumpet of winter as usual, but they, as all birds, are most lively in spring like days. The chickadees have been the prevailing bird. The partridge common enough. one ditcher tells me that he saw two robins in Moore's Swamp a month ago. I have not seen a quail, though a few have been killed in the thaws. Four or five downy woodpeckers. The white-breasted nuthatch four or five times. Tree sparrows one or more at a time, oftener than any bird that comes to us from the north. Two pigeon woodpeckers, I think, lately. one dead shrike, and perhaps one or two live ones. Have heard of two white owls, — one about Thanksgiving time and one in midwinter. one short-eared owl in December. Several flocks of snow buntings for a week in the severest storm, and in December, last part. one grebe in Walden just before it froze completely. And two brown creepers once in middle of February. Channing says he saw a little olivaceous-green bird lately. I have not seen an F. Linaria, nor a pine grosbeak, nor an F. hyemalis this winter, though the first was the prevailing bird last winter. In correcting my manuscripts, which I do with sufficient phlegm, I find that I invariably turn out much that is good along with the bad, which it is then impossible for me to distinguish — so much for keeping bad company; but after the lapse of time, having purified the main body and thus created a distinct standard of comparison, I can review the rejected sentences and easily detect those which deserve to be readmitted.

P. M. — To Walden via R.W.E.'s. I am surprised to see how bare Minott's hillside is already. It is already spring there, and Minott is pattering outside in the sun. How wise in his grandfather to select such a site for a house, the summers he has lived have been so much longer! How pleasant the calm season and the warmth — the sun is even like a burning-glass on my back — and the sight and sound of melting snow running down the hill! I look in among the withered grass blades for some starting greenness. I listen to hear the first bluebird in the soft air. I hear the dry clucking of hens which have come abroad. The ice at Walden is softened, — the skating is gone; with a stick you can loosen it to the depth of an inch, or the first freezing, and turn it up in cakes. Yesterday you could skate here; now only close to the south shore. I notice the redness of the andromeda leaves, but not so much as once. The sand foliage is now in its prime.

1853-1854

1853-1854


 March 2, Thursday: A Corner man told [Henry Thoreau](#) that Witherell had seen a [bluebird](#) [[Bluebird](#), [Eastern](#) [Sialia sialis](#)]. Although Thoreau remembered that Martial Miles had recently told him he thought he had heard one, nevertheless he doubted the reports and considered it to be too early for a bluebird to arrive.

[Walter Savage Landor](#)'s sister Elizabeth Savage Landor having died at the age of 77, on this day the body was being interred in St. Chad's Churchyard, Bishops Tachbrook, Warwick District, Warwickshire).

In [San Francisco](#), a light earthquake caused doors and windows to rattle.



March 2. A Corner man tells me that Witherell has seen a [bluebird](#) [[Bluebird](#), [Eastern](#) [Sialia sialis](#)], and Martial Miles thought that he heard one. I doubt it. It may have been given to Witherell to see the first bluebird, so much has been withholden from him. What produces the peculiar softness of the air yesterday and today, as if it were the air of the south suddenly pillowed amid our wintry hills? We have suddenly a different sky,--a different atmosphere. It is as if the subtlest possible soft vapor were diffused through the atmosphere. Warm air has come to us from the south, but charged with moisture, which will yet distill in rain or congeal into snow and hail. The sand foliage is vital in its form, reminding me [of] what are called the vitals of the animal body. I am not sure that its arteries are ever hollow. They are rather meandering channels with remarkably distinct sharp edges, formed instantaneously as by magic. How rapidly and perfectly it organizes itself! The material must be sufficiently cohesive. I suspect that a certain portion of clay is necessary. Mixed sand and clay being saturated with melted ice and snow, the most liquid portion flows downward through the mass, forming for itself instantly a perfect canal, using the best materials the mass affords for its banks. It digs and builds it in a twinkling. The less fluid portions clog the artery, change its course, and form thick stems and leaves. The lobe principle,--lobe of the ear (labor, lapsus?). On the outside all the life of the earth is expressed in the animal or vegetable, but make a deep cut in it and you find it vital; you find in the very sands an anticipation of the vegetable leaf. No wonder, then, that plants grow and spring in it. The atoms have already learned the law. Let a vegetable sap convey it upwards and you have a vegetable leaf. No wonder that the earth expresses itself outwardly in leaves, which labors with the idea thus inwardly. The overhanging leaf sees here its prototype. The earth is pregnant with law. The various shades of this sand foliage are very agreeable to the eye, including all the different colors which iron assumes,--brown, gray, yellowish, reddish, and clay-color. Perhaps it produces the greater effect by arranging the sands of the same color side by side, bringing them together.

 March 3, Friday: [Japanese](#) officials for the 1st time boarded the *USS Mississippi*. "They were very friendly and sociable" and quite curious about the functioning of this American vessel.

British and French warships entered the Black Sea to protect Turkey from Russia.

After hearing of [Robert Schumann](#)'s condition, [Johannes Brahms](#) moved to Düsseldorf to aid Clara.

Harriet Smithson died at Montmartre attended only by her nurses. Since her 1st stroke in 1848, she had been suffering from progressive paralysis, irregular breathing, and skin disease and her mobility and speech had been limited. Her husband [Hector Berlioz](#) visited the apartment in Montmartre and kissed the body before it was taken away for burial, then fetched a Protestant pastor for the interment in the Cimetière St.-Vincent. Some important literary figures attended the burial but Berlioz was too distraught to attend. He spent the time in her apartment even though they had been estranged since the early 1840s.

On an earlier day [Henry Thoreau](#) had posted \$2.⁰⁰ to Horace Greeley in New York City for a subscription to the [Tribune Semi-Weekly](#). Sinclair responded for Greeley and McEliath, acknowledging receipt of Thoreau's letter and promising to send the paper, but indicating that the firm had received no money, so Thoreau sent off another \$2.⁰⁰.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR MARCH 3D]



March 4, Saturday: St. Paul, [Minnesota](#) was incorporated as a city.

[Robert Schumann](#) was brought to Dr. Richarz' asylum at Endenich, near Bonn. Clara was prevented from seeing him off. She would not see him again until shortly before his death.

In Placer, [California](#), the Herald reported that during the past week 3 miners had dug 2 pounds of gold on a claim that John Berlin had purchased last fall for \$300. Since the days of '49 it has been well known by some of our intelligent "prospecting" miners, who reside near the American River, that many of the large flats that lay adjacent to the stream contain more or less gold and that some of them would pay well for working if water could be had to wash with. We understand this difficulty is at least, about to be obviated by the Bear River & Auburn Company. This company intends to extend their ditch from Rattlesnake Bar down along the hillside, facing the river to Dotan's Bar, where there is an extensive flat which has prospected remarkably well, and would give employment to one of two thousand men. The company has a surplus of water in Scott's Ravine, which is converted in a side ditch to a large flat in the neighborhood of Big Gulch and Mississippi Bar. The flat does not contain less than 160 acres, which will give employment to a hundred of men and at the same time aid in developing the richness of a large district of the southwestern portion of the county, which our miners have never been able to work properly for want of water.

A merchant of Sacramento says the State Journal, who has been engaged in buying gold dust to a considerable extent, being desirous of ascertaining by actual assay from whence came the purest and best dust, sent to Philadelphia Mint, some months since, samples of gold taken from the following places, with the results as below stated; — 16 ounces taken from out at Placerville, netted \$17.34 per ounce; 50 ounces from Dry Town, netted \$17.18 per ounce, 40 ounces from Mud Springs \$16.75 per ounce; 50 ounces from Coloma \$17.37 per ounce; 75 ounces from Auburn \$16.83 per ounce. It will be seen that dust taken from Coloma assayed better than any other, but none brought the price paid at \$17.50 per ounce, none of it having been brought for less than \$17.40.

During the dull, cloudy afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked through Hubbard's Wood past the foot of Cliff Hill, to Walden Pond.



March 4. A dull, cloudy day.

P.M. — To Walden *via* Hubbard's Wood and foot of Cliff Hill.

The snow has melted very rapidly the past week. There is much bare ground. The checker berries are revealed, — *somewhat* shrivelled many of them. I look along the ditches and brooks for tortoises and frogs, but the ditches are still full of dirty ice, and they are not yet seen in the brooks. In Hubbard's maple swamp I see the evergreen leaves of the gold-thread as well as the mitchella and large pyrola. I begin to sniff the air and smell the ground. In the meadow beyond I see some still fresh and perfect pitcher-plant leaves, and everywhere the green and reddish radical leaves of the golden senecio, whose fragrance when bruised carries me back or forward to an incredible season. Who would believe that under the snow and ice lie still — or in midwinter — some green leaves which, bruised, yield the same odor that they do when their yellow blossoms spot the meadows in June? Nothing so realizes the summer to me now. This past winter the sphagnum (?) in swamps and meadows has been frost-bitten and blackened, but last winter it was fresh and handsome. I see nowadays, the ground being

1853-1854

1853-1854

laid bare, great cracks in the earth revealed, a third of an inch wide, running with a crinkling line for twenty rods or more through the pastures and under the walls, — frost-cracks of the past winter. Sometimes they are revealed through ice four or five inches thick over them. I observed to-day where a crack had divided a piece of bark lying over it with the same irregular and finely meandering line, sometimes forking. Yesterday I saw a wasp slowly stretching himself and, I think, a fly, outside of Minott's house in the sun, by his wood-shed. In the dry pasture under the Cliff Hill, the radical leaves of the johnswort are now revealed everywhere in pretty radiating wreaths flat on the ground, with leaves recurved, reddish above, green beneath, and covered with dewy drops. I can no longer get on to the river ice. I do not find any willow catkins started. A red maple which I cut bleeds somewhat, — only the upper side the cut however. Is not this the earliest distinct motion of the spring? This stood in water. other trees were dry. Found a geiropodium (?), its globe now transparent, with the vermilion-colored remnants of others (?) lying in jelly about. In dry pastures I see that fungus — is it? — split into ten or twelve rays like a star and curved backward around a white bag or inner membrane. Were they not



the seeds of rose-hips which I saw abundantly in some creature's dung? The various cladonias are now very plump and erect, not only exposed to view, the ground being bare, but flourishing on account of the abundant moisture, — some light, some dark green, and various more dusky shades. In one or two places on the snow under the Cliffs I noticed more than a half-pint of partridge-droppings [**Ruffed Grouse** **Bonasa umbellus** (Partridge)] within a diameter of six inches. Were these all dropped in one night by one bird, or in the course of several nights, or by many birds? I saw that they had eaten the buds of the small blueberry *vacillans*. In their manure was what looked like woody fibres; may have been fibres of leaves. I am surprised to see how fresh and tender is the winter green bud, almost pure white. Was it so two months ago? It looks as if it had started under the snow. What is that gray beetle of which I found many under the bark of a large dead white pine, five eighths of an inch long, within an elliptical sort of log fort seven eighths of an inch or more in diameter piled around, of fibres of the sap-wood, perhaps one eighth or one tenth of an inch high, with some red bark chankings? Sometimes a curious chrysalis instead, like a very narrow and long bandbox with flat and parallel top and bottom, but highest at one end like a coffin. Also some white grubs stretch themselves, and some earwig-shaped creatures under the bark. I find that the ice of Walden has melted or softened so much that I sink an inch or more at every step, and hardly anywhere can I cut out a small cake, the water collects so fast in [the] hole. But at last, in a harder and drier place, I succeeded. It was now fifteen and a half inches thick, having lost about an inch and a half. Though the upper side was white and rotten and saturated with water for four or five inches, the under surface was still perfectly smooth and so far unchanged, yet ready to flake off, and did so readily in my hand, in flakes a half-inch to an inch thick, leaving the irregular, undulating surface with which I am familiar. But this side was comparatively unchanged and hard, though for two and three quarters inches, measuring upwards, it was whitish, then for two and a half inches remarkably clear (free from air-bubbles) and hard. Then by successive layers it grew more white and soft till you reached the upper surface. I think that that slight white ice beneath the clear and dark may have been produced by the recent warmth of the water, though this is doubtful. At any rate this year the ice has melted much more above than beneath. Least of all between two and three quarters and five inches from the under side.



March 5, Sunday: [Henry Thoreau](#) chatted with [Ellery Channing](#), and in the afternoon he walked to Upper Nut Meadow.

William Speiden, Jr. reported that it had become his duty as purser's clerk to muster the men.

The forces of Fort Union under [Lieutenant Colonel Philip St. George Cooke](#) defeated the [Jicarilla Apache](#) band led by Lobo Blanco.



WHITE ON RED, RED ON WHITE



March 5. Sunday. [Channing](#), talking with Minott the other day about his health, said, "I suppose you'd like to die now." "No," said Minott, "I've toughed it through the winter, and I want to stay and hear the bluebirds

[**Eastern Bluebird**] [**Sialia sialis**] once more.” The patches of bare ground grow larger and larger, of snow less and less; even after a night you see a difference. It is a clear morning with some wind beginning to rise, and for the first time I see the water looking blue on the meadows. Has not the johnswort two lives, in winter sending out radical shoots which creep flat on the ground under the snow, in the summer shooting upward and blossoming?

P.M. — To Upper Nut Meadow. The river is breaking up. The meadows are already partly bare, for it has only been cold enough to form a thin ice on them since this last freshet, and the old ice still lies concealed on the bottom. Great fields of thick ice from the channel, or between the channel and meadows, are driven by the wind against the thick ice on the channel. Hence the meadow ice *appears* to break up first. The waves dash against the edge of the ice and eat into it fast.

As I go along on the snow under Clamshell Hill I hear it sing around me, being melted next the ground. This is a spring sound. I cannot yet see the marchantia (?) in the ditches, for they are yet filled with ice or flooded. I see no horse-tail (unless one) nor flags, etc., yet started in Nut Meadow, nor any minnows out. This brook has run clear of ice a long time. Near Jenny’s its sides are strewn with the wreck of angelia stems and asters. I go along looking at its deep, sometimes yellow, shelving bottom, sprinkled with red pebbles. In the upper meadow the sweet-gale grows rankly along its edges, slanted over the water almost horizontally, so as frequently to meet and conceal it altogether. It is here a dark and sluggish water, comparatively shallow, with a muddy bottom. This sweet-gale is now full of fruit. This and the water andromeda are wild plants, as it were driven to the water’s edge by the white man. Saw a wood tortoise at the bottom. A reptile out of the mud before any bird, and probably quadruped. Not yet a frog, I think. The down of some willow catkins by this brook *may have* started forward this spring, though it is doubtful. Those which look most forward now will not be so a fortnight hence. It grew colder before I left. I saw some crystals beginning to shoot on the pools between the tussocks, shaped like feathers or fan coral, — the most delicate I ever saw. Thus even ice begins with crystal leaves, and birds’ feathers and wings are leaves, and trees and rivers with intervening earth are vast leaves.

Saw a small blackish caterpillar on the snow. Where do they come from? And crows [**Crow, American**] [**Corvus brachyrhynchos**], as I think, migrating northeasterly. They came in loose, straggling flocks, about twenty to each, commonly silent, a quarter to a half a mile apart, till four flocks had passed, and perhaps there were more. Methinks I see them going southwest in the fall.



March 6, Monday: **US Marine** Robert Williams died of a head injury while on liberty at Cum Sing Moon (the Americans would negotiate for the body to be buried on the **Japanese** shore). The American ship was listed to starboard in order to caulk it below the waterline.

Henry Thoreau was being written to by **Horace Greeley** / McElrath in **New-York**. In the afternoon he walked to **Goose Pond**. Greeley returned Thoreau’s 2d \$2.⁰⁰ payment because a thief in the newspaper office had been apprehended.¹³⁷



Office of the Tribune[,]
New York, 6 March 185[4]
Mr. Henry D[.] Thoreau[]
Sir:
Yours of
[3rd] to Mr[] Greeley is before us and
we will send you the Tribune
though the money has not reached
us[.]
Very [Resp^y,]
Greeley & [M^cElrath]
[pr] S[.] Sinclair[e]

137. This thief would do time.



1853-1854

1853-1854

*New York
Mar. 6, 1854.
Dear Sir:
I presume your
first letter containing
the \$2 ~~has~~ was robbed
by our general mail
robber at New Haven,
who has just been sent
to the State Prison. Your
second letter has probably
failed to receive due at-
tention, owing to a press
of business. But I will
make all right. You ought
to have the Semi-Weekly,
and I shall order it
[Page 2]
sent you one year on
trial; if you choose to
write me a letter or
s[o] some time, very
well; if not, we will
be even without that.
Thoreau, I want you
to do something on
my [urging]. I want
you to collect and ar-
range your Miscella-
n[i]es, and send them to
me. Put in 'Katahdin,'
'Carlyle,' 'A Winter Wood,' and 'Canada,' &c. and I
will try to find a pub-
lisher who will bring
them out at his own*

[Page 3]
*risk and (I hope) to your
ultimate profit. If you
have any thing new to put
with them, very well;
but let us have ~~the~~
about a l2 mo volume
whenever you can get
it ready, and see if
there is not something*

1853-1854

1853-1854

*to your credit in the
bank of Fortune.
Yours,
Horace Greeley.
Henry D. Thoreau, Esq.
Concord, Mass.*


[Waldo Emerson](#) had advanced some money against subscription promises of various Concordians, including the Thoreau family, in order to enable [Michael Flannery](#) to send for his wife Ann and children from Ireland. At this point [Thoreau](#) was able to write the letter for this [Irish](#) laborer, sending for his family. He noted in particular Flannery's concern that his wife be careful and not let their children fall overboard due to the rocking of the ship.

THOREAU ON THE IRISH



March 6. A cool morning. The bare water here and there on the meadow begins to look smooth, and I look to see it rippled by a muskrat. The earth has to some extent frozen dry, for the drying of the earth goes on in the cold night as well as the warm day. The alders and hedgerows are still silent, emit no notes.

P.M. — To Goose Pond.

According to [G. Emerson](#), maple sap sometimes begins to flow in the middle of February, but usually in the second week of March, especially in a clear, bright day with a westerly wind, after a frosty night. The brooks — the swift ones and those in swamps — open before the river; indeed some of the first have been open the better part of the winter. I saw trout glance in the Mill Brook this afternoon, though near its sources, in Hubbard's Close, it is still covered with dark, icy snow, and the river into which it empties has not broken up. Can they have come up from the sea? Like a film or shadow they glance before the eye, and you see where the mud is roiled by them. Saw children checkerberrying in a meadow. I see the [skunk-cabbage](#) started about the spring at head of Hubbard's Close, amid the green grass, and what looks like the first probing of the skunk. The snow is now all off on meadow ground, in thick evergreen woods, and on the south sides of hills, but it is still deep in sprout-lands, on the north sides of hills, and generally in deciduous woods. In sprout-lands it is melted beneath, but upheld by the bushes. What bare ground we have now is due then not so much to the increased heat of the sun and warmth of the air as to the little frost there was in the ground in so many localities. This remark applies with less force, however, to the south sides of hills. The ponds are hard enough for skating again. Heard and saw the first blackbird , flying east over the Deep Cut, with a *tchuck, tchuck*, and finally a split whistle.



March 7, Tuesday: [Charles Miller](#) of St. Louis, Missouri, who already held a sewing-machine patent, was issued Patent No. 10,609 for the 1st such device that that was capable of stitching buttonholes. There were 3 different mechanically sewn buttonhole stitches, describe as "button-hole stitch, whip stitch or herring-bone stitch."

In the afternoon, [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Annursnack.

In New-York's Broadway Tabernacle, [Waldo Emerson](#) was delivering "The Fugitive Slave Law." (At the time of the passage of this federal Fugitive Slave Law, according to Lawrence Lader's THE BOLD BRAHMINS,¹³⁸ some 600 "runaway slaves" were living and working in the city of Boston.¹³⁹)

138. NY: Dutton, 1961, page 140.

139. Was this the Broadway Tabernacle erected in 1834 for the evangelist Finney, who became the president of [Oberlin College](#)??

1853-1854

1853-1854

[Linck C. Johnson](#). "Reforming the Reformers: Emerson, Thoreau, and the Sunday Lectures at Amory Hall, Boston," [ESQ](#) Volume 37 (4th Quarter 1991):235-89, quoting page 280:

On 7 March 1854, exactly a decade after he had spoken at Amory Hall, Emerson delivered "The Fugitive Slave Law" as part of a lecture series sponsored by the American Anti-Slavery Society at the Broadway Tabernacle in New York City. Warmly describing the society as "the Cassandra that has foretold all that has befallen, fact for fact, years ago," Emerson concluded, "I hope we have reached the end of our unbelief, have come to a belief that there is a divine Providence in the world, which will not save us but through our own cooperation." His language and tone recall the final paragraph of "New England Reformers," in which he had expressed a similar faith in the providential order of the universe. But whereas at Amory Hall he had urged the reformers simply to "trust" that power, "secure that the future will be worthy of the past," Emerson at the Broadway Tabernacle embraced the position of the reformers, who had always insisted upon the individual's responsibility to help bring about such a future.

BOSTON'S AMORY HALL

It is to be noted that during this period, the lecturers at this anti-slavery convention being held in the Broadway Tabernacle were declaring themselves in opposition to the offensive new Irish-American racist newspaper in town, [The Citizen](#) — each and every one of them **with the solitary exception of Emerson**.¹⁴⁰



March 7: P.M. — To Annursnack.

I did not mention the drifts yesterday. Most of the snow left on bare, dry level ground consists of the remains of drifts, particularly along fences, — most on the south side. Also much that looks like snow is softened ice in the lower parts of fields. Looking from Annursnack, there is no perceptible difference as to snow between the north and south prospects, though the north one is not extensive; but the snowiest view is westward. Has this anything to do with there being most snow inland? All the sides of steep hills are likely to be bare, washed bare by rain (?). I do not know why there should be so much snow in sprout-lands and deciduous woods, unless it is because the sun has had less chance to thaw the frosts which yet have been thick there.

It is remarkable how true each plant is to its season. Why should not the fringed gentian put forth early in the spring, instead of holding in till the latter part of September? I do not perceive enough difference in the temperature. How short a time it is with us! I see many little white or dirty white puffballs, yellowish inside, commonly less than an inch in diameter, on bare cultivated fields, and, in pastures, some great chocolate-colored ones (within). Both yield their dust. Heard the first bluebird, [[Eastern Bluebird](#) [Sialia sialis](#)] — something like *pe-a-wor*, — and then other slight warblings, as if farther off. Was surprised to see the bird within seven or eight rods on the top of an oak on the orchard's edge under the hill. But he appeared silent, while I heard others faintly warbling and twittering far in the orchard. When he flew I heard no more, and then I suspected that he had been ventriloquizing; as if he hardly dared open his mouth yet, while there was so much winter left. It is an overcast and moist but rather warm afternoon. He revisits the apple trees, and appears to find some worms. Probably not till now was his food to be found abundantly. Saw some fuzzy gnats in the air. Saw where a partridge [[Ruffed Grouse](#) [Bonasa umbellus](#)] had been eating many prinus berries, now black and shrivelled. I suspect that they devour a great bulk, which has but little nutriment. The radical leaves of the pinweeds are like the johnswort with leaves reflexed, — most of them closer and finer. They appear unaffected by frost. The radical leaves of the crowfoot everywhere are the commonest green, as soon as the snow goes off. You can hardly tell when it begins to spring. Saw mountain cranberry near Brooks's pigeon-place, very flat on the pasture, raying out from a centre six feet each way, more than three quarters of an inch thick in the middle. Did not know it was so woody. This one of the *winter-reds*, perfectly fresh and glossy. The river *channel* is nearly open everywhere. Saw, on the alders by the riverside front of Hildreth's, a song sparrow [[Song Sparrow](#) [Melospiza melodia](#) (*melodia*)], quirking its tail. It flew across the river to the willows, and soon I heard its well-known dry *tchip, tchip*, Saw, methinks, what I called ephemerae last spring, — one on the water,

JOHN MITCHEL

140. For his racist attitudes, Mitchel was receiving accolades and invitations to lecture from the South. The state legislature of Louisiana even awarded him a special commendation.

1853-1854

1853-1854

three quarters of an inch long, narrow, gray-winged, several segments [?] curved on the back. On winter-rye field, top of Annursnack, what looked like a *very large* hard core of a buttonwood ball — same color. Broke it with a stone and found it full of dark earth. Was it not my pigeon's-egg fungus turned dark and hardened?



March 8, Wednesday morning: Captain Philip Thompson led the 55 men of Company F of the [1st US Regiment of Dragoons](#) out of Cantonment Burgwin for a planned rendezvous with [Colonel Thomas Turner Fauntleroy](#)'s column. Captain Thompson rode only a few miles before halting at Ceran St. Vrain's mill and distillery in Talpa, south of Taos, New Mexico, to procure cornmeal for the horses and Taos lightning (whiskey) for the men. Several Company F soldiers would be drunk when they entered Taos and, procuring alcohol in local saloons, would become even drunker. One trooper galloped his horse through a gathering of Mexicans and then attempted to ride up the steps of Peter Joseph's store. His horse stumbled, and he fell off as was mocked by the locals. [New Mexico Territory Supreme Court Associate Justice Perry E. Brocchus](#) rushed to the plaza, sensing "a suppressed spirit of mutiny in the majority of the soldiers." Entering Joseph's store, he found [Major George Alexander Hamilton Blake](#) seated at a desk, writing reports in apparent oblivion of the commotion outside. The Major then ordered Captain Thompson to get his detachment out of town as quickly as possible. The Captain instructed 1st Sergeant Thomas Fitzsimmons, a 26-year-old veteran from Westmeath, Ireland, to prepare the troop to depart. When Bugler [Aaron Dwight Stevens](#) sounded "To Horse," most of the troopers obeyed the call, forming an extended line across the plaza. Captain Thompson needed to round up drunken soldiers who had not responded to the bugle. Private Jeremiah Sullivan, a 3-year veteran who had been seriously wounded at Cieneguilla, was too intoxicated to rise from the dirt. The captain ordered his 1st Sergeant to tie that "damned rascal" into his saddle. However, when Fitzsimmons hefted Sullivan onto his horse, the intoxicated soldier rolled off and fell back to the ground. When the sergeant tried again, the soldier resisted: "You son of a bitch, you are always down upon me." Fitzsimmons struck Sullivan in the face. Major Blake, standing nearby, was not pleased. He protested the sergeant's rough treatment of the drunken trooper. Fitzsimmons claimed to have been defending himself. Blake answered that Sullivan had not struck the sergeant, and ordered Captain Thompson to arrest 1st Sergeant Fitzsimmons. When the captain did not do so, the Major walked over to the 1st Sergeant and went "Very well, you are placed under arrest." He then shouted to his Captain, "I order you to take your company out of town immediately, or if you do not, I will march the company out myself!" He walked to the front of the assembled troop and told the enlisted men that he was taking immediate command. It was these extreme and unexpected actions — arresting their sergeant and stripping their captain of his command — that would set off what was to follow. "I am well aware that there was such a feeling in the Company against Major Blake," Post Surgeon Edmund Barry would later aver, "It was like gunpowder — it required but a spark to explode it." An intoxicated private, John Cooper, rode up and proclaimed that they all were tired of being driven like slaves and needed to be allowed some slack. Major Blake, who had long detested Private Cooper, yanked him off his horse, grabbed him by the collar, and struck him several times. The private returned this, grabbing his major by the collar, yanked the officer's hair, bit him, and began to kick and punch him (we may note here that these well-armed men were making no resort to their weapons, when someone handed the major a pistol, he tossed the pistol aside, and when the major pulled Captain Thompson's saber out of its scabbard he merely used it to strike the private a number of times with the flat of its blade). When 1st Lieutenant Robert Johnston reached for his saber, Corporal Jim Vanderven caught his shoulder prevented this, and the lieutenant moved back to the left flank of the troop. Among the onlookers was [Christopher "Kit" Carson](#), a renown fighter, but during this fracas the fabled frontiersman merely peeked cautiously around a corner. The major's manservant Ramón Baca would attempt to intervene, rushing in and kicking the private in the neck. Private Cooper yelled "Kill the son of a bitch!" and 4 soldiers sprang into action — of them struck the manservant twice with the knuckle guard of his saber, while the others pounded him with the butts of their carbines. 1st Sergeant Fitzsimmons finally pulled out his pistol and he and Corporal Vanderven rushed to break up the fight. Someone yelled "Look out, sergeant, or you'll get hit or hurt!" as trooper Joseph Fox came up and used his saber to knock the pistol out of 1st Sergeant Fitzsimmons's

1853-1854

1853-1854

hand. The sergeant fended off the saber with his forearm, receiving minor defensive cuts. Private Robert Johnson rode toward Major Blake with pistol drawn, but when 1st Sergeant Fitzsimmons shouted at the trooper to get back in ranks, the private obeyed. Private John Steele grabbed Major Blake's neckerchief, pulling him to the ground, and began to beat him. [Justice Perry E. Brocchus](#) would later recall seeing the major rolling on the ground, fighting off a "stout athletic soldier," as Captain Thompson merely looked on in a "state of total inertness, manifestly paralyzed in his energies." Justice Brocchus shoved aside Private Steele and dragged the major, dazed and bruised, his uniform dusty and bloody, to the door of Peter Joseph's store. When the major slowly rose to his feet he pointed out the 3 troopers who had struck him. Taos County Deputy Sheriff Ezra Depew, who was himself a former dragoon, aided by the sergeant and corporal, disarmed the 3 troopers and took them to the town jail. [Justice Brocchus](#) would remember Major Blake as "in very high blood and laboring under a sense of outrage and wrong." He berated Captain Thompson and 1st Lieutenant Johnston for failing to come to his aid, accusing them of wanting him to get killed. He turned to his men and shouted out: "I can whip or thrash any man in this company from right to left — either with gun, pistol or saber — and now if there is any one of you thinks yourself fit — step out here and I will show you whether you can call old Blake a coward or such." During all this commotion, Company F's bugler, Private [Aaron Dwight Stevens](#), had been standing calmly, holding Captain Thompson's and 1st Lieutenant Johnston's horses. When he heard Major Blake's challenge, however, he threw down the reins, drew his Colt Dragoon revolver, and proclaimed: "You can't back out the company that way! I'm one of the worst men in it, and I'll accept your challenge either with gun, pistol or saber." It seems likely that Major Blake didn't hear this, as [Justice Brocchus](#) did not hear it. When he saw the bugler standing there he demanded that the man apologize on behalf of all the troop. [Stevens](#) was willing to do so, but the major was not ready to listen as Company F's bugler tried to explain why he and the men had become so upset. When Major Blake repeated he was not afraid of [Stevens](#) or anyone else in the company, the bugler came back with "God damn you! I'm as good as you are and will blow your goddamned heart out!" He raised and cocked his Model 1851 Sharps carbine, pointing it at Blake's chest. It was only then that [Kit Carson](#) came forward, and he and Justice Brocchus seized [Stevens](#)'s carbine and took him into custody. Then 1st Lieutenant Johnston ordered the remainder of the 55 men of Company F to mount their horses, and led them out of town.

Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) was able to put ashore in [Japan](#) a 2d time, and began to negotiate a trade agreement. Although he had been able to go ashore for the 1st landing, on this occasion William Speiden, Jr. was not among those fortunate 500 who were invited to this party, including 3 bands of music, and thus would need to make his notes of the events as related to him by the ship's chaplain. The negotiations took place in a large house erected specifically for this purpose. The Americans felt optimistic that more than one Japanese port would be opened to their commerce. While the American officers walked along the shore, Japanese artists made sketches of their dress and appearance, including uniforms, pistols, swords, and other paraphernalia. Speiden inserted into his journal a drawing of his father the purser, William Speiden, Sr., and of a branch in bloom done by a Japanese boy of about 11 years of age, as well as a sketch of the Commodore done by another such boy. Speiden also inserted a copy of the response to the American President's letter conveyed by the Imperial Commissioners (dated February 23d, 1854 and May 1st, 1854), in reply to the letter the Perry expedition had delivered the previous year ("... for us to continue bigotedly attached to the ancient laws, seems to misunderstand the spirit of the age, and we wish rather to conform to what necessity requires...."). A new Emperor was ascended to the throne since Perry's 1st landing, and the message stated that the Japanese would comply with the American request for provisions and aid to sailors in distress.

US MILITARY INTERVENTIONS

[Henry Thoreau](#) made a journal entry that resulted in a portion of the following paragraph from "Life without Principle":

At a lyceum, not long since, I felt that the lecturer had chosen a theme too foreign to himself, and so failed to interest me as much as he might have done. He described things not in or near to his heart, but toward his extremities and superficialities. There was, in this sense, no truly central or centralizing thought in the lecture. I

1853-1854

1853-1854

would have had him deal with his privatest experience, as the poet does. The greatest compliment that was ever paid me was when one asked me what I *thought*, and attended to my answer. I am surprised, as well as delighted, when this happens, it is such a rare use he would make of me, as if he were acquainted with the tool. Commonly, if men want anything of me, it is only to know how many acres I make of their land—since I am a surveyor,—or, at most, what trivial news I have burdened myself with. They never will go to law for my meat; they prefer the shell. A man once came a considerable distance to ask me to lecture on Slavery; but on conversing with him, I found that he and his clique expected seven-eighths of the lecture to be theirs, and only one-eighth mine; so I declined. I take it for granted, when I am invited to lecture anywhere,—for I have had a little experience in that business,—that there is a desire to hear what I *think* on some subject, though I may be the greatest fool in the country,—and not that I should say pleasant things merely, or such as the audience will assent to; and I resolve, accordingly, that I will give them a strong dose of myself. They have sent for me, and engaged to pay for me, and I am determined that they shall have me, though I bore them beyond all precedent.



March 8. Steady rain on the roof in the night, suggesting April-like warmth. This will help melt the snow and ice and take the frost out of the ground.

What pretty wreaths the mountain cranberry makes, curving upward at the extremity! The leaves are now a dark, glossy red, and wreath and all are of such a shape as might fitly be copied in wood or stone or architectural foliages.

I wrote a letter for an Irishman night before last, sending for his wife in Ireland to come to this country. one sentence which he dictated was, “Don’t mind the rocking of the vessel, but take care of the children that they be not lost overboard.”

MICHAEL FLANNERY

Lightning this evening, after a day of successive rains.

THOREAU ON THE IRISH



1853-1854

1853-1854



March 9, Thursday: Auction sales! By Selover & Sinton, real estate auctioneers and agents. Public auction of real estate in the City of San Francisco by the Board of [California](#) Land Commissioners, covering the area bounded by Jackson Street, the Bay, and Washington Street.

William Speiden, Jr. was not himself able to attend at the burial of [US Marine](#) Robert Williams at [Yokohama](#) under the ministrations of a Buddhist priest as well as of an American chaplain, but did render an account provided by one of the officers whom Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) had allowed ashore.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked to the Great Meadows, and conducted an experiment to verify an account he had seen in "[Captain](#)" [Mayne Reid](#)'s THE YOUNG VOYAGEURS; OR, THE BOY HUNTERS IN THE NORTH, an American edition of which had just been published in Boston.

Spring 1845	Ice of Walden Pond first completely open on April 1st
Spring 1846	Ice of Walden Pond first completely open on March 25th
Spring 1847	Ice of Walden Pond first completely open on April 8th
Spring 1851	Ice of Concord River opened much before February 25th; Ice of Walden Pond first completely open on March 28th
Spring 1852	Ice of Concord River opened at least by March 14th; Ice of Walden Pond first completely open on April 18th
Spring 1853	Ice of Concord River opened at least by about March 8th; Ice of Walden Pond first completely open on March 23d
Spring 1854	Ice of Concord River opened about March 9th, average March 5th; Ice of Walden Pond first completely open about April 7th
Spring 1856	Ice of Concord River opened on March 5th; Ice cleared on Walden Pond on April 18th



March 9. A.M. — Clearing up.

Water is fast taking place of ice on the river and meadows, and morning and evening we begin to have some smooth water prospects. Saw this morning a muskrat sitting "in a round form on the ice" or, rather, motionless like the top of a stake or a mass of muck on the edge of the ice. He then dove for a clam, whose shells he left on the ice beside him.

Boiled a handful of rock-tripe (*Umbilicaria Muhlenbergii*) — which [Tuckerman](#) says "was the favorite Rock-Tripe in Franklin's Journey" — for more than an hour. It produced a *black* pulp, looking *somewhat* like boiled tea leaves, and was insipid like rice or starch. The dark water in which it was boiled had a bitter taste and was slightly gelatinous. The pulp was not positively disagreeable to the palate. The account in "[The Young Voyageurs](#)" is correct.

1853-1854

1853-1854

P.M. — To Great Meadows.

"Downriver," "To Great Meadow," and "To Hill" signified a northward trip down the Concord River below the triple point of the confluence. After passing through a straight reach aligned by the local bedrock strike, arched by two bridges, and flanked by gravel bars of historic sediment that were repeatedly dredged, he entered the north side of Great Meadow. Bounded by the site of the Old North Bridge to the southwest and Ball's Hill to the northeast, it was two miles long and half a mile across. When in flood, the meadow was his favorite inland sea to sail upon because the wind was least impeded and the waves were highest.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 11

Peter H. says that he saw gulls (?) and sheldrakes [Both Common Merganser *Mergus merganser* and Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator* are called sheldrakes, but Thoreau used this name for the Common Merganser, *Mergus merganser*.] about a month ago, when the meadow was flooded. I detect the trout minnows not an inch long by their quick motions or quirks, soon concealing themselves. The river channel is open, but there is a very *thin* ice of recent formation over the greater part of the meadows. It is a still, moist, lowering day, and the water is smooth. Saw several flocks of large grayish and whitish or speckled ducks, — I suppose the same that P. calls sheldrakes. They, like ducks commonly, incline to fly in a line about an equal distance apart. I hear the common sort of quacking from them. It is pleasant to see them at a distance alight on the water with a slanting flight, launch themselves, and sail along so stately. The pieces of ice, large and small, drifting along, help to conceal them, supply so many objects on the water. There is this last night's ice on the surface, but the old ice still at the bottom of the meadows. In the spaces of still open water I see the reflection of the hills and woods, which for so long I have not seen, and it gives expression to the face of nature. The face of nature is lit up by these reflections in still water in the spring. Sometimes you see only the top of a distant hill reflected far within the meadow, where a dull-gray field of ice intervenes between the water and the shore.

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

1853-1854

1853-1854



1853-1854

1853-1854



March 10, Friday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked the C. Miles road by way of [Clamshell Hill](#). He saw a skunk on Corner Road and followed it for 60 rods or more.

Dr. Dickson of the Marine Hospital died in a [duel](#) in [Sacramento, California](#).

That night [Joshua Glover](#), an escaped Missouri slave, was seized in his shack in Racine, Wisconsin by a gang of 5 led by the slavemaster Bennami Garland, from whose tender attentions he had escaped –aided in this kidnapping of course, since this is America the home of the free and the brave, by a US federal marshal– and forced into the back of a wagon. They would take him to a lockup in Milwaukee but, fortunately, he would get help and the court system would get involved.




March 10. Misty rain, rain, — the third day of more or less rain.

P.M. — C. Miles road *via* Clamshell Hill.

Misty and mizzling. The radical leaves of the shepherd's-purse are common and fresh, also that early thistle by Nut Meadow Brook, with much down webbed, holding the mist in drops. Each alder catkin has a clear drop at the end, though the air is filled with mist merely, which from time to time is blown in my face and I put up my umbrella. The bæomyces is very perfect and handsome to-day. It occurs to me that heavy rains and sudden meltings of the snow, such as we had a fortnight ago (February 26th), before the ground is thawed, so that all the water, instead of being soaked up by the ground, flows rapidly into the streams and ponds, is necessary to swell and break them up. If we waited for the direct influence of the sun on the ice and the influence of such water as would reach the river under other circumstances, the spring would be very much delayed. In the violent freshet there is a mechanic force added to the chemic. The willow catkins on the Miles [road] I should say had decidedly started since I was here last, and are all peeping from under their scales conspicuously. At present I should say that the vegetable kingdom showed the influence of the spring as much in the air as in the water, — that is, in the flowing of the sap, the [skunk cabbage](#) buds, and the swelling of the willow catkins. I have detected very little, if anything, starting in brooks or ditches, for the first have far overflowed their banks and [are] full of rapid and sandy water, and the latter are still frequently full of ice. But probably that depends on the year, whether open or not. Saw a skunk in the Corner road, which I followed sixty rods or more. Out now about 4 P.M., — partly because it is a dark, foul day. It is a slender black (and white) animal, with its back remarkably arched, standing high behind and carrying its head low; runs, even when undisturbed, with a singular teeter or undulation, like the walking of a Chinese lady. Very slow; I hardly have to run to keep up with it. It has a long tail, which it regularly erects when I come too near and prepares to discharge its liquid. It is white at the end of




the tail, and the hind head and a line on the front of the face, — the rest black, except the flesh-colored nose (and I think feet). The back is more arched and the fore and hind feet nearer together than in my sketch. It tried repeatedly to get into the wall, and did not show much cunning. Finally it steered, apparently, for an old skunk or woodchuck hole under a wall four rods off, and got into it, — or under the wall, at least — for it was stopped up, — and there I view at leisure close to. It has a remarkably long, narrow, pointed head and snout, which enable it to make those deep narrow holes in the earth by which it probes for insects. Its eyes have an innocent, childlike, bluish-black expression. It made a singular loud patting sound repeatedly, on the frozen ground under the wall, undoubtedly with its fore feet (I saw only the upper part of the animal), which reminded me of what I have heard about your stopping and stamping in order to stop the skunk. Probably it has to do with its getting its food, — patting the earth to get the insects or worms. Though why it did so then I know not. Its track was small, round, showing the nails, a little less than an inch in diameter, alternate five or six inches by two or two and a half, sometimes two feet together. There is something pathetic in such a sight, — next to seeing one of the human aborigines of the country. I respect the skunk as a human being in a very humble sphere. I have no doubt they have begun to probe already where the ground permits, — or as far as it does. But what have they eat all winter?

The weather is almost April-like. We always have much of this rainy, drizzling, misty weather in early spring, after which we expect to hear geese [[Canada Goose](#)  [Branta canadensis](#) (~~Wild Goose~~)].

1853-1854


1853-1854

In what would become a test of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, and only a few days before the meeting in the little white schoolhouse in Ripon, Wisconsin that would launch the new “[Republican Party](#),”  Missouri slavemaster Benjamin S. Garland procured a process in the United States District Court and proceeded to a shanty at a sawmill near Racine, Wisconsin in company with two deputy United States marshals. His runaway slave [Joshua Glover](#) was in his shanty playing cards with the other lumbermen. One of the deputies knocked him down with a club and put a pistol to his head, and they handcuffed him.¹⁴¹ [Sherman M. Booth](#)'s newspaper [The Free Democrat](#) or the [American Freeman](#) (different sources tell different stories) would report that Glover was “dumped mangled and bleeding into a democrat wagon, and with a marshal's foot on his neck taken to Milwaukee and thrust into the county jail.” Pursuit having been anticipated, the officers made their way back into Milwaukee by a circuitous route. Booth, who took a leading part in the courthouse meeting, according to popular account of the affair charged up and down the streets on a white horse shouting “Freemen, to the rescue!” (In federal court, Booth would deny this, claiming to have been shouting only nonincendiary stuff such as “All freemen who are opposed to being made slaves or slave-catchers turn out to a meeting in the courthouse square at 2 o'clock!”) A hundred white activists came over by boat from Racine and marched to the city center in formation. Great crowds congregated and an indignation meeting was held. The meeting adopted resolutions having to do with Glover's right to a writ of habeas corpus and a trial by jury. A local judge issued such a writ, but the federal officers inside the jail refused to acknowledge its validity. This led to a battering in of the jail door with pickaxes, and the forwarding of Glover to safety in Canada.




We send greetings to the Free States of the Union, that, in Wisconsin, the Fugitive Slave Law is repealed! The first attempt to enforce the law, in the state, ... has failed! NO MORE COMPROMISE WITH SLAVERY!... PERISH ALL ENACTMENTS ESTABLISHING SLAVERY ON FREE SOIL!

141. Although Garland would be charged with assault and battery, he would successfully defend himself by pointing out that, as a slave owner, he was entitled to use whatever level of violence he considered necessary to secure himself in his property.

In what would become a test of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, and only a few days before the meeting in the little white schoolhouse in Ripon, Wisconsin that would launch the new “[Republican Party](#),”  Missouri slavemaster Benjamin S. Garland procured a process in the United States District Court and proceeded to a shanty at a sawmill near Racine, Wisconsin in company with two deputy United States marshals. His runaway slave [Joshua Glover](#) was in his shanty playing cards with the other lumbermen. One of the deputies knocked him down with a club and put a pistol to his head, and they handcuffed him.¹⁴² [Sherman M. Booth](#)’s newspaper [The Free Democrat](#) or the [American Freeman](#) (different sources tell different stories) would report that Glover was “dumped mangled and bleeding into a democrat wagon, and with a marshal’s foot on his neck taken to Milwaukee and thrust into the county jail.” Pursuit having been anticipated, the officers made their way back into Milwaukee by a circuitous route. Booth, who took a leading part in the courthouse meeting, according to popular account of the affair charged up and down the streets on a white horse shouting “Freemen, to the rescue!” (In federal court, Booth would deny this, claiming to have been shouting only nonincendiary stuff such as “All freemen who are opposed to being made slaves or slave-catchers turn out to a meeting in the courthouse square at 2 o’clock!”) A hundred white activists came over by boat from Racine and marched to the city center in formation. Great crowds congregated and an indignation meeting was held. The meeting adopted resolutions having to do with Glover’s right to a writ of habeas corpus and a trial by jury. A local judge issued such a writ, but the federal officers inside the jail refused to acknowledge its validity. This led to a battering in of the jail door with pickaxes, and the forwarding of Glover to safety in Canada.








We send greetings to the Free States of the Union, that, in Wisconsin, the Fugitive Slave Law is repealed! The first attempt to enforce the law, in the state, ... has failed! NO MORE COMPROMISE WITH SLAVERY!... PERISH ALL ENACTMENTS ESTABLISHING SLAVERY ON FREE SOIL!

 March 11, Saturday: Mayor G.K. Garrison hosted a dinner for the Common Council and Executive Officers of [San Francisco](#) at Robb’s “Court Block,” T.P. Robb, H.H. Doty, W.B. Gould Proprietors (and we may trust that a good time was had by all).

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked to the Cliffs.



March 11: Fair weather after three rainy days. Air full of birds,— bluebirds [[Eastern Bluebird](#) , [Sialia sialis](#)], song sparrows [[Song Sparrow](#) , [Melospiza melodia](#)], chickadee [[Chicadee](#), [Black-capped](#) , [Parus atricapillus](#) ~~Titmouse~~, ~~Titmice~~] (phoebe notes), and blackbirds . Song sparrows toward the water, with at least two kinds of variations of their strain hard to imitate. *Ozit, ozit, ozit, psa te-te-te-te ter ewe ter* [quick] is one; the other began *chip chip eke we*, etc., etc. Bluebirds’ warbling curls in elms. Shall the earth be regarded as a graveyard, a necropolis, merely, and not also as a granary filled with the seeds of life? Is not its fertility increased by this decay? A fertile compost, not exhausted sand. On Tuesday, the 7th, I heard the first song sparrow [[Song Sparrow](#) , [Melospiza melodia](#) (*melodia*)] chirp, and saw it flit silently from alder to alder. This pleasant morning after three days’ rain and mist, they generally forth burst into sprayey song from the low trees along the river. The developing of their song is gradual but sure, like the expanding of a flower. This is the first *song* I have heard.

142. Although Garland would be charged with assault and battery, he would successfully defend himself by pointing out that, as a slave owner, he was entitled to use whatever level of violence he considered necessary to secure himself in his property.

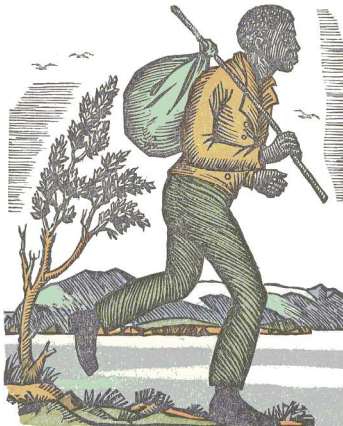
1853-1854

1853-1854

P.M. — To Cliffs.

River higher than any time in the winter, I think, yet, there being some ice on the meadows and the tops of reflected trees being seen along its edges, Aunt thought the river had gone down and that this was the ground. Muskrats are driven out of their holes. Heard one's loud plash behind Hubbard's. It comes up, brown striped with wet. I could detect its progress beneath in shallow water by the bubbles which came up. I believe I saw today, and have for some time seen, lizards in water, wiggling away more swiftly than tadpoles or frogs. From the hill the river and meadow is about equally water and ice, — rich blue water and islands or continents of white ice — no longer ice in place — blown from this side or that. The distant mountains are all white with snow while our landscape is nearly bare. Another year I must observe the alder and willow sap as early as the middle of February at least. Fair Haven covered with ice. Saw a hawk [redacted]. Goodwin saw a ground squirrel a fortnight ago and heard robin [**American Robin** [redacted] *Turdus migratorius*] this morning. He has caught skunks in traps set for minks with a piece of muskrat. Says the fox and skunk eat huckleberries, etc. Nowadays, where snow-banks have partly melted against the banks by the roadside in low ground, I see in the grass numerous galleries where the mice or moles have worked in the winter.

Incited by an editorial in [Sherman M. Booth's Free Democrat](#), a mob battered down the door of the jail in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to free [Joshua Glover](#), a runaway slave from Missouri. Although Booth would later allege that his newspaper had been advocating an entirely peaceable protest, federal authorities would seek to hold him responsible.



The feds used the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 as their basis for arresting the newspaper editor, so the state government moved immediately to declare that legislation void in Wisconsin and to release the political prisoner on a writ of habeas corpus. Here is the story as it has been telescoped by William Raney in *WISCONSIN: A STORY OF PROGRESS* (Perin Press, 1963, pages 148-49):

For the next six years Sherman M. Booth was the center of legal proceedings initiated by the federal authorities under the Fugitive Slave Act. He was arrested, and while in the custody of the United States marshal was released on a writ of habeas corpus issued by a judge of the Wisconsin Supreme Court. The whole court reviewed the case and on July 19, 1854 upheld the habeas corpus. Arrested again and tried by a federal court, Booth was sentenced to a month's imprisonment and a fine of \$1,000 in January, 1855. He was again set at liberty by a writ of habeas corpus issuing from the state supreme court. At this time the full court declared the Fugitive Slave Act unconstitutional and void. When the Supreme Court of the United States asked for a copy of the record in order to review the case, the Supreme Court of Wisconsin took no notice of the request. In March, 1857, the United States assumed jurisdiction,



1853-1854

1853-1854

procured a copy of the record, and on March 7, 1859, gave judgment reversing that of the Wisconsin Supreme Court. In March, 1860, Booth was again arrested by federal authorities and released by friends and rearrested, and the case was finally ended when President Buchanan pardoned him in March, 1861.

In writing the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in the case (*Ableman v Booth*, 62 US 506), a decision cited as a precedent as late as the 1950s, Chief Justice Roger Taney would argue that the Wisconsin courts had no jurisdiction over what was a constitutional issue, and therefore that Booth's conviction would have to stand. His argument would cite the court's essential role in arbitrating conflicts between states, a specter that would become actuality only two years later:

[L]ocal interests, local passions or prejudices, incited and fostered by individuals for sinister purposes, would lead to acts of aggression and injustice by one State upon the rights of another, which would ultimately terminate in violence and force unless there was a common arbiter between them, armed with power enough to protect and guard the rights of all by appropriate laws to be carried into execution peacefully by its judicial tribunals.

Booth's sympathizers would take matters into their own hands. A group led by Professor Edward Daniels, who was not only a faculty member at Brockway College in Ripon but also a regent of Wisconsin's normal schools, would "rescue" the editor from his cell at the Milwaukee federal Custom House on [August 1st, 1860](#).



[John Mitchel](#) wrote in his [The Citizen](#) that:

The concluding lecture of the Anti-Slavery course was delivered on Tuesday evening, by no less a person than [Ralph Waldo Emerson](#). There was considerable curiosity to hear how this practiced elaborator of exquisite sentences would set about composing such sentences as should fit the taste of the Tabernacle. We had certainly formed no high estimate of Mr. Emerson as a thinker, that is to say a coherent reasoner; yet we did expect that he would give us either fancy or logic, either poetry or vigor, either rhyme or reason. We declare that we were disappointed in this very reasonable alternative anticipation.... Two things, indeed, the Lecturer forbore to do. He did not anathematize the American Union: he did not abuse the unfortunate wight, John Mitchel. So much the worse: his lecture was less piquant.

1853-1854

1853-1854



March 12, Sunday: Out of sympathy for her sex, Miss Delia Webster was pardoned out of the [Kentucky](#) Penitentiary, where she had been held for having aided the [Reverend Calvin Fairbanks](#) in the escape of slaves.



[Kentucky's sexism](#) had worked in this lady's favor, muting the virulence of [Kentucky's racism](#)!

France and Great Britain concluded an alliance with the Ottoman Empire against Russia.

In the morning [Henry Thoreau](#) walked up the railroad tracks to the Walden Woods, and in the afternoon he went to Ball's Hill along the river. Evidently he did one or the other or both trips with [Waldo Emerson](#), for he commented bitterly in his journal about the bad effect that a companion was having on him: "My companion tempts me to certain licenses of speech, i.e. to reckless and sweeping expressions which I am wont to regret that I have used. that is, I find that I have used more harsh, extravagant, and cynical expressions concerning mankind and individuals than I intended. I find it difficult to make to him a sufficiently moderate statement. I think it is because I have not his sympathy in my sober and constant view. He asks for a paradox, and eccentric statement, and too often I give it to him."



March 12, A.M. — Up railroad to woods.

[Transcript]

We have white frosts these mornings. This is the blackbird morning. Their sprayey notes and *conquerees* ring with the song-sparrows' jingle all along the river. Thus gradually they acquire confidence to sing. It is a beautiful spring morning. I hear *my* first robin peep distinctly at a distance on some higher trees, — oaks or ?, — on a high key. No singing yet. I hear from an apple-tree a faint cricket-like chirp, and a sparrow darts away, flying far, *dashing from side to side*. I think it must be the white-in-tail, or grass finch [**Vesper Sparrow** **Poocetes gramineus**]. Saw either a large mouse or a ground squirrel on the snow near the edge of the wood, — probably the former. I hear a jay [**Blue Jay** **Cyanocitta cristata**] loudly screaming *phe-phay phe-phay*, — a loud, shrill chickadee's [**Black-capped Chickadee** **Parus atricapillus** (~~Titmouse, Titmice~~)] *phebe*. Now I see and hear the lark [**Eastern Meadowlark** **Sturnella magna**] sitting with head erect, neck outstretched, in the middle of a pasture, and I hear another far off singing. Sing when they first come. All these birds do their warbling especially in the still, sunny hour after sunrise, as rivers twinkle at their sources. Now is the time to be abroad and hear them, as you detect the slightest ripple in smooth water. As with tinkling sounds the sources of streams burst their icy fetters, so the rills of music begin to flow and swell the general quire of spring. Memorable is the warm light of the spring sun on russet fields in the morning.

1853-1854

1853-1854

A new feature is being added to the landscape, and that is expanses and reaches of blue water.
C. says he saw a gull to-day.

P.M. —To Ball's Hill along river.

My companion tempts me to certain licenses of speech, *i.e.* to reckless and sweeping expressions which I am wont to regret that I have used. That is, I find that I have used more harsh, extravagant, and cynical expressions concerning mankind and individuals than I intended. I find it difficult to make to him a sufficiently moderate statement. I think it is because I have not his sympathy in my sober and constant view. He asks for a paradox, an eccentric statement, and too often I give it to him.

Saw some small ducks, black and white, — perhaps teal [**Teal, Blue-winged** ***Anas discors***] or widgeons [**American Widgeon** ***Mareca americana***]. This great expanse of deep-blue water, deeper than the sky, why does it not blue my soul as of yore? It is hard to soften me now. I see no gulls **█** myself. The time was when this great blue scene would have tinged my spirit more. Now is the season to look for Indian relics, the sandy fields being just bared. I stand on the high lichen covered and colored (greenish) hill beyond Abner Buttrick's; I go further east and look across the meadows to Bedford, and see that peculiar scenery of March, in which I have taken so many rambles, the earth just bare and beginning to be dry, the snow lying on the north sides of hills, the gray deciduous trees and the green pines souging in the March wind — they look now as if deserted by a companion, the snow. When you walk over bare lichen-clad hills, just beginning to be dry, and look afar over the blue water on the meadows, you are beginning to break up your winter quarters and plan adventures for the new year. The scenery is like, yet unlike, November; you have the same barren russet, but now, instead of a dry, hard cold wind, a peculiarly soft, moist air, or else a raw wind. Now is the reign of water. I see many crows [**Crow, American** ***Corvus brachyrhynchos***] on the meadow by the water's edge these days. It is astonishing how soon the ice has gone out of the river, but it still lies on the bottom of the meadow. Is it peculiar to the song sparrow [**Song Sparrow** ***Melospiza melodia*** (*melodia*)] to dodge behind and hide in walls and the like? Toward night the water becomes smooth and beautiful. Men are eager to launch their boats and paddle over the meadows.

The spring birds have come a little earlier this year than last, methinks, and I suspect the spring may be earlier in the air, yet there is more ice and snow and frozen ground still, because the winter has been so much more severe.

I am surprised to find that water froze pretty thick in my chamber the night of the 14th of March, '53, after a fire in the evening, and that they were at work on the ice at Loring's on the 16th. This is very different weather. The ice is all out of the river proper, and all spoiled even on Walden.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL



1853-1854

1853-1854

 March 13, Monday: Louis Moreau Gottschalk gave his initial performance in [Havana](#).

The Americans under Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) conveyed a passel of presents intended for the Japanese Emperor and Empress and for their commissioners at [Yokohama](#), concentrating on things that Americans appreciated that obviously they would appreciate likewise such as clocks, a telescope, telegraph instruments and wire, a miniature locomotive with passenger car and rail; various agricultural implements, rifles, swords, pistols, whiskey, champagne, wine, perfumes, teas, books such as [John James Audubon](#)'s BIRDS OF AMERICA and THE QUADRUPEDS OF AMERICA — and so on and so forth.

VIVIPAROUS QUADRUPEDS

BIRDS OF AMERICA

Documentation of the [international slave trade](#), per [W.E. Burghardt Du Bois](#): “Message from the President ... communicating ... the correspondence between Mr. Schenck, United States Minister to Brazil, and the Secretary of State, in relation to the African slave trade.” —SENATE EXECUTIVE DOCUMENT, 33 Cong. 1 sess.

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

1853-1854

VIII. No. 47.

1853-1854



Thoreau's Flute, Telescope and copy of
Wilson's Ornithology.

"I bought me a spy-glass some weeks since. I buy but few things,
and those not till long after I begin to want them, so that when I do get them I
am prepared to make a perfect use of them and extract their whole sweetness."

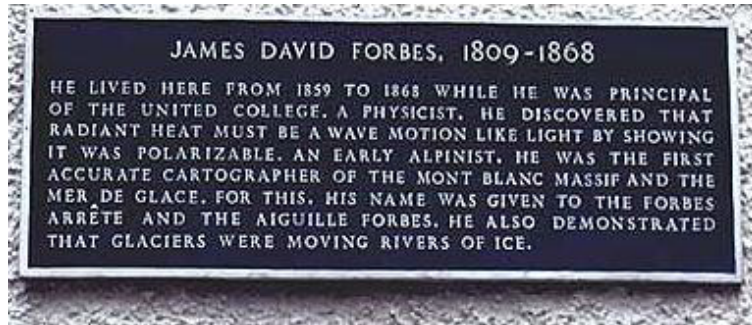
Page 3. Early Spring.

1853-1854

1853-1854

Besides purchasing a [telescope](#) (above) for eight dollars (more than a week’s total wages, order of magnitude approximately \$800 in today’s greenbacks), [Henry Thoreau](#) stopped by the [Boston Society of Natural History](#) and checked out:

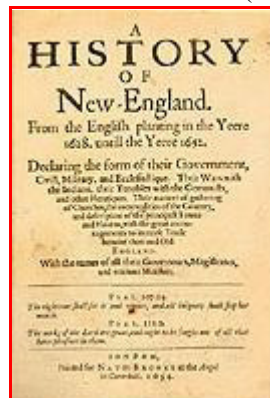
- [James David Forbes](#) (1809-1868)’s TRAVELS THROUGH THE ALPS OF SAVOY AND OTHER PARTS OF THE PENNINE CHAIN, WITH OBSERVATIONS ON THE PHENOMENA OF GLACIERS (1843)



THE ALPS OF SAVOY, ETC.

and stopped by the [Harvard Library](#) and checked out:

- [Louis Agassiz](#)’s *ÉTUDES SUR LES GLACIERS* (Neuchâtel, aux frais de l’auteur, August 20, 1840, with atlas)
- [Edward Johnson](#)’s A HISTORY OF NEW-ENGLAND. FROM THE ENGLISH PLANTING IN THE YEERE 1628. UNTILL THE YEERE 1652: DECLARING THE FORM OF THEIR GOVERNMENT, CIVILL, MILITARY, AND ECCLESIASTIQUE: THEIR WARS WITH THE INDIANS, THEIR TROUBLES WITH THE GORTONISTS, AND OTHER HERETIQUES: THEIR MANNER OF GATHERING OF CHURCHES, THE COMMODITIES OF THE COUNTRY, AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PRINCIPALL TOWNS AND HAVENS... (London: Printed for Nath. Brooke ..., 1654)¹⁴³



- The Reverend Thomas Shepard’s THE CLEAR SUNSHINE OF THE GOSPEL BREAKING OUT ON THE INDIANS OF NEW ENGLAND (1648)¹⁴⁴



Mar. 13th To Boston—



[C.](#) says he saw skater insects today. [Harris](#) tells me that those gray insects within the little log forts under the


143. The popular title of this work is WONDER-WORKING PROVIDENCE OF SION’S SAVIOR IN NEW ENGLAND. Thoreau would place his notes in his Indian Notebook #8.
 144. The Reverend Shepard was a founder of Harvard College.

1853-1854

1853-1854


bark of the dead Wht pine — which I found about a week ago — are *Rhagium lineatum*. Bought a telescope today for 8 dollars — Best military spyglass with 6 slides which shuts up to about same size, 15 dols & very powerful Saw the squares of achromatic glass from Paris which Clark-(e?) uses — 50-odd dols apiece the larger— It takes 2 together — one called the flint— These French glasses all one quality of glass. My glass tried by Clark & approved — only a part of the object glass available. Bring the edge of the diaphragm against middle of the light & your nail on object glass in line with these shows what is cut off— Sometimes may enlarge the hole in diaphragm— But if you do so you may have to enlarge the hole in diaphragm near small end — which must be exactly as large as the pencil of light there. As the diameter of the pencil is to the diameter of the available portion of the object glass so is the power — so many times it magnifies— A good glass because the form of the blurred object is the same on each side of the focus *i.e* shoved in or drawn out. C. was making a glass for Amherst Col.


ASTRONOMY

 March 14, Tuesday: Anton Rubinstein conducted the premiere of his Symphony in Bb in Lichtenthal Hall, St. Petersburg (the 1st movement of this would become his Concert Overture op.60 while the 2nd and 3d will be appended to the Symphony no.2).






March 14. A.M. — Threatening rain after clear morning.

Great concert of song sparrows [Song Sparrow  *Melospiza melodia* (*melodia*)] in willows and alders along Swamp Bridge Brook by river. Hardly hear a *distinct* strain. Couples chasing each other, and some tree sparrows with them.


R.W.E. saw a small bird in the woods yesterday which reminded him of the parti-colored warbler [Northern Parula  *Parula americana* (~~Parti-colored Warbler or Parti-colored bird~~)].

P.M. — To Great Meadows.

Raw thickening mists, as if preceding rain.




Counted over forty robins  with my glass in the meadow north of Sleepy Hollow, in the grass and on the snow. A large company of fox-colored sparrows [Fox Sparrow  *Passerella iliaca*] in Heywood's maple swamp close by. I heard their loud, sweet, canary-like whistle thirty or forty rods off, sounding richer than anything yet; some on the bushes singing, *twee twee twa twe ter tweer twa*,--this is the scheme of it only, there being no dental grit to it. They were shy, flitting before me, and I heard a slight susurrus where many were busily scratching amid the leaves of the swamp, without seeing them, and also saw many indistinctly. Wilson never heard but one sing, their common note there being a *cheep*. Saw fresh tracks in what looked like a woodchuck's hole. No ice visible as I look over the meadows from Peter's, though it lies at the bottom. [Thoreau inserted a penciled question-mark.] Scared up four black ducks [Black Duck  *Anas rubripes* (~~Dusky Duck~~)] from the flooded meadow on the right of the roadway as you go to Peter's. The water being rough on the meadows, they had apparently sought this smooth and shallow place shut in by the woods.

Alder scales are visibly loosened, their lower edges (*i.e.* as they hang) showing a line of yellowish or greenish. The pads in open warm ditches are now decidedly the greatest growth of this season, though I am not sure how much is due to last fall.

From within the house at 5.30 P.M. I hear the loud honking of geese [Canada Goose  *Branta canadensis* (~~Wild Goose~~)], throw up the window, and see a large flock in disordered harrow flying more directly north or even northwest than usual. Raw, thick, misty weather.

 March 15, Wednesday: In Concord, Henry Thoreau painted his boat.



March 15. Pleasant morning, unexpectedly. Hear on the alders by the river the *lill lill lill lill* of the first *F. hyemalis* [Dark-eyed Junco  *Junco hyemalis* (~~Slate-colored Sparrow or Snow-bird~~)], mingled with song sparrows [Song Sparrow  *Melospiza melodia* (*melodia*)] and tree sparrows [American Tree Sparrow  *Spizella arborea*]. The sound of Barrett's sawmill in the still morning comes over the water very

1853-1854

1853-1854

loud. I hear that peculiar, interesting loud hollow tapping of a woodpecker [redacted] from over the water.
I am sorry to think that you do not get a man's most effective criticism until you provoke him. Severe truth is expressed with some bitterness.
J. Farmer tells me his dog started up a lark [**Horned lark** [redacted] *Eremophila alpestris*] last winter completely buried in the snow.
Painted my boat.

Thoreau also went into Cambridge and checked out, from Harvard Library, [Louis Agassiz](#)'s 1840 *ETUDES SUR LES GLACIERS*.



In Wisconsin, [Sherman M. Booth](#) was arrested for "aiding and abetting" the escape of Missouri fugitive slave [Joshua Glover](#) and a hearing was held. Bail of \$2,000 was paid immediately.



Following Booth's arrest for his role in freeing this escaped slave, the Supreme Court of Wisconsin would immediately judge that the state's laws of habeas corpus superseded the federal Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, and consequently that the case against Booth was void. On March 7, 1859 in the case of *Ableman v. Booth* (62 U.S. 506), however, the United States Supreme Court would federally countermand that state judgment. Writing for the court, Chief Justice Taney would base the decision not on the merits of the fugitive law itself, but rather on a state's limited powers and jurisdiction:

The judges of the Supreme Court of Wisconsin do not distinctly state from what source they suppose they have derived this judicial power. There can be no such thing as judicial authority unless it is conferred by a Government or sovereignty, and if the judges and courts of Wisconsin possess the jurisdiction they



1853-1854

1853-1854

claim, they must derive it either from the United States or the State. It certainly has not been conferred on them by the United States, and it is equally clear it was not in the power of the State to confer it, even if it had attempted to do so, for no State can authorize one of its judges [62 US 516] or courts to exercise judicial power, by habeas corpus or otherwise, within the jurisdiction of another and independent Government. And although the State of Wisconsin is sovereign within its territorial limits to a certain extent, yet that sovereignty is limited and restricted by the Constitution of the United States. And the powers of the General Government, and of the State, although both exist and are exercised within the same territorial limits, are yet separate and distinct sovereignties, acting separately and independently of each other within their respective spheres. And the sphere of action appropriated to the United States is as far beyond the reach of the judicial process issued by a State judge or a State court, as if the line of division was traced by landmarks and monuments visible to the eye. And the State of Wisconsin had no more power to authorize these proceedings of its judges and courts than it would have had if the prisoner had been confined in Michigan, or in any other State of the Union, for an offence against the laws of the State in which he was imprisoned.

The Supreme Court's decision would reaffirm the verdict rendered against Booth 4 years earlier by the US District Court, and during March 1860 Booth would be again arrested and remanded to prison in the federal Custom House in Milwaukee (he would need to be again rescued from the law by the citizens of his state).

1853-1854

1853-1854



March 16, Thursday: [Henry Thoreau](#) signed an indenture for the publication of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#).

That the said Thoreau agrees to give, and by these presents give to said Ticknor & Co., the right to publish for the term of five years, a certain book, entitled "Walden, a Life in the Woods" of which, said Thoreau is the Author and Proprietor.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN



[Alexander Young](#) died of pleurisy in [Boston](#) at the age of 53, leaving the widow Mrs. Caroline James Young with 8 surviving children (4 of their 12 had died but the oldest, Edward James Young, had arrived at 24 years of age and was a graduate of Harvard College). The Reverend Ezra Stiles Gannett would deliver the discourse at his funeral. Eventually he would be succeeded in the pulpit of the New South Church, located on "Church Green" at the corner of Summer Street and Bedford Street, by the Reverend [Orville Dewey](#).¹⁴⁵

On this night an earthquake was felt in [San Francisco](#).

The Grass Valley, [California Telegraph](#) reported that last Saturday a large lump of very rich quartz, weighing 49¾ ounces and containing \$402 in gold, had been taken out of the Buena Vista diggings. The [Coloma Argus](#) was shown on that day several pounds of quartz rock taken from a lead near Mosquite Canyon which was well studded with gold. A much esteemed and worthy fellow-citizen, Justice Fouse, had recently been the fortunate discoverer of a large lump of gold ore weighing nearly 10 pounds. Great excitement had prevailed during the past week in consequence of the reports richness of leads in the vicinity of Iowa Hill, and truly if all accounts are true, this hill which is located near Illinoistown is immensely rich. We are creditably informed that a company of 10 had taken out the enormous sum of \$10,000 in one day. Several companies are averaging as high as from 7 to 15 pounds a day. At Squirrel Creek 10 miners took out \$1,400 last week.



March 16. A.M. — Another fine morning.

Willows & alders along watercourses all alive these mornings & ringing with the trills & jingles & warbles of birds even as the waters have lately broken loose & tinkle below — song-sparrows [**Song Sparrow** [Melospiza melodia](#) (*melodia*)] blackbirds — not to mention robins &c &c The song sparrows are very abundant peopling each bush-willow or alder for ¼ of a mile & pursuing each other as if now selecting their mates— It is their song which especially fills the air — made an incessant & undistinguishable trill & jingle by their numbers— I see ducks afar sailing on the meadow leaving a long furrow in the water behind them— Watch them at leisure without scaring them with my glass; observe their free & undisturbed motions— Some dark-brown partly on water alternately dipping with their tails up partly on land— These I think may be summer ducks . [Were they not females of the others?] Others with bright white breasts &c & black heads about same size or larger which may be Golden Eyes — *ie* Brass-eyed Whistlers [**Common**

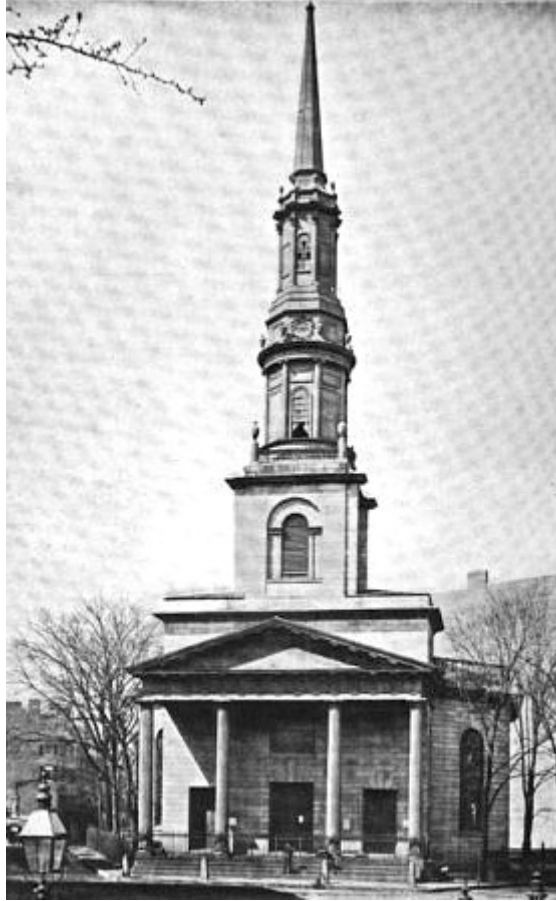
145. In the Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, among the Benjamin Loring Young papers under call number Ms. N-504, has been found a "photomechanical" of a painting on the verso of which is the notation "Rev. Alexander Young, D.D. Born in Boston, Sept. 22, 1800. Pastor of Church on Church Green, 1825-1854. Died, March 16, 1854."

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**1853-1854****1853-1854**

Goldeneye **Bucephala clangula** (Whistler)] They dive & are gone some time & come up a rod off— At first I saw but one — then a minute after 3— The first phoebe [**Eastern Phoebe** **Sayornis phoebe** (Bridge Pewee)] near the water is heard.

Saw & heard honey-bees about my boat in the yard — attracted probably by the beeswax in the grafting-wax which was put on it a year ago. It is warm weather. A thunder-storm in the evening.

This Daguerreotype of the edifice, which had been designed in 1814 by Charles Bulfinch and would be demolished in 1868, would be exposed as of 1858:



This deceased reverend's CHRONICLES OF THE PILGRIM FATHERS OF THE COLONY OF **PLYMOUTH**, FROM 1602 TO 1625. NOW FIRST COLLECTED FROM ORIGINAL RECORDS AND CONTEMPORANEOUS PRINTED DOCUMENTS, AND ILLUSTRATED WITH NOTES would be appearing in Thoreau's new book, albeit in somewhat submerged form:



PEOPLE OF WALDEN

WALDEN: This further experience also I gained. I said to myself, I will not plant beans and corn with so much industry another summer, but such seeds, if the seed is not lost, as sincerity, truth, simplicity, faith, innocence, and the like, and see if they will not grow in this soil, even with less toil and manurance, and sustain me, for surely it has not been exhausted for these crops. Alas! I said this to myself; but now another summer is gone, and another, and another, and I am obliged to say to you, Reader, that the seeds which I planted, if indeed they were the seeds of those virtues, were wormeaten or had lost their vitality, and so did not come up. Commonly men will only be brave as their fathers were brave, or timid. This generation is very sure to plant corn and beans each new year precisely as the Indians did centuries ago and taught the first settlers to do, as if there were a fate in it. I saw an old man the other day, to my astonishment, making the holes with a hoe for the seventieth time at least, and not for himself to lie down in! But why should not the New Englander try new adventures, and not lay so much stress on his grain, his potato and grass crop, and his orchards? — raise other crops than these? Why concern ourselves so much about our beans for seed, and not be concerned at all about a new generation of men? We should really be fed and cheered if when we met a man we were sure to see that some of the qualities which I have named, which we all prize more than those other productions, but which are for the most part broadcast and floating in the air, had taken root and grown in him. Here comes such a subtile and ineffable quality, for instance, as truth or justice, though the slightest amount or new variety of it, along the road. Our ambassadors should be instructed to send home such seeds as these, and Congress help to distribute them over all the land. We should never stand upon ceremony with sincerity.

ALEXANDER YOUNG
THE BEANFIELD
SQUANTO

In transit from Vevey to Geneva, [Professor Henri-Frédéric Amiel](#), who would be referred to as the “Swiss [Thoreau](#),” wrote in his *JOURNAL INTIME*: “What message had this lake for me, with its sad serenity, its soft and even tranquility, in which was mirrored the cold monotonous pallor of mountains and clouds? That disenchanted disillusioned life may still be traversed by duty, lit by a memory of heaven. I was visited by a clear and profound intuition of the flight of things, of the fatality of all life, of the melancholy which is below the surface of all existence, but also of that deepest depth which subsists forever beneath the fleeting wave.”





March 16. A.M. — Another fine morning.



Willows & alders along watercourses all alive these mornings & ringing with the trills & jingles & warbles of birds even as the waters have lately broken loose & tinkle below — song-sparrows [**Song Sparrow** [Melospiza melodia](#) (*melodia*)] blackbirds — not to mention robins &c &c The song sparrows are very abundant peopling each bush-willow or alder for ¼ of a mile & pursuing each other as if now selecting their mates— It is their song which especially fills the air — made an incessant & undistinguishable trill & jingle by their numbers— I see ducks afar sailing on the meadow leaving a long furrow in the water behind them— Watch them at leisure without scaring them with my glass; observe their free & undisturbed motions— Some dark-brown partly on water alternately dipping with their tails up partly on land— These I think may be summer ducks . [Were they not females of the others?] Others with bright white breasts &c & black

1853-1854

1853-1854

heads about same size or larger which may be Golden Eyes — *ie* Brass-eyed Whistlers [**Common Goldeneye**  *Bucephala clangula* (Whistler)] They dive & are gone some time & come up a rod off— At first I saw but one — then a minute after 3— The first phoebe [**Eastern Phoebe**  *Sayornis phoebe* (Bridge-Pewee)] near the water is heard.

Saw & heard honey-bees about my boat in the yard — attracted probably by the beeswax in the grafting-wax which was put on it a year ago. It is warm weather. A thunder-storm in the evening.

[Thaddeus William Harris](#) of Cambridge, Massachusetts wrote in regard to the LARVÆ OF THE CRANE FLY to Simon Brown, Esq. via page 210 of the [New England Farmer](#), as follows:


Dear Sir — Yesterday, Mr. Flint brought to me the bottle of grubs, which you sent by him. He said that they were found in considerable numbers, on snow in Concord lately, and that they were alive when taken; but they were dead when received.

They are of a livid or pale brownish color, about half an inch long, thickest at the hinder end of the body, and tapering towards the other end. Above the vent, there is a kind of coronet of short spines, four of which are longer than the others, and the latter are black at the points. These grubs are the larvæ or young of some kind of crane-fly or *Tipula*, and resemble the figures of the larvæ of the European *Tipula corniciva* and *Tipula oleracea*, two species vulgarly called daddy long-legs, in England, and well known for their injury, in the larvæ state, to the grass-roots of meadows. In the volume of "Insect Transformations" belonging to the "Library of Entertaining Knowledge," will be found a short account of the European insects above named, pages 252 to 255 inclusive, to which I beg to refer you. The Concord grubs, like their European prototypes, probably lived in the ground upon the roots of grasses. How they came to be dislodged from their quarters I cannot tell.



1853-1854

1853-1854

 March 17, Friday: The city government of [Worcester, Massachusetts](#) purchased some parkland (the 1st occasion on which any US city had ever done any such thing).

Treaty talks between [Japanese](#) officials and Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) continued. Members of the expedition with special functions, such as Daguerreotypist Eliphalet M. Brown, Jr., telegraphists William B. Draper and John P. Williams, the agriculturist/botanist Dr. James Morrow, and some engineers, were allowed ashore in order to set up their equipment and otherwise prepare to conduct demonstrations. A railway was set up, consisting of a locomotive pulling one car (one would suppose that the track was a loop but we don't know that), as a magnificent gift from the US President to the Emperor of Japan.

On a remarkably warm morning for the season, almost like a May morning, [Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed a houseplot belonging to Doctor Joseph Reynolds on Lowell Road near the present Bow Street. This may have been property that John Stacy had to sell in 1853.




In the afternoon [Thoreau](#) walked to the Cliffs.



March 17. Friday. A remarkably warm day for the season; too warm while surveying without my greatcoat; almost like May heats.

4 P.M.— To Cliffs.

The grass is *slightly* greened on south bank-sides,— on the south side of the house. It begins to be windy. Saw a small gyrinus at the brook bridge behind Hubbard's Grove. The first tinge of green appears to be due to moisture more than to direct heat. It is not on bare dry banks, but in hollows where the snow melts last that it is most conspicuous. Fair Haven is open for half a dozen rods about the shores. If this weather holds, it will be entirely open in a day or two.

 March 18, Saturday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked with [Ellery Channing](#) in a very high wind, around the west side of the river to Conantum.





March 18. Saturday. Very high wind this forenoon; began by filling the air with a cloud of dust. Never felt it shake the house so much; filled the house with dust through the cracks; books, stove, papers covered with it. Blew down [Mr. Frost's](#) chimney again. Took up my boat, a very heavy one, which was lying on its bottom in the yard, and carried it two rods. The white caps of the waves on the flooded meadow, seen from the window, are a rare and exciting spectacle,— such an angry face as our Concord meadows rarely exhibit.— Walked down the street to post-office. Few inhabitants out more than in a rain. Elms bending and twisting and thrashing the air as if they would come down every moment. I was cautious about passing under them. Yet scarcely a rotten limb in the street. The highest winds occur neither in summer, when the trees are covered with leaves, nor in winter, when they may be covered with ice. Saw a flattened toad on the sidewalk. Could it have been last year's?¹⁴⁶

P.M. — Walked round by the west side of the river to Conantum.

Wind less violent. [C.](#) has already seen a yellow-spotted tortoise in a ditch. (Two sizable elms by river in Merrick's pasture blown down, roots being rotted off on water side.) The willow catkins this side M. Miles's five eighths of an inch long and show some red. Poplar catkins nearly as large, color somewhat like a gray rabbit. Old barn blown down on Conantum. It fell regularly, like a weak box pushed over, without moving its



bottom, the roof falling upon it a little to leeward. The hay is left exposed, but does not blow away. The river was at its height last night. Before this we saw many robins  and sparrows  under Clamshell Hill for shelter. Birds seek warm and sheltered places in such weather. It is very cold and freezing, this wind. The water

146. Guess not.

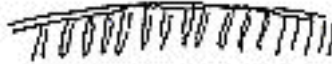
1853-1854

1853-1854

has been blown quite across the Hubbard's Bridge causeway in some places and incrusted the road with ice. Before looking this way we had seen the whitened shore from Lupine Hill. It is blown and dashes against the



willows and incrusts them with ice, sometimes to the height of three feet, with icicles shaped like bulls' horns, especially observable where many osiers stand together, and from the more horizontal osiers, etc., depend icicles, five or six inches long, very regularly, looking exactly like coarse rakes, apparently not the result of melting but of the spray and water blown or dashed upon them: only more regular. A very wintry sight.



The water is in many places blown a rod on to the shore and frozen. Saw where a woodchuck (probably) had dug out quite a pile of gravel in the side of a hill.



March 19, Sunday: When the *Supply* arrived in [Japanese](#) waters bearing a load of coal and other stores, the squadron under Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) rose to a strength of 9 vessels.

Tsar Nikolai I ruled that all public concerts in St. Petersburg must be approved by the director of the Imperial Theater, thereby restricting all public concerts to Lent when the Imperial Theater was closed.

[Henry Thoreau](#) walked in Walden Woods and visited Mill Brook behind Shannon's.



March 19. Sunday. Cold and windy. The meadow ice bears where shallow. [William Rice 2d](#) (?) saw a woodchuck last Sunday. Met his father in Walden Woods, who described a flock of crows [**American Crow** [Corvus brachyrhynchos](#)] he had just seen which followed him "eying down, eying down."

Saw in Mill Brook behind Shannon's three or four shiners¹⁴⁷ (the first), poised over the sand with a distinct longitudinal light-colored line midway along their sides and a darker line below it. This is a noteworthy and characteristic lineament, or cipher, or hieroglyphic, or type, of spring. You look into some clear, sandy-bottomed brook, where it spreads into a deeper bay, yet flowing cold from ice and snow not far off, and see, indistinctly poised over the sand on invisible fins, the outlines of a shiner, scarcely to be distinguished from the sands behind it, as if it were transparent, or as [if] the material of which it was build Ed had all been picked up from them. Chiefly distinguished by the lines I have mentioned.

Goodwin killed a pigeon [**American Passenger Pigeon** [Ectopistes migratorius](#) (~~Pigeon, Wild~~)¹⁴⁸] yesterday.

Flint's Pond almost entirely open, — much more than Fair Haven.

147. Minnows?

148. Now extinct.

CHAPTER X.

Voracity of Caterpillars, Grubs, and Maggots; — concluded.

MAGGOTS.

ADHERING to the distinction of terming those larvæ which are destitute of feet, *maggots*, we shall notice here a very destructive one, which is sometimes popularly called *the grub*, and sometimes confounded with the wire worm.* We allude to the larvæ of one or two common species of crane flies (*Tipulidæ*), well known by the provincial names of father-long-legs, Jenny-spinners, and tailors. These insects are so common in some meadows, that, being very shy and fearful of danger, they rise in swarms at every step — some of them flying high, others only skipping over the grass, and others running and using their long legs as the inhabitants of marshy countries use stilts, and employing their wings like the ostrich to aid their limbs.

These flies deposit their eggs in the earth; sometimes in grass fields or moist meadows, and sometimes in the tilled ground of gardens and farms. For this purpose the female is provided with an ovipositor well adapted to the operation, consisting of a sort of pincers or forceps of a horny consistence, and sharp at the point. By pressure, as Réaumur says, the eggs may be extruded from this in the same way as the stone can be easily squeezed out of a ripe cherry as in the following figure.

* See Stickney's Observ. on the grub, 8vo. Hull, 1800.

1853-1854

1853-1854

MAGGOTS OF CRANE FLIES.

253

Ovipositor and eggs of the crane fly (*Tipula*).

The eggs are exceedingly small and black, like grains of gunpowder, and each female lays a good many hundreds. The position which she assumes appears somewhat awkward, for she raises herself perpendicularly on her two hind legs, using her ovipositor as a point of support, and resting with her fore-legs upon the contiguous herbage. She then thrusts her ovipositor into the ground as far as the first ring of her body, and leaves one or more eggs in the hole; and next moves onwards to another place, but without bringing herself into a horizontal position. The maggot, when hatched from the egg, immediately attacks the roots of the grass and other herbage which it finds nearest to it; and of course the portion of the plant above ground withers for lack of nourishment.

The maggots of this family which seem to do most injury are those of *Tipula oleracea* and *T. cornicina*. In the summer of 1828, we observed more than an acre of ground, adjoining the Bishop of Oxford's garden, at Blackheath, as entirely stripped, both of grass and every thing green, as if the turf had been

1853-1854

1853-1854

254

INSECT TRANSFORMATIONS.



Crane fly ovipositing, and the larva beneath, in the earth, feeding upon grass roots.

pared off from the surface, the only plant untouched being the tiny bird tare (*Ornithopus perpusillus*). On digging here to learn the cause, we found these larvæ already full-fed, and about to pass into pupæ, after having left nothing upon which they could subsist. It was not a little remarkable that they seemed to be altogether confined to this spot; for we did not meet with a single foot of turf destroyed by them in any other part of the heath, or in the adjacent fields. So

very complete, however, was their destruction of the roots on the spot in question, that even now, at the distance of two years, it is still visibly thinner of herbage than the parts around it.*

Réaumur gives a similar account of their ravages in Poitou, where, in certain seasons, the grass of the low moist meadows has been so parched up in consequence, as not to afford sufficient provender for the cattle. He describes the soil in Poitou as a black peat mould; and it was the same in which we found them at Blackheath, with this difference, that the spot was elevated and dry. According to M. Réaumur, also, their only food is this sort of black mould, and not the roots of grass and herbage, which he thinks are only loosened by their burrowing.† This view of the matter appears strongly corroborated by the fact that several species of the family feed upon the mould in the holes of decaying trees, particularly the larva of a very beautiful one (*Ctenophora flaveolata*, MEIGEN), which is very rare in Britian. It is proper to mention, however, that Mr Stickney's experiments,‡ contrary to the conclusions of Réaumur, indicate that these larvæ devour the roots of grass; and Stewart says they 'feed on the roots of plants, corn, and grasses, and are thence destructive to gardens, fields, and meadows. They prevailed in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, and other places in Scotland, in the spring of 1800, when they laid waste whole fields of oats and other grain.'§

In many districts of England these insects cut off a large proportion of the wheat crop, particularly, it would appear, when it had been sown on clover leys. 'In the rich district,' say Kirby and Spence, 'of Sunk Island, in Holderness, in the spring of 1813, hundreds of acres of pasture have been entirely de-

* J. R.


‡ Obs. on the Grub.

† R aumur, v. 12, &c.

§ Elements, ii, 267.

1853-1854

1853-1854

 March 20, Monday evening: A [Fourierite](#) socialist named Alvan Bovay had grown so angered with the failure of the existing political parties to demand the immediate freeing of all slaves that he had called a meeting at Ripon, Wisconsin's Little White Schoolhouse to form a new party. Most of those present were Fourierites, and they chose the name "Republican" because it was, in Bovay's words, "suggestive of equality."

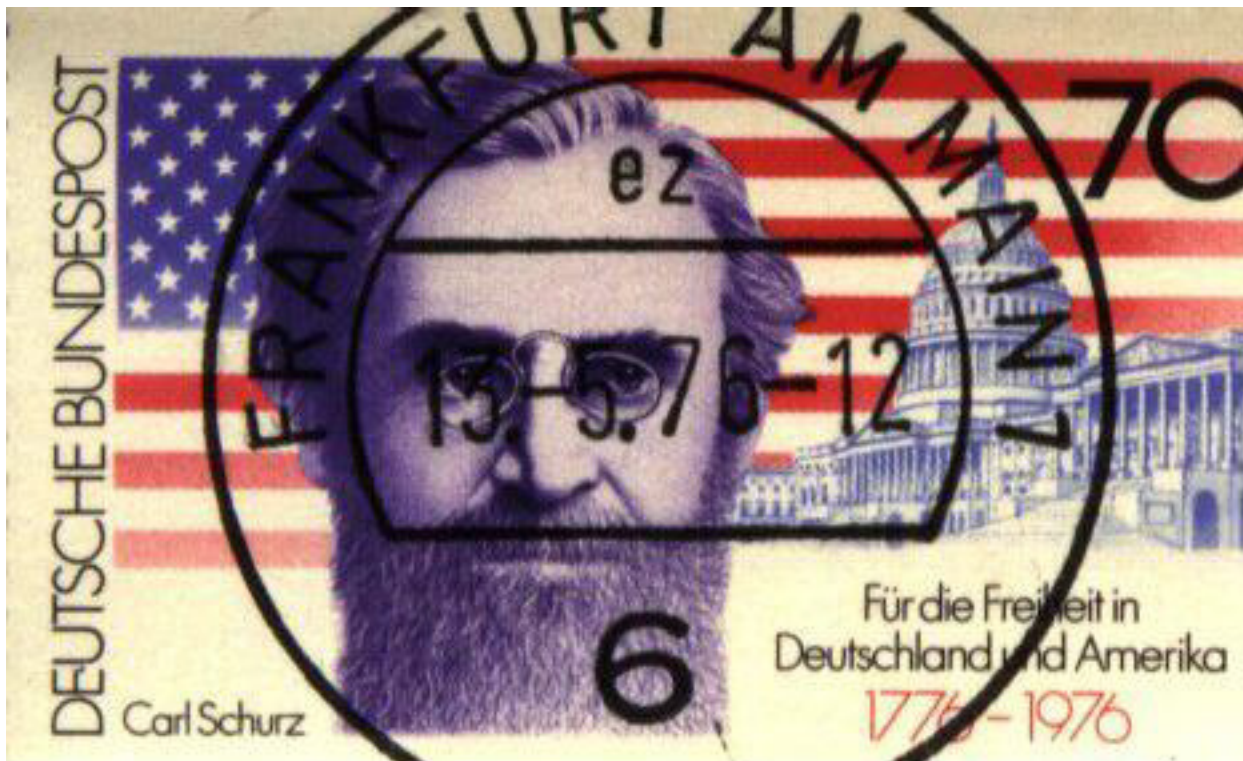
REPUBLICAN PARTY

The new party adopted a platform that pledged it to seek equality not just for slaves, but for all workers. Its slogan was "Free soil, free speech, free men," and one of its first pledges was to invalidate mortgages held by big banks in order to prevent foreclosure actions against small farmers.

FREE SOIL PARTY

The Republicans sought as well to promote women's rights, defend immigrants, advance trade union organizing, limit the amount of land that any individual could own and forbid corporate monopolies. The intent of the new party, its founders said, was nothing less than to join "the old battle –not yet over– between the rights of the toiling many and the special privileges of the aristocratic few." (It is an open question, whether the hearts of these people were filled with a longing to raise the condition of the lowly, or were animated instead with a lust to level down the overweening. Later on it would become abundantly clear from their own indignant "we are not nigger lovers" testimony that their agenda to eliminate human slavery had never amounted to an agenda to improve the lives of American black people.)

One of the first Wisconsinites attracted to their banner would be [Carl Schurz](#), a leader of the radical German revolution of 1848 — which also had been influenced by Fourier's ideas, as well as those of [Karl Marx](#).



Marx became a writer for [Horace Greeley](#)'s Republican newspaper, the [New-York Tribune](#), which also featured writing by Bovay and Schurz. By 1854, Schurz had settled in Watertown and soon became a leader



1853-1854

1853-1854

of Wisconsin's burgeoning German community.

Schurz rejected invitations to run for office on the Democrat line because he thought the party too conservative. But he joined the new party and, within a few years, became one of its first statewide candidates. Shortly before leaving Wisconsin to join the administration of his close friend and ally, [Abraham Lincoln](#), Schurz addressed students at the University of Wisconsin. In that speech, he warned against the evils of "the spirit of materialism" and "the pursuit of gain." Republicans, he argued, sought "a higher order" in which equality would replace greed and other manifestations of "the dark side of the picture."

In England, the Reverend [Samuel Ringgold Ward](#) was winding up his anti-slavery lecture tour:

After ten months' service for the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada, through the Committee in London, its affairs were wound up, some £1,200 having been kindly given to its treasury by the philanthropists of England and Scotland. A large meeting was holden at Crosby Hall on the 20th of March, 1854, the venerable and philanthropic Samuel Gurney, Esq., in the chair; Rev. James Sherman, Samuel Horman Horman-Fisher, Esq., L.A. Chamerovzow, Esq., Rev. James Hamilton, D.D., Rev. John Macfarlane, B.A., Josiah Conder, Esq., together with others, being on the platform; and Joseph Payne, Esq., gracing the occasion with his presence, a speech, and a piece of poetry, the last of which he kindly gave me. I hold it as a memento of its beloved author, and as a remembrance of the friendship wherewith he has been pleased to honour me.

Presumably it was at about this point that [Henry Thoreau](#) brought his manuscript of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) up to date by adding some notes about the story of the pond subsequent to his residency there, comments which are not to be found in any surviving manuscript draft:

Now the trunks of trees on the bottom, and the old log canoe, and the dark surrounding woods, are gone, and the villagers, who scarcely know where it lies, instead of going to the pond to bathe or drink, are thinking to bring its water, which should be as sacred as the Ganges at least, to the village in a pipe, to wash their dishes with! -to earn their Walden by the turning of a cock or drawing of a plug! That devilish Iron Horse, whose ear-rending neigh is heard throughout the town, has muddied the Boiling Spring with his foot, and he it is that has browsed off all the woods on Walden shore; that Trojan horse, with a thousand men in his belly, introduced by mercenary Greeks! Where is the country's champion, the Moore of Moore Hall, to meet him at the Deep Cut and thrust an avenging lance between the ribs of the bloated pest?




[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR MARCH 20TH]




1853-1854

1853-1854

 March 21, Tuesday: The *Lioness* of Tasmania (still known at this point as "[Van Diemen's Land](#)") wrecked at Clarke Island in the Furneaux Group with the loss of 4 crewmembers.



March 21: Tuesday. At sunrise to Clamshell Hill.

River skimmed over at Willow Bay last night. Thought I should find ducks  cornered up by the ice; they get behind this hill for shelter. Saw what looked like clods of plowed meadow rising above the ice. Looked with glass and found it to be more than thirty black ducks asleep with their heads in their backs, motionless, and thin ice formed about them. Soon one or two were moving about slowly. There was an open space, eight or ten rods by one or two. At first all within a space of apparently less than a rod [in] diameter. It was 6.30 A.M., and the sun shining on them, but bitter cold. How tough they are! I crawled far on my stomach and got a near view of them, thirty rods off. At length they detected me and quacked. Some got out upon the ice, and when I rose up all took to flight in a great stragglng flock which at a distance looked like crows, in no order. Yet, when you see two or three, the parallelism produced by their necks and bodies steering the same way gives the idea of order.

 March 22, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) and [Ellery Channing](#) launched the boat and paddled to Fair Haven.

The news in [California](#):

The Chinese Battle. — The Empire County Argus gives the following account of the recent fight among the Chinese, at Greenwood: Some five or six hundred of these people are congregated in Greenwood. They are principally from Hongkong, Canton and Makoy. Those from Hongkong were mostly smugglers and pirates at home, and mostly follow gambling and other vile practices in this country; those from the other portions are principally miners. A few days since, the Hongkongs found one of the opposing party in a brothel and beat him severely. This act caused a fight between the parties on Saturday last, in which some four or five were badly wounded. Since then active preparations were made for a grand battle; messengers were sent to the various camps for reinforcements, and each party received additions to their numbers. About ten o'clock on Thursday the hostile parties mustered in force for the fray. The Hongkongs numbering about two hundred and fifty men, while the others numbered about one hundred and fifty. The parties were armed with poles, spears and stones. After manoeuvring awhile, the fight began by a furious onslaught with stones and other missiles, much to the amusement of the spectators, of whom numbers were present. It lasted about fifteen minutes, when the Hongkongs ran. The result of the encounter is, two mortally wounded, and some twelve or fifteen badly hurt. Undoubtedly the American citizens of Greenwood are censurable for this breach of the peace, as we are informed they take sides with the belligerents and urge them on.

Gold Again Found. — Under this head we clip the following bit from the Sonoma Bulletin: Gold is now the rage the world over — in fact the world is topsyturvy

1853-1854

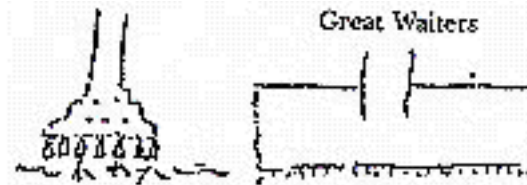
1853-1854





with glistening madness; it is a theme of conversation for the millions; only speak of digging (potatoes,) and you are asked, "how much to the pan?" so prominent is gold in the minds of the multitude. But, we mean simply to state that gold has again been found at the head, or thereabouts, of Russian River. This we were assured of by one of the inhabitants of that region, who said he had several small specimens which he found there; yet we should like to see them, in order to be fully convinced of the fact. No doubt gold exists in that neighborhood, but it is questionable whether in such quantity as to pay labor. However it may be, we are certain that our farmers are too sensible to drop their implements in a feverish moment to pursue a phantom — for so it must be called until we know to the contrary. At the Union Hotel they are exhibiting a piece of gold in a glass covered box, (whether from the new mines is not said) which, upon close scrutiny, looks very much like a lump of gilt chalk.



March 22. Wednesday. P.M. —Launch boat and paddle to Fair Haven.

Still very cold. The most splendid show of ice chandeliers, casters, hour-glasses ($\frac{1}{2}$) that I ever saw or imagined about the piers of the bridges, surpassing any crystal, so large. Rather like the bases of columns, — terraced



pedestals, that is it, — the prototypes of the ornaments of the copings and capitals. Perfect and regular, sharp, cone-shaped drops hang from the first figure a few inches above the water. I should have described it then. It would have filled many pages. Scared up my flock of black ducks [Black Duck  *Anas rubripes* (~~Dusky Duck~~)] and counted forty together. See crows [American Crow  *Corvus brachyrhynchos*] along the water's edge. What do they eat? Saw a small black duck with glass,—a dipper [Pied-billed Grebe  *Podilymbus podiceps* (or Hooded Merganser  *Lophodytes cucullatus*)](?). Fair Haven still covered and frozen anew in part. Shores of meadow strewn with cranberries. The now silvery willow catkins (notwithstanding the severe cold) shine along the shore, over the cold water, and C. thinks some willow osiers decidedly more yellow.



March 23, Thursday: [George Minott](#) commented to [Henry Thoreau](#) that he had not been to Boston "since the last war," meaning since the year 1815.

[Thoreau](#) was being written to by [Horace Greeley](#) in [New-York](#). The editor was confirming that he would announce [WALDEN: OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) in his newspaper, the [Tribune](#), at once. He also asked Thoreau to have Elizabeth Hoar send to him her personal recollections of Margaret Fuller, for possible use in an edition of Fuller's works which he had agreed to edit.



New York,

Mar. 23, '54.

Dear Thoreau,

I am glad your "Walden" is coming out. I shall announce it at once,



1853-1854

1853-1854

whether Ticknor does or not.

I am in no hurry now about your Miscellanies; take your time, select a good title, and prepare your articles deliberately and finally. Then if Ticknor will give you something worth having, let him have this too; if proffering it to him is to glut your market, let it come to me. But take your time. I was only thinking you were hybernating when you ought to be doing something. I referred (without naming you) to your "Walden" experience in my lecture on "Self-Culture," with which I have bored ever so many audiences. This episode excited much interest, and I have repeatedly been asked who it is that I refer to.

Yours,

Horace Greeley.

H. D. Thoreau, Concord, Ms.

P. S. You must know Miss Elizabeth Hoar, whereas I hardly do. Now I have agreed to edit Margaret's works, and I want of Elizabeth a letter or memorandum of personal recollections of Margaret and her Ideas. Can't you ask her to write it for me?

Yours, H.G.



March 23. Thursday. Snows and rains a little. The birds in yard active now, — hyemalis [Dark-eyed Junco] [Junco hyemalis] ~~Slate-colored Sparrow~~, tree sparrow [American Tree Sparrow] [Spizella arborea], and song sparrow [Song Sparrow] [Melospiza melodia]. The hyemalis jingle easily distinguished. Hear all together on apple trees these days. Minott confesses to me to-day that he has not been to Boston since the last war, or 1815. Aunt said that he had not been ten miles from home since; that he has not been to Acton since Miss Powers [?] lived there; but he declared that he had been there to cornwallis and musters. When I asked if he would like to go to Boston, he answered he was going to another Boston.



March 24, Friday: Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) accepted [Japanese](#) gift items of manufacture, lacquerware, silks, finely painted porcelain, fans, pipes, dolls, soy, charcoal and 4 small spaniels of a rare breed, intended not for him personally but to be carried home to [US President Franklin Pierce](#).

Despite the fact that no [war](#) had as yet been declared to be in existence, [Richard Somerset Le Poer Trench, 4th Earl of Clancarty, 3rd Marquess of Heusden](#) rose in the Parliament and suggested that the day ought to be one of prayer and humiliation. He was then rebuked by the Prime Minister, [George Hamilton-Gordon, 4th Earl of Aberdeen](#), as the assembled Lords of the Realm prepared to adjourn for their weekend:

My Lords, before your Lordships separate, I would beg to put to the noble Earl at the head of Her Majesty's Government a question upon a subject which is just now of much public interest, and I trust that, although I have not given any formal notice of it, he will be both able and willing to give a satisfactory answer. Evening after evening discussions have taken place in this House relative to the affairs of the East, and to the war with Russia, upon which this country may be said to have entered; and those discussions have certainly not been devoid of interest and of public advantage. It is a subject of congratulation that the



1853-1854

1853-1854

whole of the correspondence with Russia, both secret and official, having been laid upon the table, it has been found to be such as to reflect no dishonour upon the British name, and it may justly be added that it is most creditable to those who have been entrusted with the conduct of our foreign relations. These papers show that everything has been done that could have been done to avert the calamity of war, and they conclusively establish the justice of the cause we have espoused. Again, from the discussions that have taken place on the naval and military armaments, it has been satisfactorily shown that the most efficient preparation has been made, and that the Government have not been wanting in the emergency in careful attention to the good of the public service. Hence they have acquired, at this important crisis, 1268 the cordial support of public opinion, and the national enthusiasm in the impending conflict is scarcely less than that which animates the forces that are now on their way to the scene of action. All these are most auspicious and cheering circumstances, but there is one circumstance which many in this country view with regret and disappointment, and that is, the omission on the part of the Government to take any step for publicly invoking the Divine blessing upon our arms, and upon the cause they are sent forth to support. Such a step would, I conceive, have been right, at a time when the country is embarking in a war, certainly of a very formidable character, and of which no one can foresee the issue. We may feel confident in the justice of our cause, we may feel confident in the strength of our armaments, and we shall certainly not be disappointed in the valour of the brave men we have sent forth; but "the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong;" and if we look not to the Almighty disposer of events for his guidance and blessing, we may find our confidence no better justified in the event than was that of the Spanish Monarch, who once sent against this country the armada that he styled "invincible." I am no advocate of superstitious forms and observances, but they may nevertheless be regarded in general as implying a recognition of the Deity. I therefore take the liberty of mentioning what came under my personal observation, when I happened to be with a Russian army in 1829, on the occasion of a force being detached upon some special service from Count Diebitsch's army at Adrianople. The troops were formed in an open plain around an altar, at which a Greek priest officiated, and after a certain rite, doubtless including the offering up of prayer, had been performed, the troops were sprinkled with holy water. The ceremonial, though not very intelligible in its forms, was undoubtedly designed to invoke the Divine blessing upon the expedition, and the example is so far worthy of imitation. Forms of prayer and devotion in this country are happily simple and intelligible. Prayer is made during the sitting of Parliament for the Divine blessing upon your deliberations, and suitable forms of prayer are ordered for use in our national churches on occasions of calamity or of danger. Surely, then, on the departure of so many brave men to engage in the strife of arms, it would be suitable that some public acknowledgment should 1269 be made of national reliance on Divine support. I trust the noble Earl will, if he has not already done so, take such steps in the matter as would be

1853-1854

1853-1854

becoming in the Government of a Christian people. I therefore venture to inquire, as a matter of much public interest, whether it is intended that any form of religious observance should be commanded in reference to the war in which the country is now engaged?

THE EARL OF ABERDEEN considered the noble Earl's appeal somewhat premature, for war not having yet been declared, the time had not arrived when such a step as that to which the noble Earl referred could properly be taken, even if it should be thought proper to take it at all. He would remind the noble Earl, too, that there was in our liturgy a prayer to be publicly used in time of war, and which for the same reason — that war did not exist — was not read in our churches; and it would, he submitted, be premature to announce any proceeding of this sort, until the emergency to which it was to be directed arose.



March 24. Fair again, the snow melting. Great flocks of hyemalis [~~Dark-eyed Junco~~ Junco *hyemalis* (~~Slate-colored Sparrow or Snow-bird~~)] drifting about with their jingling note. The same ducks under Clamshell Hill. The elm buds were apparently expanded before this cold, which began on the 18th. Goose Pond half open. Flint's has perhaps fifteen or twenty acres of ice yet about shores. Can hardly tell when it is open this year. The black ducks [~~Black Duck~~ *Anas rubripes* (~~Dusky Duck~~)] — the most common that I see — are the only ones whose note I know or hear, — a hoarse, croaking quack. How shy they are!



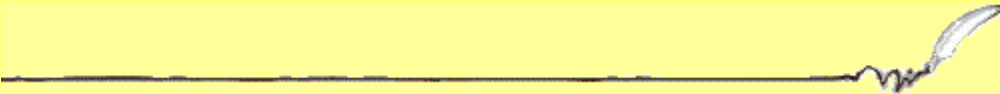
March 25, Saturday: It was cold and windy. [Henry Thoreau](#) went down the river in the boat to Great Meadows.



March 25. Saturday. Cold and windy.
Down river in boat to Great Meadows.


"Downriver," "To Great Meadow," and "To Hill" signified a northward trip down the Concord River below the triple point of the confluence. After passing through a straight reach aligned by the local bedrock strike, arched by two bridges, and flanked by gravel bars of historic sediment that were repeatedly dredged, he entered the north side of Great Meadow. Bounded by the site of the Old North Bridge to the southwest and Ball's Hill to the northeast, it was two miles long and half a mile across. When in flood, the meadow was his favorite inland sea to sail upon because the wind was least impeded and the waves were highest.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 11




Freezes on oars. Too cold and windy almost for ducks. They are in the smoother open water (free from ice) under the lee of hills. Got a boat-load of driftwood, — rails, bridge timber, planks, etc. White maple buds bursting, making trees look like some fruit trees with blossom-buds.

Is not the small duck or two I see one at a time and flying pretty high a teal [~~Teal, Blue-winged~~ *Anas discors*]? Willow osiers near Mill Brook mouth I am almost certain have acquired a fresher color; at least they surprise me at a distance by their green passing through yellowish to red at top.

 March 26, Sunday: Duke Carlo III of Parma was stabbed and mortally wounded as he walked towards his palace accompanied only by an orderly (the assassin presumably disagreed with the Duke's support of a [Crimean War](#)).



March 26. River froze over at ~~Lily~~^{Willow?} Bay.


 March 27, Monday: Duke Carlo III of Parma died of the wounds he had received on the previous day and was succeeded by his son Roberto.

William Speiden, Jr. offers in his diary of the Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) expedition to [Japan](#) an account of commissioners being welcomed to banquets aboard the *Macedonian* and the *Powhatan*. Speiden attended the banquet aboard the *Powhatan* and witnessed the toasts offered to the health of the Emperor of Japan and [President of the United States of America Franklin Pierce](#). Speiden's own father proffered one of these toasts: "California and Japan, next door neighbors, may they soon step in and spend the evening with each other." At the conclusion of the banquet the Japanese guests were subjected to a minstrel entertainment. With the evening finally over, the son speculated to his journal that "I truly believe that the new era which is now about to take place in the History of the Japanese Empire, will be one in which far more greater changes will occur than we have at this time any reason to anticipate, and that too before many years have passed."

Russia declared war on France. As if that were not quite enough news for any given day — amidst a group of titles by Ticknor, Reed & Fields the Boston [Evening Transcript](#) provided in its 2d column of its 2d page a "Literary Announcement," of [Henry Thoreau](#)'s WALDEN.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN



March 27, Saw a hawk — probably marsh hawk [[Northern Harrier](#)  [Circus cyaneus](#) Marsh Hawk (~~Hen Harrier or Frog Hawk~~)] — by meadow.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

1853-1854

1853-1854



March 28, Tuesday: After the Requiem mass for the funeral of Michael Arneth, prior of St. Florian and friend of Anton Bruckner, Bruckner's Vor Arneths Grab for chorus and 3 trombones and Libera me, Domine for chorus, 3 trombones, cello, double bass, and organ were heard for the initial time.



Rumors were circulating through the American fleet in the Far East that the Japanese negotiators had agreed to open a couple of ports to American vessels, one of them to be the port of Shimoda.

Hector Berlioz conducted in Hanover again, less successfully than in the previous year (but, he was a hit with the King and Queen).

In the afternoon Henry Thoreau walked to White Pond. And, when he picked up the mail, there was the nicest surprise: "Got first proof of 'Walden'."149

ROSS/ADAMS COMMENTARY

In the chapter "Visitors" the author had deployed the phrase "a ridiculous mouse."150 Although this can be found elsewhere in classical literature, for instance in the writings of Athenaeus, those with that sort of education would have recognized it most readily as a reference to Horace's ARS POETICA, 139, "Mountains will labor, to bring forth a ridiculous mouse."



WALDEN: I think that I love society as much as most, and am ready enough to fasten myself like a blood-sucker for the time to any full-blooded man that comes in my way. I am naturally no hermit, but might possibly sit out the sturdiest frequenter of the bar-room, if my business called me thither. I had three chairs in my house; one for solitude, two for friendship, three for society. When visitors came in larger and unexpected numbers there was but the third chair for them all, but they generally economized the room by standing up. It is surprising how many great men and women a small house will contain. I have had twenty-five or thirty souls, with their bodies, at once under my roof, and yet we often parted without being aware that we had come very near to one another. Many of our houses, both public and private, with their almost innumerable apartments, their huge halls and their cellars for the storage of wines and other munitions of peace, appear to me extravagantly large for their inhabitants. They are so vast and magnificent that the latter seem to be only vermin which infest them. I am surprised when the herald blows his summons before some Tremont or Astor or Middlesex House, to see come creeping out over the piazza for all inhabitants a ridiculous mouse, which soon again slinks into some hole in the pavement.

PEOPLE OF WALDEN

HERMIT HORACE

149. Thoreau would not finish with his editing of this 1st proof until May.

150. Those with the benefit of the classical education would have received this as a reference to Horace.

1853-1854

1853-1854

We need not take this to be a reference to the labor of producing this magnificent book since by coincidence on this very day “the Allies” and Russia were in the process of declaring war upon each other (fighting centering upon the destruction of the Russian naval base at Sevastopol), something which would eventually come to be known as the “[Crimean War](#)” — Great Britain, Turkey, Sardinia, and France declared war on [Russia](#) while [Russia](#) declared war on Great Britain. With the benefit of our historical hindsight we now know how very well that effort was going to proceed!



March 28. P.M. — To White Pond.

Coldest day for a month or more, — severe as almost any in the winter. Saw this afternoon either a snipe [[Common Snipe](#) [Gallinago gallinago](#)] or a woodcock [[Woodcock, American](#) [Scolopax minor](#)]; it appeared rather small for the last.¹⁵¹ Pond opening on the northeast. A flock of hyemalis [[Dark-eyed Junco](#) [Junco hyemalis](#) ([Slate-colored Sparrow](#) or [Snow-bird](#))] drifting from a wood over a field incessantly for four or five minutes, — thousands of them, notwithstanding the cold. The fox-colored sparrow [[Fox Sparrow](#) [Passerella iliaca](#) ([Fox-colored Sparrow](#))] sings sweetly also. Saw a small slate-colored hawk, with wings transversely mottled beneath, — probably the sharp-shinned hawk [[Sharp-shinned Hawk](#) [Accipiter striatus](#) ([slate-colored hawk](#), including subspecies *perobscurus*, *velox*, *suttoni*, *madrensis*, *fringilloides*, and *venator*)]. Got first proof of “Walden.”

TIMELINE OF WALDEN



March 29, Wednesday: The Republic of the Orange Free State was created independent of Great Britain.

In New-York, in the [Daily Tribune](#), 6 excerpts from [Henry Thoreau](#)'s WALDEN manuscript were published.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

[Thoreau](#) went to Fair Haven:



March 29. Wednesday. P.M. — To Fair Haven.

Coldest night. Pump froze so as to require thawing. Saw two marsh hawks [[Northern Harrier](#) [Circus cyaneus](#) Marsh Hawk ([Hen-Harrier](#) or [Frog-Hawk](#))](?), white on rump. A gull [[Herring Gull](#) [Larus argentatus](#)] of pure white, — a wave of foam in the air. How simple and wave-like its outline, the outline of the wings presenting two curves, between which the tail is merely the point of junction, — all wing like a birch



scale; tail remarkably absorbed.

Saw two white-throated, black-beaked divers [[Common Loon](#) [Gavia immer](#) ([Diver](#) or [Great Northern Diver](#))] fly off swiftly low over the water, with black tips of wings curved short downward. Afterward saw one



scoot along out from the shore upon the water and dive; and that was the last I could see of him, though I watched four or five minutes. Fair Haven half open; channel wholly open. See thin cakes of ice at a distance now and then blown up on their edges and glistening in the sun. Had the experience of arctic voyagers amid the floe ice on a small scale. Think I saw a hen-hawk [[Red-shouldered Hawk](#) [Buteo lineatus](#) ([Hen-Hawk](#)) or [Red-tailed Hawk](#) [Buteo jamaicensis](#) ([Hen-Hawk](#))], — two circling over Cliffs.

151. Probably a snipe.



1853-1854

1853-1854



March 30, Thursday: [New-York](#) created the office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.







1st Lieutenant John Wynn Davidson, who was commanding a reinforced company under orders to locate a fugitive band of Jicarilla Apaches and keep them from fleeing westward across the Rio Grande, disobeyed orders and attacked the Jicarilla camp on a ridge near [Cieneguilla](#) (present-day Pilar, New Mexico). They soon found themselves surrounded in a basin below the village, and in the fight every member of the 15-man Company F detachment was killed or wounded. The hard campaigning of 1854 would leave the exhausted men of Company F with threadbare uniforms, played-out horses and damaged equipment. Nevertheless, [Colonel Thomas Turner Fauntleroy](#) would plan to send Company F of the [1st US Regiment of Dragoons](#) back into the field early in the following year.

WHITE ON RED, RED ON WHITE

[Henry Thoreau](#) went to the Island at 6 AM. Later in the day, he read an article on [Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire](#) in the January issue of [Westminster Review](#), entitled “*Le Principe des Connexions.*”



March 30. 6 A.M.— To Island.

First still hour since the afternoon of the 17th. March truly came in like a lamb and went out like a lion this year. Remarkably and continuously pleasant weather from the very first day till the 18th. Apparently an early spring, —buds and birds well advanced,— then suddenly very severe cold and high winds cold enough to skim the river over in broad places at night, and commencing with the greatest and most destructive gale for many a year, felt far and wide; and it has never ceased to blow since till this morning. Vegetation is accordingly put back. The ground these last cold (thirteen) days has been about bare of snow, but frozen. Some had peas and potatoes in before it. First half of month very pleasant and mild spring weather, last half severe winter cold and high winds. The water at its highest, —not very high,— this month on the 17th. Ducks  have been lurking in sheltered places not frozen. Robins  feed along the edge of the river. At the Island I see and hear this morning the cackle of a pigeon woodpecker [[Yellow-shafted Flicker](#)  [Colaptes auratus](#) Pigeon-Woodpecker] at the hollow poplar; had heard him tapping distinctly from my boat's place ¼+ of a mile. Great flocks of tree sparrows [[American Tree Sparrow](#)  [Spizella arborea](#)] and some *F. hyemalis* [[Dark-eyed Junco](#)  [Junco hyemalis](#) ([Slate-colored Sparrow](#) or [Snow-bird](#) or *F. Hyemalis*)] on the ground and trees on the Island Neck, making the air and bushes ring with their jingling. The former —some of them— say somewhat like this: *a eke eke, ter twee twee, twee twee twa*. It sounded like a new bird. The black ducks [[Black Duck](#)  [Anas rubripes](#) ([Dusky Duck](#))] seem always to rise with that loud, hoarse croaking — quacking. The river early is partly filled with thin, floating, hardly cemented ice, occasionally turned on its edge by the wind and sparkling in the sun. If the sun had kept out of the way one day in the past fortnight, I think the river would have frozen to bear. Read an interesting article on Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, the friend and contemporary of Cuvier, though opposed to him in his philosophy. He believed species to be variable. In looking for anatomical resemblances he found that he could not safely be guided by function, form, structure, size, color, etc., but only by the relative position and mutual dependence of organs. Hence his *Le Principe des Connexions* and his maxim, “An organ is sooner destroyed than transposed,” — “Un organ est plutôt altéré, atrophié, anéanti, que transposé.” A principal formula of his was, “Unity of Plan, Unity of Composition.” (In the *Westminster Review*, January, 1854.)

Concord Mar. 30th '54

The undersigned, wishing to enjoy equal advantages with their fellow countrymen at a distance, earnestly request, that Mr Emerson will read to the Lyceum as many of the lectures which he has read abroad the past winter as may be convenient for him, including the one on Poetry; though they promise to repay him only with an eager attention.

Henry D. Thoreau[]

Josephine [Hosmer](#)

N. A. Barrett

A. Merrick





1853-1854

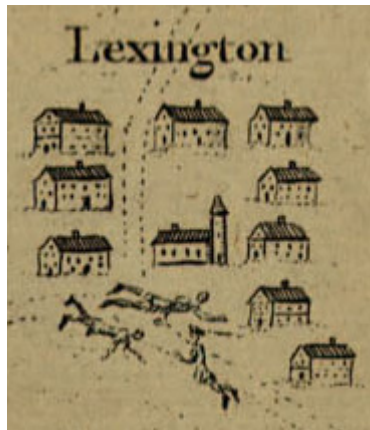
1853-1854

[LP.] <i>Cheney</i>	[J.M. <i>Cheney</i>]
[FM <i>Mackay</i>]	<i>N. Brooks</i>
<i>Samuel Hoar</i> []	<i>Josiah Bartlett</i>
<i>Mary M. Brooks</i>	<i>Anne M. Whiting</i>
<i>Geo</i> [] <i>M. Brooks</i>	<i>Louisa J. Whiting</i> []
[A. D. <i>Frye</i>]	<i>Sophia E. Thoreau</i> []
<i>John H Bent</i>	<i>John Thoreau</i>
<i>Cynthia D</i> [.] <i>Thoreau</i>	
<i>JW. Walcott</i>	<i>John</i> [Brown] <i>Jr</i>
[B.N. <i>Holden</i>]	<i>Alvan Pratt</i> —
<i>Cyrus Peirce</i>	<i>Albert Stacy</i>
<i>Rufus</i> Hosmer	<i>Jonas Hastings</i>
<i>James Giles</i>	[Da]n ^l . <i>Shattuck</i>
<i>Charles Bowers</i>	A[C] <i>Collier</i>
<i>Moses Pritchard</i>	<i>Julius M. Smith</i>
[] <i>Cyrus Warren</i>	<i>N</i> [.] <i>Henry</i> [] <i>Warren</i>
<i>Nancy Warren</i>	<i>Elijah Wood Jr</i>
<i>O</i> [L.] <i>Page</i>	<i>Francis Monroe</i>
[F.] <i>A. Wheeler</i>	<i>Sam</i> ^l . <i>Staples</i>
<i>F.E. Bigelow</i>	<i>L</i> [May]

[WALDO EMERSON](#)
[ALBERT STACY](#)

 March 31, Friday: [Dugald Clerk](#) was born in Glasgow.

The funeral of Jonathan Harrington, the last of the [Lexington](#) survivors, was described in the *Boston Post*, which commented that “no common death had taken place” and quoted one of the orators as having declared that Harrington’s life had been “eventful beyond that which could belong to any other.” This last of the Lexington company of minutemen had been their fifer, age 17 at the time, who had survived to the age of 96. The reporter was particularly impressed that not only local streets but also the “yards swarmed with omnibuses, coaches, and carriages of various descriptions” and estimated the swarm at some 10,000 citizens. More men marched at his funeral during this year than had originally fought at Lexington and Concord.



March 31. Weather changes at last to drizzling.



1853-1854

1853-1854

In criticising your writing, trust your fine instinct. There are many things which we come very near questioning, but do not question. When I have sent off my manuscripts to the printer, certain objectionable sentences or expressions are sure to obtrude themselves on my attention with force, though I had not consciously suspected them before. My critical instinct then at once breaks the ice and comes to the surface.



March 31, Friday: William Speiden, Jr. was among the few permitted to come ashore on this day and proceed with Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) to the House of Reception. On behalf of the United States of America the Commodore signed a treaty with [Japanese](#) officials to establish a “permanent” relationship between their nations. In the Treaty of Kanagawa the Japanese pledged that they would save shipwrecked Americans, provide fuel for American ships, and allow opportunities for trade. The treaty opened the ports of Hakodate and Shimoda to American vessels.

[US MILITARY INTERVENTIONS](#)

[READ THE FULL TEXT](#)

1853-1854

1853-1854

SPRING 1854

→ Spring [Ephraim Wales Bull](#) sold each and every one of his purple Concord grape vines for a flat \$5.⁰⁰ each. His total return from having developed the Concord strain of purple grapes was thus only \$3,200, minus his 11 years (Spring 1843-Spring 1854) of development expenses of course — which fully explains the mean-spirited remark on his tombstone: “He Sowed Others Reaped.”¹⁵²


BOTANY**PLANTS**

152. In later years he would develop other strains of the Concord grape which he would name the Rockwood, the Cottage, the August Rose, and the Esther, but his suspiciousness of others would have grown by that period to the point at which it had become a paralyzing mental illness — and he would be simply unable to negotiate to release these strains to the nurseries.



1853-1854

1853-1854

 Spring: [Brownson's Quarterly Review](#), No. 1


CATHOLICISM

- I. *Uncle Jack and His Nephew*
- II. *Schools of Philosophy*
- III. *The Case of Martin Koszta*
- IV. "You go Too Far" [The Power of the Pope during the Middle Ages]
- V. *Hillard's Six Months in Italy*
- VI. Literary Notices and Criticisms

MAGAZINES

ORESTES AUGUSTUS BROWNSON


APRIL 1854

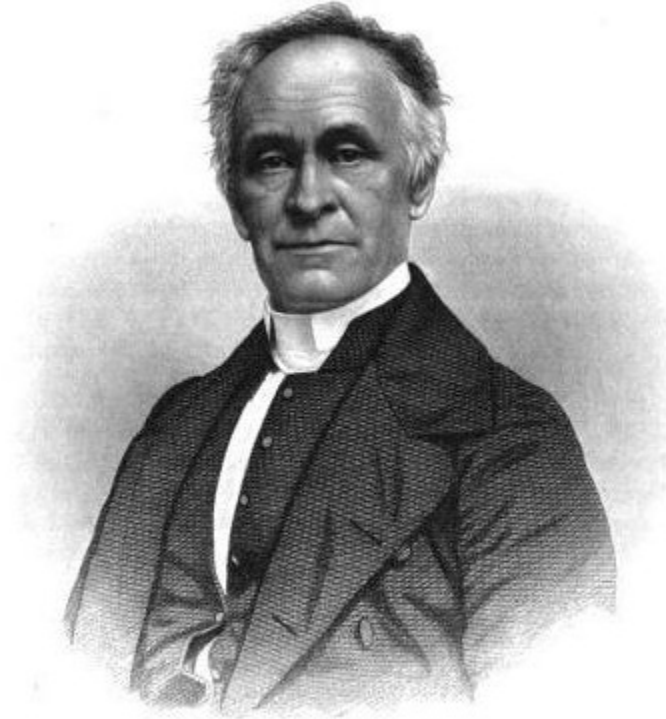
 April: This month's issue of [Harper's New Monthly Magazine](#).

CONSULT THIS ISSUE

1853-1854


1853-1854


 April: [Ralph Emerson](#) resigned his professorship at the Andover Theological Seminary and relocated to Newburyport, Massachusetts.



Ralph Emerson

The [Dickinsons](#) visited [Washington DC](#) while [Emily Dickinson](#) remained at home in Amherst with Susan Gilbert and John Graves.

 April: [Christian C.J. Bunsen](#) offered his resignation as Prussian ambassador to the Court of St. James and it was accepted. He would retire initially to a villa on the Neckar near Heidelberg, and then to Bonn.¹⁵³

 April: [Harper's Magazine](#) published another article by [George Douglas Brewerton](#), "Incidents of travel in New Mexico."



153. The English branch of this family is now known as "de Bunsen."

1853-1854

1853-1854

→ April: What would eventually become the “New England Emigrant Aid Company” was chartered by the legislature of Massachusetts, initially under the name “The Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Society.” The men engaged in this, Eli Thayer, [Amos Adams Lawrence](#), [Dr. Samuel Cabot III](#),¹⁵⁴ and others, would begin their work at once, arousing public interest and making arrangements to facilitate emigration to the [Kansas Territory](#).

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

The US circuit court for the district of Missouri was holding session in a small back room over a Main Street store in St. Louis. Preliminary skirmishing was taking place before Judge Robert M. Wells in the case of [Dred Scott](#) v Sandford.

In [Havana](#), a number of influential slave owners met with US Consul William H. Robertson to urge that he persuade [President Franklin Pierce](#) to send American troops to [Cuba](#) — of course, in order to prevent slave [emancipation](#).

→ April: [Ellery Channing](#) visited the [Tappans](#) in Lenox, Massachusetts for a couple of weeks. Then he visited [Cincinnati](#), where he and [Ellen Fuller](#) had courted.

TAPPAN FAMILY



Commander Henry A. Adams was dispatched from far eastern waters to convey the Kanagawa treaty toward the federal government of the United States of America, in [Washington DC](#).

154. For 4 years Dr. Cabot would be involved in such activities as supplying emigrants to the Kansas Territory with rifles purchased by subscription.

1853-1854

1853-1854



[Charles Dickens](#)'s *HARD TIMES* began weekly publication in the April 1st issue of *Household Words* (to bolster slipping circulation) and would continue through August 12th. The Dickens family would be in Boulogne during the summer and early fall.



Dr. [John Rae](#) brought back to England definite confirmation of the fact that all the members of [Sir John Franklin](#)'s Arctic expedition had starved to death. He would receive the £10,000 award that had been offered for information of the expedition. Unfortunately, he also brought back sad news that in their final throes these starving, freezing isolates had resorted to cannibalism — which would result in a campaign by “the tiresome Lady Franklin,” and by [Charles Dickens](#) in his publication *Household Words*, to discredit him.

THE FROZEN NORTH

ATTITUDES ON DICKENS

Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for April 1854 \(æf. 36\)](#)



April 1, Saturday: [Dr. Thaddeus William Harris](#)'s “Larvae of the Crane Fly” was appearing in this month's issue of the *New England Farmer*.

Having found prospecting for gold to involve a whole lot of hard work in what looked suspiciously like dirt, and being of the personal attitude that to do hard work was to be suspected of the dreadfully slavish and contemptible “strong back weak mind” syndrome, [Hinton Rowan Helper](#) had abandoned the gold fields of [California](#). On this date he arrived at a port on the Caribbean coast of Central America and embarked for the final legs of his journey home to North Carolina. Did he remember the dirt of North Carolina as being less dirty, the work of North Carolina as being less hard? Well, but maybe he could make some easy clean money by writing to warn others that the streets of California were not exactly paved with gold. Note carefully how his attitude about writing correlated with his attitude about labor correlated with his attitude about persons of color. For Helper, to be pro-slavery was to be pro-Negro and to be pro-Negro was to be pro-slavery. Because these loathsome blacks were being used for manual labor, manual labor itself had acquired an irremovable taint, and even a white man, if he was so situated as to need to work for his living, was being treated “as if he was a loathsome beast, and shunned with the utmost disdain.” Writing about the loathsome black man and how he is wronging us became for Helper a way of avoiding being condemned as equally loathsome on account of his unrelenting poor-boy need to obtain money in order to live.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went on the [Assabet River](#) to Dodge's Brook and thence to [Jacob B. Farmer](#)'s.

In [San Francisco](#), an ordinance for the suppression of houses of ill-fame went into effect. This ordinance abolished the erotic dance known as the fandango, and shuttered the dancing and bawdy houses along Dupont Street, Jackson Street, and Pacific Street.

1853-1854

1853-1854



Literary Hermits Recreating Themselves in Their Chapel:

Whittier-Holmes-Emerson-Motley-Alcott-Hawthorne-Lowell-Agassiz-Longfellow



Ap. 1st. The tree sparrows [American Tree Sparrow [Spizella arborea](#)] — hyemalis [Dark-eyed Junco [Junco hyemalis](#)] — & song sparrows [Song Sparrow [Melospiza melodia \(melodia\)](#)] are particularly lively & musical in the yard this rainy & truly April day. The air rings with them. The robin *now* begins to sing sweet powerfully—

Pm up Assabet to Dodge's Brook — thence to Farmer's.

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.
 — [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 10

April has begun like itself. It is warm & showery — while I sail away with a light SW wind toward the Rock— Sometimes the sun seems just ready to burst out — yet I know it will not— The meadow is becoming bare. It resounds with the sprayey notes of blackbirds [Junco](#) — The birds sing this warm showery day after a fortnight's cold (yesterday was wet too), with a universal burst & flood of melody. Great flocks of *hyemalis* [Dark-eyed Junco [Junco hyemalis](#)] &c pass overhead like schools of fishes in the water many abreast. The white maple stamens are beginning to peep out from the wet & weather-beaten buds. The earliest alders are just ready to bloom — to show their yellow — on the first decidedly warm & sunny day. The water is smooth at last and dark. Ice no longer forms on the oars. It is pleasant to paddle under the dripping hemlocks this dark day. They make more of a wilderness impression than pines. The lines of saw dust from Barrets mill at different heights on the steep wet bank under the hemlocks — rather enhance the impression of freshness & wildness, as if it were a new country. Saw a painted tortoise on the bottom— The bark of poplar boughs which have been held in the ice along the sides of the river the past winter are gnawed probably by muskrats. Saw floating a good-sized rooster without a head the red stump sticking out — probably killed by an owl. Heard a bird whose note was very much like that of the purple finch [Purple Finch [Carpodacus purpureus \(American Linnet\)](#)] — loud & clear. First *smelled* the musk-rat.

Yesterday & to-day I hear the cackle of the flicker [Yellow-shafted Flicker [Colaptes auratus](#)] so agreeable from association. It brings the year about. From afar, on some blasted tree, it makes all the vale ring with [?] its swelling flicker (?). Saw at Farmer's, his snow-grubs (the same I had seen v. back [Haris](#) in this weeks *NE Farmer* thinks on comparing them with *Eng.* plates, that they are the larvæ of one of the species of Crane-fly *Tipula*. I saw some — still in F's pasture. Did they not come out from the roots of the grass prematurely in the winter & so become food for birds? The ground in Farmer's garden was in some places whitened with the droppings of the snowbirds [Dark-eyed Junco [Junco hyemalis \(Slate-colored Sparrow or Snow-bird\)](#)] after seeds of weeds — *F. hyemalis* [Dark-eyed Junco [Junco hyemalis](#)] & others. The *hyemalis* is in the largest flocks of any at this season— You see them come drifting over a rising ground just like snowflakes before a north-east wind.

I was surprised to see how Farmers young pears 3 or 4 feet high on quince stocks had been broken down by the snow-drifts broken over & over apparently the snow freezing over them and then at last by its weight breaking them down.



I hear the jingle of the *hyemalis* from within the house [Dark-eyed Junco [Junco hyemalis](#)] — sounding like a trill.



April 2, Sunday: In the afternoon, [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Conantum by way of Nut Meadow Brook.



Brockport Collegiate Institute burned to the ground. On this day, in [New-York](#), [Thoreau](#) was being written to by [Horace Greeley](#), thanking him for helping obtain material for the Margaret Fuller edition.

1853-1854



1853-1854

[April 2, 1854]



DEAR THOREAU,—Thank you for your kindness in the matter of Margaret. Pray take no further trouble; but if anything should come in your way, calculated to help me, do not forget. Yours,
HORACE GREELEY.



April 2. P.M. — To Conantum via Nut Meadow Brook.

Saw black ducks [**Black Duck**  *Anas rubripes* (~~Dusky Duck~~)] in water and on land. Can see their light throats a great way with my glass. They do not dive, but dip. That liverwort [Marchantia?] in the J. Hosmer ditch is now obvious. It has little green cups on its frond, with a fringed mouth; but I saw something similar but shorter and more orbicular yesterday, under the hemlock bank, with little black dots on it. The radical leaves of some plants appear to have started, look brighter. The shepherd's-purse (?), and plainly the skunk-cabbage. In the brook there is the least possible springing yet. A little yellow lily in the ditch and sweet flag *starting* in the brook. I was sitting on the rail over the brook, when I heard something which reminded me of the song of the robin [**American Robin**  *Turdus migratorius*] in rainy days in past springs. Why is it that not the note itself, but something which reminds me of it, should affect me most? — the ideal instead of the actual.

At Lee's Cliff the red-stemmed moss. The slippery elm is about as forward as the common, with its rusty buds. The saxifrage is the most springlike plant, methinks, yet.

The tree sparrows [**American Tree Sparrow**  *Spizella arborea*] make the alders, etc., ring. They have a metallic chirp and a short canary-like warble. They keep company with the hyemalis [**Dark-eyed Junco**  *Junco hyemalis* (~~Slate-colored Sparrow or Snow-bird or *F. Hyemalis*~~)].



April 3, Monday: The 1st US Mint was opened on Commercial Street in [San Francisco](#).

[John Wilson](#) died in [Edinburgh](#).

[John Brown](#) wrote from Akron, Ohio to [John Brown, Jr.](#)

Dear Son John,

We received your letter of the 24th March two or three days since, and one from Henry, dated 25th March, about the same time. They had got on well so far, but had to go by stage the balance of the way. Father got home well, and was with us over night Friday last. We have all been middling well of late, but very busy, having had the care of the whole concern at Mr. Perkins's place until Friday night. I had a most comfortable time settling last year's business, and dividing with Mr. Perkins, and have to say of his dealing with me that he has shown himself to be every inch a gentleman. I bring to my new home five of the red cows and ten calves; he to have \$100 out of my share of the last year's wool, to make us even on last year's business; after dividing all crops, he paying me in hand \$28.55, balance due me on all except four of the five cows. I am going now to work with a cheap team of two yoke oxen, on which I am indebted, till I can sell my wool, \$89; \$46 I have paid towards them. I would like to have all my children settle within a few miles of each other and of me, but I cannot take the responsibility of advising you to make any forced move to change your location. Thousands have to regret that they did not let middling "well alone." I

1853-1854

1853-1854

should think you ought to get for your place another \$125; and I think you may, if you are not too anxious. That would buy you considerable of a farm in Essex or elsewhere, and we may get the Homestead Law passed yet. It has been a question with me whether you would not do better to hire all your team work done than to have your little place overstocked possibly, after some trouble about buying them, paying taxes, insurance, and some expense for implements to use them with. If you get a little overstocked, everything will seem to do poorly. Frederick is very much better, but both he and Owen have been having the ague lately. They leave the Hill farm soon. I do not at this moment know of a good opening for you this way. One thing I do not fear to advise and even urge; and that is the habitual "fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom." Commending you all to his mercy, I remain

*Your affectionate father,
John Brown.*

In the afternoon, [Henry Thoreau](#) went to the Cliffs by boat.



April 3. Saw from window with glass seven ducks on meadow-water, — only one or two conspicuously white, — these, black heads, white throats and breasts and along sides, — the rest of the ducks, brownish, probably young males and females. Probably the golden-eye [**Common Goldeneye** [Bucephala clangula](#) (~~Whistler~~)]. [Jardine](#) says it is rare to see more than one full-plumaged male in a flock.

P.M. — To Cliffs by boat.

Did I see crow blackbirds with the red-wings [**Red-winged Blackbird** [Agelaius phoeniceus](#)] and hear their harsher chattering?

The water has gone down so much that I have to steer carefully to avoid the thick hummocks left here and there on the meadow by the ice. I see the deep holes they were taken out of. A muskrat has just built a small cabin, — apparently a bushel of mouthfuls on one. No clams up yet. I see a very little snow ice still, at a distance on the north sides of hills and walls. The wind is southeasterly. This is methinks the first hazy day, though not so warm as the 17th of Mar h. The aspect of the woods reminds me of landscapes, and the sough of the wind in the pines sounds warmer, whispering of summer. I think I may say that Flint's broke up entirely on the first wet cay after the cold spell, — *i.e.* the 31st of March, — though I have not been there lately. Fair Haven will last some days yet.

1853-1854

1853-1854



April 4, Tuesday: [Chief of Staff Henry Allen Adams](#) was dispatched to convey the newly signed Kanagawa treaty to officials in the United States of America. He departed on board the *USS Saratoga* to begin his homeward journey.

A week after declaration of war, Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka left Paris for Russia.

The 2d Regiment of Dragoons under Lieutenant Colonel Philip St. George Cooke defeated the Jicarilla Apaches at the canyon of Ojo Caliente.



WHITE ON RED, RED ON WHITE

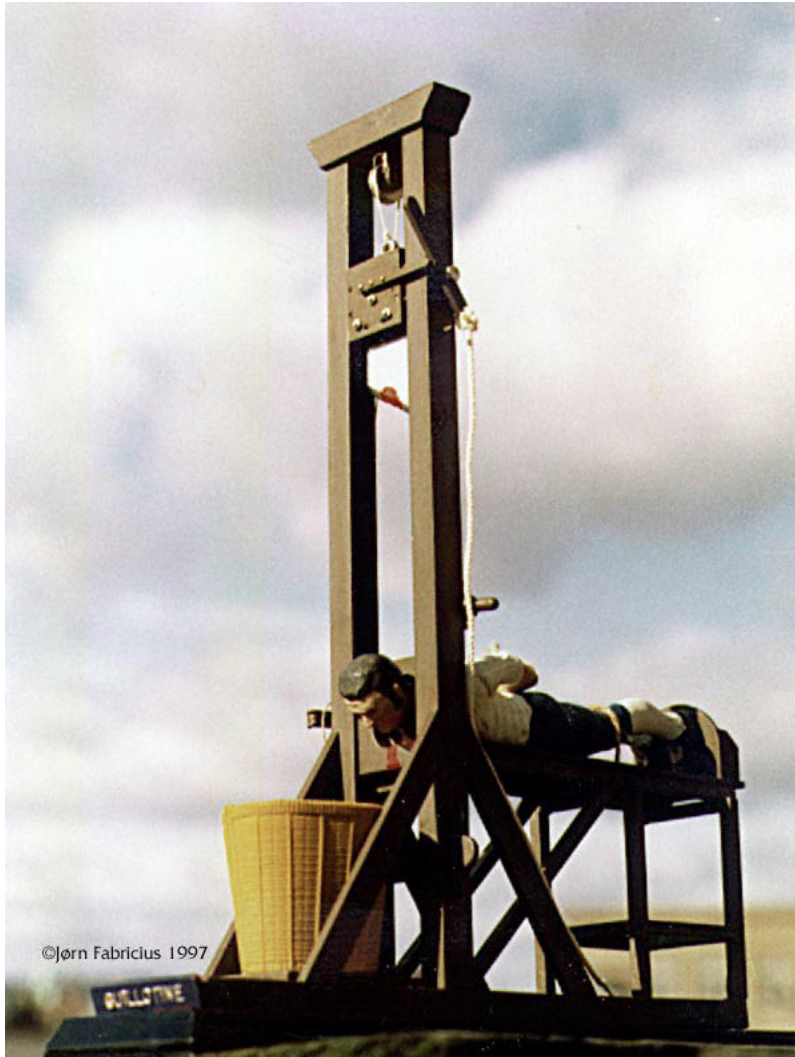
The police raided a fandango house on Pacific Street between Stockton Street and Dupont Street in [San Francisco](#), and arrested 11 men and 14 women under this municipality's new anti-prostitution ordinance (evidently these folks were suspected either of having been up to no good or of having too good a time).



April 4. All day surveying a wood-lot in Acton for Abel Hosmer. He says that he has seen the small slate-colored hawk pursue and catch doves [[Mourning Dove](#) [Zenaida macroura](#) (~~Turtle Dove~~)], i.e. the sharp-shinned [[Sharp-shinned Hawk](#) [Accipiter striatus](#)]. Has found some trouble in driving off a large slate-colored hawk from a hen in his yard, at which he pounced again close by him, — undoubtedly a goshawk. Has also noticed the butcher-bird [[Northern Shrike](#) [Lanius excubitor](#) (~~Butcher-bird~~)] catching other birds. Calls him the “mock-bird.” I observe that all the farmers have pretty much the same stories of this kind to tell. They will describe a large, bold slate-colored hawk (the goshawk) [[Goshawk](#) [Accipiter gentilis](#) (~~Cape Eagle, Partridge Hawk~~)] about here some two years ago, which caught some of their hens, and the like. The afternoon very pleasant.

1853-1854**1853-1854**

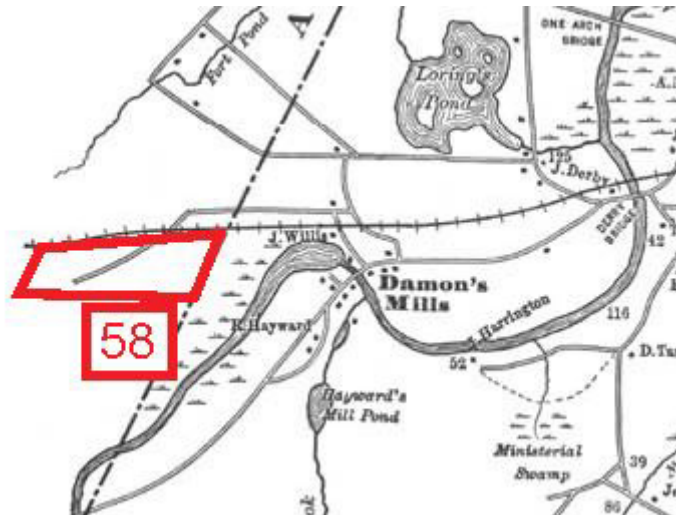
Joseph Tussaud returned to London with a head-chopping machine that he had procured from Clément Sanson. This “[guillotine](#)” was to become a part of [Madame Tussaud’s Waxworks](#).

**HEADCHOPPING**

[Henry Thoreau](#) spent all day surveying an Acton woodlot belonging to Abel [Hosmer](#) near the railroad and the road to Stow, Jessie Willis, George Wright, Joel Conant, (?) Adams, Asa Parker and the area just west of the Damon Mill land.

1853-1854

1853-1854



View [Henry Thoreau](#)'s personal working drafts of his surveys courtesy of AT&T and the Concord Free Public Library:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/Thoreau_Surveys.htm

(The official copy of this survey of course had become the property of the person or persons who had hired this Concord town surveyor to do their surveying work during the 19th Century. Such materials have yet to be recovered.)

View this particular personal working draft of a survey in fine detail:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/58a.htm

An article by [John Russell Bartlett](#) appeared in the [New York Herald](#), on pages 5 and 6, entitled "The Aboriginal Semi-civilization of the Great California Basin, with a Refutation of the popular theory of the Northern Origin of the Aztecs of Mexico," on the migration of Aztecs and the distribution of Native Americans in the Great Basin region, from which [Thoreau](#) would copy into his eighth Indian Notebook.

American and English ships began to land forces at [Shanghai](#) to protect American interests during Chinese civil strife. This would continue until June 17th.

US MILITARY INTERVENTIONS

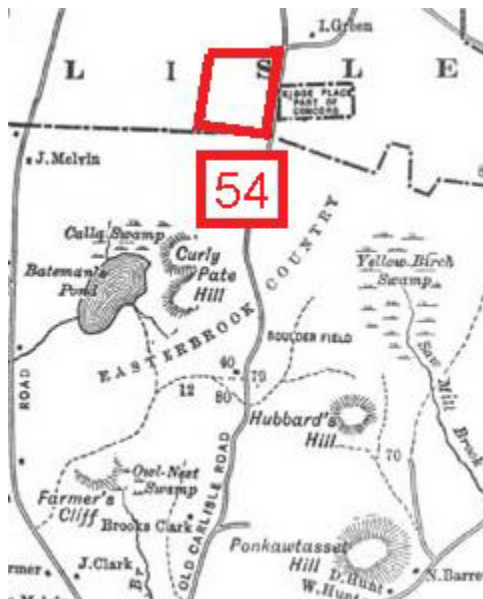
1853-1854

1853-1854

➡ April 5, Wednesday, evening: [Waldo Emerson](#) was delivering “France” at the [Concord Lyceum](#). Meanwhile the disintegrating body of a man was being discovered in the river between Fair Haven Pond and Lee’s. [Henry Thoreau](#) had spent all day surveying woodlots in Concord and [Carlisle](#), near Hitchinson’s property and near [I.??] Green’s property, for Samuel Hoar, and had made two maps.



The Poplar Hill map was for land on the hill behind the Bullet Hole House and opposite the Old Manse on Monument Street in Concord, near Great Meadows.



1853-1854

1853-1854

The other map was of the North part of the present Easterbrook Woods area.



Thousands of people had gathered at the Plaza in [San Francisco](#) for dedication of a new City Hall bell. Fire Chief Engineer Duane broke a bottle of champagne over the bell, because it was also to peal out alarms of fire (the bell tower itself was to be used by fire spotters).



Spring: “Who shall distinguish between the **law** by which a brook finds its river, the **instinct** a bird performs its migrations, and the **knowledge** by which a man steers his ship round the globe?”




April 5. This morning heard a familiar twittering over the house; looked up and saw white-bellied swallows █. Another saw them yesterday.

Surveying all day for Mr. Hoar in Carlisle, near Hitchinson’s and near I. [?] Green's. See many hawks █ about yesterday and to-day, — marsh hawks [**Northern Harrier** █ **Circus cyaneus** (**Hen Harrier** or **Frog Hawk**) Marsh hawk] and perhaps hen-hawks [**Red-shouldered Hawk** █ **Buteo lineatus** (**Hen Hawk**)], these being pleasant days. It proved very pleasant and warm, and while surveying in the woods with my greatcoat off, I heard a few stertorous sounds from the croaking frog. Also, as we rode along to Green’s, we saw many of the large butterfly, dark with buff-edged wings, and also small reddish ones, in the dry sprout-lands. The same warm and pleasant weather brings them out to flutter along the roadside in sprout-lands, that does the hawks to sail along the meadow-side and over the wood. Saw the first frog by the roadside, — I believe a speckled, *i.e. palustris*, — and, at the Green lot, heard the hyla. These days, when a soft west or southwest wind blows and it is truly warm, and an outside coat is oppressive, — these bring out the butterflies and the frogs, and the marsh hawks which prey on the last. Just so simple is every year. Whatever year it may be, I am surveying, perhaps, in the woods; I have taken off my outside coat, perhaps for the first time, and hung it on a tree; the zephyr is positively agreeable on my cheek; I am thinking what an elysian day it is, and how I seem always to be keeping the flocks of Admetus such days — that is my luck; when I hear a single, short, well-known stertorous croak from some pool half filled with dry leaves. You may see anything now — the buff-edged butterfly and many hawks — along the meadow; and hark! while I was writing down that field note, the shrill peep of the hylodes was borne to me from afar through the woods. I rode with my employer a dozen miles to-day, keeping a profound silence almost all the way as the most simple and natural course. I treated him simply as if he had bronchitis and could not speak, just as I would a sick man, a crazy man, or an idiot. The disease was only an unconquerable stiffness in a well-meaning and sensible man. Begin to look off hills, and see the landscape again through a slight haze, with warm wind on the cheek.


1853-1854

1853-1854



 April 6, Thursday: The Americans of the fleet in the Far East made a gift to the [Japanese](#) of their 12-pound Howitzers, with boat and field carriage and other equipment.


At 6 PM, [Henry Thoreau](#) went up the [Assabet River](#).

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.
 — [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 10




April 6. P.M. — Up Assabet.

A still warmer day than yesterday — a warm, moist rain-smelling west wind. I am surprised [to] find so much of the white maples already out. The light-colored stamens show to some rods. Probably they began as early as day before yesterday. They resound with the hum of honey-bees, heard a dozen rods off, and you see thousands of them about the flowers against the sky. They know where to look for the white maple and when. This susurrus carries me forward some months toward summer. I was reminded before of those still warm summer moons when the breams' nests are left dry, and the fishes retreat from the shallows into the cooler depths, and the cows stand up to their bellies in the river. The reminiscence came over me like a summer's dream. The alders, both kinds, just above the hemlocks, have just begun to shed their pollen. They are hardly as forward as the white maples, but these are not in so warm a position as some. I am in doubt which (alder or maple) may be earliest this year. Have not looked so closely as last year. In clearing out the Assabet Spring, disturbed two small speckled (*palustris*) frogs just beginning to move. Saw flying over what I at first thought a gull, then a fish hawk [Osprey  *Pandion haliaetus* (Fish Eagle or Fish Hawk)]. Heard the snipe [Common Snipe  *Gallinago gallinago* (Wilson's Snipe or Brown Snipe)] over the meadows this evening; probably to be heard for a night or two; sounds on different days as if approaching or receding; — over the meadows recently become bare.

 April 7, Friday: At 6 AM, [Henry Thoreau](#) walked down the railroad tracks to the Cliffs. He did not note the condition of the ice on [Walden Pond](#). At some point before the end of this day, the ice would be completely melted:

WALDEN: In 1845 Walden was first completely open on the 1st of April; in '46, the 25th of March; in '47, the 8th of April; in '51, the 28th of March; in '52, the 18th of April; in '53, the 23rd of March; in '54, about the 7th of April.



April 7. 6 A.M. — Down railroad to Cliffs.

The *Populus tremuloides* in a day or two. The hazel stigmas are well out and the catkins loose, but no pollen shed yet. On the Cliff I find, after long and careful search, one sedge above the rocks, low amid the withered blades of last year, out, its little yellow beard amid the dry blades and few green ones, — the first *herbaceous* flowering I have detected. Fair Haven is completely open. It must have been so first either on the 5th or 6th.



April 8, Saturday: Lieutenant Colonel Philip St. George Cooke led his 2d Regiment of Dragoons in pursuit of Jicarilla Apaches led by Chacón who had in a battle at Cieneguilla killed 20 of his soldiers. [Christopher "Kit" Carson](#) was in charge of his scouts. They found the natives camped in the canyon of [Ojo Caliente](#), and dispersed them.

WHITE ON RED, RED ON WHITE

Arthur Sullivan, accompanied by Mr. Plees, his schoolmaster, met Sir George Smart in London, in an attempt to enter the Chapel Royal. Smart encouraged the lad and sent him to see Thomas Helmore.

At 6 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) had gone to [Clamshell Hill](#). In the afternoon he went to Lee's Cliff by way of [Clamshell Hill](#).



April 8. Saturday. 6 A.M. — To Clamshell Hill.

Am surprised to find the skunk-cabbage out, shedding pollen (a few). This was probably the case in some places on the 5th and 6th. There has been very little growth visible in its spathes for a month. Its spring seems to be in the fall partly. This spring it has suffered more than usual, owing to the severe cold of the last half of March. Did I see a grass finch [[Vesper Sparrow](#) [Poocetes gramineus](#)]? Cheney's elm begins to show stamens. That remarkably warm first half of March appears to have advanced the plants very much, and as soon as the cold last half was past they burst out almost together. Spearers' lights two or three nights past.

P.M. — To Lee's Cliff *via* Clamshell.

Methinks I do not see such great and lively flocks of hyemalis [[Dark-eyed Junco](#) [Junco hyemalis](#) ~~Slate-colored Sparrow~~] and tree sparrows [[American Tree Sparrow](#) [Spizella arborea](#)] in the morning since the warm days, the 4th, 5th, and 6th. Perchance after the warmer days, which bring out the frogs and butterflies, the alders and maples, the greater part of them leave for the north and give place to newcomers.

At the Lyceum the other night I felt that the lecturer had chosen a theme too foreign to himself and so failed to interest me as much as formerly. He described things not in or near to his heart, but toward his extremities and superficialities. The poet deals with his privatest experience. There was no central nor centralizing thought in the lecture.

Some southward banks and hillsides are now considerably tinged with green, not observed at a distance. I see the celandine and catnep (?) beginning to look green along the graveyard fence. The stigmas of the hazels (beyond Clamshell) are a splendid crimson star when brought between me and the light. I cannot find any of their catkins shedding pollen yet, but they may to-morrow. On the 5th saw a man sowing rye. Heard a prolonged dream from frog (?) in the river meadow; or was it a toad?¹⁵⁵ See black ducks [[Black Duck](#) [Anas rubripes](#) (~~Dusky Duck~~)] and hear their hoarse quacking. They commonly rise sixty rods off. They feed as often on the land as in the water, and look as clumsy there, as the tame do. At Nut Meadow Brook saw, or rather heard, a muskrat plunge into the brook before me, and saw him endeavoring in vain to bury himself in the sandy bottom, looking like an amphibious animal. I stooped and, taking him by his tail, which projected, tossed him ashore. He did not lose the points of compass, but turned directly to the brook again, though it was toward me, and, plunging in, buried himself in the mud, and that was the last I saw of him. I see many yellow-spot tortoises to-day, — some of them quite rusty-looking. The alders are pretty generally [*sic*]; they are either yellowish, greenish, or reddish. At Heart-leaf Pond the croaking frogs are in full blast. I saw many on the surface, — small, ferruginous or dark brown, bodies two inches long, spread out on the surface and from time to time swimming about and toward each other, or diving. Most utter a short croak several times. Others use a peculiar squirming and nasal variation hard to imitate, somewhat like *er-wäh* (not broad *war* or *wor*) *er-wäh er-wäh er-wäh*, faster and faster, the nasal between the two syllables, something like *what what what what* spoken nasally. Then all will be silent. They have spells at it. Did I see their spawn? A turtle dove [[Mourning Dove](#) [Zenaida macroura](#) (~~Turtle Dove~~)] — went off with a slight whistling note. The willow near Miles's to-morrow or next day, *if fair*. That at the bridge equally early. The poplar catkins (*P. tremuloides*) on Conantum are beginning to curve downward, with their red anthers not yet open within the down, — mulberry-like. Apparently will open to-morrow, if warm; say the 10th. The polypody and marginal (?) shield fern and the spleenwort are evergreens at Lee's Cliff. The slippery elm, apparently in two or three days. Am surprised to find two crowfoot blossoms

155. Doubtless a toad. See *postea*.

1853-1854

1853-1854

withered. They undoubtedly opened the 5th or 6th; say the last. They must be earlier here than at the Cliffs, where I have observed them the last two years. They are a little earlier than the saxifrage around them here, of which last I find one specimen at last, in a favorable angle of the rock, just opening. I have not allowed enough for the difference of localities. The columbine shows the most spring growth of any plant. What is that plant with narrow toothed leaves which has already shot up so straight four or five inches on the shelves of the rock? *Arabis laevigata*?

Saw a large bird sail along over the edge of Wheeler's cranberry meadow just below Fair Haven, which I at first thought a gull, but with my glass found it was a hawk and had a perfectly white head and tail and broad or blackish wings. It sailed and circled along over the low cliff, and the crows dived at it in the field of my glass, and I saw it well, both above and beneath, as it turned, and then it passed off to hover over the cliffs at a greater height. It was undoubtedly a white-headed eagle [**Bald Eagle** █ *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*]. It was to the eye but a large hawk.

Saw several yellow redpolls (*Sylvia petechia*) [~~Yellow Redpoll~~ or ~~Sylvia petechia~~ (**Palm Warbler** █ *Dendroica palmarum*)] on the willows by the Hubbard Bridge. Am not sure I heard their note. May have mistaken it formerly for the pine warbler [**Pine Warbler** █ *Dendroica pinus* (~~Pine Creeper~~)]. Its chestnut crown would distinguish it.

Hazel, the very first male, open.

I find that I can criticise my composition best when I stand at a little distance from it, — when I do not see it, for instance. I make a little chapter of contents which enables me to recall it page by page to my mind, and judge it more impartially when my manuscript is out of the way. The distraction of surveying enables me rapidly to take new points of view. A day or two surveying is equal to a journey.

Pickerel have darted in shallows for week.

Some poets mature early and die young. Their fruits have a delicious flavor like strawberries, but do not keep till fall or winter. Others are slower in coming to their growth. Their fruits may be less delicious, but are a more lasting food and are so hardened by the sun of summer and the coolness of autumn that they keep sound over winter. The first are June-eatings, early but soon withering; the last are russets, which last till June again.

1853-1854

1853-1854

On this day he made an entry in his journal in regard to [Waldo Emerson](#)'s recent [Concord Lyceum](#) lecture on "France" that he was later to copy into his early lecture "[WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT](#)" It would be combined with an entry made on January 27th, 1854 and an entry made on March 23d, 1853 to form the following:

[Paragraph3] At a lyceum, not long since, I felt that the lecturer had chosen a theme too foreign to himself, and so failed to interest me as much as he might have done.¹ He described things not in or near to his heart, but toward his extremities and superficialities. There was, in this sense, no truly central or centralizing thought in the lecture. I would have had him deal with his privatest experience, as the poet does. The greatest compliment that was ever paid me was when one asked me what **I thought**, and attended to my answer. I am surprised, as well as delighted, when this happens, it is such a rare use he would make of me, as if he were acquainted with the tool. Commonly, if men want anything of me, it is only to know how many acres I make of their land,—since I am a surveyor,—or, at most, what trivial news I have burdened myself with. They never will go to law for my meat; they prefer the shell. A man once came a considerable distance to ask me to lecture on Slavery; but on conversing with him, I found that he and his clique expected seven-eighths of the lecture to be theirs, and only one-eighth mine; so I declined. I take it for granted, when I am invited to lecture anywhere, that there is a desire to hear what **I think** on some subject, though I may be the greatest fool in the country,—and not that I should say pleasant things merely, or such as the audience will assent to; and I resolve, accordingly, that I will give you a strong dose of myself.² You have sent for me, and engaged to pay for me, and I am determined that you shall have me, though I bore you beyond all precedent.³

Brad Dean's
Commentary

1. Thoreau drew this and the following three sentences from his journal entry of April 8, 1854 (JOURNAL 6:187-88). Three days earlier Waldo Emerson had lectured at the Concord Lyceum on the "foreign" subject of "France."

2. On authority of the Nantucket [Inquirer](#), Bradley P. Dean has emended the essay copy-text by omitting '—for I have had a little experience in that business,—', which follows 'lecture anywhere,;' and by changing 'them' to 'you'.

3. On authority of the Nantucket [Inquirer](#), I emend the essay copy-text by changing the three plural pronouns in this sentence from the third to the second person.



April 8. 6 A.M. — To Clamshell Hill.

Am surprised to find the skunk-cabbage out, shedding pollen (a few). This was probably the case in some places on the 5th and 6th. There has been very little growth visible in its spathes for a month. Its spring seems to be in the fall partly. This spring it has suffered more than usual, owing to the severe cold of the last half of March. Did I see a grass finch [[Vesper Sparrow](#), [Poocetes gramineus](#)]? Cheney's elm begins to show stamens. That remarkably warm first half of March appears to have advanced the plants very much, and as soon as the cold last half was past they burst out almost together. Spearers' lights two or three nights past.

P.M. — To Lee's Cliff via Clamshell.

Methinks I do not see such great and lively flocks of hyemalis and tree sparrows in the morning since the warm days, the 4th, 5th, and 6th. Perchance after the warmer days, which bring out the frogs and butterflies, the alders and maples, the greater part of them leave for the north and give place to newcomers. At the Lyceum the other night I felt that the lecturer had chosen a theme too foreign to himself and so failed to interest me as much as formerly. He described things not in or near to his heart, but toward his extremities and superficialities. The poet deals with his privatest experience. There was no central nor centralizing thought in the lecture.

Some southward banks and hillsides are now considerably tinged with green, not observed at a distance.

I see the celandine and catnep (?) beginning to look green along the graveyard fence. The stigmas of the hazels (beyond Clamshell) are a splendid crimson star when brought between me and the light. I cannot find any of their catkins shedding pollen yet, but they may to-morrow. On the 5th saw a man sowing rye. Heard a prolonged dream from frog (?) in the river meadow; or was it a toad? See black ducks and hear their hoarse quacking. They commonly rise sixty rods off. They feed as often on the land as in the water, and look as clumsy there, as the tame do. At Nut Meadow Brook saw, or rather heard, a muskrat plunge into the brook before me, and saw him

endeavoring in vain to bury himself in the sandy bottom, looking like an amphibious animal. I stooped and, taking him by his tail, which projected, tossed him ashore. He did not lose the points of compass, but turned directly to the brook again, though it was toward me, and, plunging in, buried himself in the mud, and that was the last I saw of him. I see many yellow-spot tortoises today, — some of them quite rusty-looking. The alders are pretty generally [sic]; they are either yellowish, greenish, or reddish. At Heart Leaf Pond the croaking frogs are in full blast.

I saw many on the surface, — small, feruginous or dark brown, bodies two inches long, spread out on the surface and from time to time swimming about and toward each other, or diving. Most utter a short croak several times. Others use a, peculiar squirming; and nasal variation hard to imitate, somewhat like er-wah (not broad war or wor) er-wah erwah er-wah, faster and faster, the nasal between the two syllables, something like what what what what spoken nasally. Then all will be silent. They have spells at it. Did I see their spawn? A turtle dove — went off with a slight whistling note. The willow near Miles's to-morrow or next day, if fair.

That at the bridge equally early. The poplar catkins (*P. tremuloides*) on Conantum are beginning to curve downward, with their red anthers not yet open within the down, — mulberry-like. Apparently will open to-morrow, if warm; say the 10th. The polypody and marginal (?) shield fern and the spleenwort are evergreens at Lee's Cliff. The slippery elm, apparently in two or three days. Am surprised to find two crowfoot blossoms withered. They undoubtedly opened the 5th or 6th; say the last. They must be earlier here than at the Cliffs, where I have observed them the last two years. They are a little earlier than the saxifrage around them here, of which last I find one specimen at last, in a favorable angle of the rock, just opening. I have not allowed enough for the difference of localities. The columbine shows the most spring growth of any plant. What is that plant with narrow toothed leaves which has already shot up so straight four or five inches on the shelves of the rock? *Arabis laevigata* 2

Saw a large bird sail along over the edge of Wheeler's cranberry meadow just below Fair Haven, which I at first thought a gull, but with my glass found it was a hawk and had a perfectly white head and tail and broad or blackish wings. It sailed and circled along over the low cliff, and the crows dived at it in the field of my glass, and I saw it well, both above and beneath, as it turned, and then it passed off to hover over the Cliffs at a greater height. It was undoubtedly a whiteheaded eagle. It was to the eye but a large hawk.

Saw several yellow redpolls (*Sylvia petechia*) [**Pine Warbler** ■ *Dendroica pinus*] on the willows by the Hubbard Bridge. Am not sure I heard their note. May have mistaken it formerly for the pine warbler. Its chestnut crown would distinguish it.

Hazel, the very first male open.

I find that I can criticise my composition best when I stand at a little distance from it, — when I do not see it, for instance. I make a little chapter of contents which enables me to recall it page by page to my mind, and judge it more impartially when my manuscript is out of the way. The distraction of surveying enables me rapidly to take new points of view. A day or two surveying is equal to a journey.

Pickerel have darted in shallows for a week.

Some poets mature early and die young. Their fruits have a delicious flavor like strawberries, but do not keep till fall or winter. Others are slower in coming to their growth. Their fruits may be less delicious, but are a more lasting food and are so hardened by the sun of summer and the coolness of autumn that they keep sound over winter. The first are June-eatings, early but soon withering; the last are russets, —which last till June again.



April 9, Sunday: **Henry Thoreau** was surprised to note that **Walden Pond** was completely clear of ice. Checking around, at first he reasoned that it must have opened sometime between the 6th and 9th, but he finally decided that the critical date must have been around the 7th:

WALDEN: In 1845 Walden was first completely open on the 1st of April; in '46, the 25th of March; in '47, the 8th of April; in '51, the 28th of March; in '52, the 18th of April; in '53, the 23rd of March; in '54, about the 7th of April.



April 9. I have not noticed any fox-colored sparrows [**Fox Sparrow** ■ *Passerella iliaca*] for a week. [Vide 16th.] A large-catkined sallow (?) by the railroad, ten rods this side the jog on the west, just bursting out, with its pinkish-orange (before bursting) anthers. There is a little ice snow [sic] still under the north side of hills. Saw several more yellow redpolls [**Palm Warbler** ■ *Dendroica palmarum*] with their rich, glowing yellow

1853-1854

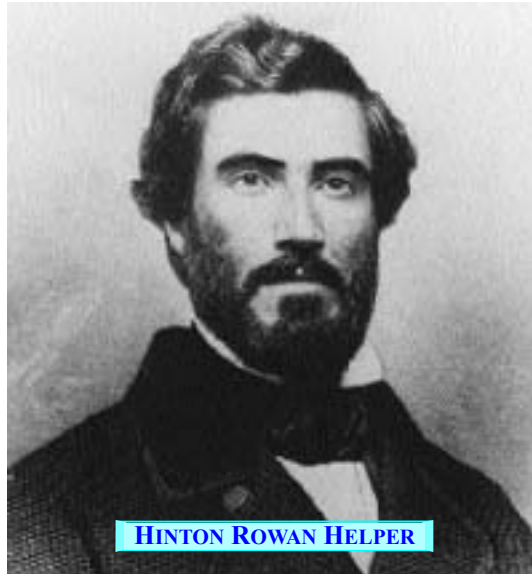
breasts by the causeway sides. Saw a wren on the edge of Nathan Stow's wood and field, with some of the habits of a creeper, lurking along a fallen pine and birch, in and out in a restless manner with tail up, a snuff-colored bird with many white spots and a fine chirping note. Can it be the winter [Winter Wren [Troglodytes troglodytes](#)] or the wood wren [Troglodytes troglodytes](#)? Callitriche just started from bottom; pollywogs two inches long. Chrysosplenium out, — a few, — perhaps a day or two, where they rest just on the surface of the water. Cowslip in Hubbard's Close will open the first warm and sunny hour. Perhaps already at Second Division. [Vide 16th.] The skunk-cabbage leaves are unfolding at Brister's Hill edge, and a grass-like, groove-leaved plant three or four inches high. Nosing of skunks nowadays, and since frost out in spots. The beaked hazel stigmas out; put it just after the common. *Lycopodium lucidulum* is as green as ever.

I am surprised to find Walden completely open. When did it open? According to all accounts, it must have been between the 6th and 9th. Fair Haven must have opened entirely the 5th or 6th, and Walden very nearly at the same time. This proves how steadily it has been melting, notwithstanding the severe cold of the last half of March; — *i.e.*, it is less affected by transient heat or cold than most ponds.

The flowers have blossomed very suddenly this year as soon as the long cold spell was over, and almost all together. As yet the landscape generally wears its November russet.

1853-1854


The steamer *Star of the West* carrying [Hinton Rowan Helper](#) arrived in [New-York](#) harbor, and our stone racist began his trek back to [North Carolina](#) and what he hoped was going to turn out to be literary fame — from the publication of some really informative and amusing and chauvinist crowd-pleasing [California](#) journals.



Austria, France, Great Britain, and Prussia signed a protocol in Vienna pledging to preserve the integrity of the Ottoman Empire.


1853-1854

1853-1854

 April 10, Monday: The Americans of the fleet in the Far East drew within sight of Edo and then turned and stood for Yokohama.

In the afternoon, [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Great Meadows by boat, and sailed back.

Long before Thoreau's lifetime, the alluvial plain of the Concord Valley lay at the bottom of a gray glacial lake. This beaded ribbon of turbid water extended the whole length of the valley, widening over bedrock basins that would later become meadows, and narrowing in bedrock constrictions. In Thoreau's epoch, every strong flood recreated the moccasin footprints of this ancient glacial lake at a lower level. The result was a "chain of handsome lakes" that was made higher, more frequent, and more long-lasting by the direct and indirect effects of the [Billerica dam](#). He described the largest lake, over the [Sudbury Meadows](#), as a "smaller Lake Huron," more than a mile across in every direction. Next in size was that over the [Great Meadows](#) of Concord, more than two miles long and half a mile wide. Both of these transient lakes could last for weeks at a time, which was long enough for him to be surprised when they finally disappeared. During floods, the already wide Carlisle reach expanded to resemble one of New York's smaller Finger Lakes.
— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, pages 120-121



Two earthquake shocks, one at 10:30 AM local time and another 15 minutes later, were experienced in [San Francisco](#). The 2d of these was the more severe, and at Point Lobos was more violent.

CALIFORNIA



April 10: April rain. How sure a rain is to bring the tree sparrows into the yard, to sing sweetly, canary-like!
I bought me a spy-glass some weeks since. I buy but few things, and those not till long after I begin to want them, so that when I do get them I am prepared to make a perfect use of them and extract their whole sweet. Saw a dead sucker yesterday.

CRUICKSHANK
COMMENTARY

1853-1854

1853-1854

P.M. — To Great Meadows by boat, and sail back.

"Downriver," "To Great Meadow," and "To Hill" signified a northward trip down the Concord River below the triple point of the confluence. After passing through a straight reach aligned by the local bedrock strike, arched by two bridges, and flanked by gravel bars of historic sediment that were repeatedly dredged, he entered the north side of Great Meadow. Bounded by the site of the Old North Bridge to the southwest and Ball's Hill to the northeast, it was two miles long and half a mile across. When in flood, the meadow was his favorite inland sea to sail upon because the wind was least impeded and the waves were highest.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 11

There are many snipes [**Common Snipe** █ *Gallinago gallinago*] now feeding in the meadows, which you come close upon, and then they go off with hoarse *cr-r-r-ack cr-r-r-ack*. They dive down suddenly from a considerable height sometimes when they alight. A boy fired at a blue-winged teal [**Blue-winged Teal** █ *Anas discors*] a week ago. A great many red-wings [**Red-winged Blackbird** █ *Agelaius phoeniceus*] along the water's edge in the meadow. Some of these blackbirds quite black, and some *apparently larger* than the rest. Are they all red-wings? The crimson stigmas, like the hazel, of the white maple, generally by themselves, make handsome show.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

 April 11, Tuesday: Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka arrived in Berlin on his way home from Paris.

In the afternoon, [Henry Thoreau](#) went off to [Lincoln](#) for a surveying assignment.



April 11.A.M. — Heard the clear, rather loud and rich warble of a purple finch [**Purple Finch** █ *Carpodacus purpureus* (~~American Linnet~~)] and saw him on an elm. Wilson says they feed on the coverings of the blossoms. It is a distinct and peculiar note, not to be confounded with anything before it. I suspect that I heard one on the 1st of April, *q.v.*

P.M. — Surveying in Lincoln.
 Large ant-hills in the woods, but no ants.
 Evening on river.
 Fine full moon; river smooth. Hear a slight snoring of frogs on the bared meadows. Is it not the *R. palustris*?
 This the first moon to walk by.





1853-1854

1853-1854



April 12, Wednesday: Arthur Sullivan was enrolled as a chorister in the Chapel Royal.

At the US Bonded Warehouse at Battery and Union in [San Francisco](#), the walls collapsed (there had been a rash of such collapses).

[Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed 20 acres of woodlot in [Lincoln](#) for Schuyler Parks.



http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_surveys/97.htm



April 12. Wednesday. Surveying for Parks in Lincoln.

A white frost this morning, after the clear moonlight.

Parks says he saw a buff-edged butterfly a month ago, *i.e.* before the 17th of March. The hazels are well out to-day, and their pollen yellows my clothes, it being a warm (off-coat) day. When I went to Mr. P.'s house at noon, he addressed me, "Now, what will you have to drink?" and soon appeared stirring a glass of gin for himself.

Waited at Lincoln depot an hour and a half. Heard the telegraph harp. I perceived distinctly that man melts at the sound of music, just like a rock exposed to a furnace heat. They need not have fabled that Orpheus moved the rocks and trees, for there is nothing more insensible than man; he sets the fashion to the rocks, and it is as surprising to see him melted, as when children see the lead begin to flow in a crucible. I observe that it is when I have been intently, and it may be laboriously, at work, and am somewhat listless or abandoned after it, reposing, that the muse visits me, and I see or hear beauty. It is from out the shadow of my toil that I look into the light. The music of the spheres is but another name for the Vulcanic force. May not such a record as this be kept on one page of the Book of Life: "A man was melted to-day."

1853-1854

1853-1854

April 13, Thursday: On a clean and pleasant morning [Henry Thoreau](#) walked down as far as Moore's at 8AM and returned along the hill. In the afternoon he sailed to Bittern Cliff.

Meanwhile a decision was being reached, to pack [John Bowring](#) off to [Hong Kong](#) as Governor Sir John. During his administration there would be a high-handed dispute with the mainland [Chinese](#) that would eventuate in the 2d Opium War (1856-1860). Under his administration Chinese citizens in Hong Kong would come to be able to serve as jurors and some would become registered solicitors before the bar of the law (this would not be to suggest, you understand, that he personally was in favor of such developments or did something to enable them). He would, however, help to establish Hong Kong's 1st commercial public water supply system, and would institute safety regulation of construction projects. Several locales in Hong Kong commemorate his governorship, which developed eastern Wan Chai, a river mouth near Happy Valley and Victoria Harbour, by elongating that river as a canal. Bowrington, a development zone around the estuary of the Wong Nai Chung river, would become the site of "Bowrington Market."







April 13. A clear and pleasant morning. Walked down as far as Moore's at 8 A.M. and returned along the hill. Heard the first chip-bird [[Chipping Sparrow](#) [Spizella passerina](#) (chip-bird or hair-bird)], sitting on an apple [tree], with its head up and bill open, jingling *tche-tche-tche-tche-tche*, etc., very fast. Hear them in various parts of the town. On the hill near Moore's hear the *F. juncorum* [[Field Sparrow](#) [Spizella pusilla](#) (Rush Sparrow or *juncorum* or George Minott's huckleberry-bird)], — *phē-phē-phē-phē-phē*, *pher-phē-ē-e-ē-ē-ē-ē-ē*. How sweet it sounds in a clear warm morning in a wood-side pasture amid the old corn-hills, or in sprout-lands, a [*sic*] clear and distinct, "like a spoon in a cup," the last part very fast and ringing. Hear the pine warbler [[Pine Warbler](#) [Dendroica pinus](#) (Pine Creeper)] also, and *think I see* a female red-wing [[Red-winged Blackbird](#) [Agelaius phoeniceus](#) Red-wing^[56]] flying with some males. Did I see a bay-wing [[Vesper Sparrow](#) [Poocetes gramineus](#)]? Heard a purple finch [[Purple Finch](#) [Carpodacus purpureus](#)

1853-1854

1853-1854

(~~American linnet~~) on an elm, like a faint robin.

P.M. — Sail to Bittern Cliff.

The surface of the water, toward the sun, reflecting the light with different degrees of brilliancy, is very exhilarating to look at. The red maple in a day or two. I begin to see the anthers in some buds. So much more of the scales of the buds is now uncovered that the tops of the swamps at a distance are reddened. A couple of large ducks, which, because they flew low over the water and appeared *black* with a little white, I thought not black ducks, — possibly velvet [White-winged Scoter  *Melanitta fusca* (Velvet Duck) (eoot)] or a merganser [Common Merganser  *Mergus merganser* (*Shecorway*¹⁵⁷ or *Goosander* or *Sheldrake*)]. The black ducks [Black Duck  *Anas rubripes* (*Dusky Duck*)] rise at once to a considerable height and often circle about to reconnoitre. The golden-brown tassels of the alder are very rich now. The poplar (*tremuloides*) by Miles's Swamp has been out — *the earliest catkins* — maybe two or three days. On the evening of the 5th the body of a man was found in the river between Fair Haven Pond and Lee's, much wasted. How these events disturb our associations and tarnish the landscape! It is a serious injury done to a stream. One or two crowfoots on Lee's Cliff, fully out, surprise me like a flame bursting from the russet ground. The saxifrage is pretty common, ahead of the crowfoot now, and its peduncles have shot up. The slippery elm is behind the common, which is fully out beside it. It will open apparently in about two days of pleasant weather.¹⁵⁸ I can see the anthers plainly in its great rusty, fusty globular buds. A small brown hawk  with white on rump — I think too small for a marsh hawk — sailed low over the meadow.¹⁵⁹ Heard now, at 5.30 P.M., that faint bullfrog-like note from the meadows, — *er-er-er*. Many of the button-bushes have been broken off about eighteen inches above the present level of the water (which is rather low), apparently by the ice. Saw a piece of meadow, twelve feet in diameter, which had been dropped on the northwest side of Willow Bay on a bare shore, thickly set with button-bushes five feet high, perfectly erect, which will no doubt flourish there this summer. Thus the transplanting of fluvial plants is carried on on a very large and effective scale. Even in one year a considerable plantation will thus be made on what had been a bare shore, and its character changed. The meadow cannot be kept smooth.

The winter-rye fields quite green, contrasting with the russet.

Saw an old log, stripped of bark, either poplar or maple, four feet long, — its whole upper half covered with that handsome winkle-like fungus.¹⁶⁰ They are steel-colored and of a velvety appearance, somewhat semicircular, with concentric growths (?) of different shades, passing from quite black within through a slaty-blue to (at present) a buff edge.¹⁶¹ Beneath cream-color. There are many minute ones a tenth of an inch in diameter, the shell-like leaf or ear springing from one side. The full-grown are sometimes united into one leaf for eight or nine inches in one level along the log, tier above tier, with a scalloped edge. They are handsomest when two or more are opposed, meeting at their bases, and make a concentric circle. They remind you of shells, also of butterflies. The great variety and regularity of the shading are very interesting. They spring from a slight base, rising by a narrow neck. They grow on stumps and other dead wood on land, even driftwood left high, just as some marine shells, their relatives, grow on driftwood. They are a sort of dimple. Does not the whole at last fade out to the buff of the edge?





April 14, Friday: [San Franciscans](#) experienced 2 earthquake shocks.

[Henry Thoreau](#) left at 6 AM for Nawshawtucl.



April 14. Friday. 6 A.M. — To Nawshawtucl.

There is a general tinge of green now discernible through the russet on the bared meadows and the hills, the green blades just peeping forth amid the withered ones. Can they be red-wings which I have seen for some time with the red-wings [Red-winged Blackbird  *Agelaius phoeniceus*], — without red or buff? They have a split note, perhaps no *gurgle-ee*! There are spider-webs on the meadow lately bared. It is difficult to find the snipe [Common Snipe  *Gallinago gallinago*], though you stand near where he alights. Saw yellow redpolls

156. The "Red Wing" chieftainship of Red Wing, Minnesota did not refer to the red wing of this blackbird, but referred rather to a swan's wing dyed red that was the badge of office of the chiefly dynasty.

157. *Shecorway* is the Abenaki name for mergansers.

158. 15th, sheds pollen in chamber. Say 18th. *Vide* 23d.

159. May it have been a young male harrier?


160. *Auricularia*.

161. Saw some the 16th wholly faded out to this color on an oak stump.

1853-1854


1853-1854


[Yellow Redpoll or *Sylvia petechia* (Palm Warbler *Dendroica palmarum*)], on Cheney's elm, — a clear metallic chip and jerks of the tail.

 April 15, Saturday: Henceforward in [New York](#) all canal engineers would be selected by a Contracting Board made up of the Canal Commission, the State Engineer, and the Auditor of the Canal Department.



April 15: Morning. — Snow and snowing; four inches deep. Yesterday was very cold. Now, I trust, it will come down and out of the air. Many birds must be hard put to it. Some tree sparrows [American Tree Sparrow *Spizella arborea*] and song sparrows [Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia (melodia)*] have got close up to the sill of the house on the south side, where there is a line of grass visible, for shelter. When Father came down this morning he found a sparrow squatting in a chair in the kitchen. Does n't know how it came there. I examined it a long time, but could not make it out. It was five or six inches long, with a somewhat finch-like bill (bluish-black above and light below); general aspect above pale brown mottled with buffish and whitish; bay and a *little* black on the wings; the crown a faint bay, divided by an ashy line, with a broad ashy line over eye and a distincter bay or chestnut line from the angle of the mouth backward; legs *pale clear flesh-color, feet black*, claws slender; two *faint* whitish bars on wings (the tips of feathers); the breast ashy-white, with many dark or black spots edged with bay in chains; *no yellow* about it; a rounded tail, long and of a pretty uniform pale brown or bay, ashy on the inner vanes, but *no white nor black* in it; a rather slender bird. It made me *think* of the bay-wing [Vesper Sparrow *Poocetes gramineus*] and of the Savannah sparrow [Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis*].

P.M. — This cold, moist, snowy day it is easier to see the birds and get near them. They are driven to the first bare ground that shows itself in the road, and the weather, etc., makes them more indifferent to your approach. The tree sparrows look much stouter and more chubby than usual, their feathers being puffed up and darker also, perhaps with wet. Also the robins  and bluebirds [Bluebird, Eastern *Sialia sialis*] are puffed up. I see the white under sides of many purple finches [Purple Finch *Carpodacus purpureus* (American linnet)], busily and silently feeding on the elm blossoms within a few feet of me, and now and then their bloody heads and breasts. They utter a faint, clear chip. Their feathers are much ruffled. The yellow red-poll [Palm Warbler *Dendroica palmarum* (Yellow Redpoll or *Sylvia petechia*)] hops along the limbs within four or five feet of me.

Martins the 13th first. The arrival of the purple finches [Carpodacus  *purpureus*] appears to be coincident with the blossoming of the elm, on whose blossoms it feeds.

THOREAU AS ORNITHOLOGIST

[Johnson](#) in his "Wonder-working Providence" speaks of "an army of caterpillars" in New England in 1649, so great "that the cart wheels in their passage were painted green with running over the great swarms of them."

EDWARD JOHNSON

1853-1854**1853-1854**

Middle of April: At some point during the 2d or 3d week of April, in Windsor, Canada, a widow named Evelyn, a teacher who had befriended the fugitive slave [John Anderson](#), learned of a letter that had arrived in Windsor, alleging that his wife and children had reached Detroit and were waiting there across the river for him to re-enter the good old US of A. Since this was obviously a trap to entice him back to where he could be arrested, he left his trunk with a Mrs. Jackson and hiked to Belle River, where he boarded the train to [Chatham](#). There was a man of color, old enough to pass for his father, like himself a fugitive, named James Hamilton, and so he began to call himself also James Hamilton, and pretend to be this man's son. Chopping wood at three and sixpence the cord, he found he could average about two cords per day. After a few weeks, however, there began to be rumors that he was being looked for in Chatham. He would go on the run again, residing in various locations in Canada during the following six years, while learning the trades of mason and plasterer. Eventually he would settle, and own a home, in Caledonia.



JACK BURTON AS THE CANADIAN "JOHN ANDERSON"

1853-1854

1853-1854



April 16, Easter Sunday: “Mazeppa,” a symphonic poem, was performed for the initial time, in Weimar, directed by its composer Franz Liszt.

When the paddle-wheel steamer *SS Powhatan*, en route from Le Havre, [France](#) to [New-York](#) harbor, ran aground on [Paumanok Long Island](#)’s Long Beach, 311 perished.

Heavy damage was done in San Salvador, by earthquake.

In the afternoon, [Henry Thoreau](#) went to a location where there was epigaea.



April 16. A cold, disagreeable day, — sun not fairly out, — yet the snow of yesterday melts apace; you can almost see it melt. Each time I look out I see more of russet or green. At first the bare ground showed itself in the middle of the road and rapidly widened, giving the birds wider pasture; then the grass in the fields began to peep through and the landscape to acquire a russet hue again. The green blades under the south side of the houses and hills appear to have grown wonderfully since the snow fell, and to be several shades darker green.

P.M. — To epigaea.

Saw a fox-colored sparrow [~~Fox Sparrow~~ [Passerella iliaca](#) (~~Fox-colored Sparrow~~)] still and black ducks [~~Black Duck~~ [Anas rubripes](#) (~~Dusky Duck~~)]. There are four or five cowslips open at the Second Division Meadow, — first probably about the 11th. The buds of the shad-bush are much expanded and show considerable green or yellowish, — more than [any other] native shrub or tree that I think of.¹⁶² The mayflower under the snow will not open for some days at least, — maybe a week. The winkle fungi are arranged either on the upper half of a prostrate log or one above another around a dead stump. Saw some to-day almost completely faded to a dark cream-color (or the buff of the edge of mine), though alternating with some faint steel-colored lines.

When I meet one of my neighbors these days who is ridiculously stately, being offended, I say in my mind: “Farewell! I will wait till you get your manners off. Why make politeness of so much consequence, when you are ready to assassinate with a word? I do not like any better to be assassinated with a rapier than to be knocked down with a bludgeon. You are so grand that I cannot get within ten feet of you.” Why will men so try to impose on one another? Why not be simple, and pass for what they are worth only? O such thin skins, such crockery, as I have to deal with! Do they not know that I can laugh? Some who have so much dignity that they cannot be contradicted! Perhaps somebody will introduce me one day, and then we may have some intercourse. I meet with several who cannot afford to be simple and true men, but personate, so to speak, their own ideal of themselves, trying to make the manners supply the place of the man. They are puffballs filled with dust and ashes.



April 17, Monday: [Benjamin Ricketson Tucker](#) was born in South Dartmouth, Massachusetts.

In [New York](#), Chemung, Steuben, and Tompkins Counties merged to form Schuyler County.



April 17. Snows again.

It is remarkable how the American mind runs to statistics. Consider the number of meteorological observers and other annual phenomena. The Smithsonian Institution is a truly national institution. Every shopkeeper makes a record of the arrival of the first martin [~~Purple Martin~~ [Progne subis](#)] or bluebird [~~Eastern Bluebird~~ [Sialia sialis](#)] to his box. Dod, the broker, told me last spring that he knew when the first bluebird came to his boxes, he made a memorandum of it: John Brown, merchant, tells me this morning that the martins first came to his box on the 13th, he “made a minute of it.” Beside so many entries in their day-books and ledgers, they record these things.


Did not see a linaria [~~Red-crown~~ (*linaria* or *Fringilla* (or *F.*) *linaria* ~~Common Redpoll~~ [Carduelis flammea](#)) (or ~~Lesser Redpoll~~)] the past winter, though they were the prevailing bird the winter before. There are but few *F. hyemalis* [~~Dark-eyed Junco~~ [Junco hyemalis](#) (~~Slate-colored Sparrow~~ or ~~Snow-bird~~)] about now; they appear to have gone north mostly on the advent of warmer weather about the 5th of April. I look up, these snowy

162. Must be blossom-buds.

1853-1854

1853-1854

days, and see purple finches [**Purple Finch** █ *Carpodacus purpureus* (American linnet)] silently feeding on the elms, when I have heard no sound. They sing somewhat like a robin, continuously, with a loud, canary-like *twee twee* and *che che che*. The tree sparrow [**American Tree Sparrow** █ *Spizella arborea*] is still the prevailing bird.

 April 18, Tuesday: The trial of **Matthew Flournoy Ward**, a son of the richest man in Kentucky, for shooting and killing the principal of the Louisville High School, Professor William H.G. Butler, began in Elizabethtown, Kentucky, after a change of venue had been obtained. Alfred Allen of Breckinridge County was at that time the commonwealth's attorney, and would be assisted in the prosecution by Robert F. Carpenter of Covington, F.W. Gibson of Louisville, and Sylvester Harris of Elizabethtown. Attorneys for the defense included John J. Crittenden of Frankfort, Thomas F. Marshall of Versailles, George Alfred Caldwell, Nat Wolfe, and Thomas W. Riley of Louisville, and John L. Helm. R.B. Hays, and James W. Hays of Elizabethtown, not to mention by name some 10 additional attorneys for the defense.

The Americans of the fleet in the Far East found the bay of the island of Oshima, "a small harbour but a very pretty place."

Henry Thoreau sent off some **Harvard Library** books, hand carry, with a note to **Thaddeus William Harris**.

Concord April 18th '54
Dear Sir,
I return by Mr. Gerrish three vols. viz Agassiz sur Les Glaciers Shepard's Clear
Sunshine and New England in 1652
Yrs
Henry D. Thoreau


In the afternoon, he went to "stone-heaps" by boat.



April 18. For three or four days the lilac buds have looked green, — the most advanced that I have seen. The earliest gooseberry still earlier in garden (though smaller buds).

P.M. — To stone-heaps by boat.

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.
*— **Professor Robert M. Thorson**, THE BOATMAN, page 10*



Scared up snipes [**Common Snipe** █ *Gallinago gallinago*] on the meadow's edge, which go off with their strange zigzag, crazy flight and a distressed sound, — *crak crak* or *cr-r-ack cr-r-rack*. One booms now at 3 P.M. They circle round and round, and zigzag high over the meadow, and finally alight again, descending abruptly from that height. Was surprised to see a wagtail thrush, the golden-crowned, [*Vide* April 26. Probably hermit thrush [**Hermit Thrush** █ *Catharus guttatus*].] at the Assabet Spring, which inquisitively followed me along the shore over the snow, hopping quite near. I should say this was the golden-crowned thrush without doubt, though I saw none of the gold, if this and several more which I saw had not kept close to the water. May possibly be the *aquaticus*. Have a jerk of the forked tail. The male yellow redpoll's breast and under parts are of a peculiarly splendid and lively yellow, glowing [**Palm Warbler** █ *Dendroica palmarum*]. It is remarkable that they too are found about willows, etc., along the water. Saw another warbler [*Vide* April 25.] [**Yellow-**

1853-1854

1853-1854

rumped Warbler [***Dendroica coronata***] about in the same localities, — *somewhat* creeper-like, very restless, more like the Tennessee warbler than any, methinks. Light-slate or bluish-slate head and shoulders, yellowish backward, all white beneath, and a distinct white spot on the wing; a harsh grating note (?) Saw two wood ducks [**Wood Duck** [***Aix sponsa***] probably; saw a white spot behind eyes; they went off with a shriller *craik* than the black ducks.

I now feel pretty sure that they were crow blackbirds [**Common Grackle** [***Quiscalus quiscula*** (**Crow Blackbird**)] which I saw April 3d with the red-wings [**Red-winged Blackbird** [***Agelaius phoeniceus***]. They are stout fellows without any red epaulet, and go off with a hoarser *chuck chuck*, with rounded tail. They make that split singing, and, with the red-wing, feed along the water's edge. Heard a red-wing sing his *bobylee* in new wise, as if he tossed up a fourpence and it rattled on some counter in the air as it went up. Saw to-day a lesser blackbird, size of cowbird, *slaty-black*, on meadow edge. What was it?

The snow is sprinkled along the street with the large scales of buds from the trees; thus revealing; what kind of *fall* is going on at this season.



April 19, Wednesday: In a concert in Weimar the phrase “symphonic poem” was heard for the initial time, as a description of “Tasso” by Franz Liszt.

[Lysander Spooner](#) wrote to George Bradburn to express the contempt in which he held the [Liberty Party](#)'s successor, the [Free Soil Party](#), a scorn which seemed only to deepen as the influence of this non-Spooner antislavery politics spread. —Love me, love my ideology. —Ignore my ideology, I detest you.

In the morning [Henry Thoreau](#) went paddling on the [Assabet River](#), and in the afternoon he went to the Cliffs.

“Up Assabet” is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), *THE BOATMAN*, page 10



April 19. Hear the tree sparrows [**American Tree Sparrow** [***Spizella arborea***] at willow hedge-row this morning, — *ah ha ha yip yip yip*, or *twitter twitter twe twe twe*, or *ah ha ha twitter tevitter twe*, — very canary-like, yet clear, as if aspirated vowels alone, — no *t* or *r*.





Hear a pine warbler [**Pine Warbler** [***Dendroica pinus*** (**Pine Creeper**)], — its note like the jingle of the *F. hyemalis* [**Dark-eyed Junco** [***Junco hyemalis*** (**Slate-colored Sparrow** or **Snow-bird**)], — on an elm in the street.

Yesterday, as I was returning down the Assabet, paddling leisurely in the stern, the sun came out after two days of storm or louring weather and shone on the banks covered with snow. The water, which had been perfectly smooth all the afternoon, looked smoother yet, and I think that I never beheld so pure and refulgent a white as the upright snowy banks presented. Snow never looks so white in winter.

I had chosen to come to the river that afternoon, for there, the air being warm though the earth was covered with snow, there was least change. The few sparrows and warblers along the water's edge and on the twigs over the water seemed to forget the wintry prospect. I was surprised to find the river so full of sawdust from the pail-factory and Barrett's mill that I could not easily distinguish if the stone-heaps had been repaired. There was not a square three inches clear. And I saw the sawdust deposited by an eddy in one place on the bottom like a sand-bank a foot or more deep half a mile below the mill. That is a good stream to explore any summer weather, because the woods border it immediately and you can observe a greater variety of small birds. I can approach them more nearly in my boat than on foot. Melvin was inspecting his traps. From time to time masses of snow overhanging the water [fell] and floated saturated down the stream. The calm, bright hour after the sun came out was very pleasant. I first saw the crescent of clear sky widening rapidly in the north-northwestern horizon, then the cheerful sunlight on hills and houses northward, and finally it shone out on the north bank and on

1853-1854

1853-1854




myself and on the south shore; and one song sparrow [Song Sparrow  *Melospiza melodia*], when he felt its influence, sang as if with a new influx of joy. How longed for by the birds! Farmer says that he saw a man catch a bluebird [Eastern Bluebird  *Sialia sialis*] yesterday which was dying in the snow. As I watched the sparrow  sitting in the cold shadow while the sun was already shining on the northern bank, I wondered that he did not at once fly to it, — ay, that he had not kept pace with the sun or fair weather from the first. But thus nature rules it, and these winged creatures wait to be shined on or shaded like ourselves. It was at this time, looking down the river, that I saw the two wood ducks [Wood Duck  *Aix sponsa*] sailing out from the shore in the smooth water, at first suspecting that they were tame. Birds are positively curious, — e.g. the thrush I saw that afternoon which hopped out to the end of the overhanging alders within a few feet to reconnoitre me and my boat.

This is the fifth day that the ground has been covered with snow. There first fell about four inches on the morning of the 15th. This had two thirds melted on the evening of the 16th. Then as much more fell on the 17th, with which to-night (evening of 19th) the ground is still more than half covered. There has been sleighing. The water was slightly skimmed over along the edge of the river this morning.

P.M. — To Cliffs.

The *Populus grandidentata* will not open for a day or two. There is considerable growth in the water at the Boiling Spring. The callitriche is most forward, a foot or more long, with its delicate or pretty cup-like whorls of leaves, floating on the surface. I see no signs of a blossom. What is that narrow tooth-leaved and red-stemmed plant which has grown nearly as much in the water? crosswise.¹⁶³ Then there is the cress next under way. Yet,



on the whole, I think the columbine in the most favorable places about even with these. The latter have been less checked the last four or five days. I saw yesterday, at the bottom of the water, by the sides of the river, a yellowish, half-unfolded pad here and there. The green tinge from new springing grass in the wet meadow as I looked low from my boat was much more obvious and springlike. I was struck the same day with the very rigid and sharp triangular points of a kind of sedge rising four or five inches above the water, perhaps that kind that makes the wreck in the fall. As if it were prepared to contend with the ice which forms in the night after it has started. That pretty little moss in beds on the rocks, etc., at the Cliffs shows its little reddish cup-like blossoms nowadays. A man was plowing in snow this morning. Saw a bullfrog in Hayden's pond-hole and a small green grasshopper. A turtle dove [Mourning Dove  *Zenaida macroura* (Turtle Dove)] flew away from the birches and lit in his stubble-field, and each time when it flew I heard a note continuously uttered like a pigeon woodpecker [Yellow-shafted Flicker  *Colaptes auratus* Pigeon-Woodpecker] or a robin [American Robin  *Turdus migratorius*] at a distance. *Salix humilis* (?) out, — i.e. the *Salix* in Stow's field, — probably before the 15th; say 14th. The sweet-gale below Emerson's *to-day*, just out, — the male, with its amber dust. I thought yesterday that the sparrows must rejoice to sit in the sun again and dry their feathers and feel its warmth. I read to-day that a boy found twenty-six bluebirds dead in a hollow tree on the 1st of April in Great Barrington. That was just after that long cold spell.

It is remarkable how scarce and silent the birds are even in a pleasant afternoon like this, compared with the morning. Within a few days the warblers have begun to come. They are of every hue. Nature made them to show her colors with. There are as many as there are colors and shades. In certain lights, as yesterday against the snow, nothing can be more splendid and celestial than the color of the bluebird. On the creeping juniper there appear to be buds, but not blossoms yet.

Do I ever see the marsh hawk?¹⁶⁴ Is it not the sharp-shinned which I have mistaken for it? A man came to me yesterday to offer me as a naturalist a two-headed calf which his cow had brought forth, but I felt nothing but disgust at the idea and began to ask myself what enormity I had committed to have such an offer made to me. I am not interested in mere phenomena, though it were the explosion of a planet, only as it may have lain in the experience of a human being.

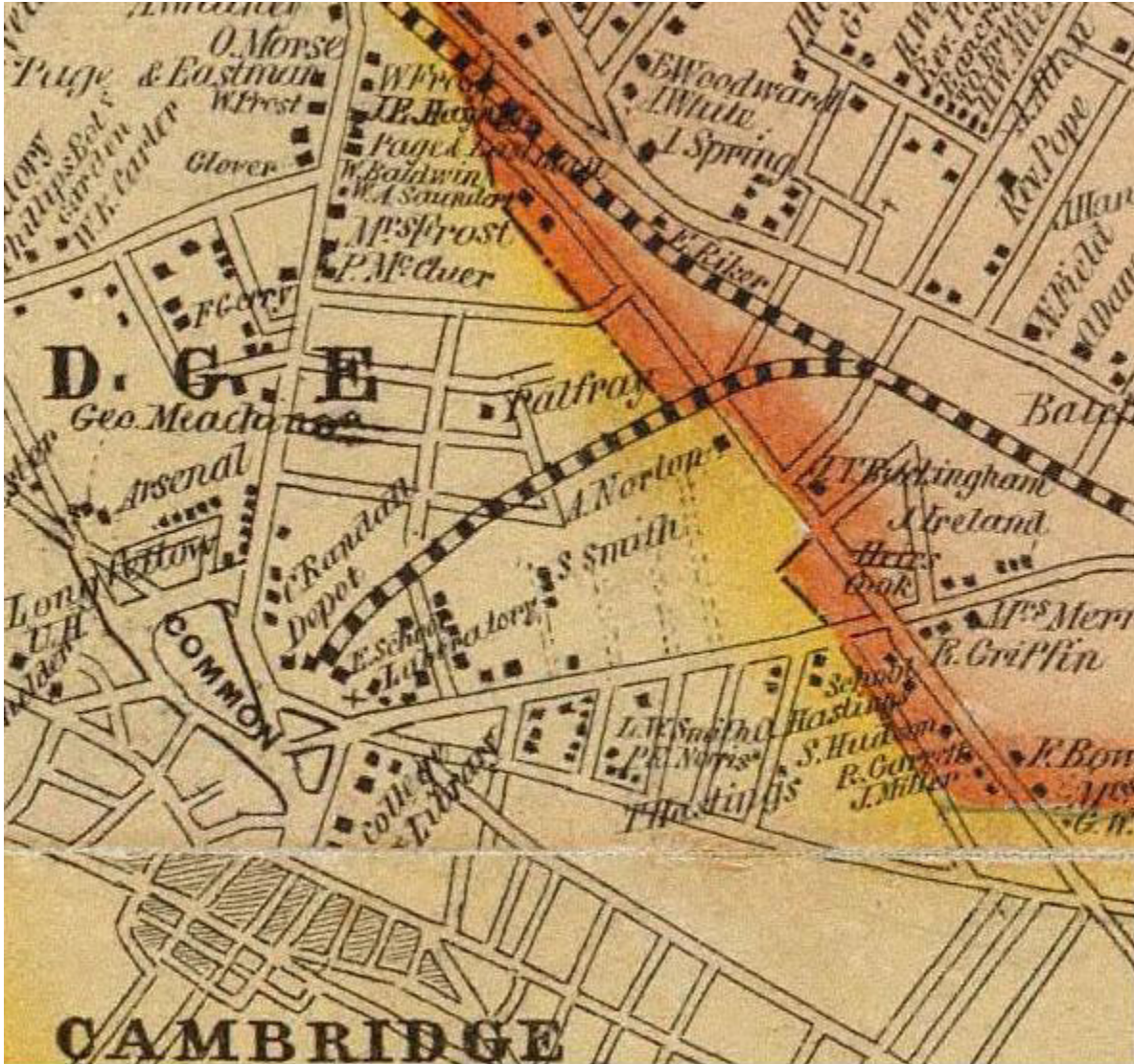
163. Veronica.

164. I think the early large hawk was it.

1853-1854

1853-1854

It was decided that the last mile of the railroad link to [Harvard College](#) campus in Cambridge be abandoned (service would discontinue in 1855 and part of the former right-of-way has now become Museum Street; in 1856 a street railway would begin operation).



HISTORY OF RR

1853-1854

1853-1854



April 20, Thursday: In the morning [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Nawshawtuct, in the afternoon he went to Island and Hill, and at 4 PM he went to Moore's Swamp.

Austria and [Russia](#) signed a defensive alliance in Berlin and remained neutral in the [Crimean War](#).

Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel [James Duncan Graham](#) of the US Army's Corps of Topographical Engineers was placed in general supervision of the Harbor Improvements on Lake Michigan.

Rochester, [New York](#)'s Penny Savings Bank opened.

[Alfred Russel Wallace](#) disembarked in Singapore for his collecting expedition in the Malay Archipelago. (He wouldn't be back until February 20th, 1862 — 8 years and about 14,000 miles of travel.)

When Captain Creezy arrived in [San Francisco](#) harbor from New-York harbor on the 88th day, this constituted a new record.



April 20. A.M. — To Nawshawtuct.

Heard on the 14th a singular note on or near the hill, like a guinea-hen or other fowl, or a squeaking pump-handle. Heard [it] again this morning, and saw two large dark birds go off from a walnut with a loud squeaking *quack*. Is it a strange large woodpecker? or possibly a teal? Heard the same at starlight, — *ker-chuck ker-chuck ker-chuck*. I think it is the redwing [[Red-winged Blackbird](#) [Agelaius phoeniceus](#) ~~Red-wing~~¹⁶⁵] only sings *bobylee*. Saw one pursuing a female (?). I am not sure whether these or the crow blackbirds [[Common Grackle](#) [Quiscalus quiscula](#) (~~Crow Blackbird~~)] are the earliest. Saw a small black-striped warbler [~~Black-and-white Creeper~~ ([Black-and-white Warbler](#) [Mniotilta varia](#))] or flycatcher (?) [[Willow Flycatcher](#) [Empidonax traillii](#) or gray flycatcher [Empidonax wrightii](#)] (c) on a willow. Hear the long-drawn scold of a flicker [[Yellow-shafted Flicker](#) [Colaptes auratus](#)], sounding very loud over the water.

P. M. — To Island and Hill.

A willow coming out fairly, with honey-bees humming on it, in a warm nook, — the most forward I have noticed, for the cold weather has held there in check. And now different kinds of bees and flies about them. What a sunny sight and summer sound! A striped snake on a warm, sunny bank. The painted tortoises are fairly out sunning to-day. A very pleasant and warm afternoon; the earth seems to be waking up. Frogs croak in the clear pools on the hillside where rocks have been taken out, and there is frog-spawn there, and little tadpoles are very lively in the sunny water.

I find some advantage in describing the experience of a day on the day following. At this distance it is more ideal, like the landscape seen with the head inverted, or reflections in water.

4 P.M. — To Moore's Swamp.

Red maple in a warm place shows anthers, and will open to-morrow if pleasant; say 22d. In the ditch in the Brown meadow, several yellow lily buds pushed up four or five inches. But water plants *on the whole* not decidedly ahead of land or air plants. The pine warbler [[Pine Warbler](#) [Dendroica pinus](#) (~~Pine Creeper~~)] on the oaks, running about somewhat creeper-like and now and then uttering a loud ringing *vetter vetter vetter vetter vetter vet* faster and faster, with its bright-yellow throat and forked tail.

At starlight by riverside a few faint stertorous sounds from the awakening meadow, and one or two faint bullfrogish notes, — *er-er-er*. The sound of the snipes [[Common Snipe](#) [Gallinago gallinago](#) (~~Brown Snipe or Wilson's Snipe~~)], winnowing the evening air now at starlight, visible but for an instant high over the meadows, is heard far into the village, — *hoo hoo hoo hoo hoo hoo*, rising higher and higher or dying away as they circle round, — a ghostly sound. Is that bittern-like squeak made by them? I do not mean the nighthawk-like squeak.

165. The "Red Wing" chieftainship of Red Wing, Minnesota did not refer to the red wing of this blackbird, but referred rather to a swan's wing dyed red that was the badge of office of the chiefly dynasty.




1853-1854

1853-1854



April 21, Friday: [William Lloyd Garrison](#), in his review for [The Liberator](#) (page 2, columns 3-4) “Exploration of the Amazon, and Designs of the Slave Power” of [William Lewis Herndon](#)’s and Lardner Gibbon’s EXPLORATION OF THE VALLEY OF THE AMAZON, opined as to the base motives that lay behind all this activity. Was it not that “the prime motive” for such an exploration of the swampy jungle would be “to discover new fields and open new resources for the Slave Power, whereby its domains shall be illimitable, and its existence perpetuated as long as a tropical soil and climate can endure its pestiferous presence”?

 “LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE”: Lieutenant Herndon, whom our Government sent to explore the Amazon, and, it is said, to extend the area of Slavery, observed that there was wanting there “an industrious and active population, who know what the comforts of life are, and who have artificial wants to draw out the great resources of the country.” But what are the artificial wants to be encouraged? Not the love of luxuries, like the tobacco and slaves of, I believe, his native Virginia, nor the ice and granite and other material wealth of our native New England; nor are “the great resources of a country” that fertility or barrenness of soil which produces these. The chief want, in every State that I have been into, was a high and earnest purpose in its inhabitants. This alone draws out “the great resources” of Nature, and at last taxes her beyond her resources; for man naturally dies out of her. When we want culture more than potatoes, and illumination more than sugar-plums, then the great resources of a world are taxed and drawn out, and the result, or staple production, is, not slaves, nor operatives, but men, -those rare fruits called heroes, saints, poets, philosophers, and redeemers.

1853-1854

1853-1854

Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) went ashore to return an official call of the [Japanese](#) Governor. The men made jest of a Marine who took a misstep while attempting to land and fell overboard (“So up sprang Jones to lead the way / When overboard he tumbled in the Bay”).

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked to Saw Mill Brook. He made an entry in his journal that he was later to copy into his early lecture “[WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT](#)” as:

Brad Dean's
Commentary

[Paragraph 41] The title **wise** is, for the most part, falsely applied. How can one be a wise man, if he does not know any better how to live than other men?—if he is only more cunning and intellectually subtle? Does Wisdom work in a tread-mill? or does she teach how to succeed **by her example**? Is there any such thing as wisdom not applied to life? Is she merely the miller who grinds the finest logic? It is pertinent to ask if Plato got his **living** in a better way or more successfully than his contemporaries,—or did he succumb to the difficulties of life like other men? Did he seem to prevail over some of them merely by indifference, or by assuming grand airs? or find it easier to live, because his aunt remembered him in her will? The ways in which most men get their living, that is, live, are mere make-shifts, and a shirking of the real business of life,—chiefly because they do not know, but partly because they do not mean, any better.

He had some questions about classic Greek philosophy, for instance questions about an Athenian philosopher named Aristokles, who had been characterized as [Plato](#) or “broad” after the shoulders that he had developed as a wrestler in his youth:



*April 21. 6 A.M. — Heard the bay-wing^{one of the seringos} sparrow [[Vesper Sparrow](#) Pooecetes gramineus] in the redeemed meadows. None yesterday morning. At a distance hear only the end of its strain, like the ring of a small piece of steel dropped on an anvil. A few *F. hyemalis* [[Dark-eyed Junco](#) Junco hyemalis (~~Slate-colored Sparrow~~ or ~~Snow-bird~~)] still about. Are not those little whorls of black pointed scales the female blossom of the *Thuja occidentalis*?*

[Transcript]

Scarcely an April shower yet.

How can a man be a wise man, if he does n’t know any better how to live than other men? —if he is only more cunning and intellectually subtle? Does Wisdom work in a treadmill? Does Wisdom fail? or does she teach how to succeed by her example? Is she merely the miller who grinds the finest logic? Did [Plato](#) get his *living* in a better way or more successfully than his contemporaries? Did he succumb to the difficulties of life like other men? Did he merely prevail over them by indifference, or by assuming grand airs? or find it easier to live because his aunt remembered him in her will?

P.M. — To Saw Mill Brook.

As I was handling the arbor-vitæ to-day, an odor like strawberries came from [it]. Is that terebinthine? The lilac is beginning to open to-day. The snows go off and the lustre of the wintergreen is undiminished. The large black ants are at work on their hills. The great scalloped leaf betrays the *P. grandidentata*. How silent and deserted the woods are! I do not fairly see a chickadee even. Snow with its tracks would make it seem more inhabited. How we prize any redness on the ground! — a red stain in a stone or even a coxcomb lichen on a stump! The hellebore at the brook has shot up six or eight inches with its compact bundles and will soon catch the cabbage. It is *now* one of the most forward plants. That gooseberry at the brook is the most forward shrub or tree at present that I can find out of doors in Concord. [Added later: Excepting the spiræa.] [Added later yet: The thimble-berry in some places equally forward, and perhaps the honeysuckle vine.] It shows more of a leaf than the lilac or Missouri currant, which may come nest. As I go up the hill beyond the brook, while the hylodes are heard behind, I perceive the faintest possible flowerlike scent as from the earth, reminding me of anemonies and houstonias. Can it be the budded mouse-ears under my feet? Downy-swaddled, they lie along flat to the earth like a child on its mother’s bosom. I sit on a rock awhile just below the old trough. These are those early times when the rich golden-brown tassels of the alders tremble over the brooks — and not a leaf on their twigs. We are far north with [Sir John Franklin](#). I see the first of that bent lake grass on the smooth surface of a flooded meadow, with a dimple at its stern. It is a warm sight. The fruit of the *O. spectabilis*(?), flowering fern, still perfect. I see on the red cedar the male blossom buds not yet quite open, and very minute hollows with whitish scales at the ends of some of the branchlets, which I take to be the female flowers.

The song of the purple finch on the elms (he also frequents firs and spruce) is rich and continuous, like, but




1853-1854

1853-1854

fainter and more rapid than, that of a robin, — some of the *cherruwit* in it and a little of the warble of the martin [Purple Martin *Progne subis*]. A martin was found dead the 18th after the snows, and many bluebirds [Bluebird, Eastern *Sialia sialis*] in Brookfield.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

 April 22, Saturday: [Harvey D. Parker](#) purchased a property west of School House Lane in [Boston](#), directly across the street from the 1749/1754 King's Chapel and just down the road from the domed Massachusetts State House, and tore down the mansion built there in 1704 by John Mico, that had been inhabited in turn by Colonel Jacob Wendall, Governor Moses Gill, and the Boylston family and had then fallen into decrepitude as a boarding house. He began construction of a brick hotel faced in white marble. The 1st and 2d floors of this 5-story Italianate structure would be provided with arched windows.

Anton Bruckner's *Laßt Jubeltöne laut erklingen* for male chorus and brass to words of Weiss was performed for the initial time, for the reception of the future Empress Elizabeth, in Linz.

Officers received permission to visit Shimoda, remaining within 10 miles of the shoreline. Shore leave had been restricted since an incident of unauthorized leave that took place earlier during negotiations raised objection by the [Japanese](#). William Speiden, Jr. went ashore with his friend Anton L.C. Portman and others. They walked out into the country. Speiden noted the picturesque scenery, the presence of many children, and a visit with some young Japanese ladies.

[Hector Berlioz](#) gave the 1st of 4 highly successful concerts in Dresden, conducting *La damnation de Faust*.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR APRIL 22D]

[Transcript]

1853-1854

1853-1854



April 23, Sunday: [Lucy Stone](#) told [Henry C. Wright](#) that reading his [MARRIAGE AND PARENTAGE; OR, THE REPRODUCTIVE ELEMENT IN MAN, AS A MEANS TO HIS ELEVATION AND HAPPINESS](#) over and over, every time she was seeing “more clearly its absolute truth, and exceeding beauty.” She was presenting copies of it to other young people, inscribing these copies with “for all that is pure, and true between man and woman” One of Stone’s friends, however, considered the book unfit to read and refused to show it to a daughter who was becoming a bride).¹⁶⁶



April 23. A kingfisher with his *crack*, — *cr-r-r-rack*. Rain Yesterday and to-day; yet this morning the robin sings and the blackbirds and, in the yard, the tree sparrow [[American Tree Sparrow](#) [Spizella arborea](#)], [hyemalis](#) [[Dark-eyed Junco](#) [Junco hyemalis](#) ([Slate-colored Sparrow](#) or [Snow-bird](#))], and song sparrow [[Song Sparrow](#) [Melospiza melodia](#)]. A rain is sure to bring the tree-sparrow and hyemalis to the gardens. I suppose it must be the seeds of weeds which they are so busily picking from the bare ground, which their sharp eyes detect. George Minott says that he used to shoot the red-headed woodpecker [[Red-headed Woodpecker](#) [Melanerpes erythrocephalus](#)], and found their nests on the trees on his hillside. He used to steal up to the pigeon woodpeckers' [[Yellow-shafted Flicker](#) [Colaptes auratus](#) [Pigeon Woodpecker](#)] holes and clap his hand over them and take out the old bird; then let her go. The first April showers are even fuller of promise and a certain moist serenity than the sunny days. How thickly the green blades are starting up amid the

166. This may be an earlier edition which we do not have, for the edition of [MARRIAGE AND PARENTAGE; OR, THE REPRODUCTIVE ELEMENT IN MAN, AS A MEANS TO HIS ELEVATION AND HAPPINESS](#) which we know about bears a publisher's imprint of the following year.

1853-1854

1853-1854

russet! The tinge of green is gradually increasing in the face of the russet earth.

Now that the very earliest shrubs are beginning to unfold, — spiraea, gooseberry, honeysuckle vine, lilac, Missouri currant, — many herbaceous plants, not evergreen merely, make quite a show, as the skunk-cabbage in favorable places, nuphar in the *most favorable* places though muddy yellow and dilapidated, callitriche and the narrow tooth-leaved water plant, etc., etc., cowslip, columbine (cress and chrysosplenium, — are not both chiefly evergreen?), celandine, catnep, saxifrage, dandelion, clover, golden senecio, sweet flag, hellebore (the most forward buds begin to open), thistle, shepherd's-purse, meadow saxifrage, elder probably.

As for the birds, I have this to remark: The crows still frequent the meadows. The lark [**Horned lark** **Eremophila alpestris**] sings morning and evening. The blackbirds — red-wing [**Red-winged Blackbird** **Agelaius phoeniceus**] and crow [**American Crow** **Corvus brachyrhynchos**] — have since their arrival kept up their *bobylee* and chattering and split notes on the willows and maples by the river and along the meadow's edge. They appear to depend much (as well as crows and robins [**American Robin** **Turdus migratorius**]) on the meadow, just left bare, for their food. They are the noisiest birds yet. Both still fly in flocks, though the male red-wings have *begun* to chase the females. Robins still frequent the meadows in flocks and sing in the rain. The song sparrows [**Song Sparrow** **Melospiza melodia**] not in such flocks nor singing so tumultuously along the watercourses in the morning as in the last half of March. how wary they are! They will dodge you for half an hour behind a wall or a twig, and only a stone will make them start, looking every which way in a minute. So the blackbirds, both kinds, sidle, till they bring a twig between me and them. The flock of black ducks [**Black Duck** **Anas rubripes** (**Dusky Duck**)] which stayed by so long is now reduced to a quarter part their number. Before the 4th or 5th of April the *F. hyemalis* [**Dark-eyed Junco** **Junco hyemalis** (**Slate-colored Sparrow** or **Snow-bird**)] was apparently the most abundant bird of any, in great drifting flocks with their lively jingle, their light-colored bill against slate breasts; then, on the advent of warmer weather, the greater part departed. Have the fox sparrows [**Fox Sparrow** **Passerella iliaca** (**Fox-colored Sparrow** or **cinnamon sparrow**)] gone also? I have not seen them of late. As for hawks **[]**, after the one or two larger (perhaps) hen-hawks in the winter and a smaller one in December (?), the first were large marsh (?) hawks [**Northern Harrier** **Circus cyaneus** Marsh Hawk (**Hen Harrier** or **Frog Hawk**)] on trees on the meadow edge or skimming along it, since which the eagle **[]**, the sharp-shinned [**Sharp-shinned Hawk** **Accipiter striatus**], and the smaller brown and white-rumped over meadows, which may be the same, etc., etc. Have seen the black duck [**Black Duck** **Anas rubripes** (**Dusky Duck**)], golden-eye [**Common Goldeneye** **Bucephala clangula** (**Whistler**)], Merganser [**Common Merganser** **Mergus merganser** (**Shecorway**¹⁶⁷ or **Goosander** or **Sheldrake**)], blue(?)-winged teal [**Teal, Blue-winged** **Anas discors**], wood duck [**Wood Duck** **Aix sponsa**]. The golden-eye seems to have gone. Heard a nuthatch [**White-breasted Nuthatch** **Sitta carolinensis** (**White-bellied Nuthatch**)] yesterday, April 22d. The tree sparrows [**American Tree Sparrow** **Spizella arborea**] are the prevailing bird on ground, and most numerous of any for the past month except one while the *hyemalis* [**Dark-eyed Junco** **Junco hyemalis** (**Slate-colored Sparrow** or **Snow-bird**)]. They are a chubby little bird with a clear chestnut crown, a dark spot on the otherwise clear whitish breast, and two light bars on the wings. The pigeon woodpecker [**Yellow-shafted Flicker** **Colaptes auratus** **Pigeon Woodpecker**] now scolds long and loud morning and evening. The snipes [**Common Snipe** **Gallinago gallinago**] are still feeding on the meadows. The turtle dove [**Mourning Dove** **Zenaida macroura** (**Turtle Dove**)] darts solitary about as if lost, or it had lost its mate. The yellow redpoll [**Palm Warbler** **Dendroica palmarum** (**Sylvia petechia** or **Yellow Redpoll**)], with a faint clear chip, is the commonest yellow bird on hills, etc., about water. The chip sparrow [**hair-bird** (**Chipping Sparrow** **Spizella passerina**) **F. socialis**] does not sing much in morning yet. New kinds of warblers **[]** have begun to come within a few days. I saw yesterday the smoke of the first burning of brush which I have noticed, though the leaves cannot be very dry yet.


P.M. — To Lee's Cliff on foot.


It has cleared up. At Ivy Bridge I see the honeybees entering the crypts of the skunk-cabbage, whose tips have been bitten by the frost and cold. The first sweet-gale, which opened a day or two ago on the sunny sides of brooks where the sun reached it above the bank, was an interesting sight, full of amber dust. Those are blossom, not leaf buds, so forward on the shad-bush. The myrtle-bird, — yellow-rumped warbler [**Yellow-rumped Warbler** **Dendroica coronata** (**Yellow-rump**)], — was not this warbler *c* of the 20th? — on the willows, alders, and the wall by Hubbard's Bridge, slate and white spotted with yellow. Its note is a *fine*, rapid, somewhat hissing or whistling *se se se se ser riddler se*, somewhat like the common yellowbird's [**Yellow Warbler** **Dendroica petechia**]. The yellow redpolls [**Palm Warbler** **Dendroica palmarum**] are very common on the willows and alders and in the road near the bridge. They keep jerking their tails. I heard one male sing a jingle like *che ve ve ve ve ve*, very fast, and accenting the last syllable. They are quite tame. I sit awhile on the lee side of Conant's Wood, in the sun, amid the dry oak leaves, and hear from time to time the fine ringing note of a pine warbler [**Pine Warbler** **Dendroica pinus** (**Pine Creeper**)], which I do not see. It reminds me of former days and indescribable things. Swarms of those little fuzzy gnats now make a faint

167. *Shecorway* is the Abenaki name for mergansers.

1853-1854

1853-1854



humming about the railing of the bridge. The bay-wing [**Vesper Sparrow**  *Pooecetes gramineus*] has a light ring at some distance around the eye. It is also too dark for my prisoner of the 15th.

Saw my white-headed eagle [**Bald Eagle**  *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*] again, first at the same place, the outlet of Fair Haven Pond. It was a fine sight, he is mainly — *i.e.* his wings and body — so black against the sky, and they contrast so strongly with his white head and tail. He was first flying low over the water; then rose gradually and circled westward toward White Pond. Lying on the ground with my glass, I could watch him easily and by turns he gave me all possible views of himself when I observed him edgewise I noticed that the tips of his wings curved upward slightly the more, like a stereotyped undulation.



He rose very high at last, till I almost lost him in the clouds circling or rather looping along westward, high over the river and wood and farm, effectually concealed in the sky.




We who live this plodding life here below never know how many eagles fly over us. They are concealed in the empyrean. I think I have got the worth of my glass now that it has revealed to me the white-headed eagle. Now I see him edgewise like a black ripple in the air, his white head still as ever turned to earth and now he turns his under side to me, and I behold the full breadth of his broad black wings, somewhat ragged at the edges. I had first seen two white ducks far off just above the outlet of the pond, mistaking them for the foaming crest of a wave. These flew soon, perhaps scared by the eagle. I think they were a male and female red-breasted merganser [**Red-breasted Merganser**  *Mergus serrator*] (though I did [not] see the red of the breast), for I saw his red bill, and his head was not large with a crest like the golden-eye; very white on breast and sides, the female browner.¹⁶⁸ As ducks often do, they first flew directly and unhesitatingly up the stream, low over the water, for half a mile, then turned and came down, flying thirty or forty feet above the water, the male leading till they were out of sight. This is the way with them, I notice; they first fly in one direction and then go off to alight in another. When they came down the river, the male leading, they were a very good example of the peculiar flight of ducks. They appeared perfectly in a line one behind the other. When they are not they preserve perfect parallelism. This is because of their long necks and feet, — the wings appearing to be attached midway, — and moreover, in this case, of their perfectly level flight, as if learned from skimming over the water. Directly after rose two blue herons [**Great Blue Heron**  *Ardea herodias* (~~Blue Heron~~)] from the meadow.

I find but one red maple fairly in blossom on a few twigs over the water to-day. I think, therefore, the 22d will do for the very earliest. Had a glimpse of a very small warbler (*b'*) on a pitch pine, and heard a pleasant and unusual whistle from him.¹⁶⁹ The slippery elm, with its dull-pinkish (?) blossoms now fully out. I think on account of the snow it could not have opened before the 18th. The sedge was abundant long before the crowfoot or saxifrage was. It must be put earlier than I have allowed. Crowfoot is not yet abundant, though it was earlier than saxifrage, which has now gone ahead. A thimble-berry under this cliff is at least — is forward as any gooseberry. I find a new plant, now six or eight inches high, which will blossom in two or three days, the *Aralia laevigata* (?).¹⁷⁰ The columbine is well budded. Some alders are still handsome. Here is a *common*. one, — very handsome drooping clusters of three, four, or five reddish-brown and greenish-yellow catkins, two to three inches long, with the small reddish female blossoms stretched over them. How the hazel catkins elongate themselves at last!


168. Certainly mergansers, probably sheldrakes.

169. Was it *b* of the 18th? *Vide* April 25.



170. *Vide* May 1st.

 April 24, Monday: In the morning [Henry Thoreau](#) walked up the railroad tracks, and in the afternoon he went up the [Assabet River](#) to Cedar Swamp.

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.
 — [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), *THE BOATMAN*, page 10






April 24. Monday. A.M. — Up railroad.

The river slightly risen again owing to rain of yesterday morn and day before. Its greatest height this year was the 17th of March. This is the next rise of any consequence. As I stand still listening on the frosty sleepers at Wood's crossing by the lupines, I hear the loud and distinct *pump-a-gor* of a strike-driver. Thus he announces himself. I find the shepherd's-purse open in Cheney's garden at last. It has run up eight or ten inches in some places, and may have been open a week; but say just after the snow, or the 19th. After a very mild winter, like that of '52 and '53?, and it will be one of the very earliest flowers, — say second, or next after the chickweed, — but last winter it was killed down by the cold. Yet it is hardier and more forward now than the chickweed, which is still dead and bleached. Saw a black blackbird  without red, with a purplish-green-black neck, and somewhat less than a red-wing, in company with two smaller slaty-black females (?). Can they be rusty grackles [**Rusty Blackbird**  *Euphagus carolinus* (~~Rusty Grackle~~)]? [*Vide* May 9th.]

P.M. — Up Assabet, and thence to Cedar Swamp.


The larch will apparently blossom in [one] or two days at least, both its low and broad purple-coned male flowers and its purple-tipped female cones. [*Vide* May 1st.] Its little leaf-bundles are beginning to burst. Heard amid the white cedars the fine, clear singing warbler of yesterday, whose harsh note I may have heard the 18th, — *twer er te le, twer er te te, twer er te to tèr*, but very clear and fast. Go to new trees, like cedars and firs, and you hear new birds. They increase the strangeness. Also other strange plants are found there. I have also observed that the early birds are about the early trees, like maples, alders, willows, elms, etc.

The white cedar female blossoms are open, and as the brown male ones are loosened the next day in the house, I think the 25th may be called their first day. I find a raspberry (thickly clothed with bristles) in this swamp, as early as the thimble-berry. This, then, might be put after the gooseberry among native plants, because this is not so much indebted to a favorable position, — the gooseberry not at all, — growing in a sheltered, *i.e.* covered, swamp. New plant¹⁷¹ flower-budded at Cedar Swamp amid the high blueberry, panicked andromeda, clethra, etc., etc., — upright dense racemes of reddish flower-buds on reddish terminal shoots.

Saw a large thin whitish fungus or spunk, fourteen and three quarters inches by eight and a half from the tree and two or three thick, with concentric growths of various thickness, within a foot of the ground on a maple stump. There was a grape-vine and some other small plants grown directly through, which it had apparently grown round. The first red maple blossoms — so very red over the water — are very interesting. Saw a very large hawk, slaty above and white beneath, low over river. Was it not a goshawk [**Goshawk**  *Accipter gentillis* (~~Cape Eagle, Partridge Hawk~~)]? The kingfisher [**Belted Kingfisher**  *Ceryle alcyon*] flies with a *crack cr-r-r-ack* and a limping or flitting flight from tree to tree before us, and finally, after a third of a mile, circles round to our rear. He sits rather low over the water. Now that he has come I suppose that the fishes on which he preys rise within reach. Are not they bank swallows¹⁷² sailing so thick over the river, now at 5.30 P.M.?




171. Racemed andromeda.

172. [Barn swallows.] *Vide* 29th.


 April 25, Tuesday: Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel [James Duncan Graham](#) of the US Army's Corps of Topographical Engineers was placed in general supervision of the Channel Improvement over St. Clair Flats.









In the afternoon, [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Indian Cedar Hill.





April 25: A.M. — I think I hear near George Heywood's the *tull-lull* (?). [Yes] Heard and saw my warbler (?) *b'* of the 23d and 24th on Mr. Emerson's pines. It is the smallest bird I have seen this year. Sits still amid the pines not far below the top and sings very sweetly, loud and clear, and seems further off than it is, beginning first with very *fine* wiry notes and then increasing in volume and melody till it ends with *tweeter tweeter tweeter ter twe*. Some of it a martin-like warble. Has sometimes a harsh scolding note. It is all light, perhaps ashy-white, beneath; has a little narrow forked tail; ashy (?) under wings, which are considerably shorter than tail; and light above and below eye; perhaps a whitish bar on wings; olivaceous (?) above. I think it may be the *golden-crested wren*, [**Golden-crowned Kinglet**  *Regulus satrapa*] though I hardly saw the upper parts, or possibly the small blue-gray flycatcher [**Willow Flycatcher**  *Empidonax traillii* or **gray flycatcher**  *Empidonax wrightii*]. I do not find the male blossoms of the red cedar open yet.

P.M. — To Indian Cedar Hill.

Quite warm and the frogs are snoring on the meadow. I swelter under my greatcoat. The *Populus grandidentata* is fairly begun; say very first the 23d. Many shad-flies in the air and alighting on my clothes. The summer approaches by almost insensibly increasing *lieferungs* of heat, each awakening some new bird or quadruped or reptile. At first we were compelled to take off our mittens, then to unbutton our greatcoat, and now, perhaps, to take it off occasionally (I have not left it at home yet), and wear thin boots. For some time we have done with little fire, nowadays let it go out in the afternoon. (To-day, 26th, I sit without any.) Each creature awaits with confidence its proper degree of heat. I think I saw a pigeon [**American Passenger Pigeon**  *Ectopistes migratorius* (*Pigeon, Wild*)] yesterday. G. Minott says that he saw some a week ago.

Saw a ^{golden}^{ruby}-crested wren ["golden" crossed out in pencil in favor of "ruby"] [**Ruby-crowned Kinglet**  *Regulus calendula*] in the woods near Goose Pond. (This must be my warblers a and b of April 18th, *b'* of April 23d and 24th.) It sounded far off and like an imitation of a robin, [And of a golden robin, [**Northern Oriole**  *Icterus galbula* (*Fairy Hangbird* or *Hangbird* or *Gold Robin* or *Golden Robin*)] which later I often mistook for him.] — a long strain and often repeated. I was quite near it before I was aware of it, sounding like a faint imitation of a robin. Some chickadees [**Chicadee, Black-capped**  *Parus atricapillus* (*Titmouse, Titmice*)] and yellow redpoll [**Palm Warbler**  *Dendroica palmarum* (*Yellow Redpoll* or *Sylvia petechia*)] were first apparent, then my wren  on the pitch pines and young oaks. He appeared curious to observe me. A very interesting and active little fellow, darting about amid the tree-tops, and his song quite remarkable and rich and loud for his size. Begins with a very fine note, before its pipes are filled, not audible at a little distance, then *woriter weter*, etc., etc., winding up with *teter teter*, all clear and round. [His song is comical and reminds me of the thrasher. [**Thrasher, Brown**  *Toxostroma rufum* (*Mavis, red*)] This was at 4 P.M., when most birds do not sing. I saw it yesterday, pluming itself and stretching its little wings. Our smallest bird, methinks, except the hummingbird. [**Ruby-throated Hummingbird**  *Archilochus colubris*] The snuff-colored, white-spotted wren  I saw some time ago was considerably larger.

Just before this saw on the low bushes, — shrub oaks, etc., — by path, a large sparrow with ferruginous-brown and white-barred wings, — the white-throated sparrow, [**White-throated Sparrow**  *Zonotrichia albicollis*] — uttered a faint ringing chirp. The first partridge [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus* (*Partridge*)] drums in one or two places, as if the earth's pulse now beat audibly with the increased flow of life. It slightly flutters all Nature and makes her heart palpitate. Also, as I stand listening for the wren, and sweltering in my greatcoat, I hear the woods filled with the hula of insects, as if my hearing were affected; and thus the summer's quire begins. The silent spaces have begun to be filled with notes of birds and insects and the peep and croak and snore of frogs, even as living green blades are everywhere pushing up amid the sere ones. I heard that same snoring which I hear on the river meadows, on all inland meadow this afternoon, where I think no bullfrogs are. Are they not then the *palustris*, or else the shad frog? There are now many new insects in the air. Black ducks still on Flint's. The fertile fruit-stems of the sensitive fern by the side of the Flint's Pond path, more than a foot high, are a rich ornament to the ground, — brown, four or five inches long, and turned to one side, contrasting with the lighter rachis (?) Saw my thrush of the 18th by the pond. It appears dark-olive, ferruginous on rump and tail, with a dark streak slanting from each check and flesh-colored legs. The red cedar has fairly begun to-day; maybe the first yesterday. Put the red yesterday and the white to-day. As I approach the red cedars now, I perceive a delicious strawberry-like fragrance in the air, like that from the arbor-vita. The creeping juniper apparently open, but not yet open. Though I see some amber on the sweet-fern, I am in doubt whether to say to-day or to-morrow. The wild red cherry (if that is one near Everett's), privet, and buckthorn are *beginning* to leaf out. The abele will probably blossom to-morrow.





April 26, Wednesday: The jury in the trial of [Matthew Flourney Ward](#), a son of the richest man in Kentucky, who had shot and killed the principal of the Louisville High School, Professor William H.G. Butler, retired for deliberation at 5 P.M. and would deliver its “not guilty” verdict the following morning.

In the American fleet in the Far East, Court Martial sentences were read for 2 men.

At 2:30PM [Henry Thoreau](#) went on foot to Lee’s Cliff. That evening there was a heavy thunder-shower.



April 26. Heard at 8 A.M. the peculiar loud and distinct ring of the first toad, at a distance. April-morning weather, threatening showeriness.

2.30 P.M. — To Lee’s Cliff on foot.

A still, warm, overcast clay with a southwest wind (this is what the Indians made so much of), and the finest possible dew-like rain in the air from time to time, now more of the sun. It is now so warm that I go back to leave my greatcoat for the first time, and the cooler smell of possible rain is refreshing. The toads ring more or less.

When the toads begin to ring,
Then thinner clothing bring,
Or off your greatcoat fling.

It is not yet time for thin clothes. Did I hear a tree-toad to-day? As I go over Hubbard’s land I see A. Wheeler burning brush, clearing up on Fair Haven. Great volumes or clouds of white smoke are blown gently northeastward, while the bright-scarlet flame is seen here and there creeping along its edge. They begin to burn on the lee side. The farmers are now busily plowing, some setting out roots and planting. I seem to perceive a slight fragrance in the air.

Found part of a bird’s head and bill, — I think that of the thrush I saw on the 18th and yesterday. The bill (with notch) and what part of the head is left are exactly like the hermit thrush in F. Brown’s collection, except that mine is yellow inside bill (but his has probably faded); and I see that the latter’s legs, which W. calls dusky, are light enough for my bird, and the colors above — olivaceous, and foxy rump and tail - are the same, but the hermit thrush’s spots on breast appear darker. I think I have seen or heard of more dead birds than usual this season, - read of bluebirds, heard of a martin (both killed by cold), also seen a dead robin or two and this thrush. The woods are full of myrtle-birds [[Yellow-rumped Warbler](#) [Dendroica coronata](#)] this afternoon, more common and commonly heard than any, especially along the edge of woods on oaks, etc., -their note an oft-repeated fine jingle, *a che che che che, che che*, or a *tweedle tweedle tweedle tweedle-twe*. As I heard the *tull lull* from the same quarter from time to time, I think it came from it. Perhaps it may be written, *a tea le, tea le, tea le*. These small birds - and all small birds - seen against the sky at a little distance look black. There is not breadth enough to their colors to make any impression; they are mere motes, intercepting the light, the substance of a shadow.

The woods are full of myrtle-birds this afternoon, more common and commonly heard than any, especially along the edge of woods on oaks, etc., — their note an oft-repeated fine jingle, *a che’ che, che’ che, che’ che*, or a *tweedle tweedle tweedle tweedle-twe*. As I heard the *tull lull* from the same quarter from time to time, I think it came from it. Perhaps it may be written, *a tea le, tea le, tea le*. These small birds — and all small birds — seen against the sky at a little distance look black. There is not breadth enough to their colors to make any impression; they are mere motes, intercepting the light, the substance of a shadow.

Birds sing all day when it is warm, still, and overcast as now, much more than in clear weather, and the hyla too is heard, as at evening. The hylodes commonly begins early in the afternoon, and its quire increases till evening. I hear now snipes far over the meadow incessantly at 3.15 P.M. The men bogging in the meadow do not hear them, and much else.

The swamp sparrow, very dark, with chestnut and black, and quirk of the tail, flits shyly under the alders along the causeway; hides or lurks behind the trunks like song sparrow and hardly rests a moment in one place.


The lark on the top of an apple tree sings a *tchea te che*, then perhaps *tche tehea*, only a plaintive clear round note. Hear the first chewink [[Ground-bird](#)],¹⁷³ [Ground-robin](#), [Chewink](#) ([Rufous-sided Towhee](#)) [Pipilo](#)

173. Thoreau occasionally used this term for such ground-feeding birds as [Savannah Sparrow](#) [Passerculus sandwichensis](#), [Song Sparrow](#) [Melospiza melodia](#), and [Vesper Sparrow](#) [Pooecetes gramineus](#).

1853-1854

1853-1854

erythrophthalmus]) hopping and chewing among the shrub oaks.

To-day the air is full of birds; they attend the opening of the buds. The trees *begin* to leaf, and the leaf-like wings of birds are in the air. The buds start, then the insects, then the birds. Saw probably a pigeon hawk [Merlin  *Falco columbarius* (Pigeon Hawk)] skim straight and low over field and wood, and another the next day apparently dark slate-color. It is warm and still, almost sultry, as if there might be a thunder-shower before night. Now look down on Fair Haven. How pleasant in spring a still, overcast, warm day like this, when [lie water is smooth! The sweet-gale in blossom, forming islets surrounded by water, on the meadow, looks like sere brown leaves left on. At the Cliff the *Arabis levigata*¹⁷⁴ is just out to-day; the honeysuckle will be, say, the very earliest, to-morrow.¹⁷⁵ A barberry bush quite forwardly leafing under the rock, and a young apple. The early gooseberry quite green.

9 P.M. — Quite a heavy thunder-shower, — the 2nd lightning, I think.

The vivid lightning, as I walk the street, reveals the contrast between day and night. The rising cloud in the west makes it very dark and difficult to find my way, when there comes a flash which lights up the street for a moment almost as brightly as the day, far more so than moonlight, and I see a person on the sidewalk before me fifty rods off—



April 27, Thursday: Myrthen-Kränze op.154, a waltz, was performed for the initial time, in the Hofburg, Vienna for the wedding of Emperor Franz Joseph II to Princess Elisabeth of Bavaria, and was directed by its composer [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#).

[Waldo Emerson](#) had offered to read a paper in [Moncure Daniel Conway](#)'s room at [Harvard Divinity School](#), and Conway had sent out invitations. The authorities had been perplexed for some time at this student's closeness to the heretic of Concord, and when this latest thing came to their attention, they went into a panic of sorts. Conway would be challenged by [Harvard](#)'s Professor of Christian Morals with the possibility that this represented a "decline of Christian morals" in Divinity Hall. Two of the professors would visit student Conway in his room and give voice to their fears that there was being organized "a school within the school," amounting to an "Emersonian cult." But the meeting in question, on this date, had in fact gone off without incident, the group having moved because of its size to a public room and Emerson having merely read his paper on "Poetry" to an audience that included Professor [Henry Wadsworth Longfellow](#) and faculty spouse Fanny Appleton Longfellow, [James Russell Lowell](#), Professor [Charles Eliot Norton](#), [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#), and [Arthur Hugh Clough](#). We are left wondering why on earth all these authority figures were getting so exercised.¹⁷⁶

174. Probably *T. stricta*.

175. *Vide* May 1st.

176. It wasn't the fact that [Waldo Emerson](#) talked about "arrested and progressive development" in this paper on poetry which had gotten the faculty all excited, even though later it would be proposed, by some folks who demonstrably knew nothing whatever of evolutionary theory, that Emerson had here been anticipating [Charles Darwin](#)'s theory. What Emerson had said was simply "The electric word pronounced by [Doctor] John Hunter [1728-1793] a hundred years ago, — *arrested and progressive development* — indicating the way upward from the invisible protoplasm to the highest organism, — gave the poetic key to natural science, — of which the theories of Geoffroy St. Hilaire, of [Lorenz Oken](#) [1779-1851], of [Johann Wolfgang von Goethe](#) [1749-1832], of [Louis Agassiz](#) [1807-1873], and [Sir] [Richard Owen](#) [1804-1892] and [Doctor] [Erasmus Darwin](#) [1731-1802] in zoology and botany, are the fruits, — a hint whose power is not exhausted, showing unity and perfect order in physics." — Which is not Darwinism, but the obsolete mental universe of hierarchy and superiority, of *Naturphilosophie*, the great ladder of being, all of which amounted to the wanna-believe bullshit that [Charles Darwin](#) would be struggling to **supersede**.

The jury in the trial of [Matthew Flourmoy Ward](#), a son of the richest man in Kentucky, for shooting and killing the principal of the Louisville High School, Professor William H.G. Butler, returned to the courtroom on this morning and delivered a “not guilty” verdict. To avert possible mob action, a horse and buggy were waiting outside the courthouse at the southwest corner of the Public Square, and the acquitted man was rushed to the railroad station and put on board a train leaving for the South.

Meanwhile, out at [Walden Pond](#), [Henry Thoreau](#) was hypothesizing that the level of water in the pond ought to become very low again during the period 1866-1869 (amazingly, this anticipation would prove to have been accurate).



April 27. 7 A.M. —To Cliffs.

Equisetum arvense on the railroad; and may have been two or three days — did not look. I am at length convinced of the increased freshness (green or yellow) of the willow bark in the spring. Some a clear yellow, others a delightful liquid green. The bark peels well now; how long? The rain of last night is helping to bring down the oak leaves. The wood thrush [[Hermit Thrush](#) [Catharus guttatus](#)] afar, —so superior a strain to that of other birds. I was doubting if it would affect me as of yore, but it did measurably. I did not believe there could be such differences. This is the gospel according to the wood thrush. He makes a sabbath out of a week-day — I could go to hear him—could buy a pew in his church— Did he ever practice pulpit eloquence? He is right about the slavery question— The brown thrasher [[Brown thrasher](#) [Toxostoma rufum](#)], too, is along. I find a threadlike stamen now between the nutlets of the callitriche probably three or four days. Some creature appears to have eaten this plant. The yellow redpolls still numerous; sing *chill lill lill lill lill lill*. The meadow-sweet and sweet-fern are beginning to leaf, and the currant in garden.

Stood on Cliffs about 7 A.M. Through a warm mistiness I see the waters with their reflections in the morning sun, while the wood thrush and huckleberry-bird, etc., are heard, — an unprofaned hour. I hear the black and white creeper’s note, — *seeser seeser sewer se*. [*Vide* May 1st.] What a shy fellow my hermit thrush!¹⁷⁷ I hear the beat of a partridge [[Ruffed Grouse](#) [Bonasa umbellus](#) ([Partridge](#))] and the spring hoot of an owl [\[redacted\]](#), now at 7 A.M. Hear a faint sort of oven-bird’s [[Night warbler](#) ([Ovenbird](#) [Seiurus aurocapillus](#), or [Common Yellowthroat](#) [Geothlypis trichas?](#))¹⁷⁸] (?) note.


It is only the irresolute and idle who have no leisure for their proper pursuit. Be preoccupied with this, devoted to it, and no accident can befall you, no idle engagements distract you. No man ever had the opportunity to postpone a high calling to a disagreeable duty. Misfortunes occur only when a man is false to his Genius. You cannot hear music and noise at the same time. We avoid all the calamities that may occur in a lower sphere by abiding perpetually in a higher. Most men are engaged in business the greater part of their lives, because the soul abhors a vacuum, and they have not discovered any continuous employment for man’s nobler faculties. Accordingly they do not pine, because they are not greatly disappointed. A little relaxation in your exertion, a little idleness, will let in sickness and death into your own body, or your family and their attendant duties and distractions. Every human being is the artificer of his own fate in these respects. The well have no time to be sick. Events, circumstances, etc., have their origin in ourselves. They spring from seeds which we have sown. Though I may call it a European War, it is only a phase or trait in my biography that I wot of. The most foreign scrap of news which the journals report to me — from Turkey or Japan — is but a hue of my inmost thought. [Forbes](#) says that the guides who crossed the alps with him lost the skin of their faces — (Ap[arently] from the reflections from the snow.)

It is remarkable that the rise & fall of Walden though unsteady & whether periodical or merely occasional are not completed but after many years. I have observed one rise & part of 2 falls. It attains its maximum slowly & surely though unsteadily. It is remarkable that this fluctuation, whether periodical or not, requires many years for its accomplishment — and I expect that a dozen or 15 years hence it will again be as low as I have ever known it.

The *Salix alba* begins to leaf, and the catkins are three quarters of an inch long. The balm-of-Gilead is in bloom, about one and a half or two inches long, and some hang down straight. Quite warm to-day. In the afternoon the wind changed to east, and apparently the cool air from the sea condensed the vapor in our atmosphere, making us think it would rain every moment; but it did not till midnight.

177. [Probably it was the hermit thrush [[Hermit Thrush](#) [Catharus guttatus](#)], not the wood thrush [[Hermit Thrush](#) [Catharus guttatus](#)], for which the date is too early, whose song he had been praising.]

178. Thoreau was never sure about his night warbler. Though on August 5, 1858, he identified the Common Yellowthroat as his mysterious singer, Cruikshank says on most occasions it was probably the Ovenbird *Seiurus aurocapillus* giving its aerial song.

 April 28, Friday: Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka arrived in Warsaw on his way home from Paris.

The United States informed the British minister in Washington of its neutrality in the [Crimean War](#).

It rained all day, making the grass look green. [Henry Thoreau](#) transplanted some black spruce trees.

There were 25,000 [Chinese](#) in [California](#) and almost all who were adults could read in Chinese. On this day was issued the 1st issue of the 1st San Francisco newspaper in the Chinese language, titled [Gold Hills News](#).



April 28. 6 A.M. — Dug up two of half a dozen, the only black spruce suitable to transplant that I know hereabouts.

Rain all day, making the grass look green.

Nawshawtuct now in the rain looks about as green as a Roxbury russet; *i.e.*, the russet is yielding to the green. Perhaps the greenness of the landscape may be said to begin fairly now. For the last half of this month, indeed, a tinge of green has been discernible on the sides of hills. Saw yesterday some cows turned out to pasture on such a hillside; thought they would soon eat up all the grass. This is coincident, then, with the leafing of the gooseberry, or earliest native shrub.

First, yon may say, is the starting of a few radical leaves, etc., and grass blades in favorable localities, and the blossoming of the earliest trees and herbs.

Secondly, during the last half of April the earth acquired a distinct tinge of green, which finally prevails over the russet.

Third. Then begins the leafing of the earliest shrubs and trees and the decided greenness and floweriness of the earth, in May.

Fourth. Then the decided leafiness in June and the first great crop of the year, the leaf or grass crop.

 April 29, Saturday: [Jules Henri Poincaré](#) was born.

The legislature of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania granted a charter to Ashmun Institute, the 1st college for African-Americans.

The jury in the trial of [Matthew Flournoy Ward](#), a son of the richest man in Kentucky, for shooting and killing the principal of the Louisville High School, Professor William H.G. Butler, having delivered a “not guilty” verdict, a mob of perhaps 8,000 prominent citizens gathered before the elegant Ward residence, stoning its windows and setting fire to the building front, demanding that the Ward brothers leave the city and burning in effigy juror Nat Wolfe and other members of the jury, and editor George D. Prentice of the [Journal](#) (he had testified as to the defendant’s character and manners). Noble Butler, a brother of the slain professor, attempted to calm these rioters.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) rowed in a misty rain to the Cliffs.

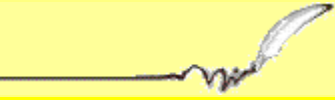


*April 29. The ideal of a market is a place where all things are bought and sold. At an agricultural meeting, in New York the other day, one said that he had lately heard a man inquiring for spurry seed; he wanted it to sow on drifting sand. His presumption had been that if he wanted it, *i.e.*, if there was a demand, there was a supply to satisfy that demand. He went simply to the shop instead of going to the weed itself. But the supply does not anticipate the demand.*

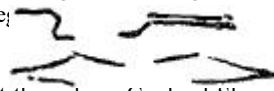
This is the second day of rain, and the river has risen about as high as any time this year.

P.M. — To Cliffs by boat in the misty rain.

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.
 — [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 10




The barn swallows [**Barn Swallow** █ *Hirundo rustica*] are very numerous, flying low over the water in the rain. I think that those which I saw on the 24th were barn and not bank swallows [**Bank Swallow** █ *Riparia riparia*]. What an entertainment this river affords! It is subject to so great overflows, owing to its broad intervals, that a day's rain produces a new landscape. Let it rain *heavily* one whole day, and the river will be increased from half a dozen rods in width to nearly a mile in some places, and, where I walked dry-shod yesterday a-maying, I sail with a smacking breeze to-day, and fancy that I am a sailor on the ocean. It is an advantage which all towns do not possess. Off the Cliffs, I met a blue heron [**Great Blue Heron** █ *Ardea herodias*] flying slowly downstream. He flaps slowly and heavily, his long, level, straight and sharp bill projecting forward, then his keel-like neck doubled up, and finally his legs; His wings, as I looked after him, presented this outline:



He alighted on a rock, and stood erect awhile. I am surprised to find a few andromedas out, just behind the alders at the oak on Cardinal Shore. Possibly yesterday the very first, though it rained. At last I find one houstonia just out there. The mouse-ear is now fairly in blossom in many places. It never looks so pretty as now in an April rain, covered with pearly drops. Its corymbs of five heads with one in the centre (all tinged red) look like a breast-pin set with pearls. J. Farmer says that this rain will kill many caterpillars just hatched.

As nearly as I can remember and judge, plants were *generally* out at the following dates:—

White maple	April 7	Hazels	April 12
Alders	8	<i>Populus Tremuloides</i>	14
Skunk-cabbage	9	Crowfoot	13
Sedge	11	Saxifrage	13
Earliest willows fairly begun		Slippery elm	22
(not common till April 20)	12	Common elm	12
Cowslip	24	Red cedar	26
Sweet-gale	23	White [cedar]	27 (?)
<i>Salix humilis</i>	23	<i>Populus grandidentata</i>	26
Red maple	26	Field horse-tail	28
Larch	28 (?)	Mouse-ear	29

 April 30, Sunday: The [Kansas-Nebraska Act](#), "An Act to Organize the Territories of Nebraska and Kansas," introduced in the federal senate by [Stephen A. Douglas](#) (Democrat of Illinois) and enacted by the 33d United States Congress in order effectively to repeal the [Missouri Compromise](#), and on May 30th signed into law by [President Franklin Pierce](#), became on this day effective. This, by stoking national tensions over [slavery](#), would contribute to a series of armed conflicts that would come to be known as "[Bleeding Kansas](#)."



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR APRIL 30TH]

1853-1854

1853-1854

**MAY 1854**

THE 1ST TUESDAY IN MAY WAS THE ANNUAL "MUSTER DAY," ON WHICH ALL THE ABLEBODIED WHITE MEN OF A TOWN WERE SUPPOSEDLY REQUIRED TO FALL INTO FORMATION, WITH THEIR PERSONAL FIREARMS, TO UNDERGO THEIR ANNUAL DAY OF MILITARY TRAINING AND MILITIA INDOCTRINATION.



May: [Elisha Graves Otis](#) produced the initial elevator with a safety device to prevent it from free-falling if the hoist cable should break, and demonstrated how it worked at America's 1st world's fair at the Crystal Palace (now Bryant Park) in New-York City, by riding the platform high into the air and then ordering the rope to be chopped by a man standing by with an ax. Joseph J. Fucini and Suzy Fucini would write in *ENTREPRENEURS: THE MEN AND WOMEN BEHIND FAMOUS BRAND NAMES AND HOW THEY MADE IT*:



1853-1854

1853-1854

A model of engineering simplicity, the safety device consisted of a used wagon spring that was attached to both the top of the hoist platform and the overhead lifting cable. Under ordinary circumstances, the spring was kept in place by the pull of the platform's weight on the lifting cable. If the cable broke, however, this pressure was suddenly released, causing the big spring to snap open in a jaw-like motion. When this occurred, both ends of the spring would engage the saw-toothed ratchet-bar beams that Otis had installed on either side of the elevator shaft, thereby bringing the falling hoist platform to a complete stop.

In fact most of what has been written about this “famous” demonstration has been written long after the fact, as detailed in Andreas Bernard’s *Lifted: A Cultural History of the Elevator* (NYU Press, 2014). There has even been a complete newspaper issue, fabricated out of whole cloth by the industry flacks to appear to be an issue of a period newspaper, for purposes of touting the “famous” event. At the time the demonstration by Otis attracted practically no attention at all, which is why we are unable to establish the date of this demonstration with any more exactness than the approximate “May 1854.”

FAKE NEWS

➡ May: Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins had been commissioned in 1853 to construct, for the relocated [Crystal Palace](#) outside London, full-scale concrete restorations of the prehistoric reptiles known to that time. —For the very biggest and newest, what but the very biggest and oldest? With the replicas installed on the grounds of Sydenham Park to the south of London, Hawkins presented a paper before the Society of Arts in which he described the conceptual problems of restoring a creature for which the evidence was piecemeal, as well as the technical problems of casting a replica that contained, as he put it, 640 bushels of artificial stone. He displayed a drawing showing all his restorations, including the marine reptiles, in their park settings. To the left he depicts his two Iguanodon, at the center his Hylaeosaurus, and to the right his Megalosaurus.¹⁷⁹

➡ May: The family of the [William Jackman](#) who had become the author of a captivity-and-escape narrative sold their land claim near Madison, Wisconsin and traveled overland to Prairie Du Chein, where they boarded the *War Eagle* and traveled on the Mississippi River to Prescott, Wisconsin.

A formal “conversation” was staged in [Waldo Emerson](#)’s study, between 2 and 3 in the afternoon, with [Bronson Alcott](#) and Emerson as two of the conversants, the audience consisting of young Harvard men, primarily from the [Harvard Divinity School](#). Among these was [Edwin Morton](#) of [Plymouth](#). Emerson opened the event by stating with confidence that literature could be, in America, a young man’s occupation and breadwinner. There followed a consideration of various [Harvard](#) professors and tutors, such as [Henry Wadsworth Longfellow](#), [George Ticknor](#), [Edward Everett](#), [Jones Very](#), [James Walker](#), etc.

➡ May: This month’s issue of [Harper’s New Monthly Magazine](#).

CONSULT THIS ISSUE

➡ May: The Reverend [Samuel Ringgold Ward](#) again had the opportunity to take part in the annual meetings of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society in London:

179. Although the [Crystal Palace](#) in England would burn down in 1936 these early models of [dinosaur](#) are still standing around to the south of London (hint: they’ll be there even if you don’t visit them).

1853-1854

1853-1854

I was honoured, both in 1853 and in 1854, by invitations to address the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society; in fact, the honour of a similar invitation was conferred upon me this year, but I was unable to attend. Added to the pleasure of labouring, however feebly, in the anti-slavery cause, was the fact that, upon the occasion first named, the Earl of Shaftesbury presided. To sustain any relation to that prince of noblemen, even for so short a time, was an honour any man might covet. Besides, among the gentlemen on the Committee of that Society are some of my dearest personal friends, to serve whom I would do anything. At that meeting, in 1853, I became acquainted with Lord Shaftesbury. No one had introduced me to him, and I was feeling all the awkwardness of being a stranger to the noble Lord whom, as chairman of the meeting, I was soon to address; but as the speaker next before myself was near concluding, his Lordship leaned towards me and said, "I believe you are to speak next, Mr. Ward." Thus the nobleman's affability removed my embarrassment, consequent upon the neglect of commoners. Thus I became acquainted with the head of the great house of Ashley: and there commenced a series of kind actions on the part of his Lordship which lay me under unceasing obligations.

It is sometimes said, that in Great Britain there is no need of discussing the question of slavery. Two very strong objections are made against it – one is, that as there are no slaves in the British empire now, there is nothing for the British people to do on the subject; the other is, that as the discussion of slavery is necessarily, now, the discussion of a subject affecting other nations and governments than our own, such discussion will be regarded by those concerned as an interference with their affairs. This remark is made with especial reference to America and the Americans, who are, of all people in the world, the most sensitive on this particular point. That I was obliged to meet these objections, at different points of my travels, I hardly need say. To answer them formed no small part of my work in England. I hope I shall be pardoned for introducing here what little I have to say on this matter.

1. It is quite true, I am but too thankful to say, that the British flag does not float anywhere over slaves. Now, in the colonies as at home, the words of Whittier apply to every man, woman, and child –

"Freedom, hand in hand with labour,
Walketh, strong and brave;
While, on the brow of his neighbour,
No man writeth – Slave!"

The British people, to their infinite credit, responded to the clarion voices of their [Henry Peter Brougham](#), Knibb, Buxton, Clarkson, Wilberforce, Macaulay, Allen, Cropper, and Rathbone, and shattered every stone of the accursed old Bastille of British slavery. Yet it is not to be forgotten, that long ere that was done, British hands had become red with the innocent blood of millions of slaves. The old slave trade, with its horrors (Liverpool being its chief mart); the horrible plantation scenes of Jamaica and other West India islands, the barbarisms of the Mauritius, the atrocities of the Cape – oh, these darkest, most guilty pages of British history, are not to be easily forgotten!



1853-1854

1853-1854

While we were guilty of these abominations, and their attendant crimes, the whole weight of British influence was given to the furtherance of slavery in other countries; what they did, we did. They may have surpassed us in cruelty,¹⁸⁰ but still we were connected with the same atrocious system. The guilt of our colonies was endorsed at home; nay, the owners of colonial slaves were dwellers at the West End of London, our senators and our peers. Commoners who were planters, in London, Liverpool, and Glasgow, rolled in untold wealth, the fruit of the Negro's unpaid toil. They were regarded with a sort of deference, such as is paid to the American slaveholder at Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. A baronetcy or a peerage was scarcely more desirable or more honourable, than to be known as a great West India planter, the owner of so many hundred slaves! Sometimes, indeed, baronet or peer, and planter, were associated titles of the same distinguished individual. These brought all the influence of wealth, name, position, patronage, and senatorial place, to bear upon the Government, which but too easily winked at the wickedness and obeyed the demands of the then British slave power. Thank God, I am writing past history; but history it is!

Having done so much for slavery, as a nation and as individuals, it is not to be denied that the British people have contracted no small share of blame for encouraging the slavery of other peoples, by their evil example. It can scarcely be said that the abolition of the slave trade, the procuring of some few treaties against it in conjunction with other nations, and the abolition of colonial slavery, at a very late day, wiped out all our guilt. In May, 1772, a decision, procured by the persevering diligence of the immortal Granville Sharpe, was rendered by Lord Chief Justice Mansfield, to the effect that the arrival of a slave upon British soil made him a freeman. In 1814 a number of Negroes escaped from North Carolina to the ships composing the British fleet, commanded by Admiral Sir George Cockburn.¹⁸¹

Upon their being claimed by the American authorities, in behalf of their masters, Sir George refused to deliver them, in virtue of that decision, declaring the law of the soil to be the law of the ship to which the Negroes had fled. In 1825 the American Government desired the British Government to deliver to them slaves who had escaped to Canada. This was refused, in accordance with Lord Mansfield's decision. But while, by virtue of that decision, we freed the slaves of foreigners, when they touched our soil, we, in spite of that decision, held slaves ourselves! Nay, more. Several American slave ships, with slave cargoes on board, were driven upon our West India Islands. Touching those islands, the slaves were made freemen. Still, we held hundreds of thousands of slaves on those islands – we made our soil free to other people's slaves, while upon the same soil we held slaves!

What a glaring contradiction was here! "British soil is free soil to the slaves of other countries; it is slave soil to our own subjects." That was substantially our saying. If the highest court in the empire made British air free to foreign lungs, why

180. That is scarcely possible, however.

181. See "Jay's View of the Action of the Federal Government in behalf of Slavery."

1853-1854

1853-1854

did it not make that air equally free to British lungs? in a word, why did not the poor slave of the colonial plantations receive the benefits of this decision? I beg to say, I cannot admit that "The why is plain as way to parish church."

Is it not true, that we held half a million of slaves in our colonies, in as open contradiction to the law as laid down by Lord Chief Justice Mansfield on the 5th of May, 1772, as do our American brethren at this day hold three millions in contradiction to their [Declaration of Independence](#) as laid down by Jefferson, four years two months and twenty nine days thereafter? and from the date of the former, until 1832, were we one whit better than our neighbours? We gave them the most practical encouragement. We began our hypocrisy more than four years before they began theirs. And it is a singular fact, that each nation, at the time to which I refer, robbed about half a million of slaves of rights which, according to public and solemn declarations of both, belonged to the subjects, to all the subjects, of each: indeed, ours was the greatest inconsistency, as we violated a judicial decision, while they simply trampled upon an abstract declaration of political sentiments. They incorporated the same sentiments in their Constitution, but this was not until 1789. We had been stultifying ourselves, then, for seventeen years! I submit whether such sinners, though penitent, "bring forth fruits meet for repentance" without seeking, if possible, to counteract the effects of their own evil example, by something more than merely emancipating their own slaves.

But there is, if possible, a still darker shade in this picture. On the sailing of Sir George Cockburn's fleet to the West Indies, the American authorities followed it, and renewed their demand for the slaves. Sir George, true to his British principles, repeated and persisted in his refusal to deliver them. The Negroes, of course, remained free. But the American Government, always persevering in such cases, made their demand for gold in payment for them, through their Minister at London. It was refused. A long correspondence then commenced, which did not terminate until 1836, twenty-two years after. And how did it terminate? By our Government paying, in gold, the sum of £40,000, by way of compensation for the Negroes; and after paying this, twenty-two years' interest was demanded, and we paid that! Some six or seven cases are on record, of our complicity in American slavery, by paying for the cargoes of slave ships wrecked on our islands: indeed, we almost always paid money in such cases, until after the passing of the Emancipation Act.

To say nothing of the perfect impunity with which we allow Spain to violate a treaty against the slave trade, for compliance with which we paid her £400,000, nearly forty years ago, and not to speak of the shamefully loose provisions of our treaty with the United States¹⁸²

The treaty also provided that, should subjects of either Government be convicted of being engaged in the slave trade, in vessels owned or chartered by the parties so convicted, they should be punished, &c. The United States Senate purged the treaty of the words "or chartered." Hence an American, or any one else, desirous to engage in this abominable traffic, had

1853-1854

1853-1854

only to charter – not to put himself to the expense of purchasing or building – a vessel, and proof of its being such exempted him from the punishment threatened in that treaty.

Again: the treaty, as it left Britain, provided that punishment should be inflicted upon subjects of either Government engaged in the slave trade, under the British or the American Flag, upon conviction. The Senate of America struck out “or the American”; so that trading in slaves on the American coast, under the American flag or in a chartered vessel, is no violation of the treaty, as it now stands! I call this treaty “shamefully loose.” Is it not so? For the same purpose, let us look at one more fact which shows that we are far from being innocent of present complicity in the crime of slaveholding.

In the Slave States it is law, that a free Negro from abroad or from the Northern States shall, upon landing on their shores, be imprisoned until his ship sails. When she sails, the captain must pay the charges of his arrest and imprisonment, or he is to be sold, to pay them, into slavery for life! For thirty years this has been done to British subjects, to the knowledge of the British Government! The Honourable Arthur F. Kinnaird has twice, within the past two years, brought this subject before the Government, but the answers to his questions have been most unsatisfactory. They reveal the fact, that but little care is felt about this matter in Downing Street. In the winter of 1854-55, one or two of the Atlantic Slave States so modified their law that a British Negro, arriving there, shall be forbidden to land, and the captain is put under heavy bonds, which are to be forfeited if the Negro goes on shore. This odious law is made for the security of slavery, by preventing free Negroes from associating with the slaves and teaching them the way to a free country. Conniving at it, our Government, certainly in a degree, shares its guilt. The rights of a British subject, of whatever colour, ought not to be suffered thus to be jeopardized for the accommodation of our trade in slave-grown cotton.

Considering the depth of our past guilt, and our share in planting, encouraging, and perpetuating slavery in America and elsewhere, I do not think we ought to close our lips until all whom we have for centuries aided in this sin shall be brought to repentance for it. Upon the high grounds of our common humanity and our holy religion, I am sure I need not say one word, except it be to deplore that mere business considerations, the arguments of Lombard Street and the Exchange, should so chill the hearts and dry up “the milk of human kindness” in Englishmen’s bosoms as to put aside the claims of our suffering brethren.

2. As to its being considered offensive to American or other slaveholders that Englishmen condemn slavery and labour for its overthrow, it is well enough to observe, that part of what we

182. I refer to Mr. Jay again on this point, and ask attention to what that learned American jurist, the son of the great John Jay, says on the subject. I give the substance only of Judge Jay’s remarks. It seems that the United States Government proposed to the British Government a convention against the slave trade. The British Government readily complied. After waiting a reasonable time, the latter gently reminded the former that nothing had been done in the case. Another pause ensued. Then the British Government prepared a treaty, and sent it to Washington for sanction. That treaty provided that, if subjects of either Government were found engaged in the slave trade, on the coast of Africa, America, or the West Indies, they should be subjected, on conviction thereof, to certain specified penalties. The American Senate struck out the word “America”; thus exempting their own coast, for obvious reasons, from the operations of the treaty.

1853-1854**1853-1854**

discuss is our own guilty complicity. Surely this cannot be intermeddling with other people's affairs. The slave being our brother, and the slaveholder being our brother too, we may claim the right of obeying the command, "Thou shalt not suffer sin upon thy neighbour, thou shalt in anywise rebuke him." Besides, the great methods of a practical character by which British abolitionists seek to destroy slavery are made upon our own soil: they are, the elevation of the British Negro, and supplying the British markets with staples from the British tropics – thus rebuking slavery by the former; and competing with it, driving it out of the market, by the latter. Is it objectionable to elevate and make good subjects of our own Negroes? Is it objectionable to till our own soil, and sell the produce thereof in our own markets? Would our American neighbours listen one moment to any objections Englishmen might make to their doing things of like character?

It is said, however, by some persons who object most strongly to British abolitionism, that Great Britain entailed slavery upon the Americans. This I think is very doubtful. If it were true, however, it would not only justify, but it would authorize, the very thing that is complained of. Let us see. I do not believe the charge of the entailment of slavery upon America by the British. I admit, of course, that much guilt and great responsibility, such as I have already referred to, rest upon the people of Britain; but as to entailing slavery upon Americans, how can that be true, when they threw overboard the tea at Boston harbour, and threw off the British rule? Could they not have disposed of slavery quite as easily? If not as easily, had they not the same power over it? Had the British people or Government any power over them after they became independent? If they retained slavery after that, was it not because they chose to do so? They answer these questions by saying, as they do every day, that they found it impossible to agree upon a constitution without agreeing either to let slavery alone, or to secure it! They claim pay for their slaves, and they claim immunity from rebuke, on the ground that slavery is constitutional. If so, who made it so? If so, what becomes of the charge of its entailment upon them by Britain?

On the other hand, if it be true that British people did entail slavery upon the Americans, they of all people are the ones to seek the undoing of what they have done.

The good example set to other nations by the British Government in this matter, and the sustenance given the Government by the British people, entitle them to be heard on the subject. They have sinned, and they have repented. They have a right to "tell their experience." The Negro in America looks to the Englishman as his friend. It is with his especial consent that the Englishman speaks in his behalf. The Englishman's friendly regard for the Negro is well known to the latter. The poor slave, even, cannot be kept ignorant of this. Some Englishmen, I am proud to know, are quite willing to be looked upon as guardians, protectors, and defenders, of the poor and needy Negro.

It was with the greatest delight that I found, in every part of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, that abolitionism is not a mere abstract idea, but a practical question of grave importance. It is not because, to a certain extent, anti-slavery

1853-1854

1853-1854

sentiments are fashionable and natural, that these persons approve them, but because of their intrinsic character. Generally, the children of the abolitionists of early days are proud of their anti-slavery inheritance. Some few, I regret to say, do not walk in their parents' footsteps: it may be because their pursuits are somewhat different. There is great occasion for rejoicing in the fact, that the leading abolitionists of Britain are among the most exalted of the land. I have mentioned the names of some of them. At their residences, where I had the pleasure of calling upon them, they impressed me most deeply with the fact. The Earl of Shaftesbury bade me call upon him as often as I pleased, to consult him upon matters relating to my mission. Upon one occasion his Lordship shook me by the hand, saying, "God bless you, my good friend! Call again, when you can." On another occasion he gently rebuked me for not having called more frequently.¹⁸³

Lord Harrowby conversed freely and with deep interest on the subject, expressing his desire that Mr. Jordan, a coloured gentleman who was candidate for the mayoralty of Kingston, Jamaica, should be elected. Lord Calthorpe asked me kindly concerning the distinctions between blacks and whites in America, and remarked that, in the judgment day, no such distinctions would appear. The same nobleman most kindly took the chair at my meeting at Birmingham. I may as well say, briefly, that the nobility generally whom I had the honour of meeting treated both me and my cause with the kindest consideration; none more so than her Grace the Duchess of Sutherland, her Grace the Duchess of Argyll, and his Grace the Duke of Argyll. I am under great obligations to Lord Robert Grosvenor, Lord Haddo, Lord Ebrington, Lord Waldegrave, the Honourable Arthur F. Kinnaird, Sir Edward North Buxton, Sir Thomas D. Acland, Ernest Bunsen, Esq., Samuel Gurney, Esq., and many others, too numerous to mention, but not too numerous both to deserve and to receive my warmest, humblest thanks.

Besides the nobility, the English abolitionists are among the most devotedly pious of the laymen, and the most eminent divines of all sections of the Christian Church. The Rev. Dr. Campbell, of London, the Rev. Dr. Raffles, of Liverpool, the Rev. Dr. Halley, of Manchester, the Rev. John Angell James, of Birmingham, the Rev. James Parsons, of York, the Rev. Dr. Alexander, of Edinburgh, the Rev. Dr. Robson, of Glasgow, the Rev. Dr. A. Moreton Brown, of Cheltenham, George Hitchcock, Esq., Samuel Morley, Esq., John Crossley, Esq., William P. Paton, Esq., John Smith, Esq., William Crossfield, Esq., Edward Baines, Esq., George Leeman, Esq., are instances and illustrations of this fact. To know that the anti-slavery cause is in such hands in England and Scotland, and to know that the honoured names now mentioned are but representatives of a class embracing the best and the purest of the earth, is reason enough why one should feel quite certain of the final success of our holy cause.

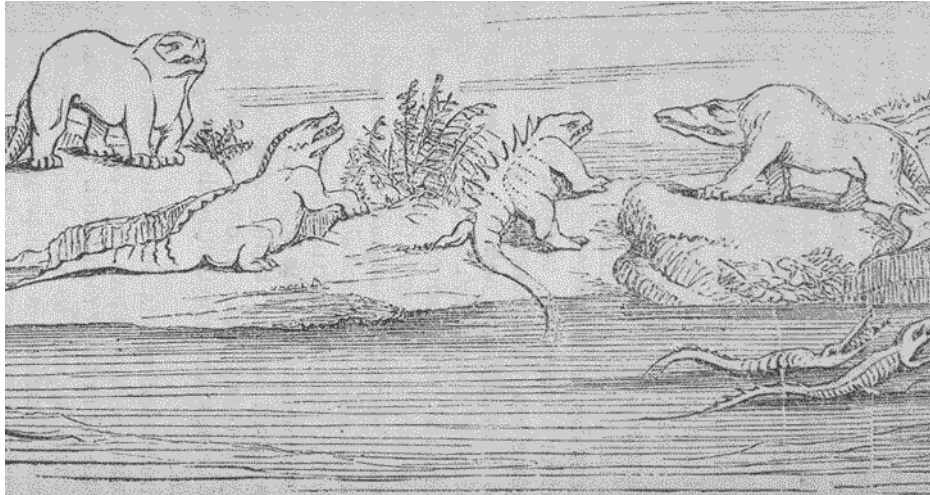
It is a little remarkable to notice the likeness of English to American abolitionists, in character and status. In both

183. At that time his Lordship did me the honour to accept my miniature. The note acknowledging its receipt I keep as a priceless inheritance for my children.

1853-1854

1853-1854

countries this precious cause has for its advocates and standard-bearers the very "salt of the earth." It is as if God calls into the service of defending the poor and the needy those whom by his grace he has made most like himself. What abundant evidence there is, in this fact, that the cause is his!



May: [Henry Thoreau](#) received a form letter from Charles Scribner Publishers in New-York, which had decided to put out an ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN LITERATURE (evidently he would respond to this since, when [Evert Augustus Duyckinck](#) and George Long Duyckinck's publication would appear during 1855, it would indeed contain, on pages 653-6, selections from his writings).

[VIEW VOLUME I](#)

<<Thoreau's nature notes on top of page>>

145 Nassau Street, New York.

[May, 1854.]

As it is my intention to publish the coming season a work, entitled AN ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF AMERICAN LITERATURE, embracing Personal and Critical Notices of Authors, with passages from their Writings, from the earliest period to the present day, with Portraits, Autographs, and other illustrations, I have adopted the method of addressing to you a Circular letter[,] as the best means of rendering the book as complete in regard to points in which you may be interested, as possible, and as faithful as may be to the memories and claims of the families and personages whose literary interests will be represented in it. The plan of the work is to furnish to the public, at one view, notices of the Lives and Writings of all American authors of importance. As it is quite probable you may have in your



1853-1854

1853-1854

possession material or information which you would like the opportunity of seeing noticed in such a publication, you will serve the objects of the work by a reply to this circular, in such answers to the following suggestions as may appear desirable or convenient to you.

1. Dates of birth, parentage, education, residence, with such biographical information and anecdote, as you may think proper to be employed in such a publication.
2. Names and dates of Books published, references to articles in Reviews, Magazines, &c., of which you may be the author.
3. Family notices and sources of information touching American authors no longer living, of whom you may be the representative.

Dates, facts, and precise information, in reference to points which have not been noticed in collections of this kind, or which may have been misstated, are desirable. Your own judgment will be the best guide as to the material of this nature which should be employed in a work which it is intended shall be of general interest and of a National character.

It will represent the whole country, its only aim being to exhibit to the readers a full, fair, and entertaining account of the literary products thus far of America.

It is trusted that the plan of the work will engage your sympathy and concurrence, and that you will find in it a sufficient motive for a reply to this Circular. The materials which you may communicate will be employed, so far as is consistent with the limits and necessary literary unity of the work, for the preparation of which I have engaged Evert A. and George L. Duyckinck, who have been prominently before the public for several years in a similar connection, as Editors of the "Literary World."

Yours, respectfully,
CHARLES SCRIBNER.

<Thoreau's nature notes>

.B. All Communications upon this subject should be addressed, "Charles Scribner, Publisher, 145 Nassau Street, New York."

<Thoreau's nature notes>

Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for May 1854 \(æf. 36\)](#)



May 1, Monday: Amsterdam began transferring drinking water out of the dunes.

At 6 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) walked up the railroad tracks. At 9 AM he went to the Cliffs and thence by boat to Fair Haven. In the afternoon he took his boat up the [Assabet River](#) to Cedar Swamp.



May 1. A fine, clear morning after three days of rain, — our principal rain-storm this year, — raising the river higher than it has been yet.

6 A.M. — Up railroad.

Everything looks bright and as if it were washed clean. The red maples, now fully in bloom, show red tops at a distance. Is that a black cherry so forward in the cow-killer? When I first found the saxifrage open, I observed that its leaves had been eaten considerably.

9 A.M. — To Cliffs and thence by boat to Fair Haven.

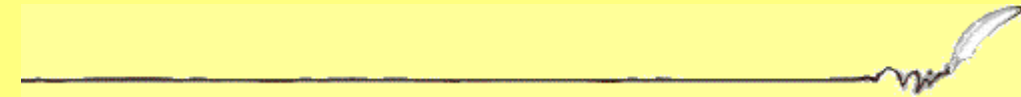
I see the scrolls of the ferns just pushed up, but yet wholly invested with wool. The sweet-fern has not yet blossomed; its anthers are green and close, but its leaves, just beginning to expand, are covered with high-scented, amber-like dots. Alder leaves begin to expand in favorable places. The viburnum (*Lentago* or *nudum*) leaves unexpectedly forward at the Cliff Brook and about Miles Swamp. I am not sure that I distinguish the *nudum* now, but suspect the other to be most forward. Snakes are now common on warm banks. At Lee's Cliff find the early cinquefoil. I think that the columbine cannot be said to have blossomed there before to-day, — the very earliest. A choke-cherry is very strongly flower-budded and considerably leaved out there. The early rose is beginning to leaf out. At Miles Swamp, benzoin will apparently open to-morrow, before any leaves begin. The creeping juniper appears to be now just in bloom. I see only the female flower.

I sail back with a fair southwest wind. The water is strewn with myriads of wrecked shad-flies, erect on the surface, with their wings up like so many schooners all headed one way. What an abundance of food they must afford to the fishes! Now and then they try to fly, and fall on the water again. They apparently reach from one end of the river to the other, one to a square yard or two. The selernanthus is out and a tuft of that brownish-flowered kind of sedge.

P.M. — Up Assabet by boat to Cedar Swamp.

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), *THE BOATMAN*, page 10



The earliest shrubs and trees to leaf have been thus far in this order: The earliest gooseberry (in garden and swamp), raspberries, thimble-berry (perhaps in favorable places only), wild red cherry (if that is one near Everett's), [*Vide* May 5. It is.] meadow-sweet, (red currant and second gooseberry, I think, here), sweet-fern (but is very *slow* to go forward), *S. alba* (April 27), and also a small dark native willow, young black cherry (if that is one in the cow-catcher, and others are as forward), choke-cherry, young shoots (am not sure if *Lentago* is earlier than *nudum*; as both are leafing, put the *Lentago* first and *nudum* next), diervilla (if that light-stemmed plant on Island is it), [*Vide* May 5] barberry (perhaps in favorable places only), and some young apples in like places, alders (in favorable places), early rose.

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

1853-1854

1853-1854



1853-1854

1853-1854

Saw two black ducks [~~Black Duck~~ **Anas rubripes** (~~Dusky Duck~~)]. Have seen no *F. hyemalis* [~~Dark-eyed Junco~~ **Junco hyemalis** ~~Slate-colored Sparrow~~] for five or six days. Hear a golden-crested wren [~~Golden-crowned Kinglet~~ **Regulus satrapa** (~~Golden-crested Wren~~)] at Cedar Swamp. I think that I may have mistaken the note of the myrtle-bird [~~Yellow-rumped Warbler~~ **Dendroica coronata** (~~Myrtle-bird~~)] for that of the creeper [~~Pine Warbler~~ **Dendroica pinus** (~~Pine Creeper~~)] the other morning. A peewee [~~Spotted Sandpiper~~ **Actitis macularia** (~~Peewee~~)], and *methinks* I have heard it a day or two.

I have seen Goodwin and Haynes all day hunting muskrats and ducks, stealthily paddling along the riverside or by the willows and button-bushes, now the river is so high, and shooting any rat that may expose himself. In one instance a rat they had wounded looked exactly like the end of an old rider stripped of bark, as it lay just on the surface close to the shore within a few feet of them. Haynes would not at first believe it a muskrat only six or eight feet off, and the dog could not find it. How pitiful a man looks about this sport! Haynes reminded me of the Penobscots.

Early starlight by riverside.

The water smooth and broad. I hear the loud and incessant cackling of probably a pigeon woodpecker [~~Yellow-shafted Flicker~~ **Colaptes auratus** (~~Pigeon Woodpecker~~)], — what some time since I thought to be a different kind. Thousands of robins are filling the air with their trills, mingling with the peeping of hylodes and ringing of frogs [*sic*]; and now the snipes [~~Common Snipe~~ **Gallinago gallinago**] have just begun their winnowing sounds and squeaks, and I hear Barrett's sawmill beside—, and whenever a gun fires, Wheeler's peacock¹⁸⁴ screams.

The flowers of the larch which I examined on the 24th *ult.* have enlarged somewhat and may now certainly be considered in blossom, *though the pollen is not quite distinct*. I am not certain whether the 26th was not too early. The crimson scales of the female cones are still more conspicuous.

184. This Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus* evidently belonged to a man by the name of Shaw about whom we seem to know approximately nothing — and its cry is elsewhere in Thoreau's journal described as "me ow."



(We have no idea which of Concord's Wheelers also indulged in a peacock.)

1853-1854

1853-1854



May 2, Tuesday: In Boston, with a bequest from Joshua Bates for \$50,000.⁰⁰ worth of books, the first circulating library in America opened its doors.¹⁸⁵ Also, an anti-Catholic mob carried off the crucifix of a Catholic church.

Luc et Lucette, an opéra-comique by Jacques Offenbach to words of de Forges and Roche, was performed for the initial time, at the Salle Herz, Paris.

The Steam Ship *Washington*, Captain Fitch, rescued the passengers of the ship *Winchester* of Boston from a heavy sea. A sketch by a Mr. Vincent, a passenger on board the *Washington*, would make an excellent hand-colored lithograph selling for good money (in good condition and color except for several tears and losses on the outer margins, \$525.00). This lithograph, which still sells, depicts Mr. P.W. King, Chief Officer of the *Washington*, and 4 of his crewmen, as they make their 1st heroic trip to the wreck (they managed to save 445 passengers and 32 crewmen).



May 2. The cracks in the ground made by the frost last winter are still quite distinct. It is the young black cherry which is so forward now.



May 3, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) went in the morning rain by boat to Nawshawtuct.

He wrote to a [Hosmer](#), we believe to [Edmund Hosmer](#) (although we do not have this letter but only a narrow strip torn from a draft of the letter).

C.H. Tracy surveyed the town of Ravenswood, near [San Francisco](#).



May 3. P.M. — In rain to Nawshawtuct.

The river rising, still. What I have called the small pewee [x] on the willow by my boat, — quite small, uttering a short *tehevet* from time to time. Some common cherries are quite forward in leafing; say next after the black. The *Pyrus arbutifolia*, of plants I observed, would follow the cherry in leafing. It just begins to show minute glossy leaves. The meadow-sweet begins to look fairly green, with its little tender green leaves, making thin wreaths of green against the bare stems of other plants (this and the gooseberry), — the next plant in this respect to the earliest gooseberry in the garden, which appears to be the same with that in the swamp. I see wood turtles which appear to be full and hard with eggs. Yesterday I counted half a dozen dead yellow-spotted turtles about Beck Stow's. There is a small dark native willow in the meadows as early to leaf as the *S. alba*, with young catkins. *Anemone nemorosa* near the ferns and the sassafras appeared yesterday. The ferns invested with rusty wool (*cinnamomea*?) have pushed up eight or ten inches and show some of the green leaf.



May 4, Thursday: The *SS Oregon* arrived in [San Francisco](#) bay from Panama, under Captain W.H. Hudson.

A contract printed in French and in German has survived, bearing this day's date, to convey one steerage passenger from Le Havre to New-York on the clipper *Admiral* of the Vanderbilt European Steamship Line. Translated into English, the [contract](#) stipulates:

This voucher is only valid for the registered persons; it cannot be assigned or transferred, and the price of the passage, once

185. Although that's about M\$5 today and would purchase some 200,000 volumes, but in those days books were proportionally more expensive and that amount of money would have obtained, order of magnitude, only some 40,000 volumes.



1853-1854

1853-1854

paid, will not be refunded to the holder should he/she decide not to leave or miss the departure of the vessel.

Crippled, sick, blind and idiotic Passengers will be declined, and they will not be able to claim seats on the ship.

No tip, for services rendered, shall be paid by the passenger on behalf of the House.

Any claims that the Passenger believes are justified, must be addressed in person to the office.

NOTES:

By accepting this voucher, the Passenger agrees to comply with the following on-board Regulations.

Passengers will not be able to board until they have found that they have enough food for the journey.

Passengers will be entitled to have onboard the said Ship:

- 1.) A place in steerage.
- 2.) Free carriage for each adult of 100 kilograms of luggage or 20 English cubic feet.
- 3.) Empty cabin space and medications in case of emergency.
- 4.) Place for cooking.
- 5.) Fresh water, wood or coal and lighting.
- 6.) Exemption from hospital tax upon arrival in America.

This voucher is only valid for the registered persons; it cannot be assigned or transferred, and the price of the passage, once paid, will not be refunded to the holder should he/she decide not to leave or miss the departure of the vessel.

Crippled, sick, blind and idiotic Passengers will be declined, and they will not be able to claim seats on the ship.

No tip, for services rendered, shall be paid by the passenger on behalf of the House.

Any claims that the Passenger believes are justified, must be addressed in person to the office.

NOTES:

By accepting this voucher, the Passenger agrees to comply with the following on-board Regulations.

Passengers will not be able to board until they have found that they have enough food for the journey.

Passengers will be entitled to have onboard the said Ship:

- 1.) A place in steerage.
- 2.) Free carriage for each adult of 100 kilograms of luggage or 20 English cubic feet.
- 3.) Empty cabin space and medications in case of emergency.
- 4.) Place for cooking.
- 5.) Fresh water, wood or coal and lighting.
- 6.) Exemption from hospital tax upon arrival in America.



1853-1854

1853-1854

Steerage Passengers

1. The cabin space will be assigned to Passengers, at the Central Office of MM. CHRISTIE, SCHOESSMANN & CIE., Quai Casimir Delavigne, No. 27, and this only after they have paid the full amount of their passage and after they have made use of the quantity of sea food prescribed in §9).

The cabin space number will be indicated on the Passenger Boarding Pass and no one is allowed to arbitrarily choose and occupy a space. The cabins of Steerage ordinarily accommodate four persons; they are numbered and assigned by serial number.

2. When a Passenger wants to exchange his/her cabin space with another passenger, the request must be made to the Bureau, and this change must be approved if possible, and marked on the Passenger Boarding vouchers.

3. Trunks, crates, bags and barrels must be clearly marked on the top with the number of the owner's cabin space.

4. Passengers must bring their bedding and cooking utensils. The benches must be filled on land.

5. Passengers must load and unload their baggage and food, neither the Captain nor the Emigration Office being responsible for such tasks.

6. Weapons of all kinds must be surrendered to the Captain.

7. The large trunks and crates will be lowered in the hold, as well as the potatoes, biscuits and wine.

8. While the Ship is at dockside, it is not allowed to go down into the hold. At sea, the hold will be opened at necessary time for Passengers to access their food.

9. Before boarding the Ship, each Passenger over the age of ten, shall load the following food.

- 40 pounds of biscuits.
- 1 hectoliter (= 2 bushels or 140 lb.) of potatoes or 30 pounds of dry vegetables.
- 5 pounds of Rice.
- 5 pounds of Flour.
- 4 pounds of butter.
- 14 pounds of smoked ham.
- 2 pounds of salt.
- 2 liters of Vinegar.

10. Any Passenger who does not have these quantities on board, twelve hours before departure fixed, will be removed from the list of Passengers and will not be able to travel with the departing Ship.

11. The Captain provides water, wood, kitchen, unfurnished cabin space (*) and medicines in case of illness. The hospital tax is included in the price of passage and remains the responsibility of the Ship.

12. Fresh water is only for drinking and for preparing food; and should not be used for washing.

13. The utmost cleanliness should be observed in the steerage to prevent contagious diseases from occurring on board. Everyone must ensure that their space is kept clean as well as the area in the front every morning, otherwise he/she would not be



1853-1854

1853-1854

allowed to cook.

14. It is forbidden to hunt for nails or hooks from the Vessel.

15. It is strictly forbidden to smoke on the ship, to make fire, or to burn candles while the vessel is at dock. At sea, smoking is permitted, but only on the deck and with covered pipes.

16. Special captain's permission is required to light a lantern in the steerage, and it is strictly forbidden to carry chemical matches on board.

17. Passengers must avoid any dispute or quarrel among themselves or with the Crew. Anyone who thinks he has cause to complain will address himself to the captain or second of the ship, to the provisions and orders of which every passenger owes absolute obedience.

18. The stern of the ship is reserved for the captain.

19. It is forbidden, under severe penalties, to give wine or spirits to drink to the crew; passenger who disregard this security, will have his/her drinks seized until the arrival in the United States.

20. The same penalty shall be done to passenger with signs of drunkenness and cause disorder on the ship.

21. The amount of the passage is payable the day before the fixed departure; whoever neglects this payment or who misses the ship, will lose his account or his passage. All Passengers must be on board two hours before departure time, especially women and children. It is advisable to bring fresh bread for five or six days.

22. Passengers must have their passports stamped by the police.

23. When the Ship is out of the dock, all Passengers must get on deck and meet by family together with all members from the same receipt. Roll call will be made, and all will be dismissed to the steerage until the end of the call.

24. The employees of our Central Emigration Bureau are strictly forbidden to take care of Passengers' Passport visas, and to accept any gratuities, regardless of which name and amount, and Passengers are asked to report back to the Bureau immediately if they discover such abuse.

25. These Regulations are made solely for the benefit and well-being of the steerage passengers for their safety, convenience and health.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR MAY 4TH]



1853-1854

1853-1854



May 5, Friday: Commodore James Plumridge's British forces attacked Finnish settlements in the Gulf of Bothnia, killing civilians and destroying British-owned goods.

The Daily Alta California reported the *SS Oregon*'s arrival in San Francisco bay from Panama:

ARRIVAL OF THE OREGON

Still Further from Acapulco.

Interview between Commodore Watkins and
Santa Ana.

STEAMERS PERMITTED TO ENTER THE PORT.

A Battle — Killed and Wounded.

The P.M. steamer *Oregon*, W.H. Hudson, Esq., Commander, arrived last evening a few moments after the *Yankee Blade*, having left Panama on the 18th, P.M., with 640 passengers, and 270 bags U.S. mails.

Among the passengers is Commodore Watkins, the well known and popular commander of the *Panama*, and more recently connected with the ill-fated *San Francisco*, Mr. Mellus, the mate, and Mr. Schell, the Purser of the same vessel are also passengers.

A battalion of U.S. troops, composed of Companies B and L, 3d Artillery, consisting of six officers and 169 enlisted men, arrived on the *Oregon*.

Memoranda.

Per *Oregon* -- Left San Francisco April 1st, at 5 P.M.; arrived Acapulco on the 9th, 5 P.M. The steamer *Pacific* arrived three hours later. The *Oregon* coaled and left same evening, and arrived at Panama on the 15th, at 11 P.M., 14 days and six hours from San Francisco.

Left Panama at 4 P.M. on the 19th. The *Yankee Blade* sailed an hour and a half earlier.

Arrived off the harbor of Acapulco at 2 A.M. on the 25th, and was hove to, by the Mexican ship of war *Santa Ana* firing two shots across our bow. Spoke the Br clipper ship *Eastern City*, 20 miles north of Monterey.

We are indebted to Wells, Fargo & Co. Messenger, for the following very full and interesting particulars of the difficulties at Acapulco:

Arrived off the harbor of Acapulco at 3 A.M. of the 25th, and found the same in a state of actual blockade by two Mexican ships of war, acting under the orders of, and in concert with, Emperor Santa Ana, who was in command on shore of a force, besieging the town and fort, which were in possession of the insurgents under Gen. Alvarez. The *Oregon* was fired at twice, first with blank and afterwards with shot, from a twenty-four pounder, and brought to between the two blockading vessels. A Mexican officer came on board and remained until daylight, the *Oregon* trying to off the harbor. At daybreak, Com. Watkins went on board the ship of war *Santa Ana*, and obtained permission to bear on shore a flag of truce to the Emperor, accompanied by a Mexican officer. After an interview with the Emperor and a representation of the circumstances of the case, his Excellency was please to allow the *Oregon* to enter the harbor.

The town and fort, although occupied by a force of insurgents,



1853-1854

1853-1854

reported to be 7000 strong, were almost wholly deserted by the inhabitants, who had fled to the neighboring haciendas. Santa Ana was present in force with 5000 soldiers. A lodgment of 200 men had been effected by Santa Ana, a few days before, in a ravine near the fort, but the day before the arrival of the Oregon, had been dislodged with a loss of sixty killed and as many taken prisoners. The fortifications at Acapulco are fine specimens of Spanish military architecture; strong, well furnished with ammunition, and first class ordnance, and would long resist a regular siege; but Santa Ana has no artillery, except a few small pieces, which are transported on the backs of mules, and are totally inadequate for the purpose of a siege. The rebellion headed by Alvarez is a vital movement, of more dignity and importance than usually attached to a Mexican pronunciamento. It is a movement in favor of restoration of the Federative Republic, and the overthrow of the system of centralization, established by Santa Ana. Alvarez, who heads the movement, has been for many years the Governor of the State of Guerrero, in which Acapulco is situated. He is the owner of large tracts of the richest cultivated lands; a man of great native qualities, but uncultivated; a pure Indian by blood, and enthusiastically beloved by the people of his State, who are most likely of that race.

If the information obtained from the foreign residents of Acapulco can be relied upon, Santa Ana is placed in a very critical position. His force and material are certainly inadequate to dislodge the insurgents, or to take the town; while Alvarez stands at bay with a large force in reserve, ready to fall upon his rear and cut off his communications with the city of Mexico, as soon as the rainy season, which is daily expected, shall commence. In the opinion of our informants the blockading force of the Mexican President will probably afford him more assistance in securing him the means of personally withdrawing from his present position, than in any other way.

Cargo

102 pkgs mdse Geo Aiken Esq; 39 pkgs express goods Wells, Fargo & Co; 103 do do Adams & Co; 3 pkgs mdse Rousset, Auger & Co; 3 do do Belloc, Freres & Suscan; 43 do do St Losky & Levy; 8 do do Hyneman, Peck & Co; 1 pkg jewelry McGregor & Co; 3 pkgs canary birds, order.

Passengers

Abbot, A.
Abbot, C. A.
Allen, W. C.
Ambuster, David
Ambuster, John
Andrews, Miss
Atkins, Mrs. H., and 4 children
Auman, Col. A.
Auman, W. F.
Avery, S. W.
Ayres, Lieut.
Baldwin, O. F.
Barstow, S. D.
Barton, E. F.
Beale, Lieut., lady and servant



1853-1854

1853-1854

Betross, J.
Bigger, J. W.
Blent, W. B.
Bor (Bore, Bord), D. P.
Bowers, J. W.
Boyd, Miss
Brumager, Joan
Burton, J. S.
Buthera (). Jno. L.
Butler, Mrs. M. D., and child
Call, W. W., wife and 2 children
Cassady, Mrs.
Chadwick, W. L.
Church, A.
Clancy, J.
Cobin (Cohin), J.
Cochrane, E. S.
Coleman, Chas. L.
Cook, Mrs., and child
Cowell, Jno.
Cowper, S.
Creigh, Mrs., and s children
Currier, c.
Dagget, D. F.
Day, Lieut.
Deal, W.
Delapsine (Delapaine), Jose
Dobbenstein, S. ()
Dopman, Miss E.
Doptman, H., and servant
Dwinelle, Jno. H.
Edwards, Lieut.
Emory, J. C.
Fairchild, E., and son
Fairchild, Mrs.
Faulkner, D. H.
Fectig, E., wife and servant
Ferguson, Y.
Fisher, A. G.
Follinsbee, E. W.
Foot, A. B.
Fowler, A. B.
Frazer, Jno. W.
Freaner, Geo., and servant
Goddard, Mrs.
Grattans, G.
Graves, Jas. E.
Hall, Mrs. C. A.
Hall, R.
Hall, W., wife and 2 children
Harrison, E. L.
Hart, J.
Hendry, A. H.
Hill, Miss J.
Hol, Chas. F., and lady
Houser, Mrs., and child



1853-1854

1853-1854

Hubbard, E.
Hyde, E., wife, child and servant
Irwin, Miss S.
Johnson, A.
Johnson, Jno.
Judson, E.
Kellogg., Lieut.
Kelly, D. W.
Kelly, J. D.
Kerlesi (Kealesi). Fred
Kerlin, F. E.
Loestig, I., wife and child
Lupton, J. F., and child
Lyndal, Mrs.
Mack, H. O.
Mackay, E.
Marony, J.
Mason, Jno.
McClellan, Miss
McDonald, Miss
McKay, Rev. S., and lady
McPherson, W., and child
Mellus, Capt. E.
Moore, A.
Moore, J. W.
Mulford, J. A.
Neville, Jno., and lady
Norman, R. B., and lady
Olcott, W.
Oldhoff, Miss A.
Osgood, Miss W.
Parrot, W. S.
Pope, Chas.
Potter, J.
Potter, P.
Potter, W.
Reed, H.
Rice, Dr. C. W.
Rice, Miss C. A.
Richardson, J. F., and lady
Richardson, J. W.
Risten, Miss
Robinson, E., lady and 2 children
Rodgers, Mrs. A.
Schell, Theo L.
Smith, Mrs. A.
Stephens, Jno.
Sullivan, Dr. J.
Taylor, W. H.
Tenbrock (Tenbrocks), Dr.
Tomlinson, R. L.
Topenheimer, E.
Trenior, D. E.
Wade, H. W., wife and infant
Waldron, Mary
Ward, M.

1853-1854

1853-1854

Watkins, Com., lady and 3 servants
 Watt, Jas.
 Weightman, J., and sister
 Welch, Mrs. and child
 Wells, Miss A.
 Wilder, A.
 Wilson, M. A.
 Yates, R.
 440 in steerage

[Henry Thoreau](#) visited Boiling Spring, Laurel Glen, and Hubbard's Close. He recorded that the Emerson children [Ellen](#), [Eddie](#), and [Edith](#) had been able to find blue and white violets on May 1st at Hubbard's Close, probably *Viola ovata* and *blanda*, although he himself had not as yet been able to find any.



May 5. P.M. — To Boiling Spring, Laurel Glen, and Hubbard's Close.
 I observe the following plants, leafing in about this order, to be added to the list of May 1st:—

Elder has made shoots two or three inches long, — much more than any other shrub or tree, — but is not common enough to show. Possibly it should rank with or next to the gooseberry.

Mountain-ash, larger leaves now than any tree, and the first tree to show green at a little distance.

Cultivated cherry.

Pyrus arbutifolia.

Horse-chestnut.

Hazel just passing from buds to leaves.

Late gooseberry in gardens.

Early apples.

Probably pears.

Wild red cherry in woods.

Dwarf or sand cherry.

Hardback.


Diervilla near Laurel Glen (comes on fast after this).¹⁸⁶

Low blackberry.

Some young red maple buds begin to expand.

Against the wall in front of young Farrar's house a scroll-shaped slender fern now three inches high; stem invested with narrow shining brown scales one third of an inch long. The *Salix tristis* now out (not out May 1st), appeared the 3d. The same of the sweet-fern. The red maple keys are now about three quarters of an inch long (with stems). I see no leaves on black, red, or shrub oaks now, — their buds expanding and showing a green or yellowish point, — but they still hang on the white oak.

May 3d and 4th, it rained again, — especially hard the night of the 4th, — and the river is now very high, far higher than in any other freshet this year; will reach its height probably to-morrow.

Heard what I should call the twitter and mew of a goldfinch¹⁸⁷ [**American Goldfinch**  *Carduelis tristis*] and saw the bird go over with ricochet flight. The oak leaves apparently hang on till the buds fairly expand. *Thalictrum arremmonoides* by Brister's Spring on hillside. Some skunk-cabbage leaves


186. May 11, is one of the most forward of all.

187. Yes, and for several days after.



1853-1854

1853-1854

are now eight or nine inches wide near there. These and the hellebore make far the greatest show — of any herbs yet. The peculiarly beautiful clean and tender green of the grass there! Green herbs of all kinds, — tansy, buttercups, etc., etc., etc., now make more or less show. Put this with the grassy season's beginning. Have not observed a tree sparrow [**American Tree Sparrow**  *Spizella arborea*] for four or five days. The Emerson children [[Ellen](#), [Eddie](#), and [Edith](#)] found blue and white violets May 1st at Hubbard's Close, probably *Viola ovata* and *blanda*; but I have not been able to find any yet. *Salix alba*.



May 6, Saturday: More than a year after its disastrous premiere, *La Traviata* by Giuseppe Verdi was produced once again in Venice, this time at the Teatro San Benedetto, with different singers. It was a complete success.

The 1st issue of a publication of the Catholic Church, the Weekly Catholic Standard.

An accidental fall from the foretopsail yard took the life of a sailor named Parish, who would be buried in a Buddhist temple yard on that far-eastern shore.

In Sacramento, there was a convention for the organization of the Grand Chapter of [California](#) Freemasons.

A comment in Scientific American helps us understand [Henry Thoreau](#)'s remark in WALDEN, "often the richest freight will be discharged upon a Jersey shore":

The late terrific shipwrecks on the Jersey shores, by which so



1853-1854

1853-1854

many lost their lives....

TIMELINE OF SHIPWRECKS



WALDEN: I have always endeavored to acquire strict business habits; they are indispensable to every man. If your trade is with the Celestial Empire, then some small counting house on the coast, in some Salem harbor, will be fixture enough. You will export such articles as the country affords, purely native products, much ice and pine timber and a little granite, always in native bottoms. These will be good ventures. To oversee all the details yourself in person; to be at once pilot and captain, and owner and underwriter; to buy and sell and keep the accounts; to read every letter received, and write or read every letter sent; to superintend the discharge of imports night and day; to be upon many parts of the coast almost at the same time; -often the richest freight will be discharged upon a Jersey shore;- to be your own telegraph, unweariedly sweeping the horizon, speaking all passing vessels bound coastwise; to keep up a steady despatch of commodities, for the supply of such a distant and exorbitant market; to keep yourself informed of the state of the markets, prospects of war and peace every where, and anticipate the tendencies of trade and civilization, -taking advantage of the results of all exploring expeditions, using new passages and all improvements in navigation;- charts to be studied, the position of reefs and new lights and buoys to be ascertained, and ever, and ever, the logarithmic tables to be corrected, for by the error of some calculator the vessel often splits upon a rock that should have reached a friendly pier, -there is the untold fate of La Perouse;- universal science to be kept pace with, studying the lives of all great discoverers and navigators, great adventurers and merchants, from Hanno and the Phoenicians down to our day; in fine, account of stock to be taken from time to time, to know how you stand. It is a labor to task the faculties of a man, - such problems of profit and loss, of interest, of tare and tret, and gauging of all kinds in it, as demand a universal knowledge.

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

JEAN-FRANÇOIS DE GALOUP

JOSEPH FRANCIS

1853-1854

1853-1854

In the afternoon [Thoreau](#) went to a location where there was epigæa, by way of [Clamshell Bank](#) or Hill. He made an entry in his journal that he was later to copy into his early lecture [“WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT”](#). It would be combined with an entry made on March 7, 1852 to form the following:

BRAD DEAN'S COMMENTARY

[Paragraph 76] We may well be ashamed to tell what things we have read or heard in our day. I do not know why my news should be so trivial,—considering what one’s dreams and expectations are, why the developments should be so paltry. The news I hear for the most part is not news to my genius. It is the stalest repetition. How many a man continues his daily paper because he cannot help it, which is the case with all vicious habits?¹ *Communication from Heaven* is a journal still published, which never reprints the President’s Message, but rather the higher law.² These facts appear to float in the atmosphere, insignificant as the sporules of fungi—and impinge on some neglected thallus or surface of my mind, which affords a basis for them—and hence a parasitic growth. We should wash ourselves clean of such news. Methinks that in a sane moment a man would bear with indifference if a trustworthy messenger were to inform him that the sun drowned himself last night. Of what consequence though our own planet explode, if there is no character involved in the explosion?

-
1. This and the following sentence were drawn from the Nantucket [Inquirer](#) summary. Their placement at this point in the paragraph is indicated by the arrangement of the sentences in the [Inquirer](#) and by a caret in the copy-text manuscript.
 2. Bradley P. Dean has emended the Nantucket [Inquirer](#) forms “Communication from Heaven” and “higher law” by dropping the quotation marks from both and italicizing the former.



May 6. P.M. — To epigæa via [Clamshell Hill](#).

“Up Assabet” is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau’s two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 10

There is no such thing as pure *objective* observation.

Your observation, to be interesting, *i.e.* to be significant, must be *subjective*. The sum of what the writer of whatever class has to report is simply some human experience, whether he be poet or philosopher or man of science. The man of most science is the man most alive, whose life is the greatest event. Senses that take cognizance of outward things merely are of no avail. It matters not where or how far you travel, — the farther commonly the worse, — but how much alive you are. If it is possible to conceive of an event outside to humanity, it is not of the slightest significance, though it were the explosion of a planet. Every important worker will report what life there is in hire. It makes no odds into what seeming deserts the poet is born. Though all his neighbors pronounce it a Sahara, it will be a paradise to him; for the desert which we see is the result of the barrenness of our experience. No mere willful activity whatever, whether in writing verses or collecting statistics, will produce true poetry or science. If you are really a sick man, it is indeed to be regretted, for you cannot accomplish so much as if you were well. All that a man has to say or do that can possibly concern mankind, is in some shape or other to tell the story of his love, — to sing; and, if he is fortunate and keeps alive, he will be forever in love. This alone is to be alive to the extremities. It is a pity that this divine creature should

1853-1854

1853-1854

ever suffer from cold feet; a still greater pity that the coldness so often reaches to his heart. I look over the report of the doings of a scientific association and am surprised that there is so little life to be reported; I am put off with a parcel of dry technical terms. Anything living is easily and naturally expressed in popular language. I cannot help suspecting that the life of these learned professors has been almost as inhuman and wooden as a rain-gauge or self-registering magnetic machine. They communicate no fact which rises to the temperature of blood-heat. It does n't all amount to one rhyme.

The ducks appear to be gone (though the water is higher than at any time since that greatest of all rises, I think, — reached its height, yesterday; the arches are quite concealed), swept by with the spring snow and ice and wind, though to-day it has spit a little snow and is very windy (northwest) and cold enough for gloves. Is not that the true spring when the *F. hyemalis*, [Dark-eyed Junco] *Junco hyemalis*, [Slate-colored Sparrow] and tree sparrows [American Tree Sparrow] *Spizella arborea* are with us singing in the cold mornings with the song sparrows [Song Sparrow] *Melospiza melodia* (*melodia*), and ducks and gulls are about? The *Viola ovata* this end of Clamshell hill, perhaps a day or two; let it go, then, Also, dandelions, perhaps the first, yesterday. This flower makes a great show, — a sun itself in the grass. How emphatic it is! You cannot but observe it set in the liquid green grass even at a distance. I am surprised that the sight of it does not affect me more, but I look at it as unmoved as if but a day had elapsed since I saw it in the fall. As I remember, the most obvious and startling flowers as yet have been the crowfoot, cowslip, and dandelion, so much of a high color against the russet or green. We do not realize yet so high and brilliant a flower as the red lily or arethusa. Horse-print is an inch or two high, and it [is] refreshing to scent it again. The *Equisetum sylvaticum* has just bloomed against Hosmer's gap.

It is the young shoots of the choke-cherry which are the more forward, — those which are not blossom-budded, — and this is the case with most trees and shrubs. These are growing while the older are blossoming. Female flower of sweet-gale how long? At Ministerial Swamp, the anthers of the larch appear now effete. I am surprised to find a larch whose female cones are pure white (not rose or crimson). The bundles of larch leaves are now fairly separating. Meadow saxifrage just out at Second Division. The cowslip now makes a show there, though not elsewhere, and not there as much as it will. There is a large and dense field of a small rush there, already a foot high, whose old and dead tops look like blossoms at a distance. The mayflower is in perfection. It has probably been out more than a week. Returned over the hill back of J.P. Brown's. Was surprised at the appearance of the flood. Seen now from the same side with the westering sun, it looks like a dark-blue liquid like indigo poured in amid the hills, with great bays making up between them, flooding the causeways and over the channel of each tributary brook, — another Musketaquid making far inland. I see in the distance the light, feathery willow rows [?] on the causeway, stretching across it, the trees just blooming and coming into leaf, and isolated red-topped maples standing far in the midst of the flood. This dark-blue water is the more interesting because it is not a permanent feature in the landscape. Those white froth lines conform to the direction of the wind and are from four to seven or eight feet apart.

Remembering my voyage of May 1st, and Goodwin and Haynes hunting, you might have passed up and down the river three or four miles and yet not have seen one muskrat, yet they killed six at least. One in stern paddling slowly along, while the other sat with his gun ready cocked and the dog erect, in the prow, all eyes constantly scanning the surface amid the button-bushes and willows, for the rats are not easy to distinguish from a bunch of dried grass or a stick.

Suddenly one is seen resting on his perch, and crack goes the gun, and over the dog instantly goes to fetch him. These men represent a class which probably always exists, even in the most civilized community, and allies it to the most savage. Goodwin said in the morning that he was laying stone, but it was so muddy on account of the rain that he told Haynes he would like to take a cruise out.



May 7, Sunday: The side-wheel steam frigate *USS Mississippi* was approached by a boat carrying 2 Japanese men who had heard of America and wish to visit it, but could not do so due to laws forbidding Japanese to travel abroad. They hoped the Americans would allow them passage. Their request refused, they returned to shore. They were later reported seen detained as prisoners. Near this point in his journal, William Speiden, Jr. inserted a 4-page copy of "A Translated letter from two Intelligent Japanese."

[Henry Thoreau](#) walked to the Cliffs.

Elisen-Polka française op.151 by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#) was performed for the initial time, in the Sperl Ballroom, Vienna.

1853-18



1853-1854

May 7. I have noticed the steel-colored, velvet-like lichen on the stumps of maples especially, also on oaks and hickories. Sometimes, where a maple grove has been cut down some years, every stump will be densely clothed with them.

Our principal rain this spring was April 18th, 29th, and 30th and again, May 3d and 4th, apparently the settling storm of the season. The great source of freshets far and wide. I observed the swallows [yesterday, — barn swallows [Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*] and some of those white-bellied with grayish-brown backs [Tree Swallow *Tachycineta bicolor* (White-bellied Swallow)], — flying close to the surface of the water near the edge of the flooded meadow. Probably they follow their insect prey.

P.M. — To Cliffs.

The causeways being flooded, I have to think before I set out on my walk how I shall get back across the river. The earliest flowers might be called May-day flowers, — if indeed the sedge is not too far one for one then. A white-throated sparrow [White-throated Sparrow *Zonotrichia albicollis*] still (in woods). *Viburnum Lentago* and *nudum* are both leafing, and I believe I can only put the former first because it flowers first. Cress at the Boiling Spring, one flower. As I ascend Cliff Hill, the two leaves of the Solomon's-seal now spot the forest floor, pushed up amid the dry leaves. *Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum* leafing. Flowers, e.g. willow and hazel catkins, are self-registering indicators of fair weather. I remember how I waited for the hazel catkins to become relaxed and shed their pollen, but they delayed, till at last there came a pleasanter and warmer day and I took off my greatcoat while surveying in the woods, and then, when I went to dinner at noon, hazel catkins in full flower were dangling from the banks by the roadside and yellowed my clothes with their pollen. If man is thankful for the serene and warm day, much more are the flowers.


From the Cliffs I again admire the flood, — the now green hills rising out of it. It is dark-blue, clay, slate, and light-blue, as you stand with regard to the sun. With the sun high on one side it is a dirty or clayey slate; directly in front, covered with silvery sparkles far to the right or north, dark-blue; farther to the southwest, light-blue. My eyes are attracted to the level line where the water meets the hills now, in time of flood, converting that place into a virgin or temporary shore. There is no strand, — nothing worn; but if it is calm we fancy the water slightly heaped above this line, as when it is poured gently into a goblet. (How in the bring we value any smoothness, gentleness, warmth!) It does not beat, but simply laves the hills (already the peetweet [Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia* (Peetweet)] flutters and teeters along it a flight further back), submerging the blossoming flowers which I went to find. I see the sweet-gale deeply buried, and the *V. blanda*, etc., etc., and the *A. calyculata* and the cowslips. I see their deluged faces at the bottom and their wrecked petals afloat. I paddle right over Miles's meadow, where the bottom is covered with cowslips in full bloom; their lustre diminished, they look up with tearful faces. Little promontories at Lee's Cliff, clothed with young pines, make into the water; yet they are rarely submerged; as if nature or the trees remembered even the highest floods and kept out of their way, avoiding the shore, leaving a certain neutral ground. Early strawberry just out. I found an *Amelanchier Botryapium*, with its tender reddish-green leaves already fluttering in the wind and stipules clothed with white silky hairs, and its blossom so far advanced that I thought, it would open to-morrow. But a little farther there was another which did not rise above the rock, but caught all the reflected heat, which to my surprise was fully open; yet a part which did rise above the rock was not open. What indicators of warmth! No thermometer could show it better. The *Amelanchier Botryapium* leaves begin now to expand. The juniper branches are now tipped with yellowish and expanding leaf-buds; put it just before the larch. I begin to see cows turned out to pasture. I am inclined to think some of these are coarse, windy days, when I cannot hear any bird. What are those small ferns under the eaves of the rocks at the Cliffs, their little balls unrolling as they ascend, now three or four inches high? How many plants have these crimson or red stigmas? Maples, hazels, sweet-gale, sweet-fern. High blackberry leafing. The leaves are now off the young oaks and shrub oaks on the plain below the Cliffs, except the white oaks, which leaf later. I noticed it elsewhere, — first May 5th, when for a day or two before perhaps — they suddenly cast off their winter clothing; and the plain now appears thinly covered with gray stems, but in a short month they will have put on a new green coat. They wear their leaves almost all the year. The partridge [Ruffed Grouse *Bonasa umbellus*] and rabbit must do without their shelter now a little while. A ruby-crested wren [Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Regulus calendula* (Ruby-crested Wren)] by the Cliff Brook, — a chubby little bird. Saw its ruby crest and heard its harsh note.¹⁸⁸ The birds I have described as such were the same. Hellebore is the most noticeable herb now. Alders, young maples of all kinds, and Ostrya, etc., now beginning to leaf. I observe the phenomena of the seashore by our riverside, now that there is quite a sea on it and the meadow, though the waves are but eight inches or a foot high. As on the sea beach, the waves are not equally high and do not break with an equally loud roar on the shore; there is an interval of four or five or half a dozen waves between the larger ones. In the middle of the meadow, where the waves run highest, only the middle and highest parts of the waves are whitened with foam. Where they are thinnest and yield to the wind apparently, while their broad leases are detained by union with the water; but next the shore,

188. This was the same I have called golden-crowned; and so described by W[ilson], I should say, except that I saw its ruby crest. I did n't see the crest of the golden-crowned, and I did not hear this ruby-c sing like the former. Have I seen the two?

1853-1854

1853-1854

where their bases are much more detained by friction on the bottom, their tops for their whole length curve over very regularly like a snow-drift, and the water is evenly poured as over a dam and falls with foam and roar on the water and shore. It is exhilarating to stoop low and look over the rolling waves northwest. The black rolling leaves remind me of the backs of waves [*sic*; whales?]. It is remarkable how cleanly the water deposits its wreck, now spotted with cranberries. There is a bare space of clean grass, perfectly clean and about a foot wide, now left between the utmost edge of the breakers and the steep and abrupt edge of the wreck. So much it has gone down. Thus perfectly the water deposits what floats on it on the land. The oak buds — black, shrub, etc., except white oak — are now conspicuously swollen. A spreading red maple in bloom, seen against a favorable background, as water looking down from a hillside, is a very handsome object, presenting not a dense mass of color but an open, graceful and ethereal top of light crimson or scarlet, not too obvious and staring, slightly tingeing the landscape as becomes the season, — a veil of rich workmanship and high color against the sky, or water, [or] other trees.

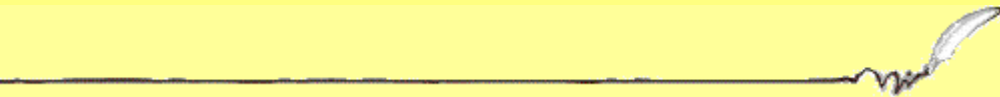
At sunset across the flooded meadow to Nawshawtuct. The water becoming calm. The sun is just disappearing as I reach the hilltop, and the horizon's edge appears with beautiful distinctness. As the twilight approaches or deepens, the mountains, those pillars which point the way to heaven, assume a deeper blue. As yet the aspect of the forest at a distance is not changed from its winter appearance, except where the maple-tops in blossom in low lands tinge it red. And the elm-tops are in fruit in the streets; and is there not [a] general but slight reddish tinge from expanding buds? Seared up ducks  of some kind.



May 8, Monday: In the morning [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Nawshawtuct and in the afternoon he went by boat to Fair Haven.

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), *THE BOATMAN*, page 10









[Colonel William Walker](#), who once upon a time had been a newspaper editor in San Francisco, and 33 of his adventurous followers, surrendered to soldiers of the US Army near Tia Juana after having spent 6 months failing to establish in northern [Mexico](#) a republic to be known as "[Lower California](#)."

Debate over the [Kansas/Nebraska Act](#) began in the federal House of Representatives. A filibuster led by antislavery northern free-soiler Lewis D. Campbell would tempt the deliberative body toward coming to blows. Insults and invective were exchanged between northerners and southerners. Their personal weapons were brandished. Henry A. Edmundson, a Virginia Democrat who had had too much to drink and was armed, had to be restrained by his fellow southerners from getting violent with the filibustering Campbell. As the sergeant at arms took him under arrest, debate was cut off and the House was obliged to adjourn.



May 8. A.M. — To Nawshawtuct.

A female red-wing [[Red-winged Blackbird](#)  [Agelaius phoeniceus](#) Red-wing]. I have not seen any before. Hear a yellowbird [[Yellow Warbler](#)  [Dendroica petechia](#)] in the direction of the willows. Its note coarsely represented by *che-che-che-char-char-char*. No great flocks of blackbirds  on tree-tops now, nor so many of robins . Saw a small hawk  flying low, about size of a robin — tail with black bars — probably a sparrow hawk [[Sparrow Hawk](#)  [Falco sparverius](#)]; probably the same I have seen before. Saw one at Boston next day; mine was the pigeon hawk,¹⁸⁹ slaty above (the male) and coarsely barred with blade on tail. I saw these distinct bars at a



1853-1854

1853-1854

distance as mine flew. It appeared hardly larger than a robin. Probably this the only hawk of this size that I have seen this season. The sparrow hawk is a rather reddish brown and *finely* and thickly barred above with black.¹⁹⁰ Missouri currant. I hear the voices of farmers driving their cows past to their up-country pastures now. The first of any consequence go by now.

P.M. — By boat to Fair Haven.

The water has fallen a foot or more, but I cannot get under the stone bridge, so haul over the road. There is a fair and strong wind with which to sail upstream, and then I can leave my boat, depending on the wind changing to southwest soon. It is long since I leave sailed on so broad a tide. How dead would the globe seem, especially at this season, if it were not for these water surfaces! We are slow to realize water, — the beauty and magic of it. It is interestingly strange to us forever. Immortal water, alive even in the superficialities, restlessly heaving and tossing me and my boat, and sparkling with life! I look round with a thrill on this bright fluctuating surface on which no man can walk, whereon is no trace of footstep, unstained as glass. When I got off this end of the Hollowell place I found myself in quite a sea with a smacking wind aft. I felt no little exhilaration, mingled with a slight awe, as I drove before this strong wind over the great black-backed waves I judged to be at least twenty inches or two feet high, cutting through them, and heard their surging and felt them toss me. I was even obligated to head across them and not get into their troughs, for then I could hardly keep my legs. They were crested with a dirty-white foam and were ten or twelve feet from crest to crest. They were so black, — as no sea I have seen, — large and powerful, and made such a roaring around me, that I could not but regard them as gambolling monsters of the deep. They were *melainai* — what is the Greek for waves? This is our black sea. You see a *perfectly black* mass about two feet high and perhaps four or five feet thick and of indefinite length, round-backed, or perhaps forming a sharp ridge with a dirty-white crest, tumbling like a whale unceasingly before you. Only one of the epithets which the poets have applied to the color of the sea will apply to this water, — *melaina*, μέλαινα θάλασσα. I was delighted to find that our usually peaceful river could toss me so. How much more exciting than to be planting potatoes with those men in the field! What a different world! The waves increased in height till [I] reached the bridge, the impulse of wind and waves increasing with the breadth of the sea. It is remarkable that it requires a very wide expanse to produce so great an undulation. The length of this meadow lake in the direction of the wind is about a mile, its breadth varying from a mile to a quarter of a mile, and the great commotion is toward the southerly end. Yet after passing the bridge I was surprised to find an almost smooth expanse as far as I could see, though the waves were about three inches high at fifty rods' distance. I lay awhile in that smooth water, and though I heard the waves lashing the other side of the causeway I could hardly realize what a sea I [had] just sailed through. It sounded like the breakers on the seashore heard from *terra firma*.

Lee's Cliff is now a perfect natural rockery for flowers. These gray cliffs and scattered rocks, with upright faces below, reflect the heat like a hothouse. The ground is whitened with the little white cymes of the saxifrage, now shot up to six or eight inches, and more flower-like dangling scarlet columbines are seen against the gray rocks, and here and there the earth is spotted with yellow crowfoots and a few early cinquefoils (not to mention houstonias, the now mostly effete sedge, the few *Viola orata*, — whose deep violet is another kind of *flame*, as the crowfoot is yellow, hanging; their heads low in the sod, and the as yet inconspicuous veronica); while the early *Amelanchier Botryapium* overhangs the rocks and grows in the shelves, with its loose, open-flowered racemes, curving downward, of narrow-petalled white flowers, red on the back and innocently cherry-scented, — as if it had drunk cherry-bounce and you smelled its breath. To which is to be added the scent of bruised catnep and the greenness produced by many other forward herbs, and all resounding with the hum of insects. And all this while flowers are rare elsewhere. It is as if you had taken a leap suddenly a month forward, or had entered a greenhouse. The rummy scent of different cherries is remarkable. The *Veronica serpyllifolia*, out say yesterday. Not observed unless looking for it, like an infant's hood — its pretty little blue-veined face. *Cerastium viscosum*, apparently to-day.

As I returned I saw, in the Miles meadow, on the bottom, two painted tortoises fighting. Their sternums were not particularly depressed. The smaller had got firmly hold of the loose skin of the

189. No; for that is barred with white. Could mine have been the *F. juscus* and so small?

190. Could the Boston pigeon hawk have been barred with black?



1853-1854

1853-1854

larger's neck with his jaws, and most of the time his head was held within the other's shell; but, though he thus had the "upper hand," he had the least command of himself and was on his edge. They were very moderate, — for the most part quite still, as if weary, — and were not to be scared by me. Then they struggled a little, their flippers merely paddling the water, and I could hear the edges of their shells strike together. I took them out into the boat, holding by the smaller, which did not let go of the larger, and so raising both together. Nor did he let go when they were laid in the boat. But when I put them into the water again they instantly separated and concealed themselves. The hornbeam has lost its leaves; in this respect put it before the white oak and, for [the] present, after the other oaks, judging from buds. Fever-bush well out now.

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**1853-1854****1853-1854**

May 9, Tuesday: [Albert Fink](#) received patent No. 10,887 for a composite cast and wrought iron truss bridge distinguished by the absence of a bottom chord, in which the tension was carried by diagonal braces. The symmetry of this design would enable the construction of spans of up to 300 feet.

BRIDGE DESIGN

[Henry Thoreau](#) went to Cambridge and Boston, and visited the [Boston Society of Natural History](#).¹⁹¹

He checked out, from [Harvard Library](#), the Reverend [John Gotlieb Ernestus Heckewelder](#)'s A NARRATIVE OF THE MISSIONS OF THE UNITED BRETHREN AMONG THE DELAWARE AND MOHEGAN INDIANS FROM ITS COMMENCEMENT IN THE YEAR 1740 TO THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR 1808 (Philadelphia: M'Carthy & Davis, 1820).

**REVEREND HECKEWELDER**

He would make entries from this source in his Indian Notebooks #5 and #8, and in his Fact Book. In addition, he would consult an account by the Reverend Heckewelder in Volume I of the [American Philosophical Society](#)

191. These would be the proceedings, for this year, of the Society:

PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1854

1853-1854

1853-1854

Transactions, of 1819, and make entries from that source in his Indian Notebook #9¹⁹² in about 1855:

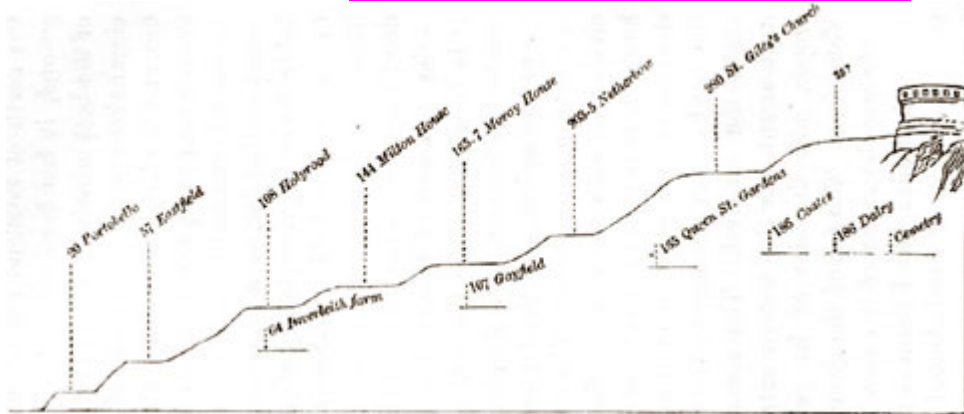
Between the Mississippi & the ocean eastward & the Hudson's Bay Company's possessions on the north — "There appears to be but 4 principal languages," some of their dialects "extend even beyond the Mississippi."

- 1st The Karabit — of the Greenlanders & Esquimaux...
- 2d The Iroquois "This language in various dialects is spoken by the ... Six Nations ... Hurons ... and others."
- 3d The Lenape "This is the most widely extended of any of those that are spoken on this side of the Mississippi."
- [4th] The Indians further N.W. Blackfeet &c. of whose language we cannot judge "from the scanty vocabularies which have been given by Mackenzie ... and other travellers."

REVEREND HECKEWELDER

He also checked out Robert Chambers's ANCIENT SEA-MARGINS, AS MEMORIALS OF CHANGES IN THE RELATIVE LEVEL OF SEA AND LAND (W. & R. Chambers, 1848).

ANCIENT SEA-MARGINS



Once back home in Concord, Thoreau planted watermelons.



May 9. Tuesday. To Boston & Cambridge.
 Currant in garden X, but ours may be a late kind. Purple finch [Purple Finch Carpodacus purpureus (American linnet)] still here —
 Looking at the birds at the Nat Hist Rooms — I find that I have not seen the crow blackbird [Common

192. The original notebooks are held by the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, as manuscripts #596 through #606. There are photocopies, made by Robert F. Sayre in the 1930s, in four boxes at the University of Iowa Libraries, accession number MsC 795. More recently, Bradley P. Dean, PhD and Paul Maher, Jr. have attempted to work over these materials.

1853-1854

1853-1854

Grackle [**Quiscalus quiscula** (~~Crow-Blackbird~~)] at all yet — this season— Perhaps I have seen the rusty blackbird [**Rusty Blackbird** [**Euphagus carolinus**]] — though I am not sure what those slaty black ones are as large as the redwings — nor those pure-black fellows — unless rusty-black birds. I think that my blackbirds of the morning of the 24 may have been cow-birds [**Brown-headed Cowbird** [**Molothrus ater** (~~Cow Blackbird, Cow Bunting, Cow-pen Bird, Cow Troopial, Cowtroopial~~)].

Sat on end of long wharf— Was surprised to observe that so many of the men on board the shipping were pure countrymen in dress & habits, and the sea-port is no more than a country town to which they come atrading— I found about the wharves steering the coasters & unloading the ships men in farmer's dress. As I watched the various craft successively unfurling their sails & getting to sea — I felt more than for many years inclined to let the wind blow me also to other climes.

Harris showed me a list of plants in Hovey's Magazine (I think for 42 or 3) not in Big's Botany —17 or 18 of them — among the rest a pine I have not seen — &c &c *q.v.* That early narrow curved winged insect on ice & river which I thought an ephemera he says is a *Sialis* — or maybe rather a *Perla*— Thinks it the *Donatia palmata* — I gave him— Says the shad-flies (with streamers & erect wings — are ephemerae— he spoke of *podura nivalis* — I think meaning ours.

Planted melons.



May 10, Wednesday: The term “iron horse” had by this point become a popular appellation for the railroad locomotive, as witness the following oratory by Mr. Elliot of [Kentucky](#) in the US House of Representatives reported in the [Congressional Globe](#):

The same progress has transferred our persons and our commerce from the horse and the slow and dull creaking wagon to the iron horse of the railroad.

RAILROAD

Henry Thoreau went at 8 AM to Tall's Island, getting into his boat at the Cliffs. Then he stopped at Rice's. On his way back from Rice's it began to sprinkle, but the wind was in the right direction and Thoreau was able to use his umbrella for a sail.



May 10. Now in the mornings I hear the chip-bird [**Chipping Sparrow** [**Spizella passerina** (~~chip-bird or hair-bird~~)] under my windows at and before sunrise. Warbling vireo [**Warbling Vireo** [**Vireo gilvus**]] on the elms. The chimney swallow [**Chimney Swift** [**Chaetura pelagica** (~~Chimney Swallow~~)]. A peach out in yard, where it had been covered by the snow. The cultivated cherry in bloom.

8 A.M. — To Tall's Island. taking boat at Cliffs.

Had some rain about daylight, which I think makes the weather uncertain for the day. Damp, April-like mistiness in the air. I take an umbrella with me. The *Salix alba* — and also one or two small native ones by river of similar habits — their catkins together with their leaves make the greatest show now of any trees (which are indigenous or have fairly established themselves), though a *very few* scattered *young* trembles suddenly streak the hillsides with their tender green in some places; and perhaps *young* balm-of-Gileads show in some places; [Not important here; rather with birches.] but with the willows it is general and from their size and being massed together they are seen afar. The *S. alba*, partly, indeed, from its commonness and growing together, is the first of *field* trees — whose growth makes an impression on the careless and distant observer, — a tender yellowish green. (The mountain-ash, horse-chestnut, and perhaps some other cultivated trees, indeed, if we regard them separately end their leaves alone, which are much larger, are now ahead of the willows.) The birches of all kinds with catkins begin to show a light green.

The inquisitive *yorrick* of the Wilson's thrush [**Veery** [**Catharus fuscescens** (~~Wilson's Thrush or Yorrick~~)], though I hear no veery [**Veery** [**Catharus fuscescens**]] note. This at entrance of Deep Cut. The oven-bird [**Ovenbird** [**Seiurus aurocapillus**]], and note loud and unmistakable, making the hollow woods ring. This is decidedly smaller than what I have taken to be the hermit thrush [**Hermit Thrush** [**Catharus guttatus**]]. The black and white creeper [**Black-and-white Warbler** [**Mniotilta varia** (~~Black-and-white Creeper~~)], unmistakable from its creeping habit. It holds up its head to sing sharp and fine *te che, te che, te che, te che, te che, te che, te che*. The oven-bird's note is much louder. broader, and more swinging. The latter sits on a low twig quite within the wood. Yesterday was a quite warm day, and these new birds I hear directly after it.

Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum first put out, and I see a bumblebee about some others which are not open, knocking

1853-1854

1853-1854

at their doors, which, if open, would be too small for him to enter, *Viola pedata* already numerous — say yesterday without doubt — at Lupine Knoll, paler than the *ovata*, — their pale faces. The field sparrow [~~Huckleberry bird~~ (Field Sparrow) **Spizella pusilla**] resembles a more slender tree sparrow [**American Tree Sparrow** **Spizella arborea**] without the spot on breast, with a light-colored bill and legs and feet, ashy-white breast, and beneath eye a drab, callow look. Note, *phe phe phe phe phe phe, phe phe-e-e-e*; holds its head the while. Thorns are leafing. *Viola blanda* by Corner road at brook and below Cliff Hill Spring. Canoe birch and white ditto leafing. There is a dew or rather rain drop in the centre of the sun-dial (lupine) leaf, where its seven or eight leaflets meet, over the sand. Cornel (*sericea*) leafing along river. I hear the fine, wiry mew of the song sparrow [**Song Sparrow** **Melospiza melodia**]. A catbird [**Gray Catbird** **Dumetella carolinensis**] mewing.

Saw coupled on a hillock by the water two what I should have called black snakes, — a uniform very dark brown, the male much the smallest. the under side — what little I noticed of the rear of the latter — was a bluish slate; but, when they ran into *the water*, I observed dull-yellowish transverse bars on the back of the female (did not observe the other there), and, when I turned over the male, had a glimpse of a reddish or orange belly. Were they water adders or black snakes? The largest was perhaps between three and four feet.

If that is the leaf of the arrow-wood which looks so much like a cornel, it will rank next to the *Viburnum nudum*. *Vide* plant by bridge.

In Boston yesterday an ornithologist said significantly, “If you held the bird in your hand —;” but I would rather hold it in my affections.

THOREAU ON NORMATIVE SCIENCE

The wind is southwest, and I have to row or paddle up. The shad-bush in blossom is the first to show like a fruit tree, — like a pale peach, — on the hillsides, seen afar amid gray twigs, amid leafless shrub oaks, etc., before even its own leaves are much expanded. I dragged and pushed my boat over the road at Deacon Farrar’s brook, carrying a roller with me. It is warm rowing with a thick coat. Heard the first regular bullfrog trump, not very loud, however, at the swamp white oaks southwest of Pantry. Heard the night-warbler [**Ovenbird** **Seiurus aurocapillus**, or **Common Yellowthroat** **Geothlypis trichas?** ~~Night-warbler~~¹⁹³]. Saw three ducks on Sudbury meadows still, one partly white, the others all dusky, — probably black ducks [**Black Duck** **Anas rubripes** (~~Dusky Duck~~)]. As to the first, with a large dark head and white breast and sides, I am not sure whether it was a golden-eye, or whistler [**Common Goldeneye** **Bucephala clangula** (~~Whistler~~)].

Dined at Tall’s Island. The tupelo terminates abruptly, as if mutilated at top, and the slender, straggling branches decline thence downward, often longer than the tree is high. The shores of these meadows do not invite me to land on them; they are too low. A lake requires some high land close to it. Meeting-House Hill is the most accessible hereabouts. Anemones common now; they love to grow under brush or treetops which the choppers have left. Shad leaves develop fast. Pitch pines staked for two or three days in some places, the largest shoots now four inches.

Returning stopped at Rice’s. He was feeding his chickens with Indian meal and water. While talking with him heard bobolinks [~~Rice-bird~~ (**Bobolink** **Dolichonyx oryzivorus**)]. I had seen what looked like a great stake just sticking out above the surface of the water on the meadows and again covered as if it were fastened at one end. It finally disappeared and probably was a large mud turtle. Rice told me that he had hunted them. You go a little later in this month, — a calm forenoon when the water is smooth, — and “the wind must be south,” — and see them on the surface. Deacon Farrar’s meadow in time of flood (I had come through this) was a good place.

It began to sprinkle, and Rice said he had got “to bush that field” of grain before it rained, and I made haste back with a fair wind and umhlla for sail. Were those cowbirds [~~Troopial~~, **Cow (Brown-headed Cowbird)** **Molothrus ater**] in Miles’s meadow, about or near the cow? Alders generally have fairly begun to leaf. I came on rapidly in a sprinkling rain, which ceased when I reached Bittern Cliff, and the water smoothed somewhat. I saw many red maple blossoms on the surface. Their keys now droop gracefully about the stems.




A fresh, growing scent comes from the moistened earth and vegetation, and I perceive the sweetness of the

193. Thoreau was never sure about his night warbler. Though on August 5, 1858, he identified the Common Yellowthroat as his mysterious singer, Cruickshank says on most occasions it was probably the Ovenbird *Seiurus aurocapillus* giving its aerial song.

1853-1854

1853-1854

willows on the causeway. Above the railroad bridge I saw a kingfisher [**Belted Kingfisher**  *Ceryle alcyon*] twice sustain himself in one place, about forty feet above the meadow by a rapid motion of his wings, somewhat like a devil's-needle, not progressing an inch, apparently over a fish. Heard a tree-toad.

During the last decade of his life, Thoreau visited his rivers more than twice as often as the upland woods and lakes that he is far better known for writing about.

— Professor Robert M. Thorson, THE BOATMAN, page 3



May 11, Thursday: The newspaper California Temperance Organ renamed itself Star of the West.

Henry Thoreau left at 6 AM for Laurel Hillside by Walden Pond. In the afternoon he went to Saw Mill Brook to check out the gooseberries.

There is controversy over the assignment of this as the date of the famous or infamous speech by Headman Seattle (See-Ahth of the Susquamish) (or Chief Seattle), a Roman Catholic and a slaveholder, allegedly delivered at an outdoor gathering of more than 1,000 persons on a beach in Puget Sound. The new Indian Superintendent Isaac Ingalls Stevens had called the native people together to consider the surrender or sale of native land to white settlers. Doc Maynard introduced Governor Stevens and then Sealth rose. Resting his hand upon the head of the much smaller white man, the native leader declaimed for an extended period with great dignity in the Lushootseed language of the Suquamish tribe, one of the coastal Salish tribes of the region. Some unknown person would translate Sealth's words into the trade lingo known as "Chinook Jargon" and then another unknown person would translate that into the English language. Some years later (on October 29th,

1853-1854

1853-1854




1887) [Dr. Henry A. Smith](#) would write down an English version of what he would refer to as “a fragment” of the speech, based on his own notes. What was thus retained is a flowery text in which Headman Sealthe purportedly thanks the white people for their generosity, demands that any treaty guarantee access to Native burial grounds, and attempts to make some sort of contrast between the God of the white people and that of his own. The speech, it seems, had primarily to do with spiritual differences between red people and white people. See-ahth most definitely did **not** say:¹⁹⁴

The earth is our mother.

Well, then, of what sort of naive insights **did** the chief deliver himself? For surely, as a certified native American leader, his life would have been close to nature and his mind would have been a repository of primitive wisdom! As near as it is now possible to reconstruct, some of what it seems See-ahth did say can be viewed on a following screen.



May 11: 6 A.M. — To Laurel Hillside by Walden.

Earliest gooseberry in garden open. Heard a Maryland yellow-throat [**Common Yellowthroat**  *Geothlypis trichas* (~~Maryland Yellowthroat~~)] about alders at Trillium Woods, where I first heard one last year, but it finds the alders cut down in the winter. Yellow birch apparently open, its leaf as forward as the *blossom* (*comparatively* — with other birches). Many small swallows hovering over Deep Cut, — probably bank swallows [**Bank Swallow**  *Riparia riparia*] (?). Hear the golden robin [**Oriole, Northern**  *Icterus galbula* (~~Fiery Hangbird or Hangbird or Gold Robin or Golden Robin~~)]. It is wonderful how surely these distinguished travellers arrive when the season has sufficiently revolved. Prunus Americana, Canada plum, yesterday at least, at Mr. Brooks's. A common plum to-day.

To sum up leafing of trees, etc., since May 5th, add these: —

Creeping juniper.

Larch; bundles fairly separated on some trees May 6th; open slowly.

Early blueberry.

Amelanchier Botryapium. It came forward fast.

High blackberry.

Young rock maple.

" red "

" white (?) [maple].

Alders generally.

Ostrya.

Some trembles suddenly leafed.

Balm-of-Gileads.

Some thorns.

Yellow birch.

Canoe "

White "

Canada plum, I think here.

Pitch pine; some shoots now four inches long.

Norway [pine]?

Cornus sericæ.

194. The *New York Times* of May 3, 1992 explained in an “Editors’ Note” on page 3, column 1, that the reason why the book *BROTHER EAGLE, SISTER SKY: A MESSAGE FROM CHIEF SEATTLE*, which had been on the nonfiction best-seller list for the previous 17 weeks, was absent from the list beginning that week, was **not** that its sales had dropped, but rather that the book had been reclassified under the heading “Advice, How To, and Miscellaneous.” The bulk of Seattle’s speech as presented in this book, nauseating ecological PC-talk, had been discovered to have been put into his mouth at a relatively recent date by a Texas script-writer, paid to write for the benefit of the souls of Southern Baptists. This Texas script-writer is now living and teaching in Vermont and professes embarrassment that his Wise Old Indian stick figure has been so widely and willfully misinterpreted.

1853-1854

1853-1854

P.M. — To Saw Mill Brook.

White pines have started; put them with pitch. Nepeta just out. I am in a little doubt about the wrens (I do not refer to the snuff-colored one), whether I have seen more than one. All that makes me doubt is that I saw a ruby, or perhaps it might be called fiery, crest on the last — not golden.

Amelanchier oblongifolia, say yesterday, probably the one whose fruit I gathered last year. It does not leaf till it flowers. Sweet-gale has just begun to leaf. The willows on the Turnpike now resound with the hum of bees, and I hear the yellowbird [Yellow Warbler *Dendroica petechia*] and Maryland yellow-throat [Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas* (Maryland Yellow-throat)] amid them. These yellow birds are concealed by the yellow of the willows. The cornets generally have fairly started, excepting the *C. Florida* (have not noticed the bunch-berry and round-leaved), and for aught I have seen yet may be placed in the order of their flowering, — alternate, panicked, sericea, putting all on the day of the sericea, *i.e.* yesterday. Wild red cherry in road near Everett's open.

The most forward oak leaflets are, I think, in one place a red, say just started, but I see shrub oak and swamp white catkins in a few places an inch long. Some shrub oak flower-buds are yellowish, some reddish. The *Thalictrum arremmonoides* is a perfect and regular white star, but methinks lacks the interesting red tinge of the other. Some young chestnuts have begun the lower branches — and are earlier than any oaks. White birches are suddenly leafing in some places, so as to make an open veil or gauze of green against the other trees. Young hornbeams just before cornels; the old ones just begun to leaf. Various slender ferns, without wool, springing apparently at Saw Mill Brook; some quite dark; also brake a foot high. The arrow-wood has just begun. The young black birch leafing with others.

While at the Falls, I feel the air cooled and hear the muttering of distant thunder in the northwest and see a dark cloud in that direction indistinctly through the wood. That distant thunder-shower very much cools our atmosphere. And I make haste through the woods homeward *via* Hubbard's Close. Hear the evergreen-forest note. The true poet will ever live aloof from society, wild to it, as the finest singer is the wood thrush [*Catharus mustelina*], a forest bird. The shower is apparently going by on the north. There is a low, dark, blue-black arch, crescent-like, in the horizon, sweeping the distant earth there with a dusky, rainy brush, and all men, like the earth, seem to wear an aspect of expectation. There is an uncommon stillness here, disturbed only by a rush of the wind from time to time. In the village I meet men making haste to their homes, for, though the heavy cloud has gone quite by, the shower will probably strike us with its tail. Rock maple keys, etc., now two inches long, probably been out some days. Those by the path on Common not out at all. Now I have got home there is at last a still cooler wind with a rush, and at last a smart shower, slanting to the ground, without thunder.

My errand this afternoon was chiefly to look at the gooseberry at Saw Mill Brook. We have two kinds in garden, the earliest of same date to leaf with that in the swamp, but very thorny, and one later just open. The list is apparently the same with that by Everett's, also just open, and with that this side of E. Wood's. I also know one other, *i.e.* the one at Saw Mill Brook, plainly distinct, with long petioled and glossy heart-shaped leaves, but as yet I find no flowers. I will call this for the present the swamp gooseberry [May 17th, the green shoots are covered with bristly prickles, but I can find no flowers. Is it the same with that by maple swamp in Hubbard's Close with young fruit?]. *Stellaria media*, apparently not long. Butternut beginning to leaf.






Over meadows in boat at sunset to Island, etc.

The rain is over. There is a bow in the east. The earth is refreshed; the grass is wet. The air is warm again and still. The rain has smoothed the water to a glassy smoothness. It is very beautiful on the water now, the breadth of the flood not yet essentially diminished. The ostrya will apparently shed its pollen to-morrow. High blueberry is just leafing. I see the kingbird [Eastern Kingbird *Tyrannus tyrannus*]. It is remarkable that the radical leaves of goldenrod should be already so obvious, *e.g.* the broadleaved at Saw Mill Brook. What need of this haste? Now at last I see crow blackbirds [Common Grackle *Quiscalus quiscula* (Crow Blackbird)] without doubt. They have probably been here before, for they are put down under April in the bird book (for '37). They fly as if carrying or dragging their precious long tails, broad at the end, through the air. Their note is like a great rusty spring, and also a hoarse chuck. On the whole I think they must have been rusty grackles which I mistook for this bird, and I think I saw their silvery irides; look like red-wings without the red spot. Ground-ivy just begins to leaf. I am surprised to find the great poplar at the Island

1853-1854

1853-1854

conspicuously in leaf, — leaves more than an inch broad, from top to bottom of the tree, and are already fluttering in the wind, — and others near it — conspicuously before any other native tree, as tenderly green, wet, and glossy as if this shower had opened them. The full-grown white maples are as forward in leafing now as the young red and sugar ones are now, only their leaves are smaller than the last. Put the young, at a venture, after the low blackberry, the old just before the other maples. The balm-of-Gilead is rapidly expanding, and I scent it in the twilight twenty rods off.

The earliest of our indigenous trees, then, to leaf *conspicuously* is the early tremble. (The one or more willows which leaf when they flower, like the *Salix alba*, with their small leaves, are *shrubs*, hardly trees.) Next to it, — close upon it, — some white birches, and, apparently close upon this, the balm-of-Gilead and white maple. Two days, however, *may* include them all. The wild red cherry and black cherry, though earlier to begin, are not now conspicuous, but I am not sure that some of the other birches, where young in favorable places, may not be as forward as the white. [Probably not, to any extent. *Vide* P.M. of 17th inst. *Vide* list.] But the *S. alba*, etc., precede them all. It is surprising what an electrifying effect this shower appears to have had. It is like the christening of the summer, and I suspect that summer weather may be always ushered in in a similar manner, — thunder-shower, rainbow, smooth water, and warm night. A rainbow on the brow of summer. Nature has placed this gem on the brow of her daughter. Not only the wet grass looks many shades greater its the twilight, but the old pine-needles also. The toads are heard to ring more generally and louder than before, and the bullfrogs trump regularly, though not very loudly, reminding its that they are at hand and not drowned out by the freshet. All creatures are more awake than ever. — Now, some time after sunset, the robins  scold and sing (but their great singing time is earlier in the season), and the Maryland yellow-throat [**Common Yellowthroat**  *Geothlypis trichas* (~~Maryland Yellow-throat~~)] is heard amid the alders and willows by the waterside, and the peetweet [**Spotted Sandpiper**  *Actitis macularia* (~~Peetweet~~)] and blackbirds , and sometimes a kingbird [**Eastern Kingbird**  *Tyrannus tyrannus*], and the tree-toad somewhat. Sweet-briar just beginning to leaf generally (?).



May 12, Friday: **Henry Thoreau** left at 5:30 AM for Nawshawtuct, and in the afternoon visited a climbing fern.

Anton Rubinstein departed from St. Petersburg for a long concert tour of Europe.



May 12. 5.30 A.M. — To Nawshawtuct.

Quite a fog risen up from the river. I cannot see over it from the hill at 6 A.M. The first I have seen. The grass is now high enough to be wet. I see many perfectly geometrical cobwebs on the trees, with from twenty-six to thirty-odd rays, six inches to eighteen in diameter, but no spiders. I suspect they were spun this last warm night very generally. No insects in them yet. They are the more conspicuous for being thickly strewn with minute drops of the mist or dew, like a chain of beads. Are they not meteorologists? A robin's [x] nest in an apple tree with three eggs, — first nest I have seen, — also a red-wing's [x] nest — bird about it did not look in — before the river is low enough for them to build on its brink. *Viola cucullata* apparently to-day first, near the sassafrases. A small white birch catkin. Fir balsam just begins fairly to loosen bundles. Were they blue-winged teal [x] flew by? for there was a large white spot on the sides aft. I think I scared up the same last night. Fever-root up four or five inches.

Is not this the first day of summer, when first I sit with the window open and forget fire? and hear the golden robin [x] and kingbird [x], etc., etc.? not to mention the bobolink [x], vireo [x], yellowbird [x], etc., and the trump of bullfrogs heard last evening.

P.M. — To climbing fern.

I have seen a little blue moth a long time. My thick sack is too much yesterday and to-day. The golden robin [x] makes me think of a thinner coat. I see that the great thrush [x], — brown thrasher

1853-1854

1853-1854

...The great –and good, I believe– White Chief sends us word that he wants to buy our land. But he will reserve us enough so that we can live comfortably. This seems generous, since the red man no longer has rights he need respect. It may also be wise, since we no longer need a large country.... Let us hope that the wars between the red man and his white brothers will never come again. We would have everything to lose and nothing to gain. Young men view revenge as gain, even when they lose their own lives. But the old men who stay behind in time of war, mothers with sons to lose– they know better. Our great father Washington ... sends us word that he will protect us if we do what he wants.... His brave soldiers will be a strong wall for my people.... Then our ancient enemies to the north– the Haidas and Tsimshians – will no longer frighten our women and old men.... But how can that ever be? Your God loves your people and hates mine... He makes your people stronger every day. Soon they will flood all the land. But my people are an ebb tide, we will never return.... No, we are two separate races, and we must stay separate. There is little in common between us.... Your religion was written on tablets of stone by the iron finger of an angry God lest you forget. The red man could never comprehend nor remember it. Our religion is the tradition of our ancestors, the dreams of our old men, given to them in the solemn hours of the night by the great spirit and the visions of our leaders, and it is written in the hearts of our people. Your dead cease to love you and the land of their nativity as soon as they pass the portals of the tomb; they wander far away beyond the stars and are soon forgotten and never return. Our dead never forget this beautiful world that gave them being. They always love its winding rivers, its sacred mountains, and its sequestered vales, and they even yearn in tenderest affection over the lonely-hearted living and often return to visit guide and comfort them. We will ponder your proposition, and when we decide we will tell you. But should we accept it, I here and now make this the first condition that we will not be denied the privilege, without molestation, of visiting at will the graves, where we have buried our ancestors, and our friends, and our children. Every part of this country is sacred to my people. Every hillside, every valley, every plain and grove has been hallowed by some fond memory or some sad experience of my tribe. Even the rocks which seem to lie dumb as they swelter in the sun along the silent seashore in solemn grandeur thrill with memories of past events connected with the lives of my people. And when the last red man shall have perished from the earth and his memory among the white men shall have become a myth these shores will swarm with the invisible dead of my tribe; and when your children's children shall think themselves alone in the fields, the store, the shop, upon the highway, or in the silence of the pathless woods, they will not be alone. In all the earth there is no place dedicated to solitude. At night when the streets of your cities and villages will be silent and you think them deserted, they will throng with returning hosts that once filled and still love this beautiful land. The white man will never be alone. Let him be just and deal kindly with my people for the dead are not powerless. Dead – did I say? There is no death, only a change of worlds.

1853-1854

1853-1854

[x], — from its markings, is still of the same family with the wood thrush [x], etc. These genera are very curious. A shrub or bear oak beginning to leaf. Am struck with the fact that the Assabet has relieved itself of its extra waters to a much greater extent than the main branch. Woolly aphides on alder. Large black birches, not quite leafing nor in bloom. In one bunch of *Viola ovata* in Ministerial Swamp Path counted eleven, an unusual number. What are those handsome conical crimson-red buds not burst on the white [*sic*] spruce? The leaves of the larch begin to make a show. Mosquito. The climbing fern is evergreen — only the flowering top dies — and spreads by horizontal roots. I perceive no growth yet. The *Amelanchier oblongifolia* has denser and smaller racemes, more erect (?), broader petalled, and not tinged with red on the back. Its downy leaves are now less conspicuous and interesting than the other's. On the whole it is not so interesting; a variety.

The bear-berry is well out, perhaps a quarter part of them. May 6th, I thought it would open in a day or two; say, then, the 8th.

At last I hear the veery [x] strain. Why not as soon as the *yorrick*? Heard again the evergreen-forest [x] note. It is a slender bird, about size of white-eyed vireo, with a black throat and I think some yellow above, with dark and light beneath, in the tops of pines and oaks. The only warblers [x] at all like it are black-throated green, black-throated blue, black-poll, and golden-winged, and maybe orange-crowned.



May 13, Saturday: [Henry Thoreau](#) went at 4:00PM to V. Muhlenbergii Brook.



May 13. The portion of the peach trees in bloom in our garden shows the height of the snow-drifts in the winter.

4 P.M. — To V. Muhlenbergii Brook.

The bass suddenly expanding its little round leaves; probably began about the 11th. Uvularias, amid the dry tree-tops near the azaleas, apparently yesterday. Saw the crow blackbird fly over, turning his tail in the wind into a vertical position to serve for a rudder, then sailing with it horizontal. The great red maples begin to leaf, and the young leaflets of the red (?) oaks up the Assabet on Hosmer's land, and one at Rock, now begin to be conspicuous. Waxwork begins to leaf. The sand cherry, judging from what I saw yesterday, will begin to flower to-day.


As for the birds, I have not for some time noticed crows [**Crow, American** █ *Corvus brachyrhynchos*] in flocks. The voices of the early spring birds are silenced or drowned in multitude of sounds. The black ducks [**Black Duck** █ *Anas rubripes* (~~Dusky Duck~~)] are probably all gone. Are the rusty grackles [**Rusty Blackbird** █ *Euphagus carolinus* (~~Rusty Grackle~~)] still here? Birds generally are now building and sitting. Methinks I heard one snipe [**Common Snipe** █ *Gallinago gallinago* (~~Wilson's Snipe or Brown Snipe~~)] night before last? I have not noticed the pine warbler [**Pine Warbler** █ *Dendroica pinus* (~~Pine Creeper~~)] nor the myrtle-bird [**Yellow-rumped Warbler** █ *Dendroica coronata* (~~Myrtle-bird~~)] for a fortnight. The chip-sparrow [**Chipping Sparrow** █ *Spizella passerina*] is lively in the morning. I suspect the purple finches [**Purple Finch** █ *Carpodacus purpureus* (~~American linnet~~)] are all gone within a few days. The black and white creeper [**Black-and-white Warbler** █ *Mniotilta varia* (~~Black-and-white Creeper~~)] is musical nowadays, and thrushes █ and the catbird [**Gray Catbird** █ *Dumetella carolinensis*], etc., etc. Goldfinch [**American Goldfinch** █ *Carduelis tristis*] heard pretty often.

Insects have just begun to be troublesome.

Young *Populus grandidentata* just opening. Panicked andromeda leaf to-morrow; not for three or four days generally.

1853-1854

1853-1854


 May 14, Sunday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Hill.

"Downriver," "To Great Meadow," and "To Hill" signified a northward trip down the Concord River below the triple point of the confluence. After passing through a straight reach aligned by the local bedrock strike, arched by two bridges, and flanked by gravel bars of historic sediment that were repeatedly dredged, he entered the north side of Great Meadow. Bounded by the site of the Old North Bridge to the southwest and Ball's Hill to the northeast, it was two miles long and half a mile across. When in flood, the meadow was his favorite inland sea to sail upon because the wind was least impeded and the waves were highest.


— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 11



May 14: P.M. — To Hill by boat.

A St. Domingo cuckoo [**Black-billed Cuckoo**  *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*], black-billed with red round the eye, a silent, long, slender, graceful bird, dark cinnamon(?) above, pure white beneath. It is in a leisurely manner picking the young caterpillars out of a nest (now about a third of an inch long) with its long, curved bill. Not timid. Black willows have begun to leaf, — if they are such in front of Monroe's. White ash and common elm *began* to leaf yesterday, if I have not named the elm before. The former will apparently open to-morrow. The black ash, *i.e.* that by the river, may have been open a day or two. Apple in bloom, Swamp white oak perhaps will open to-morrow. [No. 16.] Celtis has begun to leaf. I think I may say that the white oak leaves have now fallen; saw but one or two small trees with them day before yesterday.

Sumach began to leaf, say yesterday. Pear opened, say the 12th. The leafing goes on now rapidly, these warm and moist showery days.

 May 15, Monday: The United States Inebriate Asylum, the 1st hospital organized for the treatment of alcoholism, was founded in Binghamton, New York.

At the conclusion of the [Dred Scott](#) trial the white judge instructed the all-white jury that the white man "Sandford" had the law on his side, and so the jury in due course decided in favor of the white man. The implication of this was that the lawsuits brought by the Scotts, since they had always been Negroes, had always been null and void. Under such circumstances, normally a judge would dispose of the issue simply by dismissing such a lawsuit, but in this case the judge allowed the decision of the jury to stand.

In May, 1854, the cause went before a jury, who found the following verdict, viz: "As to the first issue joined in this case, we of the jury find the defendant not guilty; and as to the issue secondly above joined, we of the jury find that before and at the time when, &c., in the first count mentioned, the said Dred Scott was a negro slave, the lawful property of the defendant; and as to the issue thirdly above joined, we, the jury, find that before and at the time when, &c., in the second and third counts mentioned, the said Harriet, wife of said Dred Scott, and Eliza and Lizzie, the daughters of the said Dred Scott,

1853-1854

1853-1854

were negro slaves, the lawful property of the defendant."

Whereupon, the court gave judgment for the defendant.

After an ineffectual motion for a new trial, the plaintiff filed the following bill of exceptions.

On the trial of this cause by the jury, the plaintiff, to maintain the issues on his part, read to the jury the following agreed statement of facts, (see agreement above.) No further testimony was given to the jury by either party. Thereupon the plaintiff moved the court to give to the jury the following instruction, viz:

"That, upon the facts agreed to by the parties, they ought to find for the plaintiff. The court refused to give such instruction to the jury, and the plaintiff, to such refusal, then and there duly excepted."

The court then gave the following instruction to the jury, on motion of the defendant:

"The jury are instructed, that upon the facts in this case, the law is with the defendant."

The plaintiff excepted to this instruction.

Upon these exceptions, the case came up to this court.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went up the [Assabet River](#).

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), *THE BOATMAN*, page 10



May 15. Judging from those in garden, the witch-hazel began to leaf yesterday, black alder to-day.



P.M. — Up Assabet.

The golden willow catkins are suddenly falling and cover my boat. High blueberry has flowered, say yesterday. Swamp-pink leafing, yesterday. The *Amelanchier Botryapium* — some of them — have lost blossoms and show *minute* fruit. This I suspect the first sign of all wild edible fruit. *Cornus florida* began to leaf, say yesterday. The round-leafed cornel (at Island) is, I [think], as early as any of the cornels to leaf; put it for the present with the *alternifolia*. *Gaylussacia* begins to leaf to-day and is sticky. *Polygonatum pubescens* will apparently blossom to-morrow. Hickories make a show suddenly; their buds are so large, say yesterday. Young white oaks also yesterday. Old ones barely to-day, but their catkins quite prominent. Young white oak (and black oak) leaflets now very handsome, red on under side. Black oaks appear to have begun to leaf about the 13th, immediately after the red. The large *P. Grandidentata* by river not leafing yet.

Looked off from hilltop. Trees generally are now bursting into leaf. The aspect of oak and other woods at a distance is somewhat like that of a very thick and reddish or yellowish mist about the evergreens. In other directions, the light, graceful, and more distinct yellowish-green forms of birches are seen, and, in swamps, the reddish or reddish-brown crescents of the red maple tops, now covered with keys. Oak leaves are as big as a mouse's ear, and the farmers are busily planting. It is suddenly very warm and looks as if there might be a thunder-shower coming up from the west. The

1853-1854

1853-1854

crow blackbird [**Crow, American**  *Corvus brachyrhynchos*] is distinguished by that harsh, springlike note. For the rest, there is a sort of split whistle, like a poor imitation of the red-wing [**Red-winged Blackbird**  *Agelaius phoeniceus* Red-wing¹⁹⁵]. A yellow butterfly.

Have just been looking at Nuttall's "North American Sylva." Much research, fine plates and print and paper, and unobjectionable periods, but no turpentine, or balsam, or quercitron, or salicin, or birch wine, or the aroma of the balm-of-Gilead, no gallic, or ulmic, or even malic acid. The plates are greener and higher-colored than the words, etc., etc. It is sapless, if not leafless.



May 16, Tuesday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went in his boat to [Conantum](#), probably with [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#).



May 16. Tuesday. Saw an arum almost open the 11th; say 16th (?), though not shedding pollen 16th at Conantum. Sugar maples, large, beginning to leaf, say 14th; also mulberry in the How garden to-day; locust the 14th; white [*sic*] spruce, the earliest to-day: buttonwood the 14th (*leafing* all).

P.M. To Conantum by boat with S

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 10


V. peregrina in Channing's garden, — purslane speedwell, — *some* flowers withered; some days; at least. Observed all the oaks I know except the chestnut and dwarf chestnut and scarlet (?). I see anthers perhaps to all, but not yet any pollen. Apparently the most forward in respect to blossoming will be the shrub oak, which possibly is now in bloom in some places, then apparently swamp white, then red and black, then white. White oak apparently leafs with swamp white, or say next day.¹⁹⁶ Red and black oaks leaf about together, before swamp white and white. Earliest sassafras opened

195. The "Red Wing" chieftainship of Red Wing, Minnesota did not refer to the red wing of this blackbird, but referred rather to a swan's wing dyed red that was the badge of office of the chiefly dynasty.


196. See forward.

1853-1854

1853-1854

yesterday; leaf to-day. Butternut will blossom to-morrow. The great fern by sassafras begins to bloom, probably *Osmunda Claytoniana*, two feet high now, — interrupted fern, — its very dark heads soon surmounted with green. Lambkill beginning to leaf. Green-briar leaf yesterday. The rich crimson leaf-buds of the grape, yesterday globular (and some to-day), are rapidly unfolding, scattered along the vine; and the various leaves unfolding are flower-like, and taken together are more interesting than any flower. Is that a hop¹⁹⁷ by the path at landing on hill with shoots now five or six inches long? Pads begin to appear and spread themselves out on the water here and there, as the water goes down — though it is still over the meadows, — with often a scalloped edge like those tin platters on which country people sometimes bake turnovers. Their round green buds here and there look like the heads of tortoises; and I saw in the course of the afternoon three or four just begun to blossom. Golden robin [**Northern Oriole**  *Icterus galbula*] building her nest. It is easy to see now that the highest part of the meadow is next the river. There is generally a difference of a foot at least. Saw around a hardback stem on the meadow, where the water was about two feet deep, a light-brown globular mass, two inches or more in diameter, which looked like a thistle-head full of some kind of seeds, some of which were separated from it by the agitation made by the boat but returned to it again. I then saw that they were living creatures. It was a mass of gelatinous spawn filled with little light-colored pollywogs (?), or possibly fishes (?), all head and tail, — a long, broad light-colored and thin tail, which was vertical, appended to a head with two eyes. These were about a quarter of an inch long, and when washed off in the water wiggled back to the mass again.

Quite warm; cows already stand in water in the shade of the bridge. I stopped to get some water at the springy bank just above the railroad. I dug a little hollow with my hands so that I could dip some up with a skunk-cabbage leaf, and, while waiting for it to settle, I thought, by a squirming and wriggling movement on the bottom, that the sand was all alive with some kind of worms or insects. There were in fact some worm-skins (?) on it. Looking closer, however, I found that this motion and appearance was produced by the bursting up of the water, which not only trickled down from the bank above but burst up from beneath. The sandy bottom was speckled with hundreds of small, regularly formed orifices, like those in a pepper-box, about which the particles of sand kept in motion had made me mistake it for squirming worms. There was considerable loam or soil mixed with the sand. These orifices, separated by slight intervals like those in the nose of a water-pot, gave to the spring an unexpectedly regular appearance. It is surprising how quickly one of these springs will run clear. Also drank at what I will call Alder Spring at Clamshell Hill.

Looked into several red-wing [**Red-winged Blackbird**  *Agelaius phoeniceus*] blackbirds' nests which are now being built, but no eggs yet. They are generally hung between two twigs, say of button-bush. I noticed at one nest what looked like a tow string securely tied about a twig at each end about six inches apart, left loose in the middle. It was not a string, but I think a strip of milkweed pod, etc., — water asclepias probably, — maybe a foot long and very strong. How remarkable that this bird should have found out the strength of this, which I was so slow to find out!


The leaf-buds at last suddenly burst. It is now very difficult to compare one with another or keep the run or them. The bursting into leaf of the greater number, including the latest, is accomplished within a week, say from the 13th of May this year to probably the 20th; that is, within these dates they acquire minute leaflets. This same is the principal planting week methinks. The elethra well leafed, say with the bass (?), *Andromeda calyculata*, leaf to-morrow.

The red or crimsoned young leaves of the black and red (?) oaks, the former like red damask, — and the maroon(?)—red inclining to flesh-color-salmon-red (?)—of the white oak, all arranged now like little parasols, — in white oak five leaflets, — are as interesting and beautiful as flowers, downy and



197. Probably clematis, — one of the earlier plants, then.

velvet-like. Sorrel well out in some warm places. *Ranunculus bulbosus* will flower to-morrow, under Clamshell. Yesterday, when the blossoms of the golden willow began to fall, the blossoms of the apple began to open.

Landed at Conantum by the red cherry grove above Arrowhead Field. The red cherries six inches in diameter and twenty-five or thirty [feet] high, in full bloom, with a reddish smooth bark. It is a splendid day, so clear and bright and fresh; the warmth of the air and the bright tender verdure putting forth on all sides make an impression of luxuriance and genialness, so perfectly fresh and uncankered. A sweet scent fills the air from the expanding leaflets or some other source. The earth is all fragrant as one flower. And bobolinks [~~Rice-bird~~ (**Bobolink**  *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*)] tinkle in the air. Nature now is perfectly genial to man. I noticed the dark shadow of Conantum Cliff from the water. Why do I notice it at this season particularly? Is it because a shadow is more grateful to the sight now that warm weather has come? Or is there anything in the contrast between the rich green of the grass and the cool dark shade? As we walked along to the C. Cliff, I saw many *Potentilla Canadensis* var *pumila* now spotting the ground. *Vaccinium vacillans* just out. *Arenaria serpyllifolia* to-morrow. *Myosotis stricta* in several places; how long? Trillium out, possibly yesterday. Maidenhair ferns some up and some starting, unclenching their little red fists. Fever-bush, say leafed about the 12th.

Returning, the water is smoother than common, — quite glassy in some places. It is getting to be difficult to cross the meadows. Float close under the edge of the wood. But the wind changes to east and blows recently fresh. How fair and elysian these rounded and now green Indian hills, with their cool dark shadows on the east side! There are great summer clouds in the sky, — blocked rhomboidal masses tier above tier, white, glowing above, darker beneath.

On Hubbard's meadow, saw a motion in the water as if a pickerel had darted away; approached and saw a middle-sized snapping turtle on the bottom; managed at last, after stripping off my coat and rolling up my shirt-sleeve, by thrusting in my arm to the shoulder, to get him by the tail and lift him aboard. He tried to get under the boat. He snapped at my shoe and got the toe in his mouth. His back was covered with green moss (?), or the like, mostly concealing the scales. In this were small leeches. Great, rough, but not hard, scales on his legs. He made a pretty loud hissing like a cross dog, by his breathing. It was wonderful how suddenly this sluggish creature would snap at anything. As he lay under the seat, I scratched his back, and, filling himself with air and rage, his head would suddenly fly upward, his shell striking the seat, just as a steel trap goes off, and though I was prepared for it, it never failed to startle me, it was so swift and sudden. He slowly inflated himself, and then suddenly went off like a percussion lock snapping the air. Thus undoubtedly he catches fishes, as a toad catches flies. His laminated tail and great triangular points in the rear edge of his shell. Nature does not forget beauty of outline even in a mud turtle's shell.

Rhodora well out, probably two days, and leaf as long, or yesterday. The stinkpots have climbed two or three feet up the willows and hang there. I suspect that they appear first about the same time with the snapping turtles. Far and near I see painted turtles sunning or tumbling off the little hummocks laid bare by the descending water, their shells shining in the sun.




May 17, Wednesday: At Hakodate, [Japan](#), William Speiden, Jr. reported seeing many whales. He proclaimed the harbor “magnificent” and one that would “accommodate a great many vessels.”

[Henry Thoreau](#) left at 5:30 AM by boat for the Island. There he caught a snapping turtle and took it home to measure it and to observe its behavior. In the afternoon he went on the [Assabet River](#) to Cedar Swamp.



May 17: 5.30 A.M. — To Island.

The water is now tepid in the morning to the hands (may have been a day or two), as I slip my hands down the paddle. Hear the wood pewee [**Wood-Pewee, Eastern**  *Contopus virens* (~~Wood-Pewee~~ or ~~Peewee~~)], the warmweather sound. As I was returning over the meadow this side of the Island, I saw the snout of a mud turtle above the surface, — little more than an inch of the point, — and paddled toward it. Then, as he moved slowly

on the surface, different parts of his shell and head just appearing looked just like the scalloped edges of some pads which had just reached the surface. I pushed up and found a large snapping turtle on the bottom. He appeared of a dirty brown there, very nearly the color of the bottom at present. With his great head, as big as an infant's, and his vigilant eyes as he paddled about on the bottom in his attempts to escape, he looked not merely repulsive, but to some extent terrible even as a crocodile. At length, after thrusting my arm in up to the shoulder two or three times, I succeeded in getting him into the boat, where I secured him with a lever under a seat. I could get him from the landing to the house only by turning him over and drawing him by the tail, the hard crests of which afforded a good hold; for he was so heavy that I could not hold him off so far as to prevent his snapping at my legs. He weighed thirty and a half pounds.

- Extreme length of shell.....15½ inches
- Length of shell in middle15 "
- Greatest width of shell12½ "
- (This was toward the rear.)
- Tail (beyond shell)11½ "

His head and neck it was not easy to measure, but, judging from the proportions of one described by Storer, they must have been 10 inches long at least, which makes the whole length 37 inches. Width of head 4½ inches; with the skin of the neck, more than 5. His sternum, which was slightly depressed, was 10½ by 5½. Depth from back to sternum about 7 inches. There were six great scallops, or rather triangular points, on the hind edge of his shell, three on each side, the middle one of each three the longest, about ¾ of an inch. He had surprisingly stout hooked jaws, of a gray color or bluish-gray, the upper shutting over the under, a more or less sharp triangular beak corresponding to one below; and his flippers were armed with very stout claws 1¼ inches long. He had a



very ugly and spiteful face (with a vigilant gray eye, which was never shut in any position of the head), surrounded by the thick and ample folds of the skin about his neck. His shell was comparatively smooth and free from moss, — a dirty black. He was a dirty or speckled white beneath. He made the most remarkable and awkward appearance when walking. The edge of his shell was lifted about eight inches from the ground, tilting now to this side, then to that, his great scaly legs or flippers hanging with flesh and loose skin, — slowly and gravely (?) hissing the while. His walking was perfectly elephantine. Thus he stalked along, — a low conical mountain, — dragging his tail, with his head turned upward with the ugliest and most venomous look, on his flippers, half leg half fin. But he did not proceed far before he sank down to rest. If he could support a world on his back when lying down, he certainly could not stand up under it. All said that he walked like an elephant. When lying on his back, showing his dirty white and warty under side, with his tail curved round, he reminded you forcibly of pictures of the dragon. He could not easily turn himself back; tried many times in vain, resting betweenwhiles. Would inflate himself and convulsively spring with head and all upward, so as to lift his shell from the ground, and he would strike his head on the ground, lift up his shell, and catch at the earth with his claws. His back was of two great blunt ridges with a hollow between, down the middle of which was a slight but distinct ridge also. There was also a ridge of spines more or less hard on each side of his crested tail. Some of these spines in the crest of the tail were nearly half an inch high. Storer says that they have five claws on the fore legs, but only four on the hind ones. In this there was a perfectly distinct fifth toe (?) on the hind legs, though it did not pierce the skin; and on the fore legs it did not much more. S. does not say how many foes he has. These claws must be powerful to dig with.

This, then, is the season for catching them, now that the weather is warmer, before the pads are common, and the water is getting shallow on the meadows. E. Wood, Senior, speaks of two seen fighting for a long time in the river in front of his house last year. I have heard of one being found in the meadow in the winter surrounded by frozen mud. Is not this the heaviest animal found wild in this township? Certainly none but the otter approaches it. Farrar says that, when he was eleven, one which he could not lift into the boat towed him across the river; weighed twenty-nine.

Lilac is out and horse-chestnut. The female flowers — crimson cones — of the white [sic] spruce, but not yet the staminate.

The turtle was very sluggish, though capable of strength. He would just squeeze into a flour barrel and would not quite lie flat in it when his head and tail were drawn in. There was [a] triangular place in the bottom of his mouth and an orifice within it through which, apparently, he breathed, the orifice opening and shutting. I hear



of a man who injured his back seriously for many years by carrying one some distance at arm's length to prevent his biting him. They are frequently seen fighting and their shells heard striking together.

1853-1854

1853-1854

P.M. — To Cedar Swamp via Assabet.

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 10

The tupelo began to leaf apparently yesterday. The large green keys of the white maples are now conspicuous, looking like the wings of insects. *Azalea nudiflora* in woods begins to leaf now, later than the white kind. *Viola Muhlenbergii* out, say yesterday. It is a pale violet. Judging from the aspect of the *Lentago* yesterday, I should put its leafing decidedly before *Viburnum nudum*. Also apparently the late rose soon after the one observed, and the moss about same time with first. The swamp white and white oak are slow to leaf. Large maples, too, are not rapid; but the birches, aspens, and balm-of-Gileads burst out suddenly into leaf and make a great show. Also the young sugar maples in the street now and for some days have made a show of broad luxuriant leaves, early and rapidly. In the case of the early aspen you could almost see the leaves expand and acquire a darker green—this to be said the 12th or 13th or 14th—under the influence of the sun and genial atmosphere. Now they are only as big as a ninepence, to-morrow or sooner they are as big as a pistareen, and the next day they are as big as a dollar. So too the green veils or screens of the birches rapidly thickened. This from its far greater prevalence than the aspens, balm-of-Gilead, white maples, etc., is the first to give the woodlands anywhere generally a (fresh) green aspect. It is the first to clothe large tracts of deciduous woodlands with green, and perchance it marks an epoch in the season, the transition decidedly and generally from bare twigs to leaves. When the birches have put on their green sacks, then a new season has come. The light reflected from their tender yellowish green is like sunlight.

The turtle's snapping impressed me as something mechanical, like a spring, as if there were no volition about [it]. Its very suddenness seemed too great for a conscious movement. Perhaps in these cold-blooded and sluggish animals there is a near approach to the purely material and mechanical. Their very tenacity of life seems to be owing to their insensibility or small amount of life, — indeed, to be an irritation of the muscles. One man tells me of a turtle's head which, the day after it was cut off, snapped at a dog's tail and made him run off yelping, and I have witnessed something similar myself. I can think of nothing but a merely animated jaw, as it were a piece of mechanism. There is in this creature a tremendous development of the jaw, and, long after the head is cut off, this snaps vigorously when irritated, like a piece of mechanism. A naturalist tells me that he dissected one and laid its heart aside, and he found it beating or palpitating the next morning. They are sometimes baited with eels and caught with a hook. Apparently the best time to hunt them is in the morning when the water is smooth.

There is a surprising change since I last passed up the Assabet; the fields are now clothed with so dark and rich a green, and the wooded shore is all lit up with the tender, bright green of birches fluttering in the wind and shining in the light, and red maple keys are seen at a distance against the tender green of birches and other trees, tingeing them.

The wind is easterly, having changed, and produces an agreeable raw mistiness, unlike the dry blue haze of dog-days, just visible, between a dew and a fog for density. I sail up the stream, but the wind is hardly powerful enough to overcome the current, and sometimes I am almost at a standstill where the stream is most contracted and swiftest, and there I sit carelessly waiting for the struggle between wind and current to decide itself. Then comes a stronger puff, and I see by the shore that I am advancing to where the stream is broader and runs less swiftly and where lighter breezes can draw me. In contracted and swift-running places, the wind and current are almost evenly matched. It is a pleasing delay, to be referred to the elements, and meanwhile I survey the shrubs on shore. The white cedar shows the least possible life in its extremities now. Put it with the arbor-vitæ, or after it. Poisoned dogwood beginning to leaf, say yesterday. Nemopanthes out; leafed several days ago. And the clustered andromeda leafed apparently a day or more before it. Gold-thread out. *Viola palmata*. I cannot well examine the stone-heaps, the water is so deep. Muskrats are now sometimes very bold; lie on the surface and come swimming directly toward the boat as if to reconnoitre — this in two cases within a few days. Pretty sure to see a crescent of light under their tails when they dive. The splendid rhodora now sets the swamps on fire with its masses of rich color. It is one of the first flowers to catch the eye at a distance in masses, — so naked, unconcealed by its own leaves. Observed a rill emptying in above the stone-heaps, and afterward saw where it ran out of June-berry Meadow, and I considered how surely it would have conducted me to the meadow, if I had traced it up. I was impressed as it were by the intelligence of the brook, which for ages in the wildest regions, before science is born, knows so well the level of the ground and through whatever woods or other obstacles

1853-1854

1853-1854

finds its way. Who shall distinguish between the law by which a brook finds its river, the instinct [by which] a bird performs its migrations, and the knowledge by which a man steers his ship round the globe? The globe is

THOREAU ON NORMATIVE SCIENCE

the richer for the variety of its inhabitants. Saw a large gray squirrel near the split rock in the Assabet. He went skipping up the limb of one tree and down the limb of another, his great gray rudder undulating through the air, and occasionally hid himself behind the main stem. The *Salix nigra* will open to-morrow.

Here is a [David Wagoner](#) poem, "Thoreau and the Snapping Turtle":

[It] looked not merely repulsive, but to some extent terrible even as a crocodile... a very ugly and spiteful face.

— Thoreau, Journal, May 17, 1854

As his boat glided across a flooded meadow,
He saw beneath him under lily pads,
Brown as dead leaves in mud, a yard-long
Snapping turtle staring up through the water
At him, its shell as jagged as old bark.

He plunged his arm in after it to the shoulder,
Stretching and missing, but groping till he caught it
By the last ridge of its tail. Then he held on,
Hauled it over the gunwale, and flopped it writhing
Into the boat. It began gasping for air

Through a huge gray mouth, then suddenly
Heaved its hunchback upward, slammed the thwart
As quick as a spring trap and, thrusting its neck
Forward a foot at a lunge, snapped its beaked jaws
So violently, he only petted it once,

Then flinched away. And all the way to the landing
It hissed and struck, thumping the seat
Under him hard and loud as a stake-driver.
It was so heavy, he had to drag it home,
All thirty pounds of it, wrong side up by the tail.

His neighbors agreed it walked like an elephant,
lilting this way and that, its head held high,
A scarf of ragged skin at its throat. It would sag
Slowly to rest then, out of its element,
Unable to bear its weight in this new world.

Each time he turned it over, it tried to recover
By catching at the floor with its claws, by straining
The arch of its neck, by springing convulsively,
Tail coiling snakelike. But finally it slumped
On its spiky back like an exhausted dragon.
He said he'd seen a cutoff snapper's head
That would still bite at anything held near it
As if the whole of its life were mechanical,



1853-1854

1853-1854

That a heart cut out of one had gone on beating
By itself like clockwork till the following morning.

And the next week he wrote: It is worth the while
To ask ourselves... Is our life innocent
Enough? Do we live inhumanely, toward man
Or beast, in thought or act? To be successful
And serene we must be at one with the universe.

The least conscious and needless injury
Inflicted on any creature is
To its extent a suicide. What peace-
Or life-can a murderer have?... White maple keys
Have begun to fall and float downstream like wings.

There are myriads of shad-flies fluttering
Over the dark still water under the hill.



May 18, Thursday: [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Pedrick's meadow.

Harry Watkins wrote to give his mother "a gentle scolding." There had been a large fire in New York on the 9th and the newspapers had reported that their house had been damaged by both fire and water — yet not a word had she sent to him about this "although she must have known how anxious I would be to learn the particulars."



May 18. To Pedrick's meadow.

Viola lanceolata, two days at least. Celandine yesterday. The *V. pedata* beginning to be abundant. Chinquapin was probably a little later to leaf, and will be to flower, than the shrub oak. Its catkins, light, green, remind me of those of the swamp white oak. Buttonwood balls, one third inch in diameter, have been blown off, and *some* have a dull-purplish fuzzy surface (most are solid green); apparently just beginning to blossom. Red cedar shows the least possible sign of starting. The pyrus, probably black-fruited, in bloom as much as two days. Huckleberry. Now for the tassels of the shrub oak; I can find no pollen yet about them, but, as the oak catkins in my pitcher, plucked yesterday, shed pollen to-day, I think I may say that the bear shrub oak, red and black oaks open to-morrow. [Vide 22d.] I see the pincushion or crimson-tinged galls now on shrub oaks around the bases of the young shoots, — some green-shell ones on oak leaves, like large peas, and small now greenish-white fungus-like ones on swamp-pink. Thus early, before the leaves are a quarter expanded, the gall begins. I see potentillas already ascending five or six inches, but no flower on them, in the midst of low ones in flower. *Smilacina trifolia* will apparently open to-morrow in Pedrick's meadow. A large clay-brown and blotched snake; is it the chicken snake or water adder? Beach plum in full bloom by red house, apparently two or three days. It is one of the very latest plants to leaf; only a few buds just begin to show any green. One man has been a-fishing, but said the water and the wind were too high; caught a few.

High winds all day racking the young trees and blowing off blossoms.

1853-1854

1853-1854



May 19, Friday: Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) met on board ship with [Japanese](#) officials, They reported that residents had heard little of the 31 March 1854 treaty and that the inhabitants at Hakodate, believing the American ships had evil intentions, had been packing up their goods and abandoning the city for the interior.

[Henry Thoreau](#) left at 5:30 AM for Nawshawtuct and the Island.

In [California](#), F.A. Bonnard's [Daily Sun](#) began to be published as a weekly.



May 19. 5.30 A.M. — To Nawshawtuct and Island.

Ranunculus Purshii will apparently open to-day. Its little green buds somewhat like a small yellow lily. The water has now fallen so much that the grass is rapidly springing up through it on the meadows. Red-wing's **[Red-winged Blackbird [Agelaius phoeniceus](#) Red-wing¹⁹⁸]** nest with two eggs. A geranium, apparently yesterday. Celtis for several days. Button-bush began to leaf, say the 17th; *i.e.*, some of its buds began to burst. Choke-cherry out. *Aralia nudicaulis*, apparently yesterday. The red-eye **[Red-eyed Vireo [Vireo olivaceus](#)]**. The early thorn looks as if it would open to-day. I hear the *spravey*-note frog now at sunset. Now for four or five days, — though they are now for the most part large, — or since the 15th came in, the young and tender oak leaves, disposed umbrella-wise about the extremities of last year's twigs, have been very attractive from their different tints of red. Those of the black and white oaks are, methinks, especially handsome, the former already showing their minute and tender bristles, and all handsomely lobed. Some of the black oak leaves are like a rich, dark-red velvet; the white oak have a paler and more delicate tint, somewhat flesh-colored, though others are more like the black, — what S. calls a maroon red. So of the bear scrub oak; the swamp white and chinquapin are more of a downy or silvery white. The white pine shoots are now two or three inches long generally, — upright light marks on the body of dark green. Those of the pitch pine are less conspicuous. Hemlock does not show yet. The light shoots, an inch or so long, of the fir balsam spot the trees. The larch is a mass of fresh, airy, and cool green. Arbor-vita, red cedar, and white show no life except. on the closest inspection. They are some of the latest trees. The juniper is about with the fir balsam. I have already described the oaks sufficiently. The hazel is now a pretty green bush. Butternuts, like hickories, make a show suddenly with their large buds. I have not examined the birches, except the white, this year. The alders are slow to expand their leaves, but now begin to show a mass of green along the river, and, with the willows, afford concealment to the birds' nests. The birds appear to be waiting for this screen. The robin's **[red]** nest and eggs are the earliest I see. Saw one in the midst of a green-briar over the water the other day, before the briar had put out at all, which shows some foresight, for it will be perfectly invisible, if not inaccessible, soon.

The great poplar is quite late to leaf, especially those that blossom; not yet do they show much, — a silvery leaf. The golden willow is the only tree used about here at the same time for a fence and for shade. It also prevents the causeways from being washed away. The black willow is the largest as well as the handsomest of our native willows. Young elms are leafing pretty fast, old ones are late and slow. The samaræ of the elms first make a thick top, leaf-like, before the leaves come out. Ash trees are like hickories in respect to the size of the young leaves. The young leaflets of the wild holly (*Nemopanthes*) on the 17th were peculiarly thin and pellucid, yellow-green. I know of none others like them. Those of the black alder are not only late but dark. The button-bush is not only very late, but the buds are slow to expand, and methinks are very far apart, so that they do not soon make a show; for the most part at a little distance there is no appearance of life in them even yet. The sweet viburnum and also the naked are early to make a show with their substantial leaves. The andromedas are all late, — if I remember, the clustered (?) the earliest. The common swamp-pink is earlier to leaf but later to blossom than the *nudiflora*. The rhodora is late, and is *naked* flowering. The mountain laurel is one of the latest plants. The resinous dotted leaves of the huckleberry are interesting. The high blueberries are early (to bloom) and resound with the hum of bees. All the cornels begin to leaf apparently about the same time, though I do not know but. the round-leaved is the earliest.¹⁹⁹ I have not observed the dwarf. The witch-hazel is rather late, and can afford to be. One kind of thorn is well leafed, the other not. The mountain-ash is the first tree which grows here, either naturally or otherwise, to show green at a little distance. Is it not true that trees which belong peculiarly to a colder latitude are among our earliest and those which prefer a warmer among our latest? The chokeberry's shining leaf is interesting. With what unobserved secure dispatch nature advances! The amelauchiers have bloomed, and already both kinds have shed their blossoms and show minute green fruit. There is not an instant's pause! The beach plum — such as I have observed — is the latest to begin to expand of all deciduous shrubs or trees, for aught I know. The sight of it suggests that we are near the seacoast, that

198. The "Red Wing" chieftainship of Red Wing, Minnesota did not refer to the red wing of this blackbird, but referred rather to a swan's wing dyed red that was the badge of office of the chiefly dynasty.

199. The C. Florida is rather late.

1853-1854

1853-1854

even our sands are in some sense littoral, — or beaches. The cherries are all early to leaf, but only one, perhaps the wild red, and that in one place, is in mass enough to make much show. The woodbine is well advanced — shoots two or three inches long. It must have begun to leaf more than a week ago. The linden leaf suddenly and rapidly, — a round, thin, transparent-looking (?) leaf. A washing day, — a strong rippling wind, and all things bright.



May 20, Saturday: William Speiden, Jr. went ashore. His party took a walk and visited a Buddhist temple, which he deemed “the handsomest one I have ever seen in [Japan](#).” They shopped at the local stores and admired the large scale of the streets and the houses. Speiden noted special processes that should be used in shopping and paying for goods that differed from those to which Americans are accustomed.

[Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed for [David Loring](#) (this would be rerun during May 1855). He made a rough plan of land near the Railroad Depot in Concord: “Frances Monroe and Rail Road.”



The British Navy bombarded Hangö, Finland.

A storekeeper and a deputy sheriff of Middlesex County, [Mr. Moses Prichard](#) owned a parcel of land on Main Street in Concord, adjoining that of Joseph Holbrook. Perhaps it was a brick house?



May 20. Woodbine shoots (brick house) already two or three inches long; put it, say, with the red oak. *Potentilla argentea*. White [*sic*] spruce, male flowers. White ash, apparently a day or two. [Mr. Prichard](#)'s. The English hawthorn opens at same time with our earlier thorn. Very low thunder-clouds and showers far in the north at sunset, the wind of which, though not very strong, has cooled the air. Saw the lightning, but could not hear the thunder. I saw in the northwest first rise, in the rose-tinted horizon sky, a dark, narrow, craggy cloud, narrow and projecting as no cloud on earth, seen against the rose-tinged sky, — the crest of a thunder-storm, beautiful and grand. The steadily increasing sound of toads and frogs along the river with each successive wanner night is one of the most important peculiarities of the season. Their prevalence and loudness is in proportion to the increased temperature of the day. It is the first earth-song, beginning with the croakers, (the cricket's not yet), as if the very meads at last burst into a meadowy song. I hear a few bullfrogs and but few hylodes. Methinks we always have at this time those washing winds as now, when the choke-berry is in bloom, — bright and breezy days blowing off some apple blossoms.





May 21, Sunday: The wooden 3-mast ship *Brahmin* had departed London on February 5th with 42 passengers and crew, bound for Sydney, Australia. Around midnight, 3 days into a fierce gale, the vessel struck a reef south of Whistler Point on the west coast of King Island. of the passengers, 17 drowned. The schooner *Water Witch*, loaded with specie, would sail from Melbourne on September 15th bound for Mauritius, with 26 passengers and crew and be caught in a gale in the Bass Strait and be driven ashore on King Island's western coast. The survivors of these two wrecks would meet on the shore, and two men —one from each crew— set out in a small boat to seek help. They would make their way to Port Phillip, wherupon the paddle-steamer *Manchester* and the HMCS *Electra* go and collect the survivors. The survivors of the *Water Witch* and *Brahmin*, together with the cargo of specie, would be brought to Melbourne on October 25th. Divers would rediscovered the wreck of the *Brahmin* in 1976.

A thunderstorm kept [Henry Thoreau](#) indoors until late in the afternoon, when he went to the Deep Cut on the railroad tracks. Then in the evening he sailed on the river.




May 21. *Sunday*. Quince. A slight fog in morning. Some bullfrogs in morning, and I see a yellow swelling throat. They — these throats — come with the yellow lily. Cobwebs on grass, the first I have noticed. This is one of the *late* phenomena of spring. These little dewy nets or gauze, a faery's washing spread out in the night, are associated with the finest days of the year, days long enough and fair enough for the worthiest deeds. When these begin to be seen, then is not summer come? I notice the fir balsam sterile flowers already effete.

P.M. — To Deep Cut.

A shower, heralded only by thunder and lightning, has kept me in till late in the afternoon. The sterile *Equisetum arvense*, now well up, green the bank. Bluets begin to whiten the fields. A tanager [**Scarlet Tanager**  *Piranga olivacea*], — the surprising red bird, — against the darkening green leaves. I see a *little* growth in the mitchella. The larger *Populus grandidentata* here are pretty well leaved out and may be put with the young ones. *Trientalis*, perhaps yesterday. *Smilacina bifolia*, apparently to-morrow. Hear the squeak of a nighthawk [**Common Nighthawk**  *Chordeiles minor* (Booming Nighthawk)]. The deciduous trees now begin to balance the evergreens. Red oaks are quite green. Young hemlocks have grown a quarter of an inch; old just started; but by to-morrow they will show their growth by contrast more than the buttonbush. Lycopodiums just started, — light or yellowish green tips. *Cornus Canadensis*. The single-berry prinos leaves, say with the other. Was surprised to find a nemopanthes on the upland, — Stow's Clearing. Dangle-berry leaves, say next after the common huckleberry. Young checkerberry reddish shoots just begin to show themselves.

Twilight on river.

The reddish white lily pads here and there and the heart-leaves begin to be seen. A few pontederias, like long-handled spoons. The water going rapidly down, that often purplish bent grass is seen lying flat along it a foot or more, in parallel blades like matting. It is surprising how the grass shoots up now through the shallow water on the meadows, so fresh and tender, you can almost see it grow, for the fall of the water adds to its apparent growth; and the river weeds, too, — flags, polygonums, and potamogetons, etc., etc., — are rapidly pushing up. Sassafras is slow to leaf. A whip-poor-will [**Whip-poor-will**  *Caprimulgus vociferus*].



May 22, Monday: The [San Francisco](#) Board of Engineers made a report to the Town Council of local street grades.

Senator Clayton proposed:

"Resolved, That the Committee on Foreign Relations be instructed to inquire into the expediency of providing by law for such restrictions on the power of American consuls residing in the Spanish West India islands to issue sea letters on the transfer of American vessels in those islands, as will prevent the abuse of the American flag in protecting persons engaged in the African slave trade." On June 26, 1854, this committee would report "a bill (Senate, No. 416) for the more effectual suppression of the slave-trade in American built vessels." This would pass the Senate but be postponed in the House. SENATE JOURNAL, 33rd Congress, 1st session, pages 404, 457-8, 472-3, 476; HOUSE JOURNAL, 33rd Congress, 1st session, pages 1093, 1332-3; CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE, 33rd Congress, 1st session, pages 1257-61, 1511-3, 1591-3, 2139.



[William Cooper Nell](#)'s "Equal School Rights."

[Japanese](#) authorities complained to Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) that Americans who came ashore rummaged through shopkeeper's wares, paid inadequately for goods, or removed items without paying — having been allowed to do so in some cases by intimidated store owners. Americans were also accused of desecrating temples by playing cards on the premises. The Commodore inquired among the officers as to the circumstances of these reports of poor conduct. Shore leave was temporarily suspended.

[Henry Thoreau](#) left at 5:30 AM to go up the [Assabet River](#). At 10 AM he went by boat to Fair Haven.



May 22. 5.30 A.M. — Up Assabet.

Now begins the slightly sultryish morning air into which you awake early to hear the faint buzz of a fly or hum of other insect. The teeming air, deep and hollow, filled with some spiritus, pregnant as not in winter or spring, with room for imps, — good angels and bad, — many chambers in it, infinite sounds. I partially awake the first time for a month at least. As if the cope of the sky lifted, the heat stretched and swelled it as a bladder, and it remained permanently higher and more infinite for the summer. Suggesting that the night has not been, with its incidents. Naked-fl[owered] azalea in garden and wood. The dew now wets me completely each morning. Swamp white oak began to blossom apparently yesterday; the anthers completely shed their pollen at once and are effete — only a small part as yet, however. The red oak, *i.e.* at point of Island; as I did not observe it out on the 19th, say 20th. The white oak will apparently begin to-day.²⁰⁰ The hemlock may have begun to bloom the 20th. *Cornus florida*. Galls, puff-like, on naked azalea and huckleberries. The later thorn is not much if any later to leaf than the other, apparently. Saw a small diving duck  of some kind suddenly dash out from the side of the river above the hemlocks, like my red-breasted merganser [Red-breasted Merganser  *Mergus serrator*], plowing the water with a great noise and flapping, and dive in the middle of the stream. Searching carefully, I after saw its head out amid the alders on the opposite side. When I returned, it again dived in the middle of the stream. Why should it attract my attention first by this rush? Shoots along half risen from the water, striking it with its wings. I saw one of the same family run thus a long way on the Penobscot. *Ranunculus recurvatus* out at V. Muhlenbergii Brook since the 17th; say 19th.

10 A.M. — To Fair Haven by boat.

I see many young and tender dragon-flies, both large and small, hanging to the grass-tops and weeds and twigs which rise above the water still going down. They are weak and sluggish and tender-looking, and appear to have lately crawled up these stems from the bottom where they were hatched, and to be waiting till they are hardened in the sun and air. (A few, however, are flying vigorously as usual over the water.) Where the grass and rushes are thick over the shallow water, I see their large gauze-like wings vibrating in the breeze and shining in the sun. It is remarkable that such tender organizations survive so many accidents.

The black oak apparently began to blossom yesterday. The bear shrub oaks apparently began to bloom with the red, though they are various. Put the chinquapin with them immediately after. Lousewort fairly out in front of geum, on Hill.

Examined the button-bush hummock. It is about eighteen feet by ten at the widest part and from one to one and a half feet thick. It consists chiefly of button-bushes, four or five feet high and now as flourishing as any, a high blueberry (killed), and some water silk-weeds springing up (five or six inches) at the foot of the dry stalks, together with the grass and soil they grew in. Though these have been completely covered by the freshet for some weeks since it was deposited here, and exposed to high winds and waves, it has not sensibly washed away. Those masses draw so much water that they ground commonly on the edge of the river proper, and so all things combine to make this a border bush or edging. (They are sometimes, when the water is high, dropped in the middle of the meadow, and make islands there.) They thus help to define the limits of the river and defend the edge of the meadow, and, the water being still high, I see at Fair Haven the sweeping lines formed by their broad tops mixed with willows in the midst of the flood, which mark the midsummer boundary of the pond. They not only bear but require a good deal of water for their roots. Apparently these will not feel their removal at all. Every rod or two there is a great hummock of meadow sward and soil without bushes. The muskrats have already taken advantage of this one to squat on and burrow under, and by raising the shore it will afford them a refuge which they had not before here.

Senecio, probably earlier still at Boiling Spring. *Rhus radicans* apparently leafs with the *Toxicodendron*. The apple bloom is chiefly passed. *Rubus sempervirens* put forth leaf soon after *R. Canadensis*. The dwarf sumach

200. Some not open on the 26th.

1853-1854

1853-1854

is just starting, some of them decidedly later than the button-bush!

At Clamshell, the small oblong yellow heads of yellow clover, some days. Fall buttercup, a day or two. Dandelions, for some time, gone to seed. Water saxifrage, now well out. As I started away from Clamshell, it was quite warm — the seats — and the water glassy smooth, but a little wind rose afterward. Muskrats are frequently seen to dive a dozen rods from shore and not discovered again. A song sparrow's [Song Sparrow ■ *Melospiza melodia* (*melodia* or ~~three-spotted~~)] callow young in nest. A summer yellowbird [Yellow Warbler ■ *Dendroica petechia* (~~Yellow bird or Summer Yellow bird~~)] close by sounded *we we we tchea tchea tchee wiss wiss wiss*. I perceive some of that peculiar fragrance from the marsh at the Hubbard Causeway, though the marsh is mostly covered. Is it a particular compound of odors? It is more remarkable and memorable than the scent of any particular plant, — the fragrance, as it were, of the earth itself. The loud cawing of a crow [American Crow ■ *Corvus brachyrhynchos*], heard echoing through a deep pine wood, — how wild! unconverted by all our preaching. Now and then the dumping sound of frogs. Large pinweed six inches high. Lupines have been out under Fair Haven Hill several days. *Viola pedata* blue the field there.


I rest in the orchard, doubtful whether to sit in shade or sun. Now the springing foliage is like a sunlight on the woods. I was first attracted and surprised when I looked round and off to Conantum, at the smooth, lawn-like green fields and pasturing cows, bucolical, reminding me of new butter. The air so clear — as not in summer — makes all things shine, as if all surfaces had been washed by the rains of spring and were not yet soiled or begrimed or dulled. You see even to the mountains clearly. The grass so short and fresh, the tender yellowish-green and silvery foliage of the deciduous trees lighting up the landscape, the birds now most musical, the sorrel beginning to redden the fields with ruddy health, — all these things make earth now a paradise. How many times I have been surprised thus, on turning about on this very spot, at the fairness of the earth!

The alders (groves) begin to look like great mosses, so compact and curving to the ground at their edges, — as one system. Pairs of yellow butterflies are seen coquetting through the air higher and higher. Comandra, apparently yesterday. I am surprised, as I go along the edge of the Cliffs, at the oppressive warmth of the air from the dry leaves in the woods on the rocks. Compared with the oaks and hickories, the birches are now a dark green. The order of lightness is apparently black oak silvery (and probably large white), red oaks and hickories, apparently more advanced, and green white birches, and then pines. Young white oaks on plain are reddish. A pitch pine sheds pollen on Cliffs. The pines are more conspicuous now than ever, miles off, and the leaves are not yet large enough to conceal them much. It is noon, and I hear the cattle crashing their way down the cliff, seeking the shade of the woods. They climb like goats. Others seek the water and the shade of bridges. Erigeron, a day or two. It loves moist hillsides.

Landed next at the Miles's Swamp. The dense cylindrical racemes of the choke-cherry, some blasted into a puff. Caterpillars prey on this too. I do not find any arums open yet. There are many little gnats dead within them. Barberry at Lee's Cliff, two (??) days; elsewhere just beginning. Some krigias out of bloom. *Gallium Aparine* (?), a day or two, but with six (?) leaves. Those scars where the woods were cut down last winter now show, for they are comparatively slow to be covered with green, — only bare dead leaves, reddish-brown spots.

First observe the creak of crickets. It is quite general amid these rocks. The song of only one is more interesting to me. It suggests lateness, but only as we come to a knowledge of eternity after some acquaintance with time. It is only late for all trivial and hurried pursuits. It suggests a wisdom mature, never late, being above all temporal considerations, which possesses the coolness and maturity of autumn amidst the aspiration of spring and the heats of summer. To the birds they say: "Ah! You speak like children from impulse; Nature speaks through you; but with us it is ripe knowledge. The seasons do not revolve for us; we sing their lullaby." So they chant, eternal, at the roots of the grass. It is heaven where they are, and their dwelling need not be heaved up. Forever the same, in May and in November (?). Serenely wise, their song has the security of prose. They have drunk no wine but the dew. It is no transient love-strain, hushed when the incubating season is past, but a glorifying of God and enjoying of him forever. They sit aside from the revolution of the seasons. Their strain is unvaried as Truth. Only in their saner moments do men hear the crickets. It is balm to the philosopher. It tempers his thoughts. They dwell forever in a temperate latitude. By listening to whom, all voices are tuned. In their song they ignore our accidents. They are not concerned about the news. A quire has begun which pauses not for any news, for it knows only the eternal. I hear also *pe-a-wee pe-a-wee*, and then occasionally *pee-yu*, the first syllable in a different and higher key emphasized, — all very sweet and naive and innocent. *Rubus Canadensis* out, on the rocks. A hummingbird [Ruby-throated Hummingbird ■ *Archilochus colubris*] dashes by like a loud bumblebee.

HUMMINGBIRDS

 May 23, Tuesday: An earthquake was felt in [San Francisco](#).

[Japanese](#) authorities complained to [Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) that Americans had been coming ashore and rummaging through the wares of shops, paying inadequately or removing items without payment, with the storekeepers feeling unable to protest. They also accused Americans of desecrating temples by playing cards on the premises. The Commodore inquired among the officers as to the circumstances for such poor conduct, and temporarily suspended shore leave.

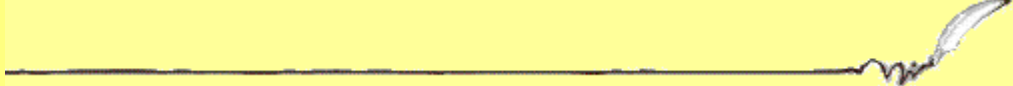
In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) sailed up the [Assabet River](#) to Cedar Swamp.









May 23. Tuesday. P.M. —To Cedar Swamp by Assabet.


"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.


— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 10



The cobwebs, apparently those I saw on the bushes the morning of the 12th, are now covered with insects, etc. (small gnats, etc.), and are much dilapidated where birds have flown through them. As I paddle up the Assabet, off the Hill, I hear a loud rustling of the leaves and see a large scared tortoise sliding and tumbling down the high steep bank a rod or more into the water. It has probably been out to lay its eggs. The old coal-pit heap is a favorite place for them. The wood pewee [**Eastern Wood-Pewee**  *Contopus virens*] sings now in the woods behind the spring in the heat of the day (2 P.M.), sitting on a low limb near me, *pe-a-wee, pe-a-wee*, etc., five or six times at short and regular intervals, looking about all the while, and then, naively, *pee-a-oo*, emphasizing the first syllable, and begins again. The last is, in emphasis, like the scream of a hen-hawk [**Red-shouldered Hawk**  *Buteo lineatus* (Hen-Hawk) or **Red-tailed Hawk**  *Buteo jamaicensis* (Hen-Hawk)]. It flies off occasionally a few feet, and catches an insect and returns to its perch between the bars, not allowing this to interrupt their order. Scare up a splendid wood (?) duck [**Wood Duck**  *Aix sponsa*], alternate blue and chestnut (?) forward, which flew into and lit in the woods: or was it a teal [**Teal, Blue-winged**  *Anas discors*]? Afterward two of them, and my diver [**Common Loon**  *Gavia immer* (Diver or Great Northern Diver)] of yesterday.

The bent grass now lies on the water (commonly light-colored) for two feet. When I first saw this on a pool this spring, with the deep dimple where the blade emerges from the surface, I suspected that the water had risen gently in calm weather and was heaped about the dry stem as against any surface before it is wetted. But now the water is rapidly falling, and there is considerable wind. Moreover, when my boat has passed over these blades, I am surprised on looking back to see the dimple still as perfect as before. I lift a blade so as to bring a part which was under water to the surface, and still there is a perfect dimple about it; the water is plainly repelled from it. I pull one up from the bottom and passing it over my lips am surprised to find that the front side is perfectly dry from the root upward and cannot be wet, but the back side is wet. It has sprung and grown in the water, and yet one of its surfaces has never been wet. What an invaluable composition it must be coated with! The same was the case with the other erect grasses which I noticed growing in the water, and with those which I plucked on the bank and thrust into it. But the flags were wet both sides. [*Vide* scrap-book.] The one surface repels moisture perfectly.

The barbarea has been open several days. The first yellow dor-bug struggling in the river. The white cedar has now grown quite *perceptibly*, and is in advance of any red cedar which I have seen. Saw a hummingbird [**Ruby-throated Hummingbird**  *Archilochus colubris*] on a white oak in the swamp. It is strange to see this minute creature, fit inhabitant of a parterre, on an oak in the great wild cedar swamp. The clustered andromeda appears just ready to open; say to-morrow. [Rather the 25th.] The smilacina is abundant and well out here now. A new warbler (?).

We soon get through with Nature. She excites an expectation which she cannot satisfy. The merest child which has rambled into a copsewood dreams of a wilderness so wild and strange and inexhaustible as Nature can never show him. The red-bird [**Red-bird** (Scarlet Tanager)  *Piranga olivacea*] which I saw on my companion's string on election days I thought but the outmost sentinel of the wild, immortal camp, — of the wild and

HUMMINGBIRDS

1853-1854


1853-1854

dazzling infantry of the wilderness, — that the deeper woods abounded with redder birds still; but, now that I have threaded all our woods and waded the swamps, I have never yet met with his compeer, still less his wilder kindred. The red-bird which is the last of Nature is but the first of God. The White Mountains, likewise, were smooth molehills to my expectation. We *condescend* to climb the crags of earth. It is our weary legs alone that praise them. That forest on whose skirts the red-bird flits is not of earth. I expected a fauna more infinite and various, birds of more dazzling colors and more celestial song. How many springs shall I continue to see the common sucker (*Catostomus Bostoniensis*) floating dead on our river! Will not Nature select her types from a new fount? The vignette of the year. This earth which is spread out like a map around me is but the lining of my inmost soul exposed. In me is the sucker that I see. No wholly extraneous object can compel me to recognize it. I am guilty of suckers. I go about to look at flowers and listen to the birds. There was a time when the beauty and the music were all within, and I sat and listened to my thoughts, and there was a song in them. I sat for hours on rocks and wrestled with the melody which possessed me. I sat and listened by the hour to a positive though faint and distant music, not sung by any bird, nor vibrating any earthly harp. When you walked with a joy which knew not its own origin. When you were an organ of which the world was but one poor broken pipe. I lay long on the rocks, foundered like a harp on the seashore, that knows not how it is dealt with. You sat on the earth as on a raft, listening to music that was not of the earth, but which ruled and arranged it. Man *should be* the harp articulate. When your cords were tense.²⁰¹

AEOLIAN HARP

JENNY LIND

Think of going abroad out of one's self to hear music, — to Europe or Africa! Instead of so living as to be the lyre which the breath of the morning causes to vibrate with that melody which creates worlds — to sit up late and hear Jane Lind!

You may say that the oaks (all but the chestnut oak I have seen) were in bloom yesterday; *i.e.*, shed pollen more or less. Their blooming is soon over. Waterbugs and skaters coupled. Saw in Dakin's land, near the road, at the bend of the river, fifty-nine bank swallows' [Bank Swallow  *Riparia riparia*] holes in a small upright bank within a space of twenty by one and a half feet (in the middle), part above and part below the sand-line. This would give over a hundred birds to this bank. They continually circling about over the meadow and river in front, often in pairs, one pursuing the other, and filling the air with their twittering. Mulberry out to-day.



May 24, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) left at 4:30AM for the Cliffs, and in the afternoon went to Pedrick's meadow.

Americans were allowed on shore to shop at a [Japanese](#) bazaar, at which items were made available for sale with specific prices marked on them. The *Southampton* set off to survey Volcano Bay.

In Pennsylvania, John Miller Dickey and Sarah Emlen Cresson founded Lincoln University as the 1st Black college in United States of America.

This would turn out, in Boston, to be the day of [Anthony Burns](#)'s arrest. It seems Burns, a 6-footer classifiable as an "escaped slave," had made the mistake of attempting to send a note to a brother still held in Virginia. The note had of course been intercepted by his brother's "owner," who had thus discovered where he was hiding.



1853-1854

1853-1854

He was arrested by [US Marshall Asa O. Butman](#) while working as a presser in a tailor shop on Brattle Street in Boston, and accused of running away from his owner Mr. Charles Francis Suttle.²⁰² [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) would lead an assault on the jail, and in the attempt to rescue Burns, a deputized truckman named

201. [William M. White](#)'s version of the journal entry is:

*There was a time when the beauty and the music
Were all within,
And I sat and listened to my thoughts,
And there was a song in them.*

*I sat for hours on rocks
And wrestled
With the melody which possessed me.*

*I sat and listened by the hour
To a positive
Though faint and distant music,
Not sung by any bird,
Nor vibrating any earthly harp.*

*When you walked with a joy
Which knew not its own origin.
When you were an organ
Of which the world
Was but one poor broken pipe.*

*I lay long on the rocks,
Foundered like a harp on the seashore,
That knows not how it is dealt with.*

*You sat on the earth
As on a raft,
Listening to music
That was not of the earth,
But which ruled and arranged it.*

[Walter Roy Harding](#) pointed out that in his [JOURNAL](#) for May 23, 1854, in speaking of blue flags, Thoreau has a footnote saying "Vide scrap-book." Professor Harding was wanting to know to what scrap-book [Henry Thoreau](#) was referring and where it is now.

1853-1854

1853-1854

[James Batchelder](#) would be killed, some say by a blunderbuss.²⁰³



A [telegram](#) originating in [Washington DC](#), allegedly from President of the United States of America Franklin Pierce,²⁰⁴ sided with the kidnapers of Burns but offered a quite ambiguous sentiment,

The law must be executed.

indeed one with which all anarchists everywhere would be able **most heartily** to concur:

**ROSS/ADAMS
COMMENTARY**

[Richard Henry Dana, Jr.](#) would be the attorney for the defense. The trial would cost more than \$40,000.⁰⁰ and would be lost. In the course of all this lawyer Dana would be assaulted at night by a hired thug.²⁰⁵

RESISTING THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

Democrats had dragged cannon from the Custom House to the Common, and were there firing off salutes to the new [Kansas/Nebraska Act](#) extending the territory of American slavery, at 8PM while Anthony Burns was

202. At the time of the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, according to Lawrence Lader's THE BOLD BRAHMINS (NY: Dutton, 1961, page 140), there were some 600 "runaway slaves" living and working in the city of [Boston](#).

203. [James Batchelder](#) was either shot or stabbed, either by an abolitionist on purpose or by accident or by another police agent on purpose or by accident. What we know for sure is that he quickly bled out after his femoral artery was "nearly divided." It would be said that he had received the wages for his sin of favoring human enslavement, but it needs to be mentioned that we do not know how many children this [Irish](#) immigrant truckman had in some Boston tenement, to feed and clothe.

204. Although this telegram must have been a fraud—since President Pierce was never indicted as a co-conspirator in this kidnapping of Burns—our history books say nothing further about the source of the telegram and appear to have little interest in uncovering who it was in [Washington](#) who could have been behind such a slanderous misuse of a President's name. —And recently, when Rodney King was attacked and abused by the "LAPD," an armed and exceedingly dangerous group of bigoted criminals operating in the Los Angeles area, the same sort of slanderous attack was made on the good name of President George Herbert Walker Bush!

205. Hopefully, this hired thug was not in the employ of the White House plumbers.

1853-1854

1853-1854

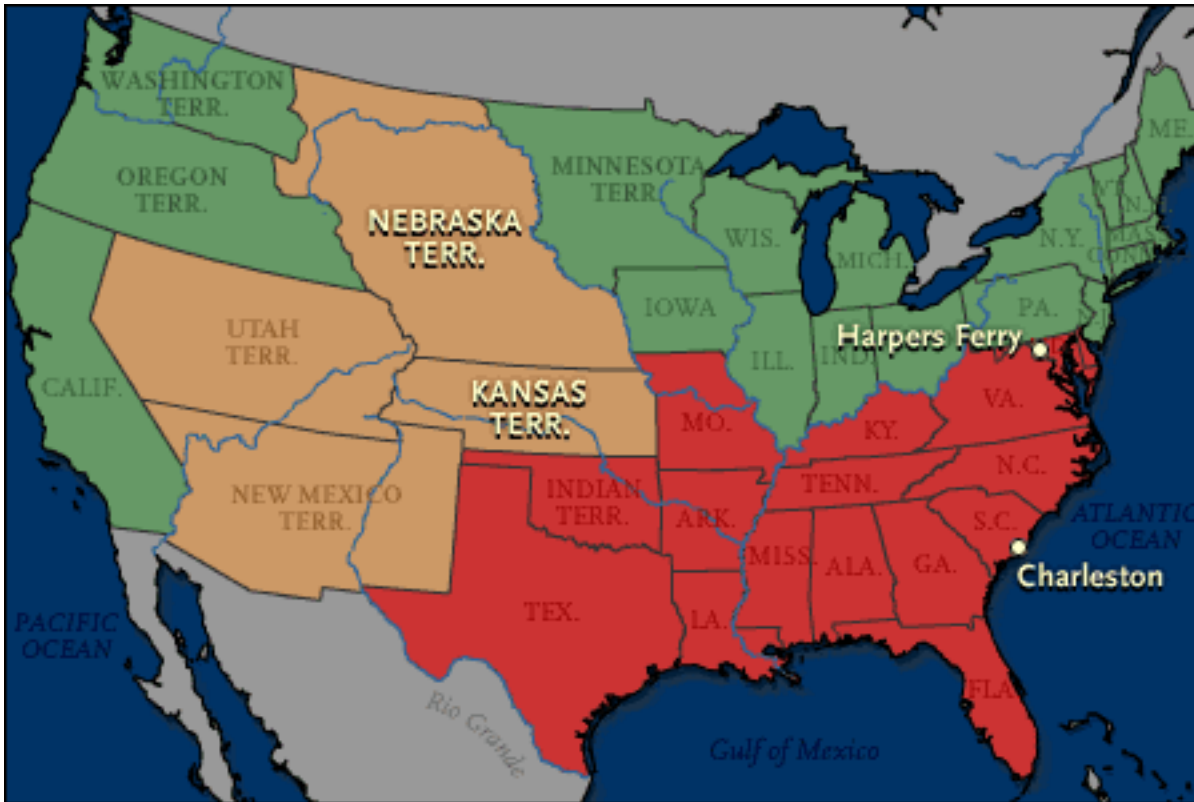
being taken into custody as he walked home along Brattle Street. (Caleb Page, a Boston truckman who had gone along with Butman to arrest Burns, would later be outraged when informed that he had helped in the recapture of an escaped slave — Butman had assured his hired day-deputy that he was merely assisting in the capture of a thief which technically under the law was a correct explanation as, under the law as it then existed, Burns was stealing himself and his services from their rightful owner. The next day in court there a broken bone would be seen to be protruding from his right hand, but this had not been the result of harm he had sustained while he was being taken into custody, for as a child that hand had been damaged in some machinery at a shop to which his owner had hired out his labor. Dana would describe the “scarred” right hand for the court record as “a bone stands out from the back of it, a hump an inch high, and it hangs almost useless from the wrist, a huge scar or gash covering half its surface.” I do not know whether this meant that the white bone was protruding permanently through the skin, or whether this meant that the deformed bone made a pronounced lump under the skin.)

Brad Dean summarized: “In September 1850 the United States Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Law, which granted slaveholders the right to seize runaway slaves anywhere in the U.S. and carry them back to the South. The first attempt at rendition in February 1851 failed when abolitionists rescued a runaway called [Shadrach \(Frederick Jenkins\)](#) from his captors in Boston and sent him on to safety in [Canada](#). Less than two months later, however, another runaway, [Thomas Simms \(Sims\)](#), was seized in Boston, but on that occasion local, state, and federal troops ensured that Sims’s owners were able to carry him back to Georgia. Thoreau and hundreds of thousands of others in the North were outraged by the Fugitive Slave Law and the Sims rendition, which seemed to them flagrant violations by the federal government of the rights guaranteed to states under the US Constitution. As a consequence of these and similar actions by the federal government, the [Nullification](#) movement, which posited that a state had a right to nullify laws mandated by the federal government, garnered more serious attention in the North than it had before been accorded. Two key events immediately preceded and helped set the stage for the meeting sponsored by the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society on July 4, 1854. On May 24, [Anthony Burns](#), a fugitive slave working in a Boston clothing store, was arrested and slated to be shipped back to Virginia. Abolitionists protested at [Faneuil Hall](#), and the [Reverend Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) led a failed attempt to rescue Burns from the Boston jail. Burns was escorted under heavy guard by the militia to a revenue cutter, which returned him to slavery. The 2d key event was the passage of the [Kansas/Nebraska Act](#), which became law on May 30. One provision of the Act was the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, an action that removed the explicit prohibition of slavery in the northern reaches

1853-1854

1853-1854

of the Louisiana Purchase. [Thoreau](#) was incensed over the Burns affair. On May 29, he began a long, scathing



journal entry with these 2 sentences, the 2d of which would echo again in [“SLAVERY IN MASSACHUSETTS”](#): “These days it is left to one Mr. Loring to say whether a citizen of Massachusetts is a slave or not. Does any one think that Justice or God awaits Mr. Loring’s decision?”²⁰⁶ The arrangements by which Thoreau joined [William Lloyd Garrison](#), [Wendell Phillips](#), and the others on the podium at [Framingham, Massachusetts](#) are not known. The absence of his name from announcements of the event suggests that he was a last-minute addition, but we do not know whether he was asked to speak or sought the opportunity. In view of his aroused emotions at the moment and of his apparent difficulty getting Concordians to talk about the North rather than the South, it is certainly possible that the announced rally struck him as an ideal forum to get things off his chest. Minimal time to prepare was not really a problem because on the issue of slavery and Massachusetts his long-stewing thought and rhetoric had already reached the boiling point. Indeed, in writing “Slavery in Massachusetts,” he essentially mined his still fresh journal entries on Burns and earlier passages on the [Thomas Simms \(Sims\)](#) case.”



May 24. 4.30 A.M. — To Cliffs.

A considerable fog, but already rising and retreating to the river. There are dewy cobwebs on the grass. The morning came in and awakened me early, — for I slept with a window open, — and the chip-bird [[Chipping Sparrow](#) [Spizella passerina](#) (chip-bird or hair-bird)] was heard also. As I go along the causeway the [sun] rises red, with a great red halo, through the fog. When I reach the hill, the fog over the river already has its erectile feathers up. I am a little too late. But the level expanse of it far in the east, now lit by the sun, with countless tree-tops like oases seen through it, reminds of vast tracts of sand and of the seashore. It is like a greater dewy cobweb spread over the earth. It gives a wholly new aspect to the world, especially in that

206. THE JOURNAL OF HENRY D. THOREAU, ed. Bradford Torrey and [Francis Henry Allen](#), 14 volumes. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1906, 6:313.

1853-1854

1853-1854

direction. The sun is eating up the fog. As I return down the hill, my eyes are cast toward the very dark mountains in the northwest horizon, the remnants of a hard blue scalloped rim to our saucer. As if a more celestial ware had formerly been united there to our earthen. Old china are they, worth keeping still on our sideboards, though fragmentary.

The early cinquefoil now generally yellows the banks. Put the sage willow with the black for the present. The black spruce apparently blossomed with the white but its leaf-buds have not yet fairly started.

P.M. — To Pedrick's meadow.

The side-flowering sandwort well out in Moore's Swamp. The pyrus has now for some days taken the place of the amelanchier, though it makes less show. How sweet and peculiar the fragrance of the different kinds of cedar! It is imparted to your hands. Lady's-slipper since the 18th; say 22d. Waded into Beck Stow's. The water was so cold at first that I thought it would not be prudent to stand long in it, but when I got further from the bank it was comparatively warm. True, it was not then shaded nor quite so deep, but I suppose there were some springs in the bank. Surprised to find the *Andromeda Polifolia* in bloom and apparently past its prime at least a week or more. It is in water a foot and a half deep, and rises but little above it. The water must have been several inches higher when it began to bloom. A timid botanist would never pluck it. Its flowers are more interesting than any of its family, almost globular, crystalline white, even the calyx, except its tips, tinged with red or rose. Properly called water andromeda: you must wade into water a foot or two deep to get it. The leaves are not so conspicuously handsome as in the winter. Also the buck-bean, apparently as old, — say a week, — in the same depth of water. The *calyculata* almost completely done, and the high blueberry getting thin. *Potentilla Canadensis* var. *simplex*, perhaps two days. I find a male juniper, with effete blossoms quite large, yet so fresh that I suspect I may have antedated it. Between Beck Stow's and Pedrick's meadow. The red cedar has grown considerably, after all. My *Rubus triflorus* (only Bigelow and Gray place it on hillsides) is nearly out of bloom. It is the same I found at the Miles Swamp; has already some green fruit as big as the *smallest* peas. Must be more than a week old. It is the only annual rubus described. May it not be a new kind?

This evening I hear the hum of dor-bugs, — a few, — but listen long in vain to hear a hylodes.

There being probably no shrub or tree which has not begun to leaf now, I sum up the order of their leafing thus (wild and a few tame).²⁰⁷

Their buds begin to burst into leaf:—

The earliest gooseberry in garden and swamp, April 20.

? Elder, longest shoots of any, in some places (May 5).

Raspberry in swamps.

Thimble-berry (perhaps in favorable places only).

Wild red cherry in some places.

Meadow-sweet.

? Red currant, but slow to advance; observed only ours, which is late?

? Second gooseberry.

Salix alba, April 27.

?? Black currant, not seen.

Small dark native willow blossoming (?) and leafing.

?? Early willow, two-colored, not seen.

?? Muhlenberg's (?), not seen.

Young black cherry.

Choke-cherry shoots.

Viburnum Lentago } not carefully distinguished between.

? " *nudum* }

Diervilla, advances fast.

Barberry in favorable places.

Some young apples in favorable places.

Young' alders, blow to advance, both kinds.

Early robe.

? Moss rose, not seen.

Sweet-fern, slow to advance.

Mountain-ash, May 5, larger leaves than any show green at a distance.

Cultivated cherry.

Pyrus arbutifolia.

? Late pyrus, not seen.

Horse-chestnut.

Hazel, May 5.

207. *Vide* [p. 255].

1853-1854

? Beaked hazel, not distinguished.
 Early large apples.
 Late gooseberry in garden.
 ? Pears, not seen.
 Wild red cherry generally; or let it go with the earliest.
 ? Dwarf or sand cherry.
 Hardhack.
 ? Clematis, shoots five or six inches long, May 16.
 Low blackberry,
 ?? *Rufus triflorus*, eight inches high, May 22.
 ? Quince.
 ?? Mayflower, not seen.
 Young red maples.
 ?? Fever-root, four or five inches high, May 12.
 Creeping juniper comes forward like fir balsam.
 Larch, opens slowly; makes a show, May 12.
Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum.
Amelanchier Botryapium, fast.
 High blackberry.
 ? *Sempervirens*, not seen.
 Young rock maple.
 ? Large white "
 Alders generally.
 ?? Linnaea, not seen.
 Ostrya.
Amelanchier oblongifolia.
 Early trembles suddenly.
 ?? Dwarf cassandra.
 Balm-of-Gilead.
 Early thorns.
 ? Late ", not seen.
 Yellow birch.
 ? Cockspur thorn, not seen.
 Canoe birch, shoots.
 White ", shoots.
 ? Black, young (large not
 ? Canada plum.
 Pitch pine.
 ?? Bear-berry, not seen.
 ? Norway pine, not seen.
 White pine.
 Young hornbeam.
Cornus alternifolia.
 ? Round-leaved [cornel], seen late.
 Panicked cornel.
 Silky "
 Sweet-gale, May 11.
 Red oak, May 11.
 Bass, sudden.
 Young chestnuts and lower limbs; full leafing of large not seen.
 ?? Clethra, seen late. [*Vide* forward.]
 Old hornbeam.
 ?? Maple-leaved arrow-wood, not seen till late.
 Arrow-wood.
 Butternut.
 High blueberry.
Rhus Toxicodendron.
 ? var. *radicans*, seen late.
 Sweet-briar generally; earliest not seen.
 ? Swamp rose, seen late.
 ?? Beech, not seen.
 White-ash, May 12.

1853-1854

1853-1854

1853-1854

Fir-balsam.
 ? Fever-bush, seen rather late.
 ?? Woodbine, not seen.
 Black shrub oak.
 Elm, young.
 ? Slippery [elm], not seen.
 Great red maples, May 13.
 Clustered andromeda, 13th.
 Young *Populus grandidentata* (large three or four days later?)
 Black oak.
 Black willow.
 ?? Sage ", seen late.
 ? Chinquapin oak.
 ? Chestnut ", not seen.
 Celtis.
 ?? Cranberry.
 Locust, 14th.
 Nemopanthes.
 ? Witch hazel, in our garden.
 Swamp white oak. slow.
 ? Large sugar maples, not well observed.
 White swamp-pink.
 Buttonwood.
 Cornus florida.
 Panicked andromeda, not generally; several days later.
 ? Waxwork, seen but lost place.
 Pignut hickory, make a show suddenly.
 ? Mockernut hickory.
 ?? Black walnut.
 Young white oak (old 15th, slow).
 Prinos -verticillatus, 15th.
 ? Single-berry prinos, seen late.
 Huckleberries, black.
 N.B. — Trees generally!!
 Grape.
 Smilax.
 ?? Pinweeds, seen late, six or more inches high; the large, May 22.
 ?? Cistus, as early at least.
 Mulberry, May 16.
 ?? Carrion-flower, four or five feet long, the 31st of May.
 White spruce, slow. [Here, "White" is crossed out in pencil, and "black, white variety" substituted.]
 Sassafras, slow.
 Lambkill.
 ?? Mountain laurel, not seen
 ?? Andromeda Polifolia, seen
 ? Rhodora.
 Tupelo.
 Poison-dogwood.
 Jersey tea.
 Azalea nudiflora, 17th.
 Button-bush, but does not show, being few buds.
 Beach plum, 19th; scarcely makes any show the 24th, no more than the button-bush.
 ? Red cedar.
 White " growth not obvious, and difference in trees; not sure of date.
 Arbor-vita
 Young hemlocks, 20th; old, 21st.
 Checkerberry, 20th, shoots just visible.
 ? Mountain sumach, 22d. [The 31st May it is much more forward than the button-bush at Cliffs, and perhaps started first.]
 ? Black spruce [Dark variety], 24th, hardly yet at Potter's.
 Of common deciduous shrubs or trees, the buttonbush is the latest to leaf, and, from the fewness of its buds, *i.e.* the great intervals between them, they appear later than other plants which leaf nearly at the same time. Their



1853-1854

1853-1854

being subject to overflows at this season may have to do with this habit, as hardhacks, etc., under these circumstances are equally late.

Of all deciduous shrubs and trees the mountain sumach at Hubbard's field is the latest to leaf. I have not observed those under Fair Haven. [*Vide* May 31.]

The beach plum at a little distance does not make so much show of green even as the button-bush. Do the young shoots show more?

Tree-toads heard oftener, and at evening I hear a dor-bug hum past. The mouse-ear down begins to blow in fields.






May 25, Thursday: This was [Waldo Emerson](#)'s 51st birthday. [Henry Thoreau](#) left at 5:30AM for a walk to the Hill.

A copy of the Sonata in b minor for piano by Franz Liszt, dedicated to Robert Schumann (presently in an insane asylum), arrived in Düsseldorf at the home of Clara Schumann. She deemed it "merely a blind noise — no healthy ideas anymore, everything confused, one cannot find a single, clear harmonic progression."

Tell us what you really think, Clara: "It really was too awful."



May 25. 5.30 A.M. —To Hill.

Smilax. Heard and saw by the sassafras shore the rose-breasted grosbeak [**Rose-breasted Grosbeak**  *Pheucticus ludovicianus*], a handsome bird with a loud and very rich song, in character between that of a robin [**American Robin**  *Turdus migratorius*] and a red-eye [**Red-eyed Vireo**  *Vireo olivaceus*]. It sang steadily like a robin. Rose breast, white beneath, black head and above, white on shoulder and wings. The flowering ferns [Probably onoclea] just *begin* to light up the meadow with their yellowish green.

1853-1854

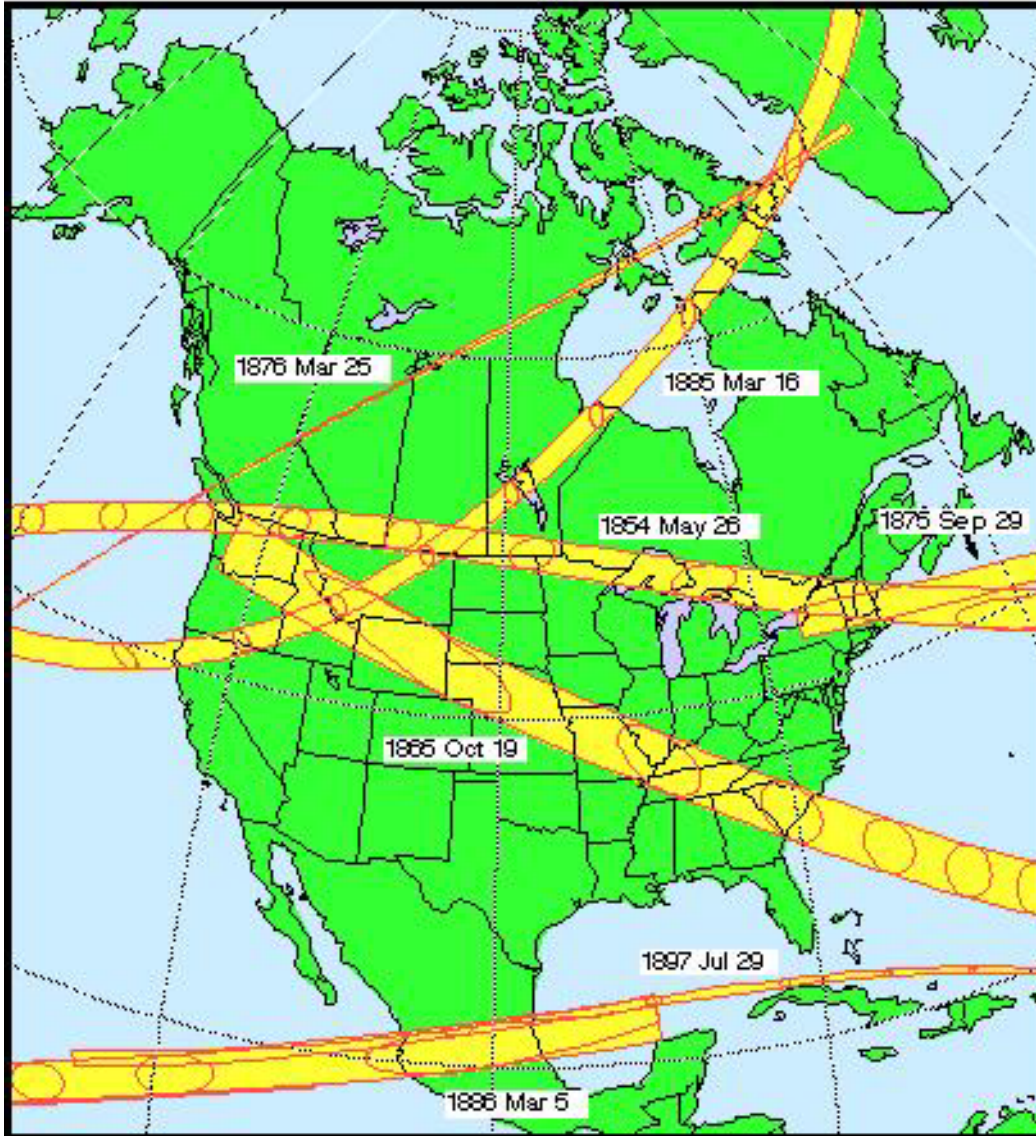
1853-1854



May 26, Friday: An annular solar [eclipse](#) (#7298) was visible (local weather conditions permitting) in a path from Washington state along the Canadian border and across New England and Nova Scotia:

ASTRONOMY

Annular Solar Eclipses: 1851 - 1900



In Boston, [Henry Thoreau](#) was on the lookout for the eclipse and although he found that the clouds prevented him from viewing it, he was able to sense that the temporary cooling of the sun's rays had created a perceptible breeze. In Roxbury, Caroline Barrett White was able to record the totality as occurring at 5:40 PM.

In Cambridge, [Henry Wadsworth Longfellow](#) wrote "Yesterday a fugitive slave was arrested in Boston! To-day there is an eclipse of the sun. 'Hung be the heavens in black!'"

When, after declaring a blockade of Greece on account of their attempt to attack Turkey, Great Britain and France occupied Piraeus, Greece promptly assented to neutrality.

Pièce pour Grand Orgue in A was performed for the initial time, in the Church of Saint-Eustache, Paris, by its composer [César Franck](#).

1853-1854

1853-1854

At 5:30 AM [Thoreau](#) visited the climbing ivy, and in the afternoon went to [Walden Pond](#).

[Moncure Daniel Conway](#) heard the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#) orate at [Faneuil Hall](#):



There is a means, and there is an end; liberty is the end, and sometimes peace is not the means toward it.

Hey, that's not bad, coming from a white man who believed his own Caucasian race to be uniquely humane, civilized, and progressive, never enslaved because able to conquer by use of the head as well as by use of the hand. (Yeah, that's just about a quote unquote, for the Reverend Parker besides being a warmonger was also a racist.) Hey, let's have a war so that superior and inferior races can live together in harmony!

The lawyer Seth Webb, Jr. managed to persuade Judge Daniel Wells of Boston's Court of Common Pleas to issue to Boston's coroner, Charles Smith, a writ of personal replevin according to which US Marshal Watson Freeman was to surrender "the body of Anthony Burns." Freeman, however, refused to comply with this writ.²⁰⁸

This [Anthony Burns](#) affair made Conway (among others) into an abolitionist, by forcing him to choose sides. As the industrialist [Amos Adams Lawrence](#) of the [Secret "Six"](#) conspiracy commented,

*We went to bed one night old-fashioned, conservative,
Compromise Union Whigs and waked up stark mad
Abolitionists.*

[Bronson Alcott](#) took the train from Boston for [Worcester](#) on a mission for the Boston Vigilance Committee. He was to attract the Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#), who had organized the guerrilla action of 1851 which had failed to rescue [Thomas Simms \(Sims\)](#), to head the Vigilance Committee and to take action in regard to the kidnapping of Burns.²⁰⁹

RESISTING THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

208. Meanwhile, there were maneuvers to raise \$1,200 to purchase the escaped slave in order directly to [manumit](#) him. This would have been at best problematic, for if such a sale of Burns to the abolitionists for \$1,200 had gone through, under Massachusetts law, the sale of a slave within the Commonwealth would have constituted a criminal offense punishable by a fine of \$1,000 plus 10 years in prison. Even if Mr. Charles Francis Suttle were to carefully phrase the transaction as a [manumission](#) financed by others rather than as a financial transaction for gain, he very well knew this would provide a pretext for indefinite legal harassment — a pretext which the utter absence of good will would render more than likely.

209. For the attempt at rescuing [Anthony Burns](#), see the [Reverend Higginson](#)'s *CHEERFUL YESTERDAYS* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1898).



May 26. *Friday*. 5.30 A.M. — To climbing ivy.

Pipe-grass equisetum. Buttercups now densely spot the churchyard. Now for the fragrance of firs and spruce.

P.M. — To Walden.

Horse-radish, several days; rye four feet high. The luxuriant and rapid growth of this hardy and valuable grass is always surprising. How genial must nature be to it! It makes the revolution of the seasons seem a rapid whirl. How quickly and densely it clothes the earth! Thus early it suggests the harvest and fall. At sight of this deep and dense field all vibrating with motion and light, looking into the mass of its pale(?)—green culms, winter recedes many degrees in my memory. This the early, queen of grasses with us (?). Indian corn the 2d, or later. It always impresses us at this season with a sense of genialness and bountifulness. Grasses universally shoot up like grain now, in many places deceiving with the promise of a luxuriant crop where in a few weeks they will be dry and wiry. Pastures look as if they were mowing-land. The season of grass, now everywhere green and luxuriant.

The leaves have now grown so much that it [is] difficult to see the small birds in the tree-tops, and it is too late now to survey in woods conveniently. Saw Mr. Holbrook trying an experiment on an elm this morning, which he endeavored in vain to make perpendicular last year with a brace. It was about six inches in diameter, and he had sawed it a little more than half through at about six feet from the ground and then driven in an ashen wedge about three quarters of an inch thick on the outside. This made it then perpendicular, and he was about filling it with clay and protecting it. In Nathan Stow's sprout-land every black cherry is completely stripped of leaves by the caterpillars, and they look *as if* dead, only their great triangular white nests being left in their forks. I see where a frost killed the young white oak leaves and some hickories in deep sprout-land hollows, apparently about a week ago, when the shoots were about an inch long and the leaves about the same. Evergreen-forest [Black-throated Green Warbler ■ *Dendroica virens* or *Setophaga virens* ~~Evergreen-forest bird~~] note still, — the first syllable three times repeated, *er-er-er*, etc., — flitting amid the tops of the pines. Some young red or scarlet (?) oaks have already grown eighteen inches, *i.e.* within a fortnight, before their leaves have two-thirds expanded. In this instance, perhaps, they have accomplished more than half their year's growth, as if, being held back by winter, their vegetative force had accumulated and now burst forth like a stream which has been dammed. They are properly called *shoots*. Gathered some small pincushion galls on a white oak. They are smaller and handsome, more colored than those I first saw on shrub oaks about a week ago. They are shaped somewhat like little bass-drum sticks with large pads, — on the end of last year's twigs. It is a globular mass composed of fine crystalline rays, somewhat like stigmas, the ground white ones, thickly sprinkled with bright-scarlet (rather than crimson) dimples. This is one of the most faery-like productions of the woods. These young white oak leaves and young leaves generally are downy, — downy-swaddled, as if for protection against frosts, etc. Are not the more tender the most downy? Why is the downy *Populus grandidentata* so much later than the other? The lint now *begins* to come off the young leaves.

The annular eclipse of the sun this afternoon is invisible on account of the clouds. Yet it seems to have created a strong wind by lowering the temperature? Yellow Bethlehem-star, a day or more; near the broom-rape.

1853-1854

1853-1854



May 27, Saturday: The Marine Telegraph from Fort Point to [San Francisco](#) was completed.

US Commissioner Robert McLane visited the rebel kingdom at Nanjing in his warship, the *Susquehanna*. The Reverend [Issachar J. Roberts](#) 罗孝全 had asked to be taken along to respond to his standing invitation from his old friend [Hung Hsiu Ch'üan](#) 洪秀全 who had proclaimed himself the real emperor, but the Commissioner had refused this.



Meanwhile, the [Chinese Christian Army](#) invading North China had been encircled by *Qing* troops loyal to the emperor of Beijing, and by mobilized corvee labor of peasants an entire river had been redirected into their camp to swamp them, and they had elected to make a last stand in the city of Lianzhen — where in a siege that would last fully eight months they were being slowly annihilated.

THE TAEPING REBELLION

1853-1854

1853-1854



This was Zheng Guo-fan, the loyalist general:



In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Saw Mill Brook.



May 27. P.M. — To Saw Mill Brook.

Geum rivale, a day or two at Hubbard's Close; also the *Rubus triflorus* abundant there along the brook next the maple swamp, and still in bloom. Wild pinks (*Silene*), apparently a day or two. The red-eye [**Red-eyed Vireo**  *Vireo olivaceus*] is an indefatigable singer, — a succession of short bars with hardly an interval long continued, now at 3 P.M. The pincushion galls on young white oaks and on shrub oaks are now in their prime. It is a kind of crystalline wool. Those which I have noticed on the shrub oaks are the largest, and are crimson-spotted, while those on the young white oaks are scarlet-spotted and for the most part about the size of a cranberry. They are either at the extremity of last year's twig or saddled on it midway. No fruit perhaps catches my eye more. It is remarkable that galls are apparently as early to form as the leaves to start, and that some of them are among the most beautiful products of the wood. Within small hard kernels in the midst of these I find minute white grubs. I see and hear the yellow-throated vireo [**Yellow-throated vireo**  (*Vireo flavifrons*)]. It is somewhat similar (its strain) to that of the red-eye, *prelia pre-li-ay*, with longer intervals and occasionally a whistle like *flea flow*, or *chowy chow*, or *tully ho* (??) on a higher key. It flits about in the tops of the trees. I find the pensile nest of a red-eye between a fork of a shrub chestnut near the path. It is made, thus far, of bark and different woolly and silky materials. The arums — some of them — have bloomed probably as early as the last I saw at the Miles Swamp. *Viola pubescens* must be about out of bloom (??). *Actæa alba* fully out, the whole raceme, say two days.

1853-1854

1853-1854

I see young gooseberries as big as *small* green peas. Is that low two or three leaved plant without stem about Saw Mill Brook a wood lettuce?



That tall swamp fern by Eb. Hubbard's Close, with fertile fronds separate and now cinnamon-colored, perhaps a little later than the interrupted, appears to be the *cinnamomea*. Is that very wide, loose-spread fern, three or four feet high, now beginning to fruit terminally, the *spectabilis*, — a large specimen?



May 27, Saturday: In London, the Athenaeum reported that although [Henry Thoreau](#) was a graduate of Harvard College and therefore qualified as a minister, instead he had chosen to manufacture pencils and had moved into a hut on the shore of a pond in order to live in a primitive manner and write. The article described WEEK as “a curious mixture of dull and prolix dissertation, with some of the most faithful and animated descriptions of external nature which has [*sic??*] ever appeared.”

In [Worcester](#), [Bronson Alcott](#) succeeded in persuading the [Reverend Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) to take charge of the Boston vigilantes, and the two took the train into Boston. Martin Stowell of Worcester came also. When they reached Boston, however, they found that the Committee was unable to agree upon a plan of action, and it appears that the Reverend took matters into his own hands. He went out and purchased a dozen axes with which to attack the door of the courthouse. That night, at the mass rally at [Faneuil Hall](#) at which the committee intended to instigate the sort of howling mob which would be needed in order to cover their purposive activity and distract the guards, the committee members slipped out early and took up their positions at the courthouse and waited for the mob to be marshaled. When Martin Stowell gave the signal, a black man ran to the west door and hammered it open with a 12-foot beam and leaped inside, with the Reverend Higginson close behind him. The people who managed to get inside the courthouse were immediately, however, repulsed by a group of policemen with clubs. The Reverend Higginson was badly beaten on the head and face, and one of the policemen was killed either by knife or gunshot to the midriff. The police began arresting individual rioters, and the mob began to pull back, but the Reverend Higginson, and a lawyer named Seth Webb who had been one of his classmates in college, held firm. Then they were joined by Alcott, came in hand, who walked right up to the door of the courthouse and looked in. A shot was fired inside the building, or was not fired (although some claimed this, Alcott himself never made any mention of having heard such a

1853-1854

1853-1854

sound), as Alcott turned around and came back away from the courthouse.



A little-known fact is that [Newport, Rhode Island](#) businessman [George Thomas Downing](#) was one of those involved in this attack on the Boston courthouse.

One of the onlookers to these events, who would take no part in them but would suffer in his home town for having so much as been present, was [Moncure Daniel Conway](#). Word that he had been present would circulate in Virginia, so that when he attempted to return to visit his father and mother, a crowd of young men would confront him and order him to leave the town immediately or suffer the consequences.

The Boston mayor, [Dr. Jerome Van Crowninshield Smith](#), a local-politics weathervane, issued the following declaration:

Under the excitement that now pervades the city, you are respectfully requested to cooperate with the Municipal authorities in the maintenance of peace and good order. The law must be obeyed, let the consequences be what they may.

Of course, just as the courthouse officials could agree with peace with quiet, the abolitionists could agree with peace with justice. —They could agree that the ideal of peace and good order was utterly incompatible with kidnapping, and with human enslavement. They could agree that the higher law, which was the law of righteousness, and the law of nature and of God, must be obeyed — whatever the consequences.

RESISTING THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

HIGHER LAW

A jury, meeting in the building in which [Anthony Burns](#) was being held and judged, rendered a verdict of guilty



1853-1854

1853-1854

at 10:15 PM — James Wilson was to [hang](#).

Because there had been an alert that Peter Dunbar's²¹⁰ truckmen were planning to attack the home of [Wendell Phillips](#), Phillips being elsewhere but his family being in the home, [Bronson Alcott](#), [Henry Kemp](#), [Francis Jackson](#), and the [Reverend Samuel Joseph May](#) each armed themselves with a pistol, to sit out the night in the Phillips parlor. They would sit out this night with their pistols in their laps, however, without incident.

Because there were fears that the slavemaster, Mr. Charles Francis Suttle, and his attorney at law, William Brent, might be attacked at their lodgings on the 1st floor of the Revere House, an honor guard of southern students was recruited from Harvard College.²¹¹ Suttle and Brent then relocated to a room in the hotel's garret, for greater security inside their cordon of armed students.

Knowing that during the attack on the courthouse he had discharged his pistol toward Watson Freeman but that Freeman had been unharmed, [Lewis Hayden](#) considered it entirely possible that it had been his bullet that had

210. What relation would this Peter Dunbar, a member of the management team at the Customs House on the waterfront, and his son Peter Dunbar, Jr., the captain of the guard at the courthouse guarding [Anthony Burns](#), have been to Concord's [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#)?

211. [Moncure Daniel Conway](#), as a Harvard student from the South, was recruited to take part in this armed guard at the hotel. The two visitors to Boston were not unknown to him, but rather, they were close neighbors or distant relatives. Nevertheless, he declined to get involved in the affair.

1853-1854

struck deputized truckman [James Batchelder](#) in the major vein of his leg, causing him to bleed out and promptly killing him. Therefore in the evening some activist friends got Hayden into a carriage and conveyed him to the home of Dr. Henry Ingersoll Bowditch in Brookline. (In that period, no-one would have imagined



that a person of color could have been permitted to ride inside such a horse-and-carriage. Thus, drawing the carriage's window curtains was in and of itself adequate to provide complete concealment.) Hayden was met at his destination by a group of black men resolved to prevent the re-enslavement of Burns.



The [Reverend Higginson](#) in a note to his wife in Worcester, written in haste from a home in Boston in which he had sought refuge after the attempted rescue of [Anthony Burns](#): “There has been an attempt at rescue, and failed. I am not hurt, except for a scratch on the face which will probably prevent me from doing anything more about it, lest I be recognized.”

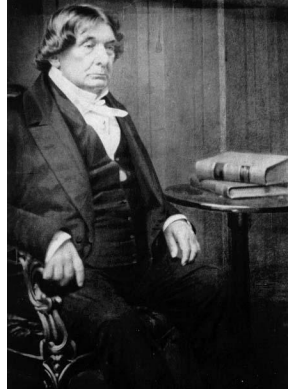
1853-1854

1853-1854

1853-1854



May 28, Sunday: Early in the morning, Judge [Lemuel Shaw](#) of the Supreme Judicial Court sentenced the murderer James Wilson to be “confined to hard labor in the House of Correction for one year from the 26th of May, 1854, and then to be taken to the place of execution, and hanged by the neck until dead.” He then left the courthouse, freeing it for the important proceedings of the Burns case.



Judge [Edward Greeley Loring](#) then sat, and ruled that since the defense would be allowed more time to prepare if someone was accused of writing a bad check for \$25.00, he considered that in a case affecting a man’s liberty, it was reasonable and within the discretion of the court to allow some further delay.

In his Ascension Sunday sermon the [Reverend Theodore Parker](#) condemned [Edward Greeley Loring](#), a teacher at Harvard College who doubled as a judge of probate in the Massachusetts court system, for issuing the warrant as United States Commissioner for [Anthony Burns](#)’s arrest, and thus, in effect, for causing the murder of the 1 out of the 184 courthouse guards, [James Batchelder](#) who had been unfortunately shot to death during the citizen riot. The Woburn ladies of the congregation took up a collection and sent Commissioner Loring thirty pieces of silver.

William Speiden, Jr. attended the funeral of a crew member of the *Vandalia*, who was buried on shore near a small temple.

After a siege of a month, a major Russian assault on the Turkish defenders of Silistria, just over the Danube southeast of Bucharest, was repelled with heavy cost.

Alexandros Nikolaou Mavrokordatos replaced Antonios Georgiou Kriezis as Prime Minister of Greece.

Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka arrived at Tsarskoye Selo, where he was planning to spend the summer, 7 weeks after leaving Paris.

Erzherzog Wilhelm Genesungs-Marsch op. 149 by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#) was performed for the initial time, in Ungers Casino, Vienna.



May 28. Sunday. The *F. hyemalis* [[Dark-eyed Junco](#) [Junco hyemalis](#) (Slate-colored Sparrow or Snow-bird or *F. Hyemalis*)], fox-colored sparrow [[Fox Sparrow](#) [Passerella iliaca](#) (Fox-colored Sparrow)], rusty grackles [[Rusty Blackbird](#) [Euphagus carolinus](#) (Rusty-Grackle)], tree sparrows, [[American Tree Sparrow](#) [Spizella arborea](#)] have all gone by; also the purple finch [[Purple Finch](#) [Carpodacus purpureus](#) (American Linnet)]. The snipe [[Common Snipe](#) [Gallinago gallinago](#)] has ceased (?) to boom. I have not heard the phoebe [[Eastern Phoebe](#) [Sayornis phoebe](#) (Bridge-Pewee)] of late, and methinks the bluebird [[Eastern Bluebird](#) [Sialia sialis](#)] and the robin [[American Robin](#) [Turdus migratorius](#)] are not heard so often (the former certainly not). Those tumultuous morning concerts of sparrows, tree and song, hyemalis, and grackles, like leaves on the trees, are past, and the woodland quire will rather be diminished than increased henceforth. But, on the other hand, toads and frogs and insects, especially at night, all through June,

[Transcript]

1853-1854

1853-1854

betray by the sounds they make their sensitiveness to the increasing temperature, and theirs especially is the music which ushers in the summer. Each warmer night, like this, the toads and frogs sing with increased energy, and already fill the air with sound, though the bullfrogs have not yet begun to trump in earnest. To this add the hum and creak of insects. These still herald or expect the summer. The birds do not foretell that.

12 M. — By boat to Lee's Cliff.

Larch cones are now conspicuous and handsome, — dark-crimson, about half an inch long. Pitch pine cones, too, are now handsome. The larch has a little of the sweetness of the fir, etc. Pontederias, flags, *Polygonum hydropiperoides* (just showing itself), that coarse utricularia, often floating, potamogetons, etc., etc., now begin to make a conspicuous border to the river, and its summer limits begin to be defined. Pads began to be eaten by insects as soon as they appeared, though it is still so high that I am obliged to lower my mast at the bridges. Even this spring the arches of the stone bridge were completely concealed by the flood, and yet at midsummer I can sail under them without lowering my mast, which is [a blank space was left here] feet high from the bottom of the boat. Critchicroches have been edible some time in some places. It must be a kind of water milfoil, whose leaves I now see variously divided under water, and some nearly two feet long. [Probably *Sium*.]

At the *old* bridge at the hill, the water being quite smooth, I saw a water-bug cross straight from the south to the north side, about six rods, furrowing the water in a waving line, there being no other insects near him on the surface. It took but about a minute. It was an interesting sight, proving that this little insect, whose eyes are hardly raised above the plane of the water, sees, or is cognizant of, the opposite shore. I have no doubt that they cross with ease and rapidity lakes a mile wide. It looked like an adventurous voyage for it. Probably he is in danger from fishy monsters, — though it must be difficult for a fish to catch one.

I see the exuviae or cases of some insects on the stems of water plants above the surface. The large devil's-needles are revealed by the reflection in the water, when I cannot see them in the air, and at first mistake them for swallows. Broom-rape, perhaps yesterday. Thimble-berry out, — at Lee's Cliff day before yesterday at least. Distinguished by the downy under sides of its leaves. I see those large, thin, transparent radical heart (?) leaves [*Nuphar Kalmiana*] floating on the surface, as if bitten off by some creature. I see breams' nests which have been freshly cleared out and are occupied. The red choke-berry is fully out, and I do not know but it is as early as the black. Red clover at Clamshell, a day or two. Saw that common snake *Coluber eximius* of De Kay, checkered adder, etc., etc., — forty-one inches long. A rather light brown above, with large dark-brown, irregularly quadrangular blotches, margined with black, and similar small ones, on the sides; abdomen light salmon-white, — whitest toward the head, — checkered with quadrangular blotches; very light bluish-slate in some lights and dark-slate or black in others. Abdominal plates 201, caudal scales 45. I should think from Storer's description that his specimen had lost its proper colors in spirits. He describes not the colors of a living snake, but those which alcohol might impart to it (?). It is as if you were to describe the white man as very red in the face, having seen a drunkard only.

The huckleberries, excepting the late, are now generally in blossom, their rich clear red contrasting with the light-green leaves; frequented by honey-bees, full of promise for the summer. One of the great crops of the year. The blossom of the *Vaccinium vacillans* is larger and paler, but higher-colored on one side and more transparent (?), less concealed by leaves. These are the blossoms of the *Vaccinieæ*, or Whortleberry Family, which affords so large a proportion of our berries. The crop of oranges, lemons, nuts, and raisins, and figs, quinces, etc., etc., not to mention tobacco and the like, is of no importance to us compared with these. The berry-promising flower of the *Vaccinieæ*. This crop grows wild all over the country, — wholesome, bountiful, and free, — a real ambrosia (one is called *V. Vitis-Idæa*, Vine of Mt. Ida), — and yet men — the foolish demons that they are — devote themselves to culture of tobacco, inventing slavery and a thousand other curses as the means, — with infinite pains and inhumanity go raise tobacco all their lives. Tobacco is the staple instead of huckleberries. Wreaths of tobacco smoke go up from this land, the incense of a million sensualists. With what authority can such distinguish between Christians and Mahometans?

Finding the low blackberry nearly open, I looked long and at last, where the vine ran over a rock on the south hillside, the reflected heat had caused it [to] open fully its large white blossoms. In such places, apparently yesterday. The high blackberry in similar places, at least to-day. At these rocks I hear a sharp peep, — methinks of a peewee [Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia* (Peewee)] dashing away. Four pale-green (?) eggs, finely sprinkled with brown, in a brown thrasher's [Brown thrasher *Toxostoma rufum*] nest, on the ground (!) under a barberry bush. The night-warbler [night-warbler], after his strain, drops down almost perpendicularly into a tree-top and is lost. The crickets, though it is everywhere an oppressively warm day (yesterday I had a fire!!) and I am compelled to take off any thinnish coat, are heard, particularly amid the rocks at Lee's Cliff. They must love warmth. As if it were already autumn there. White clover under the rocks. I see the ebony spleenwort full-grown. The pitch pines are *rather* past bloom here, — the cobwebs they contain yellowed with their dust, — probably generally in bloom elsewhere. *Turritis stricta*, apparently out of bloom. Young wild cherry under rocks, fully out two or three days; generally or elsewhere not quite out; probably will begin to-morrow.

It would be worth the while to ask ourselves weekly, Is our life innocent enough? Do we live *inhumanly*, toward man or beast, in thought or act? To be serene and successful we must be at one with the universe. The least conscious and needless injury inflicted on any creature is to its extent a suicide. What peace — or life — can a



1853-1854

1853-1854

murderer have?

Fair Haven Cliffs.

The lint has begun to come off the young leaves. The birches are still the darkest green to be seen in large masses, except evergreens. The last begin to be less conspicuous, beginning to be lost in the sea of verdure. The shrub oak plain is now fairly greened again, only slightly tinged with redness here and there, where are the youngest white oak leaves.

As I sail down toward the Clamshell Hill about an hour before sunset, the water is smoothed like glass, though the breeze is as strong as before. How is this? Yet I have not seen much smooth water this spring. I think the fall must be the time. The rounded green hills are very fair and elysian. The low clumps of bushes on their sides, just clothed with tender verdure, look like islets half sunk and floating in a cool sea of grass. They do not stand, but float on the cool glaucous swells. Though the grass is really short and thin there. Whole schools of fishes leap out of water at once with a loud plashing, even many rods distant, scared by my sail. Cracks in the earth are still visible, and hips of the late rose still hold on under water in some places.

The inhumanity of science concerns me, as when I am tempted to kill a rare snake that I may ascertain its species. I feel that this is not the means of acquiring true knowledge.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

THOREAU ON NORMATIVE SCIENCE

During the last decade of his life, Thoreau visited his rivers more than twice as often as the upland woods and lakes that he is far better known for writing about.

— *Professor Robert M. Thorson*, THE BOATMAN, page 3



May 29, Monday: [Henry Thoreau](#) sailed up the [Assabet River](#) to Cedar Swamp.

The Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) in a letter to his mother Louisa Storow Higginson, from his home in Worcester: “Of course, I as in Boston on Friday night and had something to do with the demonstration in court.... That attack was a great thing for freedom, and will echo all over the country. It came within an inch of success at any rate. Of course, I was unarmed, hurt nothing but a door, and was unhurt myself but for some knocks and a scratch.... I am sorry for the death of the man it is my clear conviction that he was killed by one of his own blundering comrades.... At any rate, they are making arrests, and I think it more than probable that I may come in for a share. I shall consider it the highest honor yet attained by a Higginson.”

The US Senate abrogated a portion of the Treaty of Washington:

Resolved, “that, in the opinion of the Senate, it is expedient, and in conformity with the interests and sound policy of the United States, that the eighth article of the treaty between

1853-1854


1853-1854



this government and Great Britain, of the 9th of August, 1842, should be abrogated." Introduced by Slidell, and favorably reported from Committee on Foreign Relations in Executive Session, June 13, 1854. SENATE JOURNAL, 34th Congress, 1-2d session, pages 396, 695-8; SENATE REPORTS, 34th Congress, 1st session, I. No. 195.

INTERNATIONAL SLAVE TRADE



May 29. Monday. P.M. — To Cedar Swamp by Assabet.

The white maple keys have begun to fall and float down the stream like the wings of great insects. Dandelions and mouse-ear down have been blowing for some time and are seen on water. These are interesting as methinks the first of the class of downy seeds which are more common in the fall. There are myriads of shad-flies fluttering over the dark and still water under the hill, one every yard or two, continually descending, almost falling, to the surface of the water as if to dunk and then, with perhaps a little difficulty, rising again, again to fall upon it, and so on. I see the same one fall and rise five or six feet thus four or five times; others rise much higher; and now comes along a large dragon-fly and snatches one. This two or three times. Other smaller insects, light-colored, are fluttering low close to the water, and in some places are swarms of small black moths. *Viburnum Lentago* in a warm place. The choke-cherry is leaving off to bloom, now that the black cherry is beginning. The clustered andromeda is not yet fully, *i.e.* abundantly, out. The tall huckleberry in swamps is well out. In the longitudinal crevices of the white cedar bark there is much clear yellow resin, probably yesterday, side of railroad, above red house. See a purple finch [**Purple Finch**  *Carpodacus purpureus* (~~American linnet~~)] and hear him, — robin-like and rich warbling. S. Barrett thinks that many chubs are killed at mills, and hence are seen floating. I see no stone-heaps distinctly formed yet.

Saw what I thought my night-warbler, [~~Night-warbler~~ (**Ovenbird**  *Seiurus aurocapillus*, or **Common Yellowthroat**  *Geothlypis trichas?*)²¹²] — sparrow-like with chestnut (?) stripes on breast, white or whitish below and about eyes, and perhaps chestnut (??) head.

Stellaria longifolia, apparently apetalous (!), ten or twelve inches high, will soon open on the bank near the *Ranunculus abortivus*.

These days it is left to one Mr. Loring to say whether a citizen of Massachusetts is a slave or not. Does any one think that Justice or God awaits Mr. Loring's decision? Such a man's existence in this capacity under these circumstances is as impertinent as the gnat that settles on my paper. We do not ask him to make up his mind, but to make up his pack. Why, the United States Government never performed an act of justice in its life! And this unoffending citizen is held a prisoner by the United States soldier, of whom the best you can say is that he is a fool in a painted coat. Of what use a Governor or a Legislature? they are nothing but politicians. I have listened of late to hear the voice of a Governor, Commander-in-Chief of the forces of Massachusetts. I heard only the creaking of the crickets and the hum of the insects which now fill the summer air. The Governor's exploit is to review the troops on muster-days. I have seen him on horseback, with his hat off, listening to a chaplain's prayer. That is all I have ever seen of a Governor. I think that I could manage to get along without one. When freedom is most endangered, he dwells in the deepest obscurity. A distinguished clergyman once told me that he chose the profession of a clergyman because it afforded the most leisure for literary pursuits. I would recommend to him the profession of a Governor. I see the papers full of soft speeches of the mayor and the Governor and brother editors. I see the Court-House full of armed men, holding prisoner and trying a MAN, to find out if he is not really a SLAVE. It is a question about which there is great doubt.

It is really the trial of Massachusetts. Every moment that she hesitates to set this man free, she is convicted. The Commissioner on her case is God. Perhaps the most saddening aspect of the matter is the tone of almost all the Boston papers, connected with the fact that they are and have been of course sustained by a majority of their readers. They are feeble indeed, but only as sin compared with righteousness and truth. They are eminently time-serving. I have seen only the *Traveller, Journal*,

212. Thoreau was never sure about his night warbler. Though on August 5, 1858, he identified the Common Yellowthroat as his mysterious singer, Cruickshank says on most occasions it was probably the Ovenbird *Seiurus aurocapillus* giving its aerial song.



1853-1854

1853-1854

and *Post*. I never look at them except at such a time as this. Their life is abject even as that of the marines. Men in any office of government are everywhere and forever politicians. Will mankind never learn that policy is not morality, that it never secures any, moral right, but always considers merely what is “expedient,” — chooses the available candidate, who, when moral right is concerned, is always the devil? Witness the President of the United States. What is the position of Massachusetts? (Massa-chooses-it!) She leaves it to a Mr. Loring to decide whether one of her citizens is a freeman or a slave. What is the value of such a SHE’S FREEDOM AND PROTECTION to me? Perhaps I shall so conduct that she will one day offer me the FREEDOM OF MASSACHUSETTS in a gold casket, — made of California gold in the form of a court-house, perchance. I spurn with contempt any bribe which she or her truckling men can offer. I do not vote at the polls. I wish to record my vote here. Men profess to be surprised because the devil does not behave like an angel of light. The majority of the men of the North, and of the South and East and West, are not men of principle. If they vote, they do not send men to Congress on errands of humanity; but, while their brothers and sisters are being scourged and hung for loving liberty, while (insert here all the inhumanities that pandemonium can conceive of), it is the mismanagement of wood and iron and stone and gold which concerns them. Do what you will, O Government, with my mother and brother, my father and sister, I will obey your command to the letter. It will, indeed, grieve me if you hurt them, if you deliver them to overseers to be hunted by hounds, and to be whipped to death; but, nevertheless, I will peaceably pursue my chosen calling on this fair earth, until, perhaps, one day I shall have persuaded you to relent. Such is the attitude, such are the words of Massachusetts. Rather than thus consent to establish hell upon earth, — to be a party to this establishment, — I would touch a match to blow up earth and hell together. As I love my life, I would side with the Light and let the Dark Earth roll from under me, calling any mother and my brother to follow me.



May 30, Tuesday: William Speiden, Jr. attended a concert of the [Japanese](#) Olio Minstrels on board the *Powhatan*. “A large number of the Japanese were on board and seemed highly pleased.”

Stephen Douglas introduced to Congress, and obtained, the bill establishing Kansas and Nebraska as territories whose legislatures would decide whether they’d be slave or free. It was anticipated that under the Popular Sovereignty clause of the [Kansas/Nebraska Act](#), despite the game-rules set down in the Missouri Compromise Nebraska would choose to be a free state and [Kansas](#) a slave state.

READ THE FULL TEXT

There were two governments in the Kansas Territory, one proslavery and the other, in Topeka, antislavery. President [Franklin Pierce](#) sided with the proslavery government, denouncing the Topeka government as “revolutionary.” Opponents of the act began to coalesce into a new political party, its members calling themselves [Republicans](#). New England Abolitionists rushed to finance the sending of likeminded antislavery settlers into Kansas. Bloody fights and raids erupted between pro- and antislavery settlements. Separate territorial governments were established, one slave and one free. Each had its own capital. Though he represented only a minority, the territorial governor was appointed by President Pierce and could officially recognize only the proslavery government.

“My understanding is that anti-slavery and anti-black went hand in hand. This is a modern political assumption that to be anti-slavery was to be pro-black. In fact, the fight against the extension of slavery into Kansas was as much a fight to keep the blacks out, even as slaves. Racist whites did not want blacks in their territory, so they were anti the extension of slavery and its aristocratic culture as well as anti black. See Foner’s FREE SOIL, FREE LABOR, FREE MEN for a great summary of the whole

1853-1854

1853-1854

free soil mentality.” – Dave Williams

This Kansas/Nebraska Compromise set aside the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and undermined the Compromise of 1850. The US government had thrown the Kansas Territory open to white settlement despite the fact that there were 10,000 Native American inhabitants of the territory and despite the fact that Congress had not yet ratified any treaty providing for their cession of this land to the intrusives.



“BLEEDING KANSAS”



KANSAS-NEBRASKA ACT OF 1854

AN ACT TO ORGANIZE THE TERRITORIES OF NEBRASKA AND KANSAS.



1853-1854

1853-1854

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That all that part of the territory of the United States included within the following limits, except such portions thereof as are hereinafter expressly exempted from the operations of this act, to wit: beginning at a point in the Missouri River where the fortieth parallel of north latitude crosses the same; then west on said parallel to the east boundary of the Territory of Utah, the summit of the Rocky Mountains; thence on said summit northwest to the forty-ninth parallel of north latitude; thence east on said parallel to the western boundary of the territory of Minnesota; thence southward on said boundary to the Missouri River; thence down the main channel of said river to the place of beginning, be, and the same is hereby, created into a temporary government by the name of the Territory of Nebraska; and when admitted as a State or States, the said Territory or any portion of the same, shall be received into the Union with or without slavery, as their constitution may prescribe at the time of the admission: Provided, That nothing in this act contained shall be construed to inhibit the government of the United States from dividing said Territory into two or more Territories, in such manner and at such time as Congress shall deem convenient and proper, or from attaching a portion of said Territory to any other State or Territory of the United States: Provided further, That nothing in this act contained shall be construed to impair the rights of person or property now pertaining the Indians in said Territory, so long as such rights shall remain unextinguished by treaty between the United States and such Indians, or include any territory which, by treaty with any Indian tribe, is not, without the consent of said tribe, to be included within the territorial line or jurisdiction of any State or Territory; but all such territory shall be excepted out of the boundaries, and constitute no part of the Territory of Nebraska, until said tribe shall signify their assent to the President of the United States to be included within the said Territory of Nebraska, or to affect the authority of the government of the United States to make any regulations respecting such Indians, their lands, property, or other rights, by treaty, law, or otherwise, which it would have been competent to the government to make if this act had never passed.

SECTION 2. And Be it further enacted, That the executive power and authority in and over said Territory of Nebraska shall be vested in a Governor who shall hold his office for four years, and until his successor shall be appointed and qualified, unless sooner removed by the President of the United States. The Governor shall reside within said Territory, and shall be commander-in-chief of the militia thereof. He may grant pardons and respites for offences against the laws of said Territory, and reprieves for offences against the laws of the United States, until the decision of the President can be made known thereon; he shall commission all officers who shall be appointed to office under the laws of the aid Territory, and shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed.



1853-1854

1853-1854

SECTION 3. And Be it further enacted, That there shall be a Secretary of said Territory, who shall reside therein, and hold his office for five years, unless sooner removed by the President of the United States; he shall record and preserve all the laws and proceedings of the Legislative Assembly hereinafter constituted, and all the acts and proceedings of the Governor in his executive department; he shall transmit one copy of the laws and journals of the Legislative Assembly within thirty days after the end of each session, and one copy of the executive proceedings and official correspondence semi-annually, on the first days of January and July in each year to the President of the United States, and two copies of the laws to the President of the Senate and to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to be deposited in the libraries of Congress, and in or case of the death, removal, resignation, or absence of the Governor from the Territory, the Secretary shall be, and he is hereby, authorized and required to execute and perform all the powers and duties of the Governor during such vacancy or absence, or until another Governor shall be duly appointed and qualified to fill such vacancy.

SECTION 4. And be it further enacted, That the legislative power and authority of said Territory shall be vested in the Governor and a Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Assembly shall consist of a Council and House of Representatives. The Council shall consist of thirteen members, having the qualifications of voters, as hereinafter prescribed, whose term of service shall continue two years. The House of Representatives shall, at its first session, consist of twenty-six members, possessing the same qualifications as prescribed for members of the Council, and whose term of service shall continue one year. The number of representatives may be increased by the Legislative Assembly, from time to time, in proportion to the increase of qualified voters: Provided, That the whole number shall never exceed thirty-nine. An apportionment shall be made, as nearly equal as practicable, among the several counties or districts, for the election of the council and representatives, giving to each section of the Territory representation in the ratio of its qualified voters as nearly as may be. And the members of the Council and of the House of Representatives shall reside in, and be inhabitants of, the district or county, or counties for which they may be elected, respectively. Previous to the first election, the Governor shall cause a census, or enumeration of the inhabitants and qualified voters of the several counties and districts of the Territory, to be taken by such persons and in such mode as the Governor shall designate and appoint; and the persons so appointed shall receive a reasonable compensation therefor. And the first election shall be held at such time and places, and be conducted in such manner, both as to the persons who shall superintend such election and the returns thereof, as the Governor shall appoint and direct; and he shall at the same time declare the number of members of the Council and House of Representatives to which each of the counties or districts shall be entitled under this act. The persons having the highest number of legal votes in each of said council districts for members of the Council, shall be declared by the Governor to be duly elected to the Council; and the persons having the highest



1853-1854

1853-1854

number of legal votes for the House of Representatives, shall be declared by the Governor to be duly elected members of said house: Provided, That in case two or more persons voted for shall have an equal number of votes, and in case a vacancy shall otherwise occur in either branch of the Legislative Assembly, the Governor shall order a new election; and the persons thus elected to the Legislative Assembly shall meet at such place and on such day as the Governor shall appoint; but thereafter, the time, place, and manner of holding and conducting all elections by the people, and the apportioning the representation in the several counties or districts to the Council and House of Representatives, according to the number of qualified voters, shall be prescribed by law, as well as the day of the commencement of the regular sessions of the Legislative Assembly: Provided, That no session in any one year shall exceed the term of forty days, except the first session, which may continue sixty days.

SECTION 5. And be it further enacted, That every free white male inhabitant above the age of twenty-one years who shall be an actual resident of said Territory, and shall possess the qualifications hereinafter prescribed, shall be entitled to vote at the first election, and shall be eligible to any office within the said Territory; but the qualifications of voters, and of holding office, at all subsequent elections, shall be such as shall be prescribed by the Legislative Assembly: Provided, That the right of suffrage and of holding office shall be exercised only by citizens of the United States and those who shall have declared on oath their intention to become such, and shall have taken an oath to support the Constitution of the United States and the provisions of this act: And provided further, That no officer, soldier, seaman, or marine, or other person in the army or navy of the United States, or attached to troops in the service of the United States, shall be allowed to vote or hold office in said Territory, by reason of being on service therein.

SECTION 6. And Be it further enacted, That the legislative power of the Territory shall extend to all rightful subjects of legislation consistent with the Constitution of the United States and the provisions of this act; but no law shall be passed interfering with the primary disposal of the soil; no tax shall be imposed upon the property of the United States; nor shall the lands or other property of non-residents be taxed higher than the lands or other property of residents. Every bill which shall have passed the Council and House of Representatives of the said Territory shall, before it become a law, be presented to the Governor of the Territory; if he approve, he shall sign it; but if not, he shall return it with his objections to the house in which it originated, who shall enter the objections at large on their journal, and proceed to reconsider it. If, after such reconsideration two thirds of that house shall agree to pass the bill, it shall be sent, together with the objections, to the other house, by which it shall likewise be reconsidered, and if approved by two thirds of that house, it shall become a law. But in all such cases the votes of both houses shall be determined by yeas and nays, to be entered on the journal of each house respectively. If any bill shall not be returned by the Governor



1853-1854

1853-1854

within three days (Sundays excepted) after it shall have been presented to him, the same shall be a law in like manner as if he had signed it, unless the Assembly, by adjournment, prevents its return, in which case it shall not be a law.

SECTION 7. And be it further enacted, That all township, district, and county officers, not herein otherwise provided for, shall be appointed or elected, as the case may be, in such manner as shall be provided by the Governor and Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Nebraska. The Governor shall nominate, and, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council, appoint all officers not herein otherwise provided for; and in the first instance the Governor alone may appoint all said officers, who shall hold their offices until the end of the first session of the Legislative Assembly; and shall lay off the necessary districts for members of the Council and House of Representatives, and all other officers.

SECTION 8. And be it further enacted, That no member of the Legislative Assembly shall hold, or be appointed to, any office which shall have been created, or the salary or emoluments of which shall have been increased, while he was a member, during the term for which he was elected, and for one year after the expiration of such term; but this restriction shall not be applicable to members of the first Legislative Assembly; and no person holding a commission or appointment under the United States, except Postmasters, shall be a member of the Legislative Assembly, or hold any office under the government of said Territory.

SECTION 9. And be it further enacted, That the judicial power of said Territory shall be vested in a Supreme Court, District Courts, Probate Courts, and in Justices of the Peace. The Supreme Court shall consist of a chief justice and two associate justices, any two of whom shall constitute a quorum, and who shall hold a term at the seat of government of said Territory annually, and they shall hold their offices during the period of four years, and until their successor shall be appointed and qualified. The said Territory shall be divided into three judicial districts, and a district court shall be held in each of said districts by one of the justices of the Supreme Court, at such times and places as may be prescribed by of law; and the said judges shall, after their appointments, respectively, reside in the districts which shall be assigned them. The jurisdiction of the several courts herein provided for, both appellate and original, and that of the probate courts and of justices of the peace, shall be as limited by law: Provided, That justices of the peace shall not have jurisdiction of any matter in controversy when the title or boundaries of land may be in dispute, or where the debt or sum claimed shall exceed one hundred dollars; and the said supreme and districts courts, respectively, shall possess chancery as well as common law jurisdiction. Each District Court, or the judge thereof, shall appoint its clerk, who shall also be the register in chancery, and shall keep his office at the place where the court may, be held. Writs of error, bills of exception, and appeals, shall be allowed in all cases from the final decisions of said district courts to the Supreme Court, under such regulations as may be



1853-1854

1853-1854

prescribed by law; but in no case removed to the Supreme Court shall trial by jury be allowed in said court. The Supreme Court, or the justices thereof, shall appoint its own clerk, and every clerk shall hold his office at the pleasure of the court for which he shall have been appointed. Writs of error, and appeals from the final decisions of said Supreme Court, shall be allowed, and may be taken to the Supreme Court of the United States, in the same manner and under the same regulations as from the circuit courts of the United States, where the value of the property, or the amount in controversy, to be ascertained by the oath or affirmation of either party, or other competent witness, shall exceed one thousand dollars; except only that in all cases involving title to slaves, the said writs of error, or appeals shall be allowed and decided by the said Supreme Court, without regard to the value of the matter, property, or title in controversy; and except also that a writ of error or appeal shall also be allowed to the Supreme Court of the United States, from the decision of the said Supreme Court created by this act, or of any judge thereof, or of the district courts created by this act, or of any judge thereof, upon any writ of habeas corpus, involving the question of personal freedom: Provided, that nothing herein contained shall be construed to apply to or affect the provisions to the "act respecting fugitives from justice, and persons escaping from the service of their masters," approved February twelfth, seventeen hundred and ninety-three, and the "act to amend and supplementary to the aforesaid act," approved September eighteen, eighteen hundred and fifty; and each of the said district courts shall have and exercise the same jurisdiction in all cases arising under the Constitution and Laws of the United States as is vested in the Circuit and District Courts of the United States; and the said Supreme and District Courts of the said Territory, and the respective judges thereof, shall and may grant writs of habeas corpus in all cases in which the same are granted by the judges of the United States in the District of Columbia; and the first six days of every term of said courts, or so much thereof as shall be necessary, shall be appropriated to the trial of causes arising under the said constitution and laws, and writs of error and appeal in all such cases shall be made to the Supreme Court of said Territory, the same as in other cases. The said clerk shall receive in all such cases the same fees which the clerks of the district courts of Utah Territory now receive for similar services.

SECTION 10. And Be it further enacted, That the provisions of an act entitled "An act respecting fugitives from justice, and persons escaping from the service of their masters," approved February twelve, seventeen hundred and ninety-three, and the provisions of the act entitled "An act to amend, and supplementary to, the aforesaid act," approved September eighteen, eighteen hundred and fifty, be, and the same are hereby, declared to extend to and be in full force within the limits of said Territory of Nebraska.

SECTION 11. And be it further enacted, That there shall be appointed an Attorney for said Territory, who shall continue in office for four years, and until his successor shall be

1853-1854**1853-1854**

appointed and qualified, unless sooner removed by the President, and who shall receive the same fees and salary I as the Attorney of the United States for the present Territory of Utah. There shall also be a Marshal for the Territory appointed, who shall hold his office for four years, and until his successor shall be appointed and qualified, unless sooner removed by the President, and who shall execute all processes issuing from the said courts when exercising their jurisdiction as Circuit and District Courts of the United States; he shall perform the duties, be subject to the same regulation and penalties, and be entitled to the same fees, as the Marshal of the District Court of the United States for the present Territory of Utah, and shall, in addition, be paid two hundred dollars annually as a compensation for extra services.

SECTION 12. And be it further enacted, That the Governor, Secretary, Chief Justice, and Associate Justices, Attorney and Marshal, shall be nominated, and, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, appointed by the President of the United States. The Governor and a Secretary to be appointed as aforesaid, shall, before they act as such, respectively take an oath or affirmation before the District Judge or some Justice of the Peace in the limits of said Territory, duly authorized to administer oaths and affirmations by the laws now in force therein, or & before the Chief Justice, or some Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, to support the Constitution of the United States, and faithfully to discharge the duties of their respective offices, which said oaths, when so taken, shall be certified by the person by whom the same shall have been taken; and such certificates shall be received and recorded by the said Secretary among the Executive proceedings; and the Chief Justice and Associate Justices, and all other civil officers in said Territory, before they act as such, shall take a like oath or affirmation before the said Governor or Secretary, or some Judge or Justice of the Peace of the Territory, who may be duly commissioned and qualified, which said oath or affirmation shall be certified and transmitted by the person taking the same to the Secretary, to be by him recorded as aforesaid; and, afterwards, the like oath or affirmation shall be taken, certified, and recorded, in such manner and form as may be prescribed by law. The Governor shall receive an annual salary of two thousand five hundred dollars. The Chief Justice and Associate Justices shall each receive an annual salary of two thousand dollars. The Secretary shall receive an annual salary of two thousand dollars. The said salaries shall be paid quarter-yearly, from the dates of the respective appointments, at the Treasury of the United States; but no such payment shall be made until said officers shall have entered upon the duties of their respective appointments. The members of the Legislative Assembly shall be entitled to receive three dollars each per day during their attendance at the sessions thereof, and three dollars each for every twenty miles' travel in going to and returning from the said sessions, estimated according to the nearest usually travelled route; and an additional allowance of three dollars shall be paid to the presiding officer of each house for each day he shall so preside. And a chief clerk, one assistant clerk, a sergeant-at-arms, and



1853-1854

1853-1854

doorkeeper, may be chosen for each house; and the chief clerk shall receive four dollars per day, and the said other officers three dollars per day, during the session of the Legislative Assembly; but no other officers shall be paid by the United States: Provided, That there shall be but one session of the legislature annually, unless, on an extraordinary occasion, the Governor shall think proper to call the legislature together. There shall be appropriated, annually, the usual sum, to be expended by the Governor, to defray the contingent expenses of the Territory, including the salary of a clerk of the Executive Department; and there shall also be appropriated, annually, a sufficient sum, to be expended by the Secretary of the Territory, and upon an estimate to be made by the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, to defray the expenses of the Legislative Assembly, the printing of the laws, and other incidental expenses; and the Governor and Secretary of the Territory shall, in the disbursement of all moneys intrusted to them, be governed solely by the instructions of the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, and shall, semi-annually, account to the said Secretary for the manner in which the aforesaid moneys shall have been expended; and no expenditure shall be made by said Legislative Assembly for objects not specially authorized by the acts of Congress, making the appropriations, nor beyond the sums thus appropriated for such objects.

SECTION 13. And be it further enacted, That the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Nebraska shall hold its first session at such time and place in said Territory as the Governor thereof shall appoint and direct; and at said first session, or as soon thereafter as they shall deem expedient, the Governor and Legislative Assembly shall proceed to locate and establish the seat of government for said Territory at such place as they may deem eligible; which place, however, shall thereafter be subject to be changed by the said Governor and Legislative Assembly.

SECTION 14. And be it further enacted, That a delegate to the House of Representatives of the United States, to serve for the term of two years, who shall be a citizen of the United States, may be elected by the voters qualified to elect members of the Legislative Assembly, who shall be entitled to the same rights and privileges as are exercised and enjoyed by the delegates from the several other Territories of the United States to the said House of Representatives, but the delegate first elected shall hold his seat only during the term of the Congress to which he shall be elected. The first election shall be held at such time and places, and be conducted in such manner, as the Governor shall appoint and direct; and at all subsequent elections the times, places, and manner of holding the elections, shall be prescribed by law. The person having the greatest number of votes shall be declared by the Governor to be duly elected; and a certificate thereof shall be given accordingly. That the Constitution, and all Laws of the United States which are not locally inapplicable, shall have the same force and effect within the said Territory of Nebraska as elsewhere within the United States, except the eighth section of the act preparatory



1853-1854

1853-1854

to the admission of Missouri into the Union approved March sixth, eighteen hundred and twenty, which, being inconsistent with the principle of non-intervention by Congress with slaves in the States and Territories, as recognized by the legislation of eighteen hundred and fifty, commonly called the Compromise Measures, is hereby declared inoperative and void; it being the true intent and meaning of this act not to legislate slavery into any Territory or State, nor to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States: Provided, That nothing herein contained shall be construed to revive or put in force any law or regulation which may have existed prior to the act of sixth March, eighteen hundred and twenty, either protecting, establishing, prohibiting, or abolishing slavery.

SECTION 15. And Be it further enacted, That there shall hereafter be appropriated, as has been customary for the Territorial governments, sufficient amount, to be expended under the direction of the said Governor of the Territory of Nebraska, not exceeding the sums heretofore appropriated for similar objects, for the erection of suitable public buildings at the seat of government, and for the purchase of a library, to be kept at the seat of government for the use of the Governor, Legislative Assembly, Judges of the Supreme Court, Secretary, Marshal, and Attorney of said Territory, and such other persons, and under such regulations as shall be prescribed by law.

SECTION 16. And be it further enacted, That when the lands in the said Territory shall be surveyed under the direction of the government of the United States, preparatory to bringing the same into market, section; numbered sixteen and thirty-six in each township in said Territory shall be, and the same are hereby, reserved for the purpose of being applied to schools in said Territory, and in the States and Territories hereafter to be erected out of the same.

SECTION 17. And be it further enacted, That, until otherwise provided by law, the Governor of said Territory may define the Judicial Districts of said Territory, and assign the judges who may be appointed for said Territory to the several districts; and also appoint the times and places for holding courts in the several counties or subdivisions in each of said Judicial Districts by proclamation, to be issued by him; but the Legislative Assembly, at their first or any subsequent session, may organize, alter, or modify such Judicial Districts, and assign the judges, and alter the times and places of holding the courts, as to them shall seem proper and convenient.

SECTION 18. And be it further enacted, That all officers to be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, for the Territory of Nebraska, who, by virtue of the provisions of any law now existing, or which may be enacted during the present Congress, are required to give security for moneys that may be intrusted with them for disbursement, shall give such security, at such time and place, and in such manner, as the Secretary of the Treasury may prescribe.

SECTION 19. And be it further enacted, That all that part of the



1853-1854

1853-1854

Territory of the United States included within the following limits, except such portions thereof as are hereinafter expressly exempted from the operations of this act, to wit, beginning at a point on the western boundary of the State of Missouri, where the thirty-seventh parallel of north latitude crosses the same; thence west on said parallel to the eastern boundary of New Mexico; thence north on said boundary to latitude thirty-eight; thence following said boundary westward to the east boundary of the Territory of Utah, on the summit of the Rocky Mountains; thence northward on said summit to the fortieth parallel of latitude, thence east on said parallel to the western boundary of the State of Missouri; thence south with the western boundary of said State to the place of beginning, be, and the same is hereby, created into a temporary government by the name of the Territory of Kansas; and when admitted as a State or States, the said Territory, or any portion of the same, shall be received into the Union with or without slavery, as their Constitution may prescribe at the time of their admission: Provided, That nothing in this act contained shall be construed to inhibit the government of the United States from dividing said Territory into two or more Territories, in such manner and at such times as Congress shall deem convenient and proper, or from attaching any portion of said Territory to any other State or Territory of the United States: Provided further, That nothing in this act contained shall be construed to impair the rights of person or property now pertaining to the Indians in said Territory, so long as such rights shall remain unextinguished by treaty between the United States and such Indians, or to include any territory which, by treaty with any Indian tribe, is not, without the consent of said tribe, to be included within the territorial limits or jurisdiction of any State or Territory; but all such territory shall be excepted out of the boundaries, and constitute no part of the Territory of Kansas, until said tribe shall signify their assent to the President of the United States to be included within the said Territory of Kansas, or to affect the authority of the government of the United States to make any regulation respecting such Indians, their lands, property, or other rights, by treaty, law, or otherwise, which it would have been competent to the government to make if this act had never passed.

SECTION 20. And be it further enacted, That the executive power and chin authority in and over said Territory of Kansas shall be vested in a Governor, who shall hold his office for four years, and until his successor shall be appointed and qualified, unless sooner removed by the President of the United States. The Governor shall reside within said Territory, and shall be commander-in-chief of the militia thereof. He may grant pardons and respites for offences against the laws of said Territory, and reprieves for offences against the laws of the United States, until the decision of the President can be made known thereon; he shall commission all officers who shall be appointed to office under the laws of the said Territory, and shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed.

SECTION 21. And be it further enacted, That there shall be a Secretary of said Territory, who shall reside therein, and hold



1853-1854

1853-1854

his office for five years, unless sooner removed by the President of the United States; he shall record and preserve all the laws and proceedings of the Legislative Assembly hereinafter constituted, and all the acts and proceedings of the Governor in his Executive Department; he shall transmit one copy of the laws and journals of the Legislative Assembly within thirty days after the end of each session, and one copy of the executive proceedings and official correspondence semi-annually, on the first days of January and July in each year, to the President of the United States, and two copies of the laws to the President of the Senate and to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to be deposited in the libraries of Congress; and, in case of the death, removal, resignation, or absence of the Governor from the Territory, the Secretary shall be, and he is hereby, authorized and required to execute and perform all the powers and duties of the Governor during such vacancy or absence, or until another Governor shall be duly appointed and qualified to fill such vacancy.

SECTION 22. And be it further enacted, That the legislative power and authority of said Territory shall be vested in the Governor and a Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Assembly shall consist of a Council and House of Representatives. The Council shall consist of thirteen members, having the qualifications of voters, as hereinafter prescribed, whose term of service shall continue two years. The House of Representatives shall, at its first session, consist of twenty-six members possessing the same qualifications as prescribed for members of the Council, and whose term of service shall continue one year. The number of representatives may be increased by the Legislative Assembly, from time to time, in proportion to the increase of qualified voters: Provided, That the whole number shall never exceed thirty-nine. An apportionment shall be made, as nearly equal as practicable, among the several counties or districts, for the election of the Council and Representatives, giving to each section of the Territory representation in the ratio of its qualified voters as nearly as may be. And the members of the Council and of the House of Representatives shall reside in, and be inhabitants of, the district or county, or counties, for which they may be elected, respectively. Previous to the first election, the Governor shall cause a census, or enumeration of the inhabitants and qualified voters of the several counties and districts of the Territory, to be taken by such persons and in such mode as the Governor shall designate and appoint; and the persons so appointed shall receive a reasonable compensation therefor. And the first election shall be held at such time and places, and be conducted in such manner, both as to the persons who shall superintend such election and the returns thereof, as the Governor shall appoint and direct; and he shall at the same time declare the number of members of the Council and House of Representatives to which each of the counties or districts shall be entitled under this act. The persons having the highest number of legal votes in each of said Council Districts for members of the Council, shall be declared by the Governor to be duly elected to the Council; and the persons having the highest number of legal votes for the House of Representatives, shall be declared by the Governor to be duly

1853-1854**1853-1854**

elected members of said house: Provided, That in case two or more persons voted for shall have an equal number of votes, and in case o a vacancy shall otherwise occur in either branch of the Legislative Assembly, the Governor shall order a new election; and the persons thus elected to the Legislative Assembly shall meet at such place and on such day as the Governor shall appoint; but thereafter, the time, place, and manner of holding and conducting all elections by the people, and the apportioning the representation in the several counties or districts to the Council and House of Representatives, according to the number of qualified t voters, shall be prescribed by law, as well as the day of the commencement of the regular sessions of the Legislative Assembly: Provided, That no session in any one year shall exceed the term of forty days, except the first session, which may continue sixty days.

SECTION 23. And be it further enacted, That every free white male inhabitant above the age of twenty-one years, who shall be an actual resident of said Territory, and shall possess the qualifications hereinafter prescribed, shall be entitled to vote at the first election, and shall be eligible to any office within the said Territory; but the qualifications of voters, and of holding office, at all subsequent elections, shall be such as shall be prescribed by the Legislative Assembly: Provided, That the right of suffrage and of holding office shall be exercised only by citizens of the United States, and those who shall have declared, on oath, their intention to become such, and shall have taken an oath to support the Constitution of the United States and the provisions of this act: And, provided further, That no officer, soldier, seaman, or marine, or other person in the 'army or navy of the United States, or attached to troops in the service of the United States, shall be allowed to vote or hold office in said Territory by reason of being on service therein.

SECTION 24. And be it further enacted, That the legislative power of the Territory shall extend to all rightful subjects of legislation consistent with the Constitution of the United States and the provisions of this act; but no law shall be passed interfering with the primary disposal of the soil; no tax shall be imposed upon the property of the United States; nor shall the lands or other property of non-residents be taxed higher than the lands or other property of residents. Every bill which shall have passed the Council and House of Representatives of the said Territory shall, before it become a law, be presented to the Governor of the Territory; if he approve, he shall sign it; but if not, he shall return it with his objections to the house in which it originated, who shall enter the objections at large on their journal, and proceed to reconsider it. If, after such reconsideration, two thirds of that house shall agree to pass the bill, it shall be sent, together with the objections, to the other house, by which, it shall likewise be reconsidered, and, if approved by two thirds of that house, it shall become a law. But in all such cases the votes of both houses shall be determined by yeas and nays, to be entered on the journal of each house, respectively. If any bill shall not be returned by the Governor within three days (Sundays excepted) after it shall



1853-1854

1853-1854

have been presented to him, the same shall be a law in like manner as if he had signed it, unless the Assembly, by adjournment, prevent its return, in which case it shall not be a law.

SECTION 25. And be it further enacted, That all township, district, and; county officers, not herein otherwise provided for, shall be appointed or elected as the case may be, in such manner as shall be provided by the Governor and Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Kansas. The Governor shall nominate, and, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council, appoint all officers not herein otherwise provided for; and, in the first instance, the Governor alone may appoint all said officers, who shall hold their offices until the end of the first session of the Legislative Assembly; and shall lay off the necessary districts for members of the Council and House of Representatives, and all other officers.

SECTION 26. And be it further enacted, That no member of the Legislative Assembly shall hold, or be appointed to, any office which shall have been created, or the salary or emoluments of which shall have been increased, while he was a member, during the term for which he was elected, and for one year after the expiration of such term; but this restriction shall not be applicable to members of the first Legislative Assembly; and no person holding a commission or appointment under the United States, except postmasters, shall be a member of the Legislative Assembly, or shall hold any office under the government of said Territory.

SECTION 27. And be it further enacted, That the judicial power of said Territory shall be vested in a supreme court, district courts, probate courts, and in justices of the peace. The Supreme Court shall consist of chief justice and two associate justices, any two of whom shall constitute a quorum, and who shall hold a term at the seat of government of said Territory annually; and they shall hold their offices during the period of four years, and until their successors shall be appointed and qualified. The said Territory shall be divided into three judicial districts, and a district court shall be held in each of said districts by one of the justices of the Supreme Court, at such times and places as may be prescribed by law; and the said judges shall, after their appointments, respectively, reside in the districts which shall be assigned them. The jurisdiction of the several courts herein provided for, both appellate and original, and that of the probate courts and of justices of the peace, shall be as limited by law: Provided, That justices of the peace shall not have jurisdiction of any matter in controversy when the title or boundaries of land may be in dispute, or where the debt or sum claimed shall exceed one hundred dollars; and the said supreme and district courts, respectively, shall possess chancery as well as common law jurisdiction. Said District Court, or the judge thereof, shall appoint its clerk, who shall also be the register in chancery, and shall keep his office at the place where the court may be held. Writs of error, bills of exception, and appeals shall be allowed in all cases from the final decisions of said district courts to the Supreme Court, under such regulations as may be



1853-1854

1853-1854

prescribed by law; but in no case removed to the Supreme Court shall trial by jury be allowed in said court. The Supreme Court, or the justices thereof, shall appoint its own clerk, and every clerk shall hold his office at the pleasure of the court for which he shall have been appointed. Writs of error, and appeals from the final decisions of said supreme court, shall be allowed, and may be taken to the Supreme Court of the United States, in the same manner and under the same regulations as from the Circuit Courts of the United States, where the value of the property, or the amount in controversy, to be ascertained by the oath or affirmation of either party, or other competent witness, shall exceed one thousand dollars; except only that in all cases involving title to slaves, the said writ of error or appeals shall be allowed and decided by said supreme court, without regard to the value of the matter, property, or title in controversy; and except also that a writ of error or appeal shall also be allowed to the Supreme Court of the United States, from the decision of the said supreme court created by this act, or of any judge thereof, or of the district courts created by this act, or of any judge thereof, upon any writ of habeas corpus, involving the question of personal freedom: Provided, That nothing herein contained shall be construed to apply to or affect the provisions of the "act respecting fugitives from justice, and persons escaping from the service of their masters," approved February twelfth, - seventeen hundred and ninety-three, and the "act to amend and supplementary to the aforesaid act," approved September eighteenth, eighteen hundred and fifty; and each of the said district courts shall have and exercise the same jurisdiction in all cases arising under the Constitution and laws of the United States as is vested in the Circuit and District Courts of the United States; and the said supreme and district courts of the said Territory, and the respective judges thereof, shall and may grant writs of habeas corpus in all cases in which the same are granted by the judges of the United States in the District of Columbia; and the first six days of every term of said courts, or so much thereof as may be necessary, shall be appropriated to the trial of causes arising under the said Constitution and laws, and writs of error and appeal in all such cases shall be made to the Supreme Court of said Territory, the same as in other cases. The said clerk shall receive the same fees in all such cases, which the clerks of the district courts of Utah Territory now receive for similar services.

SECTION 28. And be it further enacted, That the provisions of the act entitled "An act respecting fugitives from justice, and persons escaping from, the service of their masters," approved February twelfth, seventeen hundred and ninety-three, and the provisions of the act entitled "An act to amend, and supplementary to, the aforesaid act," approved September eighteenth, eighteen hundred and fifty, be, and the same are hereby, declared to extend to and be in full force within the limits of the said Territory of Kansas.

SECTION 29. And be it further enacted, That there shall be appointed an attorney for said Territory, who shall continue in office for four years, and until his successor shall be



1853-1854

1853-1854

appointed and qualified, unless sooner removed by the President, and who shall receive the same fees and salary as the Attorney of the United States for the present Territory of Utah. There shall also be a marshal for the Territory appointed, who shall hold his office for four years, and until his successor shall be appointed and qualified, unless sooner removed by the President, and who shall execute all processes issuing from the said courts where exercising their jurisdiction as Circuit and District Courts of the United States; he shall perform the duties, be subject to the same regulations and penalties, and be entitled to the same fees, as the Marshal of the District Court of the United States for the present Territory of Utah, and shall, in addition, be paid two hundred dollars annually as a compensation for extra services.

SECTION 30. And be it further enacted, That the Governor, Secretary, Chief Justice, and Associate Justices, Attorney, and Marshal, shall be nominated, and, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, appointed by the President of the United States. The Governor and Secretary to be appointed as aforesaid shall, before they act as such, respectively take an oath or affirmation before the district judge or some justice of the peace in the limits of said Territory, duly authorized to administer oaths and affirmations by the laws now in force therein, or before the Chief Justice or some Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, to support the Constitution of the United States, and faithfully to discharge the duties of their respective offices, which said oaths, when so taken, shall be certified by the person by whom the same shall have been taken; and such certificates shall be received and recorded by the said secretary among the executive proceedings; and the Chief Justice and Associate Justices, and all other civil officers in said Territory, before they act as such, shall take a like oath or affirmation before the said Governor or Secretary, or some Judge or Justice of the Peace of the Territory who may be duly commissioned and qualified, which said oath or affirmation shall be certified and transmitted by the person taking the same to the Secretary, to be by him recorded as aforesaid; and, afterwards, the like oath or affirmation shall be taken, certified, and recorded, in such manner and form as may be prescribed by law. The Governor shall receive an annual salary of two thousand five hundred dollars. The Chief Justice and Associate Justices shall receive As an annual salary of two thousand dollars. The Secretary shall receive an annual salary of two thousand dollars. The said salaries shall be paid quarter-yearly, from the dates of the respective appointments, at the Treasury of the United States; but no such payment shall be made until said officers shall have entered upon the duties of their respective appointments. The members of the Legislative Assembly shall be entitled to receive three dollars each per day during their attendance at the sessions thereof, and three dollars each for every twenty miles' travel in going to and returning from the said sessions, estimated according to the nearest usually travelled route; and an additional allowance of three dollars shall be paid to the presiding officer of each house for each day he shall so preside. And a chief clerk, one assistant clerk, a sergeant at-arms, and door-keeper, may be

1853-1854**1853-1854**

chosen for each house; and the chief clerk shall receive four dollars per day, and the said other officers three dollars per day, during the session of the Legislative Assembly; but no to other officers shall be paid by the United States: Provided, That there shall be but one session of the Legislature annually, unless, on an extraordinary occasion, the Governor shall think proper to call the Legislature together. There shall be appropriated, annually, the usual sum, to be expended by the Governor, to defray the contingent expenses of the Territory, including the salary of a clerk of the Executive Department and there shall also be appropriated, annually, a sufficient sum, to be expended by the Secretary of the Territory, and upon an estimate to be made by the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, to defray the expenses of the Legislative Assembly, the printing of the laws, and other incidental expenses; and the Governor and Secretary of the Territory shall, in the disbursement of all moneys intrusted to them, be governed solely by the instructions of the secretary of the Treasury of the United States, and shall, semi-annually, account to the said secretary for lit the manner in which the aforesaid moneys shall have been expended; and no expenditure shall be made by said Legislative Assembly for objects not specially authorized by the acts of Congress making the appropriations, nor beyond the sums thus appropriated for such objects.

SECTION 31. And be it further enacted, That the seat of government of said Territory is hereby located temporarily at Fort Leavenworth; and that such portions of the public buildings as may not be actually used and needed for military purposes, may be occupied and used, under the direction of the Governor and Legislative Assembly, for such public purposes as may be required under the provisions of this act.

SECTION 32. And be it further enacted, That a delegate to the House of Representatives of the United States, to serve for the term of two years, who shall be a citizen of the United States, may be elected by the voters qualified to elect members of the Legislative Assembly, who shall be entitled to the same rights and privileges as are exercised and enjoyed by the delegates from the several other Territories of the United States to the said House of Representatives, but the delegate first elected shall hold his seat only during the term of the Congress to which he shall be elected. The first election shall be held at such time and places, and be conducted in such manner, as the Governor shall appoint and direct; and at all subsequent elections, the times, places, and manner of holding the elections shall be prescribed by law. The person having the greatest number of votes shall be declared by the Governor to be duly elected, and a certificate thereof shall be given accordingly. That the Constitution, and all laws of the United States which are not locally inapplicable, shall have the same force and effect within the said Territory of Kansas as elsewhere within the United States, except the eighth section of the act preparatory to the admission of Missouri into the Union, approved March sixth, eighteen hundred and twenty, which, being inconsistent with the principle of non-intervention by Congress with slavery in the States and Territories, as recognized by the legislation



1853-1854

1853-1854

of eighteen hundred and fifty, commonly called the Compromise Measures, is hereby declared inoperative and void; it being the true intent and meaning of this act not to legislate slavery into any Territory or State, nor to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States: Provided, That nothing herein contained shall be construed to revive or put in force any law or regulation which may have existed prior to the act of sixth of March, eighteen hundred and twenty, either protecting, establishing, prohibiting, or abolishing slavery.

SECTION 33. And be it further enacted; That there shall hereafter be appropriated, as has been customary for the territorial governments, a sufficient amount, to be expended under the direction of the said Governor of the Territory of Kansas, not exceeding the sums heretofore appropriated for similar objects, for the erection of suitable public buildings at the seat of government, and for the purchase of a library, to be kept at the seat of government for the use of the Governor, Legislative Assembly, Judges of the Supreme Court, Secretary, Marshal, and Attorney of said Territory, and such other persons, and under such regulations, as shall be prescribed by law.

SECTION 34. And be it further enacted, That when the lands in the said Territory shall be surveyed under the direction of the government of the United States, preparatory to bringing the same into market, sections numbered sixteen and thirty-six in each township in said Territory shall be, and the same are hereby, reserved for the purpose of being applied to schools in said Territory, and in the States and Territories hereafter to be erected out of the same.

SECTION 35. And be it further enacted, That, until otherwise provided by law, the Governor of said Territory may define the Judicial Districts of said Territory, and assign the judges who may be appointed for said Territory to the several districts; and also appoint the times and places for holding courts in the several counties or subdivisions in each of said judicial districts by proclamation, to be issued by him; but the Legislative Assembly, at their first or any subsequent session, may organize, alter, or modify such judicial districts, and assign the judges, and alter the times and places of holding the courts as to them shall seem proper and convenient.

SECTION 36. And be it further enacted, That all officers to be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, for the Territory of Kansas, who, by virtue of the provisions of any law now existing, or which may be enacted during the present Congress, are required to give security for moneys that may be intrusted with them for disbursement, shall give such security, at such time and place, and in such manner as the Secretary of the Treasury may prescribe.

SECTION 37. And be it further enacted, That all treaties, laws, and other, engagements made by the government of the United States with the Indian tribes inhabiting the territories embraced within this act, shall be faithfully and rigidly observed, notwithstanding any thing contained in this act; and



1853-1854

1853-1854

that the existing agencies and superintendencies of said Indians be continued with the same powers and duties which are now prescribed by law, except that the President of the United States may, at his discretion, change the location of the office of superintendent.

Approved, May 30, 1854.



May 30, Tuesday: In [California](#), Lone Mountain Cemetery was dedicated.

Kibrisli Mehmed Pasha replaced Mustafa Naili Pasha as Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire.

The [Kansas/Nebraska Act](#) was passed by the United States Congress. This left the question of slavery in these territories open to popular vote. Those opposed to slavery would perceive this as a supremely dangerous incursion of slavery into the north.

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

Within a month of the organization of the [Kansas and Nebraska territories](#), President [Franklin Pierce](#) appointed [Physic Rush Elmore](#), the owner of 14 slaves, as an associate judge of the supreme court for the territory of [Kansas](#).

In [Boston](#), the New England Anti-Slavery Society met to try to figure out what to do, while the presser of the Brattle Street tailor shop, [Anthony Burns](#), was on trial in the courthouse, on the charge of being a fugitive from enslavement. Behind barricades of ropes stretched across Courthouse Square, the courthouse was being guarded by regiments of US troops. The night was so cold that Thoreau had to go out and cover his watermelon plants.

RESISTING THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

The [Boston Post](#), a Democratic mouthpiece, was editorializing that “What these bold, bad men [the paper instances the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#) and aristocrat [Wendell Phillips](#) by name] are doing, is nothing more nor less than committing treason.”

A false report had appeared in the [Boston Daily Times](#), on Monday, May 29th, that Friend [John Greenleaf Whittier](#) had offered “any aid, by money or muscle,” to effect a violent rescue of Anthony Burns. (Whittier had in fact incautiously commented in a message that had become generally known, that “anything” would be preferred to sending Burns “out of Boston as a slave.”) On this day Whittier wrote to the newspaper, offering as further explanation of the attitude he was seeking to express, that “I regard all violence as evil and self-destructive.”

In [Concord](#) in the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Clintonia [swamp](#) and Pond.



May 30. Tuesday. Whiteweed. *Spergularia rubra*, apparently a day or two, side of railroad above red house. Yarrow.

P.M. — To Clintonia Swamp and Pond.

Saw a black snake, dead, four feet three inches long, slate-colored beneath. Saw what was called a California cat which a colored man brought home from California, — an animal at least a third smaller than a cat and shaped more like a polecat or weasel, brown-gray, with a cat-like tail of alternate black and white rings, very large ears, and eyes which were prominent, long body like a weasel, and sleeps with its head between its fore paws, curling itself about; a rank smell to it. It was lost several days in our woods, and was caught again in a tree; about a crow’s nest.²¹³

Ranunculus repens, perhaps a day or two; channelled peduncle and spreading calyx and




1853-1854

1853-1854

conspicuously spotted leaves. The leaves of the tall buttercup are much larger and finely cut and, as it were, peltate. Pickerel are not easily detected, — such is their color, — as if they were transparent. Vetch. I see now green high blueberries, and gooseberries in Hubbard's Close, as well as shad-bush berries and strawberries.

In this dark, cellar-like maple swamp are scattered at pretty regular intervals tufts of green ferns, *Osmunda cinnamomea*, above the dead brown leaves, broad, tapering fronds, curving over on every side from a compact centre, now three or four feet high. Wood frogs skipping over the dead leaves, whose color they resemble. Clintonia. Medeola. The last may be earlier. I am surprised to find arethusa abundantly out in Hubbard's Close, maybe two or three days, though not yet at Arethusa Meadow, probably on account of the recent freshet. It is so leafless that it shoots up unexpectedly. It is all color, a little hook of purple flame projecting from the meadow into the air. Some are comparatively pale. This high-colored plant shoots up suddenly, all flower, in meadows where it is wet walking. A superb flower. Cotton-grass here also, probably two or three days for the same reason. *Eriophorum polystachyon* var. *latifolium*, having rough peduncles.

The twigs of the dwarf willow, now gone to seed, are thickly invested with cotton, containing little green seed-vessels, like excrement of caterpillars, and the shrubs look at a little distance like sand cherries in full bloom. These are among the downy seeds that fly.

Found a ground-robin's [~~Ground-bird,~~²¹⁴ ~~Ground-robin,~~ ~~Chewink~~ (Rufous-sided Towhee  *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*)] nest, under a tuft of dry sedge which the winter had bent down, in sprout-land on the side of Heywood Peak, perfectly concealed, with two whitish eggs very thickly sprinkled with brown; made of coarse grass and weed stems and lined with a few hairs and stems of the mahogany moss.

The pink is certainly one of the finest of our flowers and deserves the place it holds in my memory. It is now in its prime on the south side of the Heywood Peak, where it grows luxuriantly in dense rounded tufts or hemispheres, raying out on every side and presenting an even and regular surface of expanded flowers. I count in one such tuft, of an oval form twelve inches by eight, some three hundred fully open and about three times as many buds, — more than a thousand in all. Some tufts consist wholly of white ones with a very faint tinge of pink. This flower is as elegant in form as in color, though it is not fragrant. It is associated in my mind with the first heats of summer, or [those] which announce its near approach. Few plants are so worthy of cultivation. The shrub oak pincushion (?) galls are larger, whiter, and less compact than those of the white oak. I find the linnaea, and budded, in Stow's Wood by Deep Cut.




Sweet flag. Waxwork to-morrow. [June 1st.] I see my umbrella toadstool on the hillside has already pierced the ground.



May 31, Wednesday: The Boston Post, noting Friend John Greenleaf Whittier's letter to the Times, commented misleadingly that Friend John had "come out in favor of the law."

The Reverend Dr. David Livingstone arrived at St. Paul de Loanda (Luanda), 1,300 kilometers from the beginning of his trek Linyanti. He was very ill.

213. Ringtail (*Bassariscus astutus*) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ring-tailed_Cat

214. Thoreau occasionally used this term for such ground-feeding birds as Savannah Sparrow  *Passerculus sandwichensis*, Song Sparrow  *Melospiza melodia*, and Vesper Sparrow  *Pooecetes gramineus*.

1853-1854

1853-1854



May 31, Wednesday: [Ann Flannery](#) arrived in the port of Boston aboard the vessel *Meredian* (she was listed as “Ann Flaney,” age 40, with John, age 5), with her son [John Joseph Flannery](#) (her son [Patrick Flannery](#), not quite 4 years of age, apparently had needed to be left behind due to illness, and would arrive on July 11, 1855 aboard the vessel *Chariot of Fame*).

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went by boat to Miles Meadow.

“Up Assabet” is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau’s two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), *THE BOATMAN*, page 10



In reading the following, please to bear in mind that one of the perennial joke explanations for the complexion of the black race, which every white Bostonian was hearing in barbershops and church socials and other venues, was that when God had made those people, He had inadvertently left them in the oven too long. They were like God’s burned cookies. This was a joke that could be made to play real well, in the case of a black man who happened to bear a name such as “Burns.” (Even a white man can be bright enough to figure out how to play around with such obvious materials.)

OK, now here’s the material of the day. There appeared in a Boston newspaper an advertisement for a burn medication known as “Russian Salve,” and this advertisement was for the nonce posing the trick question, precisely what was the difference between a slavemaster and salve. (The answer these people were poking at, we can figure out, was that while salve is good for burns, the slavemaster was bad for Burns.)

The Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) wrote again from his home in Worcester, after having obtained the benefit of legal counsel, to his mother Louisa Storrow Higginson: “I think it altogether probable, now, that I shall be arrested soon, imprisoned till the trial and perhaps after again.”

ANTHONY BURNS



May 31. Old Election. Cold weather. Many go a-fishing to-day in earnest, and one gets forty pouts in river. Locust.

P.M. — To Miles Meadow by boat.


A cold southeast wind. Blue-eyed grass, apparently in pretty good season. Saw a greater telltale [**Greater Yellowlegs** [Tringa melanoleuca](#)], and this is the only one I have seen probably; distinguished by its size. It is very, watchful, but not timid, allowing me to come quite near, while it stands on the lookout at the water’s edge. It keeps nodding its head with an awkward jerk, and wades in the water to the middle of its yellow legs; goes oft with a loud and sharp *phe phe phe phe*, or something like that. It acts the part of the telltale, although there are no birds here, as if [it] were with a flock. Remarkable as a sentinel for other birds. I think I see a few clams come up. The mountain sumach at the Cliffs is much more forward than at Hubbard’s, and perhaps is earlier to leaf than the button-bush. Alternate cornel, apparently yesterday. Cockspur thorn is well out; how long? Maidenhair fern, how handsome!



1853-1854


1853-1854

JUNE 1854


 June: The New England Emigrant Aid Company dispatched Dr. Charles Robinson of Fitchburg and Mr. Charles Henry Branscomb of Holyoke to explore the [Kansas Territory](#) and select a site for a colony.

[THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION](#)

When a museum opened on the island of [St. Helena](#) its exhibits included a sea serpent and a flying lizard. Were these extinct local species?

 June: This month's issue of [Harper's New Monthly Magazine](#).

[CONSULT THIS ISSUE](#)

 June: James Spicer, Esq. invited the [Reverend Samuel Ringgold Ward](#) to dine with the Company of Fishmongers, and the Reverend was enabled there to make remarks on the topic of civil and religious liberty.

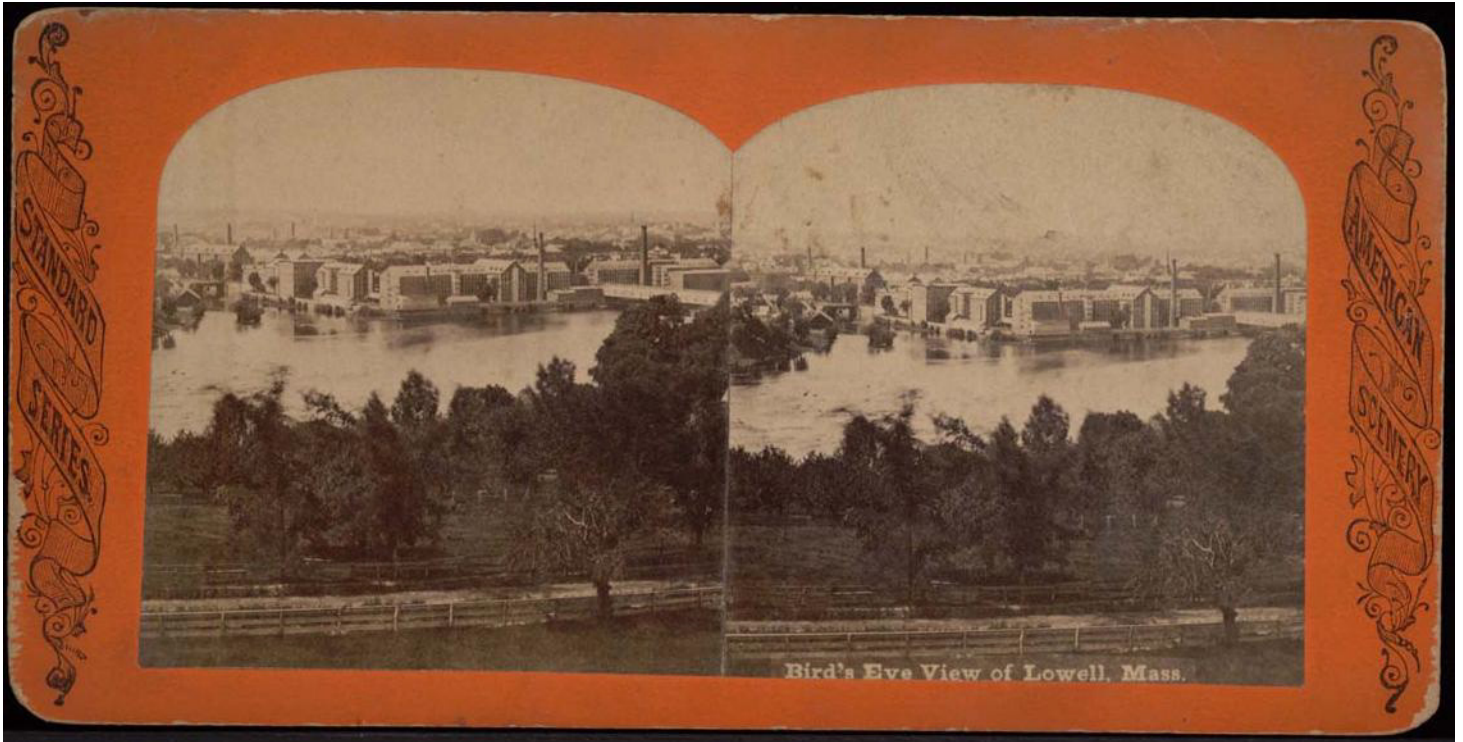
1853-1854

1853-1854




June: When the Five Cent Savings Bank began operations, the [Reverend Horatio Wood](#), whose father had been president of the Mechanics Bank of Newbury port, was chosen as its president. He would fill that function until resigning in January 1885 in consequence of physical disability.

Horatio Wood



FIGURING OUT WHAT AMOUNTS TO A “HISTORICAL CONTEXT” IS WHAT THE CRAFT OF HISTORICIZING AMOUNTS TO, AND THIS NECESSITATES DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN THE SET OF EVENTS THAT MUST HAVE TAKEN PLACE BEFORE EVENT E COULD BECOME POSSIBLE, AND MOST CAREFULLY DISTINGUISHING THEM FROM ANOTHER SET OF EVENTS THAT COULD NOT POSSIBLY OCCUR UNTIL SUBSEQUENT TO EVENT E.

Read [Henry Thoreau's Journal for June 1854 \(æf. 36\)](#)

 June 1, Thursday: At 4:30 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) went to the Hill, and in the afternoon he went on the Walden Pond road to [Goose Pond](#) and thence to Bare Hill.

Dr. Shattuck purchased the [Waterford](#) “[Water Cure](#)” (now, because of a more careful regard for the truth, known as “The Lake House and Annex” :-).



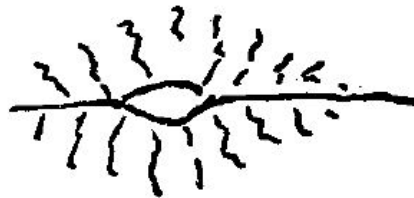
June 1. 4.30 A. M. -- To Hill.

Fever-root. The umbrella toadstool yesterday, and now decaying. A smaller one. It was so cold last night and still that I surely expected a frost and covered all our melons. But either the wind changed or clouds came over in the night, and there w-as no frost here. Here is another cool day. I sit with window shut and walk with a thick coat, as yesterday. Do we not always have these changes about the first of June?

P.M. — To Bare hill via Walden road and Goose Pond. Below the almshouse I see a small sparrow, not larger than the field sparrow, — with a white line down the middle of the head, a tawny throat and breast, a yellow spot over the eye and another on the forward part of the wings, flesh-colored legs, upper mandible dusky, and wings dark with faint lines of white. Undoubtedly the *Fringilla passerina* [x]. There were two. Its note was that of my seringo, but very faint and short, sitting on the wall or fence-post. I see caterpillars, now full-grown, clustered upon their great nests on stripped cherry trees in the woods. Hear my evergreen-forest note, sounding rather gaspingly as usual, where there are large oaks and pines mingled, — *er-er te, to ter twee, or er tc, tc ter t toe.*²¹⁵ It is very difficult to discover now that the leaves are grown, as it frequents the tops of the trees. But I get a glimpse of its black throat and, I think, yellow head. This and the red-eye [x] and wood pewee [x] are singing now at midday. The pincushion galls of the shrub oaks have but little color compared with those of the white oak, and are now turning brown. The shrub oak ones are larger but plainer, less spotted, and less distinctly spotted, than the others. Galls are a surprising production of nature, suggesting a union or connivance of two kingdoms, the animal and vegetable, to produce. Many, like the ordinary black oak-balls (I see some fully grown), seem as natural to the tree as its proper fruit, and plainly anticipated by its whole economy. We hesitate to pronounce them abortions. Their grub is a foster-child of the oak. I see equally if not more remarkable and regular ones on a black shrub oak, of this form,



attached to a leaf, green, — a core like this:



Being filled with air, they burst with a puff when pressed.

215. [A good rendering of the song of the black-throated green warbler.]



1853-1854

1853-1854

I see marks of a frost last night in sprout-land hollows; young white oaks and hickories, and some other oaks even, have been touched, and, though not yet black, their leaves are crisped and come off. In wood-paths and elsewhere I now see countless dragonflies which have lately taken wing, — some of those pretty little blue ones, and various colors. One of those biting flies stabs my finger severely, wings half black, with a green front.

Within little more than a fortnight the woods, from bare twigs, have become a sea of verdure, and young shoots have contended with one another in the race. The leaves have unfurled all over the country like a parasol. Shade is produced, and the birds are concealed and their economies go forward uninterrupted, and a covert is afforded to the animals generally. But thousands of worms and insects are preying on the leaves while: they are young and tender. Myriads of little parasols are suddenly spread all the country over, to shield the earth and the roots of the trees from parching heat, and they begin to flutter and rustle in the breeze. Checkerberry shoots in forward places are now just fit to eat, they are so young and tender. In a long walk I have found these somewhat refreshing. From Bare Hill there is a bluish mist on the landscape, giving it a glaucous appearance.

Now I see gentlemen and ladies sitting at anchor in boats on the lakes in the calm afternoons, under parasols, making use of nature, not always accumulating money. The farmer hoeing is wont to look with scorn and pride on a man sitting in a motionless boat a whole half-day, but he dares not realize that the object of his own labor is perhaps merely to add another dollar to his heap, nor through what coarseness and inhumanity to his family and servants he often accomplishes this. He has an Irishman or a Canadian working for him by the month; and what, probably, is the lesson that he is teaching him by precept and example? Will it make that laborer more of a man? this earth more like heaven? The veiny-leaved hawkweed to-morrow. I see the sand cherry in puffs like the Canada plum in some places.

1853-1854

1853-1854



June 2, "Bad Friday": [Louis D'Entremont Surette](#) was born in [Concord](#) to [Louis A. Surette](#) and [Frances Jane Shattuck Surette](#).

By 6AM, crowds were already beginning to accumulate outside the [Boston](#) courthouse.



At 7:30AM, to maintain order and to make some sort of gesture that this is after all America, a brace of horses dragged a cannon onto the square before the courthouse and a squad of [U.S. Marines](#) trained its load of 6 pounds of grapeshot on the crowd.

At 8AM a martial law notice was posted, which someone read aloud to the crowd:

TO THE CITIZENS OF BOSTON.

To secure order throughout the city this day, Major-General Edmands and the Chief of Police will make such disposition of the respective forces under their commands as will best promote that important object; and they are clothed with full discretionary power to sustain the laws of the land. All well-disposed citizens and other persons are urgently requested to leave those streets which it may be found necessary to clear temporarily, and under no circumstances to obstruct or molest any officer, civil or military, in the lawful discharge of his duty.

J.V.C. SMITH, Mayor.

BOSTON, June 2, 1854.

1853-1854

1853-1854

At 8:45AM the defendant's attorney, [Richard Henry Dana, Jr.](#), entered the courtroom, and was startled to observe his client [Anthony Burns](#) attired in a stylish new suit.

At 9AM [Judge of Probate Edward Greeley Loring](#) entered the chamber, and the troops outside began to drive the citizenry out of the courthouse square. The Marines began ostentatiously to "train" by going through the motions of loading, firing, and reloading their cannon, while the police began to make arrests. Judge Loring, in regard to the objection that was being raised that his rôle as a Fugitive Slave Bill Commissioner of the United States of America was an unconstitutional one for judges to play, commented mildly that his duties as a Fugitive Slave Commissioner were "ministerial rather than judicial."

[Horace Mann, Sr.](#) and E.G. Loring were old buddies from the Litchfield Law School. It had been just a brief period since Loring, who was an officer of Harvard College, had been rejected as a candidate for a law professorship because of his favoring the Fugitive Slave Law as written by [James Murray Mason](#) of Virginia.

To prove to the court what everyone knew to be the fact, the slavemaster and his attorney displayed to the judge a copy of the Revised Code of Virginia.

"On the law and facts of the case, I consider the claimant entitled to the certificate from me which he claims."

Judge Loring then signed the certificate and outside upon a signal the bells of Boston's churches began to toll. In response to the pealing of the bells, the townspeople began to hang black bunting, and women's black shawls and mantles, out of their windows. The streets of Boston were being patrolled by the National Guard, and by US Army cavalry, and by marines, and by artillery brigades, totaling some 2,000 soldiers—President Pierce having ordered that no expense be spared—but no quantity of mere soldiering could force local citizens to raise their flags above half-mast or take down their drapings of black bunting.

At 2:30PM the procession of troops, each with pistol by his left hand and drawn cutlass in his right, began to move toward the waterfront and, eventually, the government revenue cutter *Morris* that was being kept at a safe distance in the harbor, out at the mooring at Minot's Light. Burn was moved along quick-step by the troops "down that sworded street" from the Boston courthouse in the custody of [US Marshall Asa O. Butman](#). The Marine Band attempted to incite the crowds of citizens lining the streets to riot by playing the tune "Carry Me Back to Old Virginnny," so that the army would have an opportunity to do what it does best, but could not get a firefight started. The colored man was heard to comment,

There was a lot of folks to see a colored man walk through the streets.

The New England Woman's Rights Convention was getting little done, for the delegates were out on State Street watching the colored man in the new suit being marched past. [William Lloyd Garrison](#) and the Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) watched together from the window of a law office (this would get Conway in big trouble in his home town in Virginia). On the way down to Dock T, it seems that by coincidence a druggist's stockboy from Roxbury, William Ela, who had been sent into town that afternoon to procure a bottle of ink, was in the vicinity lugging his bottle — and the troops presumed that the bottle he was carrying contained vitriol which he intended to hurl at them. The bottle of ink was smashed and the boy would be brain-damaged from being assaulted with the butts of muskets (later there would be a lawsuit for his maintenance: *Ela v. J.V.C. Smith*). The nervous troops also bayoneted a carthorse that happened to get in their way as [Anthony Burns](#) was being marched to the dock. There was a dock, and there was a street leading down to it; the cutter was at the end of the dock, and sometimes a cart driver does not mean to get in the way. What to do? Where a human being means nothing, what the hell is a horse supposed to mean? The white soldiers, having gotten all keyed up to bayonet citizens, of course bayoneted the horse. The driver of the cart was lucky they didn't bayonet him as well.



1853-1854

1853-1854

At 3:20PM, after the troops had loaded their black captive and their brass cannon aboard the steamer *John Taylor* at Dock T, the steamer pulled away from the dock and began to make its way through the massed small craft in the harbor toward Minot's Light, where the federal revenue cutter *Morris* was waiting.

That afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) had taken his mother [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) and sister [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#) in his boat up the [Assabet River](#) to Castilleja and Annursnack (they wouldn't return until about 7 PM).

By 8:30PM, [Richard Henry Dana, Jr.](#) had finished writing out a version of the closing argument which he had offered, and had sent it off to the Boston [Traveller](#) to be published in their next edition. When he met [Anson Burlingame](#), the 9PM omnibus to Cambridge having already departed, Burlingame offered to escort Dana home. As they walked together on Court Street, however, Dana was struck from behind. The lawyer's glasses flew off and shattered. His eye was blackened and some of his teeth were chipped.²¹⁶

RESISTING THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

Friend [John Greenleaf Whittier](#) would turn the [Anthony Burns](#) episode into one of his occasional poems, but –poetry to the contrary notwithstanding– the man of color's wrists had not been in handcuffs as he had been quick-stepped “hand-cuffed down that sworded street” of sordid downtown Boston:

The Rendition, by [John Greenleaf Whittier](#).

I HEARD the train's shrill whistle call,
I saw an earnest look beseech,
And rather by that look than speech
My neighbor told me all.

And, as I thought of Liberty
Marched handcuffed down that sworded street,
The solid earth beneath my feet
Reeled fluid as the sea.

I felt a sense of bitter loss, —
Shame, tearless grief, and stifling wrath,
And loathing fear, as if my path
A serpent stretched across.

All love of home, all pride of place,
All generous confidence and trust,
Sank smothering in that deep disgust
And anguish of disgrace.

Down on my native hills of June,
And home's green quiet, hiding all,
Fell sudden darkness like the fall
Of midnight upon noon!

And Law, an unloosed maniac, strong,
Blood-drunken, through the blackness trod,
Hoarse-shouting in the ear of God
The blasphemy of wrong.

“O Mother, from thy memories proud,
Thy old renown, dear Commonwealth,
Lend this dead air a breeze of health,

216. The men were later identified as Luigi Varelli and Henry Huxford, who had been serving that day as part of the marshal's guard and who were celebrating their earnings at Allen's Saloon when they recognized [Richard Henry Dana, Jr.](#) as he passed on the sidewalk. [Anthony Burns](#) would turn out to be the last escapee from slavery to be returned from Massachusetts. His owner would not, as was feared at the time, torture him to death. He would be kept in the traders' jail in Richmond, Virginia until sold to a white man from North Carolina. This man would then retail him to a Massachusetts minister at Barnum's Hotel in [Baltimore](#) in February 1855 for the sum of \$1,325.⁰⁰ On March 7, 1855 Burns would be feted at [Tremont Temple](#) and handed [manumission](#) papers. He would attend the School of Divinity at [Oberlin College](#) and, bless him, he would become a minister of the gospel.

1853-1854

1853-1854

And smite with stars this cloud.

“Mother of Freedom, wise and brave,
Rise awful in thy strength;” I said;
Ah me! I spake but to the dead;
I stood upon her grave!



June 2. Friday. P.M. — Up Assabet to Castilleja and Annurnsack.

“Up Assabet” is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau’s two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 10

While waiting for Mother and Sophia I look now from the yard to the waving and slightly glaucous-tinged June meadows, edged by the cool shade –gelid– of shrubs and trees, — a waving shore of shady bays and promontories, — yet different from the August shades. It is beautiful and elysian. The air has now begun to be filled with a bluish haze. These virgin shades of the year, when everything is tender, fresh and green, — how full of promise! promising bowers of shade in which heroes may repose themselves! I would fain be present at the birth of shadow. It takes place with the first expansion of the leaves.

I find sanicle just out on the Island. The black willows are already beautiful, and the hemlocks with their bead-work of new green. Are these not kingbird [[Eastern Kingbird](#) [Tyrannus tyrannus](#)] days, when, in clearer first June days full of light, this aerial, twittering bird flutters from willow to willow and swings on the twigs, showing his white-edged tail? The *Azalea nudiflora* has about done, or there was apparently little of it. I see some breams’ nests near my old bathing-place above the stone-heaps, with sharp, yellow, sandy edges, like a milk-pan from within, showing considerable art (?) as well as labor. Also there are three or four small stoneheaps formed. We went near to the stone

bridge and crossed direct *via* the house-leek, of which I brought home a bunch. No *Stellaria longiflora* nor *Ranunculus abortivus* to be found yet in bloom, though probably some of the first, apetalous, have opened now. Lambkill. The Painted-Cup Meadow is all lit up with ferns, on its springy slopes. The handsome flowering fern, now rapidly expanding and fruiting at the same time, colors these moist slopes afar with its now commonly reddish fronds. And then there are the interrupted and the cinnamon ferns in very handsome and regular tufts, and the brakes standing singly and more backward. The rue, just budded, smells remarkably like a skunk and also like a rank dog. Strange affinity! Took tea at Mrs. Barrett’s.

When we returned to our boat at 7 P.M., I noticed first, to my surprise, that the river was all alive with leaping fish, their heads seen continually darted above water, and they were large fish, too. Looking up I found that the whole atmosphere over the river was full of shad-flies. It was a *great flight of ephemerae*. It was not so when I landed an hour and a half before. They extended as high as I could see. It was like a dense snow-storm, and all (with very few exceptions) flying as with one consent up the stream. Many coupled in the air, and many more with the bodies curved. They reached a mile or more from the stone-heaps to the mouth of the Assabet, but were densest where there were woods on both sides, whether they came out of them, or they made the air more still for them. Those I examined had three very long streamers behind, the two outside about an inch and a quarter. The fishes I saw rise for such as were struggling on the water close to the boat were, I am pretty sure, suckers. This is like what the French fishermen call “manna.” There were also swarms of small black millers close above the surface, and other small ones. Several dead suckers were floating. It seemed



1853-1854

1853-1854

as if the suckers were now ascending the river. In the air there was one or more at least to every foot. Apparently this phenomenon reached on this stream as far as it was wooded. Caraway naturalized, and out apparently two or three days, in S. Barrett's front yard.

The following commentary on Thoreau's journal entry for this day is from H. Daniel Peck's THOREAU'S MORNING WORK: MEMORY AND PERCEPTION IN A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS, THE JOURNAL, AND WALDEN (Yale UP, 1994):

To "improve these seasons as much as a farmer his" is to cultivate them richly through perception and to fix them in enduring phenomenological categories. One of the most obvious signs of Thoreau's ongoing revision of the traditional calendar in the Journal is his unceasing recording of first-observed appearances of seasonal phenomena. These observations cluster in the spring, when their myriad occurrences signify the vigorous rebirth of nature celebrated in the climatic chapter of WALDEN. Yet a close reading of the Journal reveals that Thoreau was closely attentive to "first facts" at all seasons. There are hundreds of such observations in the Journal, recorded at all times of the year and usually without commentary. In part, they are an expression of Thoreau's deep preoccupation with origins. By searching the world for the first visible appearances of natural growth, he hopes to participate through observation in the creativity of nature – to be there at the moment of genesis. A passage from a Journal entry of June 2, 1854, expresses this desire poignantly: "I would fain be present at the birth of shadow. It takes place with the first expansion of the leaves." But as this example shows, the concept of beginning as it is usually expressed in the Journal is defined not by pure origination but by repetition. The necessary context for observing the "first" appearance of a seasonal phenomenon is the natural cycle; any "first" in nature is recognizable only because it has happened before. That is, Thoreau has already prepared, or recognized, a category for anticipating it; he is keyed for the observation of first facts. In the spring of 1860, we find him "on the alert for several days to hear the first birds" (March 9, 1860). Reporting the appearance of these "first birds" to his Journal is an act of confirmation as much as an act of origination; the beginning, in Thoreau, always pivots between memory and anticipation. As he puts it in a Journal entry of June 6, 1857, "Each annual phenomenon is a reminiscence and prompting." But even the most vigilant of nature's observers cannot "be present at the birth of shadow," and Thoreau is acutely aware of this, as he shows in an entry of March 17, 1857: "No mortal is alert enough to be present at the first dawn of the spring."

The new lighthouse on Bird Island in [San Francisco Bay](#) (also known as Alcatraz Island, due to its *alcatraces* or pelicans), its new lens finally in position, was illuminated for the 1st time. The light could be seen 12 miles at sea.



1853-1854

1853-1854



June 3, Saturday: [H.G.O. Blake](#) and [Theophilus Brown](#) arrived from [Worcester](#) and went with [Henry Thoreau](#) to Fair Haven. They dined at Lee's Cliff.

The Austrian government requested that Russian troops be withdrawn from Moldavia and Wallachia.

A new organ was inaugurated in Winchester Cathedral by its organist, Samuel Sebastian Wesley, before a large audience. His virtuosic display was followed by a service consisting of his music, including the 1st performance of an anthem written for the occasion, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made."



June 3. 9 A.M. — To Fair Haven with Blake and Brown.

A very warm day, without a breeze. A kingbird's [x] nest in a fork of a black willow. Going up Fair Haven Hill, the blossoms of the huckleberries and blueberries imparted a sweet scent to the whole hillside. The cistus is well out on the Cliffs; maybe several days. At Lee's Cliff, where we dined, the oxalis pretty early (?). Hear the first, but a faint, locust.²¹⁷ On the pond, played a long [time] with the bubbles which we made with our paddles on the smooth, perhaps unctuous, surface, in which little hemispherical cases we saw ourselves and boat, small, black and distinct, with a fainter reflection on the opposite side of the bubble (head to head). These lasted sometimes a minute before they burst. They reminded me more of Italy than of New England. Crossed to Baker Farm and Mt. Misery. To-day, having to seek a shady and the most airy place, at length we were glad when the east wind arose, ruffled the water and cooled the air, and wafted us homeward. Reflected how many times other similar bubbles, which had now burst, had reflected the Indian, his canoe and paddle, with the same faithfulness that they now image me and my boat.



June 4, Sunday: At 8 AM [Henry Thoreau](#), [H.G.O. Blake](#), and [Theophilus Brown](#) went up the Assabet River to Barbarea Shore, and thence to [Walden Pond](#).

20,000 [nativists](#) invaded the [Irish](#) districts of Brooklyn, injuring scores before troops arrived.

A Chapel for [Chinese](#) was founded at Sacramento Street and Stockton Street in San Francisco. H.C. Beales was one of the trustees.

CALIFORNIA

At the base of Fisher's Peak in the Raton Range, the column of cavalymen led by Lieutenant Philip St. George Cooke managed to surprise a camp of 22 lodges of the Jicarilla Apache.

WHITE ON RED, RED ON WHITE

In Worcester, the Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#), minister of the Worcester Free Church, preached a sermon entitled "Massachusetts in Mourning" which would first be published in the Worcester Daily Spy and then reprinted as a pamphlet by James Munroe and Company of Boston at the press of Prentiss and Sawyer of No. 19, Water Street.

Massachusetts in Mourning.

Shall the iron break the Northern iron and the steel? — Jeremiah xv. 12.

You have imagined my subject beforehand, for there is but one subject on which I could preach, or you could listen, to-day.

217. Was it not a cricket?

1853-1854**1853-1854**

Yet, how hard it is to say one word of that. You do not ask, at a funeral, that the bereaved mourners themselves should speak, but you call in one a little farther removed, to utter words of comfort, if comfort there be. But to-day is, or should be, to every congregation in Massachusetts, a day of funeral service – we are all mourners – and what is there for me to say?

Yet, even in this gloom, the faculty of wonder is left; as at funerals, men ask in a low tone, around the coffin, what was the disease that smote this fair form, and are we safe from the infection? So we now ask, what is lost, and how have we lost it, and what have we left? Is it all gone, (men say,) that old New England heroism and enthusiasm? Is there any disinterested love of Freedom left in Massachusetts? And then they think with joy, (as I do,) that, at least, Freedom did not die without a struggle, and that it took thousands of armed men to lay her in the grave at last.

I am thankful for all this. Words are nothing – we have been surfeited with words for twenty years. I am thankful that this time there was action also ready for Freedom. God gave men bodies, to live and work in; the powers of those bodies are the first things to be consecrated to the Right. He gave us higher powers, also, for weapons, but, in using those, we must not forget to hold the lower ones also ready; else we miss our proper manly life on earth, and lay down our means of usefulness before we have outgrown them. "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things which are God's." Our souls and bodies are both God's, and resistance to tyrants is obedience to Him.

If you meet men whose souls are contaminated, and have time enough to work on them, you can deal with them by the weapons of the soul alone; but if men array brute force against Freedom – pistols, clubs, drilled soldiers, and stone walls – then the body also has its part to do in resistance. You must hold yourself above men, I own, yet not too far above to reach them. I do not like even to think of taking life, only of giving it; but physical force that is forcible enough, acts without bloodshed. They say that with twenty more men at hand, that Friday night, at the Boston Court House, the Slave might have been rescued without even the death of that one man – who was perhaps killed by his frightened companions, then and there. So you see force may not mean bloodshed; and calm, irresistible force, in a good cause, becomes sublime. The strokes on the door of that Court House that night for instance – they may perchance have disturbed some dreamy saint from his meditations, (if dreamy saints abound in Court Square,) – but I think they went echoing from town to town, from Boston to far New Orleans, like the first drum beat of the Revolution – and each reverberating throb was a blow upon the door of every Slave-prison of this guilty Republic.

That first faint throb of Liberty was a proud thing for Boston; Boston which was a scene so funereal a week after. Men say the act of one Friday helped prepare for the next; I am glad if it did. If the attack on the Court House had no greater effect than to send that Slave away under a guard of two thousand men, instead of two hundred, it was worth a dozen lives. If we are all Slaves indeed – if there is no law in Massachusetts except

1853-1854**1853-1854**

the telegraphic orders from Washington—if our own military are to be made Slave-catchers—if our Governor is a mere piece of State ceremony, permitted only to rise at a military dinner and thank his own soldiers for their readiness to shoot down his own constituents, without even the delay of a riot act—if Massachusetts is merely a conquered province and under martial law—then I wish to know it, and I am grateful for every additional gun and sabre that forces the truth deeper into our hearts. Lower, Massachusetts, lower, kneel still lower! Serve, Irish Marines! the kidnappers, your masters; down in the dust, citizen soldiery! before the Irish Marines, and for you, O Governor, a lower humility yet, and your homage must be paid, at second hand, before the stained and soiled “citizen soldiery.”

I remember the great trades-procession in Boston, a few years since, in honor of the visitors from the North, from the free soil of Canada. Then all choice implements, which Massachusetts had invented to supply the industry of the world, were brought forth for exhibition, and superb was the show. This time we had visitors from the South – the South which uses tools also – and imports them all, “hoes, spades, axes, politicians, and ministers.” So the last new implements, for her use, were to be exhibited now. There were twenty-one specimens of Boston military companies. There were the two hundred more confidential bullies, for whom the city was ransacked, men so vile, that it was said the police had no duties left, for all the dangerous persons were employed as policemen themselves,— men whom a Police Judge having inspected, recognized criminal after criminal, who had been sentenced by himself to the House of Correction; these came next. Truly as there is joy in heaven over one sinner who repenteth, so there was joy in Boston that day, over one sinner who had not repented, – over every man in whom the powers of hell were strong enough, aided by public brandy, to fit him for that terrible service. Those were the tools marshalled forth for exhibition. But why were these only shown? Why were the finer, the more precious implements kept invisible that day, the real engines of that Slaveholder's triumph? Why not make the picture perfect? Place, O Chief Marshal, between the Slave and the guardian cannon, the crowning glory of that sad procession, the Slaveholder in his carriage, and chain) on the one side, the Mayor of Boston, and, on the other side, the Governor of the Commonwealth, with the motto, “The Representative Men of Massachusetts, – These tools she gives, Virginia, to thee!”

I mean no personality. The men who occupy these offices, are men who (I have always thought) did them honor. I suppose that neither would own a Slave, nor (personally) catch one. No doubt they favorably represent the average of Massachusetts men. But I introduce them for precisely this reason, to show the tragedy of our American institutions, that they take average Massachusetts men, put them into public office, and then, demanding more of them than their education gives them manliness to meet, – use them, crush them, and drop them, into the dishonor with which these hitherto honored men are suddenly overwhelmed to-day.

If such be the influence of our national organization, what good

1853-1854

1853-1854

do our efforts do? Our labor to reform the North, with the whole force of nationalized Slavery to resist, is like the effort of Sir John Franklin; on his first voyage, to get north-ward by travelling on the ice. He travelled toward the pole for six weeks, no doubt of that; but at the end of the time he was two hundred miles farther from it than when he started. The ice had floated southward – and our ice floats southward also. And so it will be, while this Union concentrates power in the hands of Slaveholders, and gives the North only commercial prosperity, the more thoroughly to enervate and destroy it.

Here, for instance, is the Nebraska Emigration Society; it is indeed, a noble enterprise; and I am proud that it owes its origin to a Worcester man – but where is the good of emigrating to Nebraska; if Nebraska is to be only a transplanted Massachusetts, and the original Massachusetts has been tried and found wanting? Will the stream rise higher than its source? Settle your Nebraska ten years, and you will have your New England harvest of corn and grain, more luxuriant in that virgin soil;— ah, but will not the other Massachusetts crop come also, of political demagogues and wire-pullers, and a sectarian religion, which will insure the passage of the greatest hypocrite to heaven, if he will join the right church before he goes? And give the emigrants twenty years more of prosperity, and then ask them, if you dare, to break law and disturb order, and risk life, merely to save their State from the shame that has just blighted Massachusetts?

In view of these facts, what stands between us and a military despotism? "Sure guarantees," you say. So has every nation thought until its fall came. "The outward form of Roman institutions stood uninjured till long after [Caligula](#) had made his horse consul." What is your safeguard? Nothing but a parchment Constitution, which has been riddled through and through whenever it pleased the Slave Power; which has not been able to preserve to you the oldest privileges of Freedom – Habeas Corpus and Trial by Jury! Stranger still, that men should think to find a security in our material prosperity, and our career of foreign conquest, and our acquisition of gold mines, and forget that these have been precisely the symptoms which have prophesied the decline of every powerful commercial state – Rome, Carthage, Tyre, Venice, Spain, Holland, and all the rest. In the third century after the birth of Jesus, Terullian painted that brilliant picture of the Roman power, which describes us, as if it were written for us:

"Certainly," says he, "the world becomes more and more our tributary; none of its secret recesses have remained inaccessible, all are known, frequented, and all have become the scene or the object of traffic. Who now dreads an unknown island? who trembles at a reef? our ships are sure to be met with everywhere—everywhere is a people, a state; everywhere is life. We crush the world beneath our weight – onerosi sumus mundo." And Rome perished, almost when the words were uttered!

How simple the acts of our tragedy may be! Let another Fugitive Slave case occur, and more blood be spilt (as might happen another time;)— let Massachusetts be declared insurrectionary, and placed under martial law, (as it might;)— let the President be made Dictator, with absolute power; let him send his willing

1853-1854

1853-1854

Attorney General to buy up officers of militia, (which would be easy,) and frighten Officers of State, (which would be easier;)- let him get half the press, and a quarter of the pulpits, to sustain his usurpation, under the name of "law and order";- let the flame spread from New England to New York, from New York to Ohio, from Ohio to Wisconsin;- and how long would it take for some future [Franklin Pierce](#) to stand where Louis Napoleon stands, now? How much would the commercial leaders of the East resist, if an appeal were skilfully made to their pockets?- or the political demagogues of the West, if an appeal were made to their ambition? It seems inconceivable! Certainly-so did the coup d' etat of Louis Napoleon, the day before it happened!

"Do not despair of the Republic," says some one, remembering the hopeful old Roman motto. But they had to despair of that one in the end,- and why not of this one also? Why, when we were going on, step by step, as older Republics have done, should we expect to stop just as we reach the brink of Niagara? The love of Liberty grows stronger every year, some think, in some places. Thirty years ago, it cost only \$25 to restore a Fugitive Slave from Boston, and now it costs \$100,000;-but still the Slave is restored. I know there are thousands of hearts which stand pledged to Liberty now, and these may save the State, in spite of her officials and her military; but can they save the Nation? They may give us disunion instead of despotism, but can they give us anything better? Can they even give us anything so good? We talk of the Anti-Slavery sentiment as being stronger; but in spite of your Free Soil votes, your Uncle Tom's Cabin, and your New York Tribunes, here is the simple fact: the South beats us more and more easily every time. So chess-players, when they have once or twice overcome a weak antagonist, think it safe, next time, to give up to him a half dozen pieces by way of odds;- and after all gain the victory. Compare this Nebraska game with the previous ones. The Slave Power could afford to give us the Whig party on our side, this time-could give up to us the commercial influence of Boston and New York, so strong an ally before-it has not had the name and presence of Daniel Webster to help it now, nor the voices of clergymen, nor the terror of disunion, nor the weariness after a long Anti-Slavery excitement: it has dispensed with all these;- nay, the whole contest was on our own sail, to defend the poor little landmark we had retreated to long before;- and for all this, the Slave Power has conquered us, just as easily as it conquered us on Texas, Mexico, and the compromises of 1850.

No wonder that this excitement is turning Whigs and Democrats into Free Soilers, and Free Soilers into disunionists. But this is only the eddy, after all; the main current sets the wrong way. The nation is intoxicated and depraved. It takes all the things you count as influential,- all the "spirit of the age," and the moral sentiment of Christendom," and the best eloquence and literature of the time,- to balance the demoralization of a single term of Presidential patronage. Give the offices of the nation to be controlled by the Slave Power, and I tell you that there is not one in ten, even of professed Anti-Slavery men, who can stand the fire in that furnace of sin; and there is not a plot so wicked, but it will have, like all its predecessors, a sufficient majority when the time comes.

1853-1854**1853-1854**

Do you doubt this? Name, if you can, a victory of Freedom, or a defeat of the Slave Power, within twenty years, except on the right of petition, and even that was only a recovery of lost ground. Do you say, the politicians are false, but the people mark the men who betray them! True, they mark them, but as merchants mark goods, with the cost price, that they may raise the price a little, when they want to sell the same article again. You must go back to the original Missouri Compromise, if you wish to prove that even Massachusetts punishes traitors to Freedom, by any severer penalty than a seat on her Supreme Bench. For myself, I do not believe in these Anti-Slavery spasms of our people, for the same reason that Coleridge did not believe in ghosts, because I have seen too many of them myself. I remember when our Massachusetts delegation in Congress, signed a sort of threat that the State would withdraw from the Union if Texas came in, but it never happened. I remember the State Convention at Faneuil Hall in 1845, where the lion and the lamb lay down together, and George T. Curtis and John G. Whittier were Secretaries; and the Convention solemnly pronounced the annexation of Texas to be the "over-throw of the Constitution, the bond of the existing Union." I remember how one speaker boasted that if Texas was voted in by joint resolution, it might be voted out by the same. But somehow, we have never mustered that amount of resolution; and when I hear of State Street petitioning for the repeal of its own Fugitive Slave Law, I remember the lesson.

For myself, I do not expect to live to see that law repealed by the votes of politicians at Washington. It can only be repealed by ourselves, upon the soil of Massachusetts. For one, I am glad to be deceived no longer. I am glad of the discovery—(no hasty thing, but gradually dawning upon me for ten years)—that I live under a despotism. I have lost the dream that ours is a land of peace and order. I have looked thoroughly through our Fourth of July," and seen its hollowness; and I advise you to petition your City Government to revoke their appropriation for its celebration, (or give the same to the Nebraska Emigration Society,) and only toll the bells in all the churches, and hang the streets in black from end to end. O shall we hold such ceremonies when only some statesman is gone, and omit them over dead Freedom, whom all true statesmen only live to serve!

At any rate my word of counsel to you is to learn this lesson thoroughly—a revolution is begun! not a Reform, but a Revolution. If you take part in politics henceforward, let it be only to bring nearer the crisis which will either save or sunder this nation—or perhaps save in sundering. I am not very hopeful, even as regards you; I know the mass of men will not make great sacrifices for Freedom, but there is more need of those who will. I have lost faith forever in numbers; I have faith only in the constancy and courage of a "forlorn hope." And for aught we know, a case may arise, this week, in Massachusetts, which may not end like the last one.

Let us speak the truth. Under the influence of Slavery, we are rapidly relapsing into that state of barbarism in which every man must rely on his own right hand for his protection. Let any man yield to his instinct of Freedom, and resist oppression, and his life is at the mercy of the first drunken officer who orders

1853-1854**1853-1854**

his troops to fire. For myself, existence looks worthless under such circumstances; and I can only make life worth living for, by becoming a revolutionist. The saying seems dangerous; but why not say it if one means it, as I certainly do. I respect law and order, but as the ancient Persian sage said, "always to obey the laws, virtue must relax much of her vigor." I see, now, that while Slavery is national, law and order must constantly be on the wrong side. I see that the case stands for me precisely as it stands for Kossuth and Mazzini, and I must take the consequences.

Do you say that ours is a Democratic Government, and there is a more peaceable remedy? I deny that we live under a Democracy. It is an oligarchy of Slaveholders, and I point to the history of a half century to prove it. Do you say, that oligarchy will be propitiated by submission? I deny it. It is the plea of the timid in all ages. Look at the experience of our own country. Which is most influential in Congress—South Carolina, which never submitted to anything, or Massachusetts, with thrice the white population, but which always submits to everything? I tell you, there is not a free State in the Union which would dare treat a South Carolinian as that State treated Mr. Hoar; or, if it had been done, the Union would have been divided years ago. The way to make principles felt is to assert them—peaceably, if you can; forcibly, if you must. The way to promote Free Soil is to have your own soil free; to leave courts to settle constitutions, and to fall back (for your own part,) on first principles: then it will be seen that you mean something. How much free territory is there beneath the Stars and Stripes? I know of four places—Syracuse, Wilkesbarre, Milwaukie, and Chicago: I remember no others. "Worcester," you say. Worcester has not yet been tried. If you think Worcester County is free, say so and act accordingly. Call a County Convention, and declare that you leave legal quibbles to lawyers, and parties to politicians, and plant yourselves on the simple truth that God never made a Slave, and that man shall neither make nor take one here! Over your own city, at least, you have power; but will you stand the test when it comes? Then do not try to avoid it. For one thing only I blush—that a Fugitive has ever fled from here to Canada. Let it not happen again, I charge you, if you are what you think you are. No longer conceal Fugitives and help them on, but show them and defend them. Let the Underground Railroad stop here! Say to the South that Worcester, though a part of a Republic, shall be as free as if ruled by a Queen! Hear, O Richmond! and give ear, O Carolina! henceforth Worcester is Canada to the Slave! And what will Worcester be to the kidnapper? I dare not tell; and I fear that the poor sinner himself, if once recognized in our streets, would scarcely get back to tell the tale.

I do not discourage more peaceable instrumentalities; would to God that no other were ever needful. Make laws, if you can, though you have State processes already, if you had officers to enforce them; and, indeed, what can any State process do, except to legalize nullification? Use politics, if you can make them worth using, though a coalition administration proved as powerless, in the Sims case, as a Whig administration has proved now. But the disease lies deeper than these remedies can reach.

1853-1854

1853-1854

It is all idle to try to save men by law and order, merely, while the men themselves grow selfish and timid, and are only ready to talk of Liberty, and risk nothing for it. Our people have no active physical habits; their intellects are sharpened, but their bodies, and even their hearts, are left untrained; they learn only (as a French satirist once said,) the fear of God and the love of money; they are taught that they owe the world nothing, but that the world owes them a living, and so they make a living but the fresh, strong spirit of Liberty droops and decays, and only makes a dying. I charge you, parents, do not be so easily satisfied; encourage nobler instincts in your children, and appeal to nobler principles; teach your daughter that life is something more than dress and show, and your son that there is some nobler aim in existence than a good bargain, and a fast horse, and an oyster supper. Let us have the brave, simple instincts of Circassian mountaineers, with-out their ignorance; and the unfaltering moral courage of the Puritans, without their superstition; so that we may show the world that a community may be educated in brain without becoming cowardly in body; and that a people without a standing army may yet rise as one man, when Freedom needs defenders.

May God help us so to redeem this oppressed and bleeding State, and to bring this people back to that simple love of Liberty, without which it must die amidst its luxuries, like the sad nations of the elder world. May we gain more iron in our souls, and have it in the right place;— have soft hearts and, hard wills, not as now, soft wills and hard hearts. Then will the iron break the Northern iron and the steel no longer; and "God save the Commonwealth of Massachusetts!" will be at last a hope fulfilled.



June 4. 8 A.M. — Up Assabet to Barbarea Shore with Blake and Brown.

Brown speaks of a great brown moth, — probably emperor moth, — which came out in Worcester a few days ago. I see under the window, half dead, a large sphinx-like moth which apparently flew last night. The surface of the still water nowadays with a kind of lint, looking like dust at a little distance. Is it the down of the leaves blown off? In many places it reaches quite across the river. It is interesting to distinguish the different surfaces, — here broken into waves and sparkling with light, there, where covered with this linty dust or film, merely undulating without breaking, and there quite smooth and stagnant. I see in one place a sharp and distinct line, as if there were a cobweb on the water, between the clear and ruffled water and the stagnant filmy part, as if it were a slightly raised seam; and particles of lint (?) are continually gliding in from the clear space and arranging themselves along the edge of the scum or film.

These warm and dry days, which put spring far behind, the sound of the cricket at noon has a new value and significance, so serene and cool. It is the *iced*-cream of song. It is modulated shade. I see now here and there deep furrows in the sandy bottom, two or three inches wide, leading from the middle of the river toward the side, and a clam on its edge at the end of each. These are distinct whiter lines. Plainly, then, about these times the clams are coming up to the shore, and I have caught them in the act. I now notice froth on the pitch and white pines. The lower and horizontal parts of the shaggy button-bushes, now left bare, are covered thickly with dry brown-paper confervæ, for the most part bleached almost white. It is very abundant, and covers these stems more thickly than clothes on a line.

P.M. — To Walden.

Now is the time [to] observe the leaves, so fair in color and so perfect in form. I stood over a sprig of choke-cherry, with fair and perfect glossy green obovate and serrate leaves, in the woods this P.M.,

1853-1854

1853-1854

as if it were a rare flower. Now the various forms of oak leaves in sprout-lands, wet-glossy, as if newly painted green and varnished, attract me. The chinquapin and black shrub oak are such leaves as I fancy crowns were made of. And in the washing breeze the lighter under sides begin to show, and a new light is flashed upon the year, lighting up and enlivening the landscape. Perhaps, on the whole, as most of the under sides are of a glaucous line, they add to the glaucous mistiness of the atmosphere, which now has begun to prevail. The mountains are hidden. Methinks the first dry spell or drought may be beginning. The dust is powdery in the street, and we do not always have dew in the night.

The cracks in the ground made by the frost in the winter are still quite distinct.

In some cases fame is perpetually false and unjust. Or rather I should say that she *never* recognizes the simple heroism of an action, but only as connected with its apparent consequence. It praises the interested energy of the Boston Tea Party, but will be comparatively silent about the more bloody and disinterestedly heroic attack on the Boston Court-House, simply because the latter was unsuccessful. Fame is not just. It never finely or discriminatingly praises, but coarsely hurrahs. The truest acts of heroism never reach her ear, are never published by her trumpet.



June 5, Monday: [Henry Wadsworth Longfellow](#) was reading the Finnish epic *KALEVALA*.

[Stephen Collins Foster](#) copyrighted “Jeanie With the Light Brown Hair.”

Secretary of State William L. Marcy and Canadian Governor-General Lord Elgin signed a reciprocity agreement covering trade, fishing, and navigation rights.

[Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed land that one of the Hoars had bought from James Heywood, near Factory Quarter near Stow Road and the land of William Brown. For many years the pond on this land was known as Hoar Pond. At 6 PM Thoreau went to the Cliffs.



June 5: 6 P.M. — To Cliffs.

Large yellow butterflies with black spots since the 3d. Carrion-flower, maybe a day. Dangle-berry, probably June 3d at Trillium Woods. Now, just before sundown, a nighthawk [**Common Nighthawk** █ *Chordeiles minor* (Booming Nighthawk)] is circling, imp-like, with undulating, irregular flight over the sprout-land on the Cliff Hill, with an occasional squeak and showing the spots on his wings. He does not circle away from this place, and I associate him with two gray eggs somewhere on the ground beneath and a mate there sitting. This squeak and occasional booming is heard in the evening air, while the stillness on the side of the village makes more distinct the increased hum of insects. I see at a distance a kingbird [**Eastern Kingbird** █ *Tyrannus tyrannus*] or blackbird █ pursuing a crow [**American Crow** █ *Corvus brachyrhynchos*] lower down the hill, like a satellite [*sic*] revolving about a black planet. I have come to this hill to see the sun go down, to recover sanity and put myself again in relation with Nature. I would fain drink a draft of Nature’s serenity. Let deep answer to deep. Already I see reddening clouds reflected in the smooth mirror of the river, a delicate tint, far off and elysian, unlike anything in the sky as yet. The evergreens now look even black by contrast with the sea of fresh and light-green foliage which surrounds them. Children have been to the Cliffs and woven wreaths or chaplets of oak leaves, which they have left, for they were unconsciously attracted by the beauty of the leaves now. The sun goes down red and shorn of his beams, a sign of hot weather, as if the western horizon or the lower stratum of the air were filled with the hot dust of the day. The dust of his chariot eclipses his beams. I love to sit here and look off into the broad deep vale in which the shades of night are beginning to prevail. When the sun has set, the river becomes more white and distinct in the landscape. The pin-cushion galls have mostly turned brown, especially the shrub oak ones. Perhaps the sorrel was most noticeable last week. The caterpillars are and have been very numerous this year. I see large trees (wild cherry and

1853-1854

1853-1854

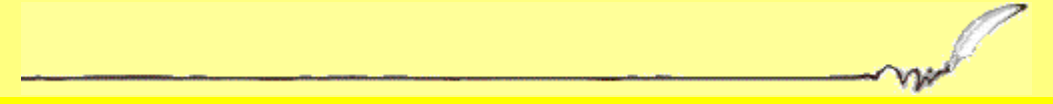
apple) completely stripped of leaves. Some of the latter, twenty or thirty feet high, are full of blossoms without a single leaf. I return by moonlight.



June 6, Tuesday: At 6:30 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) went up the [Assabet River](#). In the afternoon he visited Assabet Bathing-Place, returning by way of the stone bridge.

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), *THE BOATMAN*, page 10



June 6: Tuesday. I perceive the sweetness of the locust blossoms fifteen or twenty rods off as I go down the street.

P.M. — To Assabet Bathing-Place and return by stone bridge.

I see now great baggy light-green puffs on the paniced andromeda, some with a reddish side, two or three inches through. The *Stellaria longifolia* has been out, apparently, a day or two. A slender rush, flowered at the top, at bathing-place, some tulle.

The painted tortoises are nowadays laying their eggs. I see where they have just been digging in the sand or gravel in a *hundred* places on the southerly sides of hills and banks near the river, but they have laid their eggs in very few. I found none whole. Here is one which has made its hole with the hind part of its shell and its tail apparently, and the ground is wet under it. They make a great deal of water at these times, apparently to soften the earth or to give it consistency, or both. They are remarkably circumspect, and it is difficult to see one working. They stop instantly and draw in their heads, and do not move till you are out of sight, and then probably try a new place. They have dabbled in the sand and left the marks of their tails all around.

The black oaks, birches, etc., etc., are covered with ephemerae of various sizes and colors, with one, two, three, or no streamers, ready to take wing at evening, *i.e.* about seven. I am covered with them and much incommoded. There is garlic by the wall, not yet out. The air over the river meadows is saturated with sweetness, but I look round in vain on the yellowish sensitive fern and the reddish eupatorium springing up. From time to time, at mid-afternoon, is heard the trump of a bullfrog, like a Triton's horn.

I am struck now by the large light-purple *Viola palmata* rising above the grass near the river.

There are: —

The small, firm, few-lobed, wholesome, dark-green shrub oak leaf, light beneath.

The more or less deeply cut, and more or less dark green or sometimes reddish black oak, not light beneath. These two bristle-pointed.

The very wet-glossy, obovatish, sinuate-edged swamp white oak, light beneath.

The small narrower, sinuated, and still more chestnut-like chinquapin, little lighter beneath.

All these more or less glossy, especially the swamp white and shrub.

Then the dull-green, *sometimes* reddish, more or less deeply cut or fingered, unarmed, round-lobed white oak, not light beneath. The last three without bristles.

I remember best the sort of rosettes made by the wet-glossy leaves at the ends of some swamp white oak leaves [*sic*], also the wholesome and firm dark green shrub oak leaves, and some glossy and finely cut light-green black (?) or red (?) or scarlet ().



I see some devil's-needles, a brilliant green, with white and black or openwork and black wings, —

1853-1854

1853-1854

sonic with clear black wings, some white bodies and black wings, etc.
White pine.

6.30 A.M. [*sic*]. — Up Assabet.

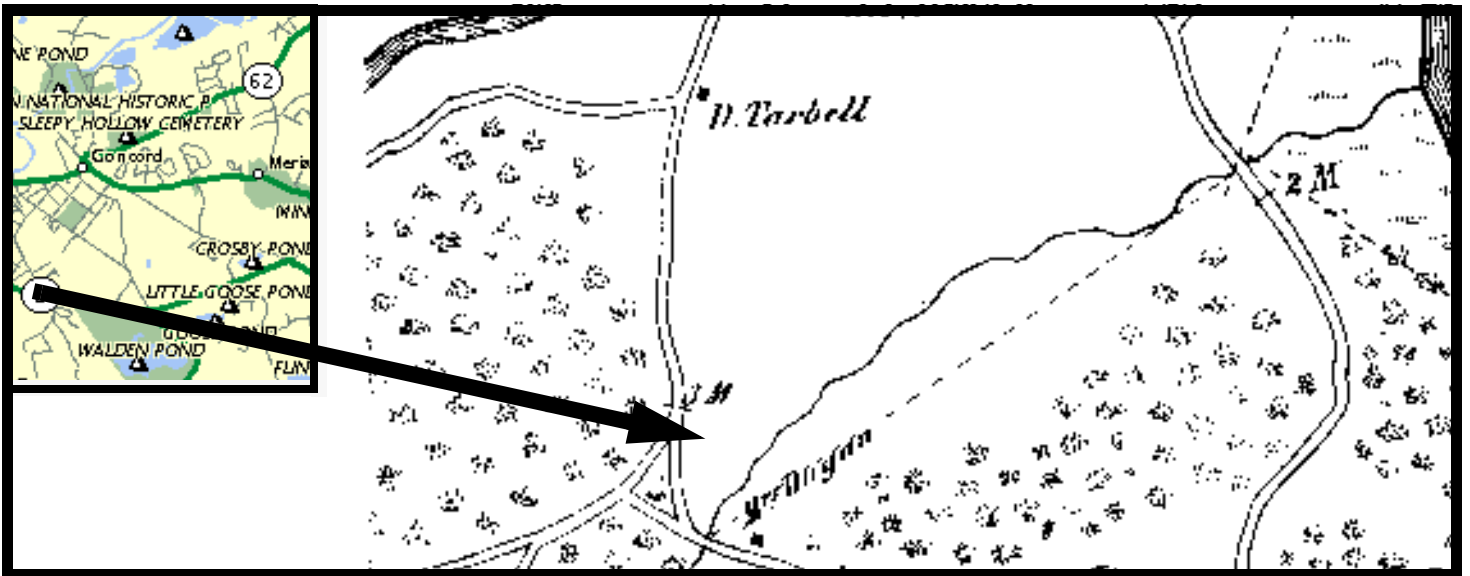
Rhus Toxicodendron, yesterday, on Rock. *Smilacina racemosa*, probably June 4th. Beautiful the hemlock- fans, now broad at the ends of the lower branches, which slant down, seen icy the shade against the dark hillside. Such is the contrast of the very light green just put forth on their edges with the old very dark, I feast my eyes on it. Pignut. A crow blackbird [**American Crow**  *Corvus brachyrhynchos*]'s nest in a white maple this side the Leaning Hemlocks, in a crotch seven or eight feet from ground; somewhat like a robin [**American Robin**  *Turdus migratorius*]'s but larger, made of coarse weed stems, mikania, and cranberry vines (without leaves), fish-lines, etc., without, and of mid lined with finer fibres or roots within; four large but blind young covered with dark brown. Sphinx moths about the flowers — honeysuckles — at evening, a night or two.



June 7, Wednesday: At Shimoda, [Japan](#). “Early this morning we had a peep at our old friend Mt. Fuji-towering high into the heavens.”

At 6 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) walked up the railroad tracks. In the afternoon he visited the Linnaea Hills and then the [Dugan Desert](#):

JENNY DUGAN



June 7. Wednesday. 6 A.M. — Up railroad.

Viburnum dentatum. Grape yesterday. *Viburnum nudum*, June 5. A thick fog this morning, through which at last rain falls, — the first after a considerable and first dry spell. As yet nothing has suffered from dryness; the grass is very green and rank, owing to the cold spring, the June-grass converting hillside pastures into mowing-land, and the seeds (or chaff?) of many grasses begin to fall on my shoes.

P.M. — To Dugan Desert *via* Linnaea Hills.

Curled dock. *Linnaea* abundantly out some days: say 3d or 4th. It has not rained since morning, but continues cloudy and is warm and muggy, the sun almost coming out. The birds sing now more than ever, as in the morning, and mosquitoes are very troublesome in the woods. The locusts so full of pendulous white racemes five inches long, filling the air with their sweetness and resounding with the hum of humble and honey bees,

1853-1854

1853-1854

are very interesting. These racemes are strewn along the path by children. Is that the *Cratægus Crus-Galli?*, roadside between Joe Hosmer's and Tarbell's? Again I am struck by the rank, dog-like scent of the rue budded to blossom. Along the wood-paths and in wood-side pastures I see the golden basins of the cistus. I am surprised at the size of green berries, — shad-bush, low blueberries, choke-cherries, etc., etc. It is but. a step from flowers to fruit.

As I expected I find the desert scored by the tracks of turtles, made evidently last night, though the rain of this morning has obliterated the marks of their tails. The tracks are about seven eighths of an inch in diameter, one half inch deep, two inches apart (from centre to centre) in each row, and the rows four or five inches apart; and they have dabbled in the sand in many places and made some small holes. Yesterday was hot and dusty, and this morning it rained. Did they choose such a time? Yesterday I saw the painted and the wood tortoise out. Now I see a snapping turtle, its shell about a foot long, out here on the damp sand, with its head out, disturbed by me. It had just been excavating, and its shell — especially the fore part and sides — and especially its snout, were deeply covered with earth. It appears to use its shell as a kind of spade whose handle is within, tilting it now this way, now that, and perhaps using its head and claws as a pick. It was in a little cloud of mosquitoes, which were continually settling on its head and flippers, but which it did not mind. Its sternum was slightly depressed. It seems that they are very frequently found fighting in the water and sometimes dead in the spring, maybe killed by the ice. Some think that the suckers I see floating are killed by the ice.

The *Linaria Canadensis* well out, near Heart-leaf Pond. How long? *Enothera pumila* in low ground. Angelica at Nut Meadow Brook. The low blackberry leaves on Dennis's lupine hill are now covered beneath with that orange rust.²¹⁸ Were those premature scarlet leaves which I saw at the Rock on the 4th the shadbush?²¹⁹ Common iris, some days; *one withered*.

Saw again what I have pronounced the yellow-winged sparrow (*Fringilla passerina*) [**Grasshopper Sparrow** ■ *Ammodramus savannarum* (~~Yellow-winged Sparrow or Savannarum or savanna~~)], with white line down head and yellow over eyes and my seringo note; but this time yellow of wings not apparent; ochreous throat and breast; quite different from the bay-winged, and smaller. Does the bay-wing [**Vesper Sparrow** ■ *Poocetes gramineus* (~~Bay-wing or White-in-tail or Grass Finch or Grass-bird~~)] make the seringo note? [No.]

Now the river is reduced to summer width. It is in the spring that we observe those dark-blue lakes on our meadows. Now weeds are beginning to fill the stream.

This muggy evening I see fireflies, the first I have seen or heard of at least. This louring day has been a regular fisherman's day, and I have seen many on the river, a general turnout.

218. The same on thimble-berry the 13th June.

219. Yes; it was dying.

1853-1854

1853-1854



June 8, Thursday: In the afternoon, [Henry Thoreau](#) went up the river. Reports from Boston of the [Anthony Burns](#) affair began to furnish material for “Slavery in Massachusetts.” Thoreau made an entry in his journal that he was later to copy into his early lecture “[WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT](#)” as:

[Paragraph 55] Lieutenant [Herndon](#), whom our Government sent to explore the Amazon, and, it is said, to extend the area of Slavery,¹ observed that there was wanting there “an industrious and active population, who know what the comforts of life are, and who have artificial wants to draw out the great resources of the country.” But what are the “artificial wants” to be encouraged? Not the love of luxuries, like the tobacco and slaves of, I believe, his native Virginia,² nor the ice and granite and other material wealth of our native New England; nor are “the great resources of a country” that fertility or barrenness of soil which produces these. The chief want is ever a life of deep experiences, — that is, character.³ This alone draws out “the great resources” of Nature, and at last taxes her beyond her resources, for man naturally dies out of her. When we want culture more than potatoes, and illumination more than sugar plums, then the great resources of a world are taxed and drawn out, and the result or staple production, is, not slaves, nor operatives, but men, those rare fruits called, heroes, saints, poets, philosophers, and redeemers.

**Brad Dean's
Commentary**

-
1. William Lloyd Garrison, in his review of [Herndon](#)'s book, charged that “the prime motive” of the exploration of the Amazon was “to discover new fields and open new resources for the Slave Power, whereby its domains shall be illimitable, and its existence perpetuated as long as a tropical soil and climate can endure its pestiferous presence” (“Exploration of the Amazon, and Designs of the Slave Power,” [The Liberator](#), 21 April 1854, page 2, columns 3-4).
 2. [Herndon](#) was from Fredericksburg, Virginia.
 3. This sentence is taken from the journal source of this paragraph. Preceding this sentence is essay copy-text; after it is manuscript copy-text. Authority for the inclusion of the sentence at this point is derived from the journal source and the sentence “The chief want is ever a life of deep experiences — that is — character, which alone draws out Nature and at last goes beyond her” in the Nantucket [Inquirer](#) summary.

We may note that this entry indicates that he had been reading in a set of volumes that according to an inscription inside had been presented to him by [Horace Mann, Sr.](#), to wit: [William Lewis Herndon](#) (Part I) and Lardner Gibbon (Part II), EXPLORATION OF THE VALLEY OF THE AMAZON, MADE UNDER DIRECTION OF THE NAVY DEPARTMENT, BY WM. LEWIS HERNDON AND LARDNER GIBBON, LIEUTENANTS UNITED STATES NAVY (Washington: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, Part I, 1853; A.O.P. Nicholson, Public Printer, Part II, 1854).²²⁰

[Thoreau](#) also made an entry that he would later copy into “[WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT](#)” as:

[Paragraph 56] What we name civilization does not yet substitute this for the barren simplicity of the savage.

**Brad Dean's
Commentary**



June 8. Thursday. A.M. — Gentle, steady rainstorm.

220. In the absence of some specific indication, we should beware any presumption that this gift indicated the existence of some particular bond between Mann, Sr. and Thoreau. The fact is that due to the largesse of members of the federal congress in playing games with your tax dollars, at this moment there happened to be literally **thousands** of freebee copies of this expensive government report in float across the nation.

1853-1854


1853-1854

The *Rosa nitida* bud which I plucked yesterday has blossomed to-day, so that, notwithstanding the rain, I will put it down to to-day.

P.M. — On river.

Sidesaddle, apparently to-morrow (?). Earliest and common potamogeton. *Erigeron strigosus* slowly opening, perhaps to-morrow. [Vide 14th.] Meadow-rue, with its rank dog-like scent. Ribwort plantain is abundantly in bloom, fifteen or sixteen inches high; how long? *Utricularia vulgaris*. Young robins in nest.

[Herndon](#), in his "Exploration of the Amazon," says that "there is wanting an industrious and active population, who know what the comforts of life are, and who have artificial wants to draw out the great resources of the country." But what are the "artificial wants" to be encouraged, and the "great resources" of a country? Surely not the love of luxuries like the tobacco and slaves of his native(?) Virginia, or that fertility of soil which produces these. The chief want is ever a life of deep experiences, — that is, character, — which alone draws out "the great resources" of Nature. When our wants cease to be chiefly superficial and trivial, which is commonly meant by artificial, and begin to be wants of character, then the great resources of a country are taxed and drawn out, and the result, the staple production, is poetry. Have the "great resources" of Virginia been drawn out by such "artificial wants" as there exist? Was that country really designed by its Maker to produce slaves and tobacco, or something more even than freemen and food for freemen? Wants of character, aspirations, — this is what is wanted; but what is called civilization does not always substitute this for the barren simplicity of the savage.

 June 9, Friday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Well Meadow. At 7 PM he went up the Assabet River.




"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 10

In [San Francisco](#) there was rioting, precipitated by squatters, on Green Street near Stockton Street. Several arrests were made.



June 9: Friday. P.M. — To Well Meadow.

The summer aspect of the river begins perhaps when the *Utricularia vulgaris* is first seen on the surface, as yesterday. As I go along the railroad causeway, I see, in the cultivated grounds, a lark [**Horned lark**  *Eremophila alpestris*] flashing his white tail, and showing his handsome yellow breast, with its black crescent like an Indian locket. For a day or two I have heard the fine seringo note of the cherry-birds [**Cedar Waxwing**  *Bombycilla cedrorum* (~~Cherry-bird~~)], and seen them flying past, the only (?) birds, methinks, that I see in small flocks now, except swallows . The willow down and seeds are blowing over the causeway. *Veronica scutellata*, apparently several days. A strawberry half turned on the sand of the causeway side, — the first fruit or berry of the year that I have tasted. Ladies'-slippers are going to seed. I see some white oak pincushions, nearly two inches through.

Is that galium, out apparently some days in the woods by Deep Cut, near *Linnea triflorum* or *Aparine*?²²¹ Vide Maps. Compare that at Lee's. I should like to know the birds of the woods better. What birds inhabit our woods? I hear their various notes ringing through them. What musicians

compose our woodland quire? They must be forever strange and interesting to me. How prominent

**THOREAU AS
ORNITHOLOGIST**

a place the vireos hold! It is probably the yellow-throated vireo [**Yellow-throated vireo** █ (*Vireo flavifrons*)] I hear now, — a more interrupted red-eye [**Red-eyed Vireo** █ (*Vireo olivaceus*)] with its *prelia-prelioit* or *tully-ho*, — invisible in the tops of the trees. I see the thick, flower-like huckleberry apples. Haynes (?), Goodwin's comrade, tells me that he used to catch mud turtles in the ponds behind Provincetown with a toad on a mackerel hook thrown into the pond and the line tied to a stump or stake on shore. Invariably the turtle when hooked crawled up, following the line to the stake, and was there found waiting — Goodwin baits minks with muskrats.

Find the great fringed orchis out apparently two or three days. Two are almost fully out, two or three only budded. A large spike of peculiarly delicate pale-purple flowers growing in the luxuriant and shady swamp amid hellebores, ferns, golden senecios, etc., etc. It is remarkable that this, one of the fairest of all our flowers. should also be one of the rarest, — for the most part not seen at all. I think that no other but myself in Concord annually finds it. That so queenly a flower should annually bloom so rarely and in such withdrawn and secret places as to be rarely seen by man! The village belle never sees this more delicate belle of the swamp. How little relation between our life and its! Most of us never see it or hear of it. The seasons go by to us as if it were not. A beauty reared in the shade of a convent, who has never strayed beyond the convent bell. Only the skunk or owl or other inhabitant of the swamp beholds it. In the damp twilight of the swamp, where it is wet to the feet. How little anxious to display its attractions! It does not pine because man does not admire it. How independent on our race! It lifts its delicate spike: amid the hellebore and ferns in the deep shade of the swamp. I am inclined to think of it as a relic of the past as much as the arrowhead, or the tomahawk I found on the 7th.

Ferns are four or five feet high there.



June 10, Saturday: The new Crystal Palace opened in Sydenham, London, having not only been moved from its 1851 Hyde Park location, but also enlarged. It had come to comprise 150,000 square meters of rough sheet-rolled glass. The gardens had come to cover more than 80 hectares. The ceremonies were overseen by Queen Victoria.

Earlier in the year [Bernhard Riemann](#) had proposed a interpretation of the integral for non-continuous functions. On this day he delivered “Über die Hypothesen welche der Geometrie zu Grunde liegen” in which he revealed that a variety of non-Euclidean geometries were possible (although the lecture was immediately influential, it would not be published until 1868).

In [San Francisco](#) there was a mass meeting to prevent squatting on anyone else's property, but Judge Freelon of the Court of Sessions issued an order preventing action being taken against these squatters.

[Henry Thoreau](#) walked to Conantum. He was being written to by [William Davis Ticknor](#) of [Ticknor & Co.](#) in Boston, to advise that Mr. [James Thomas Fields](#) would be carrying proof sheets of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) to England in order to secure the English copyright.²²²



TIMELINE OF WALDEN

221. Call it the first, for it has less prickles or angles, has smaller and less prickly fruit, rather three separate than three couples, and is more spreading and reclining, and is later?

222. Actually, this wouldn't happen because [Fields](#) would be so seasick as to turn back. [WALDEN](#) would not see publication in England until 1886.



1853-1854

1853-1854

Boston June 10/54

Dear Sir

Our Mr. Fields who left by the Steamer of the 7th for England took the proof sheets of Walden, — In order to secure a Copt in England the book must be published there as soon as here, and at least 12 Copies published and offered for Sale. If Mr. F. succeeds in making a sale of the Early sheets, it will doubtless be printed in London so as to cause very little delay here but if it be necessary to print and send out the Copies it will delay us 3 or 4 weeks. Probably not more than three weeks. You will probably prefer to delay the publication that you may be sure of your Cop't in England.




Truly Yours

W.D. Ticknor & Co.


Henry D. Thoreau Esq



June 10. Saturday. P.M. — To Conantum on foot.

The bay-wing sparrow [**Vesper Sparrow**  *Pooecetes gramineus*] apparently is not my seringo, after all. What is the seringo? I see some with clear, dirty-yellow breasts, but others, as to-day, with white breasts, dark-streaked. Both have the yellow over eye and the white line on crown, and agree in size, but I have seen only one with distinct yellow on wings. Both the last, *i.e.* except only the bay-wing, utter the seringo note. Are they both yellow-winged sparrows [**Grasshopper Sparrow**  *Ammodramus savannarum* (Yellow-winged Sparrow or Savannarum or savanna)]? or is the white-breasted with streaks the Savannah sparrow [**Savannah Sparrow**  *Passerculus sandwichensis*]?

The meadows now begin to be yellow with senecio. Sidesaddle generally out; petals hang down, apparently a day or two. It is a conspicuous flower. The fragrance of the arethusa is like that of the lady's-slipper, or pleasanter. I see many dead painted tortoises, the bugs now devouring them, in the fields. The [*Viburnum*] *Lentago* is just out of bloom now that the *V. nudum* is fairly begun.

Saw probably a crow's nest high in a white pine two crows [**Crow, American**  *Corvus brachyrhynchos*] with ragged wings circling high over it and me, not noisy.



June 11, Sunday: While her husband Robert Schumann resided in an asylum, Clara Schumann gave birth to their 8th and final child, whom she named Felix in honor of Felix Mendelssohn.

When a couple of immigrant **Irishmen** threw rocks at a **nativist** speaker in Brooklyn, a mob of 10,000 rioted in the city and troops were deployed.

The day was cloudy and cool but without rain. At 8:30 AM **Henry Thoreau** escorted Mrs. Brown to **Framingham, Massachusetts**. At noon he walked up the **Sudbury River** above Frank's to Ashland "at first through the meadows, then over the high hills in the vicinity."

From a **Connecticut** letter written by Lizzie Goodwin to her Aunt Emma Whipple:

... I like Mr. Whipple myself very much and if he wasn't an abolitionist I should feel much more amicably disposed towards him, but since mother is married to him I am afraid he may make her ... a violent abolitionist too, which she never was before. I was so afraid [that] in the great fugitive slave excitement

1853-1854




1853-1854

in Boston she might be drawn into some extravagance of conduct. I am glad he was carried off in triumph. Frank is very well and I will give your love to him the next time I write which will be soon.

ABOLITIONISM



June 11. Sunday. 8.:30 A.M. — To Framingham with Mrs. Brown. All, day cloudy and cool without rain.

At twelve walked up the Sudbury River above Frank's to Ashland, at first through the meadows, then over the high hills in the vicinity. The stream narrows suddenly in the middle of Framingham, probably about the outlet from Farm Pond and also Stony Brook. It is merely a large brook from a rod to a rod and a half wide, pursuing a serpentine course through meadows, still deep and dark and sluggish for the most part, and bordered with pads, thus preserving its character below. Diervilla abundant on bank of river at Frank's, out possibly yesterday. I see that red sugar incrustation on red maple leaves. Young song sparrows [**Song Sparrow**  *Melospiza melodia* (*melodia*)] have flown some days at Frank's. Prunella well out. perhaps two or three days. From a high hill on the west of the river, about a mile from Frank's, get a good view of Farm Pond eastward, which empties into the river, with South Framingham on the southeast side of it. I did not instantly detect it, the dark hills and trees being reflected in it. How agreeable in a still, cloudy day, when large masses of clouds, equally dispersed, float across the sky, not threatening rain, but preserving a temperate air, to see a sheet of water thus revealed by its reflections, a smooth, glassy mirror, reflecting the light sky and the dark and shady woods. It is very much like a mirage. I went to a pretty high hill east of and near to Ashland, where I found an abundance of ripe strawberries, earlier, I am sure, than with us. A young man picking strawberries pointed toward Hopkinton southwesterly and said that it was four miles thither straight and six to Whitehall Pond (the source of the river), but, a great deal farther by the river, that boats were used here at Ashland, and pouts and pickerel caught. Grape out. Saw in and near some woods four or five cow blackbirds [**Brown-headed Cowbird**  *Molothrus ater* (~~Cow Blackbird, Cow Bunting, Cow-pen Bird, Cow-Troopial, Cowtroopial~~)], with their light-brown heads, — their strain an imperfect, milky, gurgling *conqueree*, an unsuccessful effort. It made me think, for some reason, of streams of milk bursting out a sort of music between the staves of a keg. I saw a yellow-spotted tortoise come out, undoubtedly to lay its eggs — which had climbed to the very top of a hill so much as a hundred and thirty feet above any water. A wood tortoise had just made its hole, in the damp soil of Frank's garden. Maple viburnum well out. It must come very soon after the *nudum*. The note of the cuckoo [**Black-billed Cuckoo**  *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus* (~~St. Domingo Cuckoo~~)] is an agreeable sound in the middle of these days. I think I saw wild radish (*Raphanus*) out, as I rode along. These days observe and admire the forms of elms.



June 12, Monday: Incidental music to Plouvier's comédie *Le Songe d'une nuit d'hiver* by Jacques Offenbach was performed for the initial time, at the Comédie-Française, Paris.

Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) had an interview with 7 [Japanese](#) princes, including some Treaty commissioners.

The body of William Board was discovered on the island of Okinawa. This American was alleged to have while intoxicated on shore committed a home invasion during which he raped a woman. It would appear that he had been chased down by villagers, stoned, and drowned (if course, nobody would be willing to turn these local perpetrators over to the "justice" of a western fleet).

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to [Walden Pond](#), and by sunset he was on [Clamshell Hill](#).



June 12. P.M. — To Walden.

Clover now reddens the fields. Grass in its prime. Comfrey in front of Stow's well out some days apparently. With the roses now fairly begun I associate summer heats. *Galium trifidum* var. *latifolium* (?), smooth-angled, some with linear leaves. Is it *tinctorium*? Hear the evergreen-forest note, and see the bird on the top of a white pine, somewhat creeper-like, along the boughs, and golden head except a black streak from eyes, black throat, slate-colored back, forked tail, white beneath, — *er te, ter ter te*. Another bird with yellow throat near by may have been the other sex. Is it the golden-winged warbler? [**Golden-winged Warbler** *Vermivora chrysoptera*] [*Vide* June 17th.]

Pyrola chlorantha. *Rosa lucida*, probably yesterday, the 11th, judging from what I saw Saturday, *i.e.* the 10th. A bud in pitcher the 13th. The *R. nitida* is the most common now. The round-leaved cornel is well out at Heywood Peak, probably two or three days. Perhaps this and the maple-leaved viburnum are as early as the *V. nudum* and *V. dentatum*, only more rare. Scared a kingfisher [**Belted Kingfisher** *Ceryle alcyon*] on a bough over Walden. As he flew off, he *hovered* two or three times thirty or forty feet above the pond, and at last dove and apparently caught a fish, with which he flew off low over the water to a tree. Mountain laurel at the pond. A narrow-leaved potamogeton well out at the bathing-place, — leaves two to three inches long. Four-leaved loosestrife.

Silene antirrhina, how long? Do I not see two birds with the seringo note, — the Savannah (?) sparrow [**Savannah Sparrow** *Passerculus sandwichensis* (*passerina* or *seringo* or *seringo-bird*)], larger with not so bright a yellow over eye, none on wing, and white breast, and beneath former streaked with dark and perhaps a dark spot, and the smaller yellow-winged [**Grasshopper Sparrow** *Ammodramus savannarum* (~~Yellow-winged Sparrow or Savannahum or savanna~~)], with spot on wing also and ochreous breast and throat? The first sings *che che rar, che ra-a-a-a-ar*.

Sundown. — To Clamshell Hill.

Nightshade a day or two. The cracks made by cold in pastures in the winter are still quite distinct. Phleum or herd's-grass (:). I sit on the Clamshell Hill at sunset, while several kinds of swallows are playing low over it chasing each other, and occasionally alighting on the bare hillside. The level rays of the sun shine into and light up the trunk and limbs of a swamp white oak on Hubbard's meadow.



June 13, Tuesday: The Leavenworth Town Company was organized (these early **Kansas Territory** settlers were primarily from Missouri).

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

At 2 PM **Henry Thoreau** went by boat to Bittern Cliff, and from there he went to Lee's Cliff.



June 13. Tuesday. I hear a quail [**Northern Bobwhite** *Colinus virginianus*] this morning.


2 P.M. — By boat to Bittern Cliff and so to Lee's Cliff.

I hear the muttering of thunder and see a dark cloud in the west-southwest horizon; am uncertain how far upstream I shall get. The *Nuphar lutea* var. *Kalmiana*, apparently two or three days in *some* places; generally not yet. Its leaf appears to be the prevailing pad; it is outside in the deepest water, and is smaller and narrower in proportion to its breadth than the other, with a small leaf-stern, the lobes overlapping. Now, in shallow places near the bends, the large and conspicuous spikes of the broad-leaved potamogeton rise thickly above the water. Though the plants are slanted downward by the stream, the spikes at their ends rise perpendicularly two or three inches. My boat passes over these beds of potamogetons, pressing their spikes under water. I see the yellow water ranunculus in dense fields now, in some places on the side of the stream, two or three inches above water, and many gone to seed. See a white lily bud.

The clams now lie up thickly at the Hubbard Bathing-Place, all on their edges. The small iris is budded near by. The clouds are rising up in the southwest, irregular and ragged black pillars in the form of men and bears, the northernmost with a glowing side. If it rains hard, I will run my boat ashore, turn it over, and get under it. I will not turn back; my afternoon shall not be interrupted by a thunder-shower. It is so warm that I stop to drink wherever there is a spring. The flowering fern is reddish and yellowish green on the meadows. There are bare places on the meadow, from which the surface was carried off last winter. An opposite cloud is rising fast in the east-northeast, and now the




1853-1854

1853-1854

lightning crinkles down it and I bear the heavy thunder. It appears to be rising to meet the cloud in the west, and I shall surely get wet. The *Comarum palustre* — well out apparently three or four days, with its small dark and dull purple petals on a dark purplish calyx ground. I paddle slowly by farmers in small parties, busily hoeing corn and potatoes. The boy rides the horse dragging the cultivator. They have a jug of sweetened water in the grass at the end of the row. The kingbird's [Eastern Kingbird  *Tyrannus tyrannus*] eggs are not yet hatched. How often I see Garfield, — Uncle Daniel, — the stout broad-shouldered farmer, taking his way through the fields toward night, toward the river, with his fish-pole and basket over his shoulder. He had on a live shiner, six or seven inches long, the other day and a cork above. He wanted to see if he "could n't catch a big pickerel." At Bittern Cliff Spring, a handsomely cut petalled geranium, the whole rather elliptical in outline. Forget the number of petals. The panicked cornel by Conant's orchard wall will open in a day or



two.²²³ The small veronica with minute blue flowers at Lee's Cliff, how long? *V. arvensis*. Pennyroyal is four or five inches high.

Galium circazans well out some days at Cliff, — the broad three-nerved four leaves. The thundercloud in the east has disappeared southward, and that in the west has changed to a black sheaf falling over on all sides at top, but [it does] not rise fast. The little globular drooping reddish buds of the *Chimaphila umbellata*, pipsissewa, — are now very pretty. It is remarkable how much the pads are eaten already. Some water-target leaves at Walden yesterday were scored as by some literal character. I see also the leaves of a columbine with light markings, being half eaten through; and, as there are eggs beneath, it may have been done to let the light through to them. The krigia seeds and down begin to fly. The common polypody and ebony spleenwort show green fruit dots. It is remarkable how many birds' nests are broken up. At least half that I examine again have been disturbed, only the broken shells left; viz., a chewink's [Ground-bird,²²⁴ Ground-robin, Chewink (Rufous-sided Towhee  *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*)] and a brown thrasher's [Brown thrasher  *Toxostoma rufum*]. The last was on the ground under a barberry bush, was six or seven inches in diameter without, of dead leaves and hay, then of small twigs, then of dark root-fibres within, — no more lining. How beautiful the solid cylinders of the lambkill now just before sunset, — small ten-sided, rosy-crimson basins, about two inches above the recurved, drooping dry capsules of last year, — and sometimes those of the year before are two inches lower. The first rose-bug on one of these flowers. Stopped to pick strawberries on Fair Haven. When I have stayed out thus till late many miles from home, and have heard a cricket beginning to chirp louder near me in the grass, I have felt that I was not far from home after all, — began to be weaned from my village home. There is froth on alders, which comes off on to my clothes. I see over the bream nests little schools of countless minute minnows. Can they be the young breams? The breams being still in their nests. It is surprising how thickly strewn our soil is with arrowheads. I never see the surface broken in sandy places but I think of them. I find them on all sides, not only in corn and grain and potato and bean fields, but in pastures and woods, by woodchucks' holes and pigeon [Pigeon, Wild (American Passenger Pigeon  *Ectopistes migratorius*]²²⁵] beds, and, as to-night, in a pasture where a restless cow has pawed the ground. I float homeward over water almost perfectly smooth, yet not methinks as in the fall, my sail so idle that I count ten devil's-needles resting along it at once.

Carpet-weed, and purslane, and sweet-briar.

Is not the rose-pink *Rosa lucida* paler than the *R. nitida*?

223. Probably 14th; well out the 16th elsewhere.

224. Thoreau occasionally used this term for such ground-feeding birds as Savannah Sparrow  *Passerculus sandwichensis*, Song Sparrow  *Melospiza melodia*, and Vesper Sparrow  *Poocetes gramineus*.

225. Now extinct.





1853-1854

1853-1854

[Jefferson Davis](#) and [Varina Davis](#)'s son Samuel Emory Davis died.

[Charles Algernon Parsons](#) was born in London.

Documentation of the [international slave trade](#), per [W.E. Burghardt Du Bois](#): "Report submitted by Mr. Slidell, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, on a resolution relative to the abrogation of the eighth article of the treaty with Great Britain of the 9th of August, 1842, etc."—SENATE REPORTS, 34 Cong. 1 sess. I. No. 195. (Injunction of secrecy removed June 26, 1856.)

[W.E. Burghardt Du Bois](#): During the decade there was some attempt at reactionary legislation, chiefly directed at the Treaty of Washington. June 13, 1854, Slidell, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, made an elaborate report to the Senate, advocating the abrogation of the 8th Article of that treaty, on the ground that it was costly, fatal to the health of the sailors, and useless, as the trade had actually increased under its operation.²²⁶ Both this and a similar attempt in the House failed,²²⁷ as did also an attempt to substitute life imprisonment for the death penalty.²²⁸ Most of the actual legislation naturally took the form of appropriations. In 1853 there was an attempt to appropriate \$20,000.²²⁹ This failed, and the appropriation of \$8,000 in 1856 was the first for ten years.²³⁰ The following year brought a similar appropriation,²³¹ and in 1859²³² and 1860²³³ \$75,000 and \$40,000 respectively were appropriated. Of attempted legislation to strengthen the laws there was plenty: e.g., propositions to regulate the issue of sea-letters and the use of our flag;²³⁴ to prevent the "coolie" trade, or the bringing in of "apprentices" or "African laborers;"²³⁵ to stop the coastwise trade;²³⁶ to assent to a Right of Search;²³⁷ and to amend the Constitution by forever prohibiting the slave-trade.²³⁸ The efforts of the executive during this period were criminally lax and negligent. "The General Government did not exert itself

226. SENATE JOURNAL, 34th Congress, 1-2 session, pages 396, 695-8; SENATE REPORTS, 34th Congress, 1st session, I. No. 195.

227. HOUSE JOURNAL, 31 Congress, 2d session, page 64. There was still another attempt by Sandidge. Cf. 26TH REPORT OF THE AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, page 44.

228. SENATE JOURNAL, 36th Congress, 1st session, page 274; CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE, 36th Congress, 1st session, page 1245.

229. CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE, 32d Congress, 2d session, page 1072.

230. I.e., since 1846: STATUTES AT LARGE, XI. 90.

231. STATUTES AT LARGE, XI. 227.

232. STATUTES AT LARGE, XI. 404.

233. STATUTES AT LARGE, XII. 21.

234. E.g., Clay's resolutions: CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE, 31 Congress, 2d session, pages 304-9. Clayton's resolutions: SENATE JOURNAL, 33d Congress, 1st session, page 404; HOUSE JOURNAL, 33d Congress, 1st session, pages 1093, 1332-3; CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE, 33d Congress, 1st session, pages 1591-3, 2139. Seward's bill: SENATE JOURNAL, 33d Congress, 1st session, pages 448, 451.

235. Mr. Blair of Missouri asked unanimous consent in Congress, Dec. 23, 1858, to a resolution instructing the Judiciary Committee to bring in such a bill; Houston of Alabama objected: CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE, 35th Congress, 2d session, page 198; 26TH REPORT OF THE AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, page 44.

236. This was the object of attack in 1851 and 1853 by Giddings: HOUSE JOURNAL, 32d Congress, 1st session, page 42; 33d Congress, 1st session, page 147. Cf. HOUSE JOURNAL, 38 Congress, 1st session, page 46.

237. By Mr. Wilson, March 20, 1860: SENATE JOURNAL, 36th Congress, 1st session, page 274.

238. Four or five such attempts were made: December 12, 1860, HOUSE JOURNAL, 36th Congress, 2d session, pages 61-2; January 7, 1861, CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE, 36th Congress, 2d session, page 279; January 23, 1861, CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE, 36th Congress, 2d session, page 527; February 1, 1861, CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE, 36th Congress, 2d session, page 690; February 27, 1861, CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE, 36th Congress, 2d session, pages 1243, 1259.



1853-1854

1853-1854

in good faith to carry out either its treaty stipulations or the legislation of Congress in regard to the matter. If a vessel was captured, her owners were permitted to bond her, and thus continue her in the trade; and if any man was convicted of this form of piracy, the executive always interposed between him and the penalty of his crime. The laws providing for the seizure of vessels engaged in the traffic were so constructed as to render the duty unremunerative; and marshals now find their fees for such services to be actually less than their necessary expenses. No one who bears this fact in mind will be surprised at the great indifference of these officers to the continuing of the slave-trade; in fact, he will be ready to learn that the laws of Congress upon the subject had become a dead letter, and that the suspicion was well grounded that certain officers of the Federal Government had actually connived at their violation."²³⁹ From 1845 to 1854, in spite of the well-known activity of the trade, but five cases obtained cognizance in the New York district. Of these, Captains Mansfield and Driscoll forfeited their bonds of \$5,000 each, and escaped; in the case of the notorious *Canot*, nothing had been done as late as 1856, although he was arrested in 1847; Captain Jefferson turned State's evidence, and, in the case of Captain Mathew, a *nolle prosequi* was entered.²⁴⁰ Between 1854 and 1856 thirty-two persons were indicted in New York, of whom only thirteen had at the latter date been tried, and only one of these convicted.²⁴¹ These dismissals were seldom on account of insufficient evidence. In the notorious case of the "*Wanderer*," she was arrested on suspicion, released, and soon after she landed a cargo of slaves in Georgia; some who attempted to seize the Negroes were arrested for larceny, and in spite of the efforts of Congress the captain was never punished. The yacht was afterwards started on another voyage, and being brought back to Boston was sold to her former owner for about one third her value.²⁴² The bark "*Emily*" was seized on suspicion and released, and finally caught red-handed on the coast of Africa; she was sent to New York for trial, but "disappeared" under a certain slave captain, Townsend, who had, previous to this, in the face of the most convincing evidence, been acquitted at Key West.²⁴³

The squadron commanders of this time were by no means as efficient as their predecessors, and spent much of their time, apparently, in discussing the Right of Search. Instead of a number of small light vessels, which by the reports of experts were repeatedly shown to be the only efficient craft, the government, until 1859, persisted in sending out three or four great frigates. Even these did not attend faithfully to their duties. A letter from on board one of them shows that, out of a fifteen months' alleged service, only twenty-two days were spent on the usual cruising-ground for slavers, and thirteen of these at anchor; eleven months were spent at Madeira and Cape Verde Islands, 300 miles from the coast and 3,000 miles from the slave

239. "The Slave-Trade in New York," in the *Continental Monthly*, January, 1862, page 87.

240. New York *Herald*, July 14, 1856.

241. New York *Herald*, July 14, 1856. Cf. SENATE EXECUTIVE DOCUMENT, 37th Congress, 2d session, V. No. 53.

242. 27TH REPORT OF THE AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, pages 25-6. Cf. 26TH REPORT OF THE AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, pages 45-9.

243. 27TH REPORT OF THE AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, pages 26-7.



1853-1854

1853-1854

market.²⁴⁴ British commanders report the apathy of American officers and the extreme caution of their instructions, which allowed many slavers to escape.²⁴⁵

The officials at Washington often remained in blissful, and perhaps willing, ignorance of the state of the trade. While Americans were smuggling slaves by the thousands into Brazil, and by the hundreds into the United States, Secretary Graham was recommending the abrogation of the 8th Article of the Treaty of Washington;²⁴⁶ so, too, when the Cuban slave-trade was reaching unprecedented activity, and while slavers were being fitted out in every port on the Atlantic seaboard, Secretary Kennedy naïvely reports, "The time has come, perhaps, when it may be properly commended to the notice of Congress to inquire into the necessity of further continuing the regular employment of a squadron on this [i.e., the African] coast."²⁴⁷ Again, in 1855, the government has "advices that the slave trade south of the equator is entirely broken up;"²⁴⁸ in 1856, the reports are "favorable;"²⁴⁹ in 1857 a British commander writes: "No vessel has been seen here for one year, certainly; I think for nearly three years there have been no American cruizers on these waters, where a valuable and extensive American commerce is carried on. I cannot, therefore, but think that this continued absence of foreign cruizers looks as if they were intentionally withdrawn, and as if the Government did not care to take measures to prevent the American flag being used to cover Slave Trade transactions;"²⁵⁰ nevertheless, in this same year, according to Secretary Toucey, "the force on the coast of Africa has fully accomplished its main object."²⁵¹ Finally, in the same month in which the "Wanderer" and her mates were openly landing cargoes in the South, President Buchanan, who seems to have been utterly devoid of a sense of humor, was urging the annexation of Cuba to the United States as the only method of suppressing the slave-trade!²⁵²

About 1859 the frequent and notorious violations of our laws aroused even the Buchanan government; a larger appropriation was obtained, swift light steamers were employed, and, though we may well doubt whether after such a carnival illegal importations "entirely" ceased, as the President informed Congress,²⁵³ yet some sincere efforts at suppression were certainly begun. From 1850 to 1859 we have few notices of captured slavers, but in 1860 the increased appropriation of the thirty-fifth Congress resulted in the capture of twelve vessels with 3,119 Africans.²⁵⁴

244. 26TH REPORT OF THE AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, page 54.

245. BRITISH AND FOREIGN STATE PAPERS, 1859-60, pages 899, 973.

246. Nov. 29, 1851: HOUSE EXECUTIVE DOCUMENT, 32d Congress, 1st session, II. pt. 2, No. 2, page 4.

247. Dec. 4, 1852: HOUSE EXECUTIVE DOCUMENT, 32d Congress, 2d session, I. pt. 2, No. 1, page 293.

248. HOUSE EXECUTIVE DOCUMENT, 34th Congress, 1st session, I. pt. 3, No. 1, page 5.

249. HOUSE EXECUTIVE DOCUMENT, 34th Congress, 3d session, I. pt. 2, No. 1, page 407.

250. Commander Burgess to Commodore Wise, Whydah, Aug. 12, 1857: PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS, 1857-8, vol. LXI. SLAVE TRADE, Class A, page 136.

251. HOUSE EXECUTIVE DOCUMENT, 35th Congress, 1st session, II. pt. 3, No. 2, page 576.

252. HOUSE EXECUTIVE DOCUMENT, 35th Congress, 2d session, II. pt. 1, No. 2, pages 14-15, 31-33.

253. SENATE EXECUTIVE DOCUMENT, 36th Congress, 2d session, I. No. 1, page 24. The Report of the Secretary of the Navy, 1859, contains this ambiguous passage: "What the effect of breaking up the trade will be upon the United States or Cuba it is not necessary to inquire; certainly, under the laws of Congress and our treaty obligations, it is the duty of the executive government to see that our citizens shall not be engaged in it": SENATE EXECUTIVE DOCUMENT, 36th Congress, 1st session, III. No. 2, pages 1138-9.

254. SENATE EXECUTIVE DOCUMENT, 36th Congress, 2d session, III. pt. 1, No. 1, pages 8-9.



1853-1854

1853-1854

The Act of June 16, 1860, enabled the President to contract with the Colonization Society for the return of recaptured Africans; and by a long-needed arrangement cruisers were to proceed direct to Africa with such cargoes, instead of first landing them in this country.²⁵⁵



June 14, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) was visited by another amateur [botanist](#), [Austin Bacon](#) of [Natick](#), and they walked to Concord's limekiln.

[\[George Partridge\] Bradford](#) [of [Plymouth](#), a Brook Farmer], [\[the Reverend John Lewis\] Russell](#) [of [Salem](#)], and [Austin Bacon](#) of [Natick](#) are acknowledged in the preface to [George B. Emerson](#)'s report on the trees and shrubs of Massachusetts. This preface approximates a directory of Massachusetts botanists in 1846. Austin Bacon (1813-88) was a surveyor-naturalist. [Thoreau](#) paid a visit to him on August 24, 1857, and was shown a number of Natick's botanical highlights. Thoreau's interest in Natick no doubt arose from his reading of Oliver N. Bacon's HISTORY OF NATICK, which included a list of unusual plants (January 19, 1856, JOURNAL).

— [Ray Angelo](#), "Thoreau as Botanist"

Turkey and Austria entered into an accord whereby Wallachia would be occupied by the troops of both nations, while Moldavia would be occupied by the troops of the Austrians alone.

On page 2 of the New York [Daily Times](#) appeared an article about [steamboating](#) on the upper Mississippi River, identified only as by a "special correspondent," "W":

Perhaps you have beheld such sublimity in dreams, but surely never in daylight walking elsewhere in this wonderful world. Over one hundred and fifty miles of unimaginable fairy-land, genii-land, and world of visions, have we passed during the last twenty-four hours.... Throw away your guide books; heed not the statements of travelers; deal not with seekers after and retailers of the picturesque; believe on man, but see for yourself the Mississippi River above Dubuque.²⁵⁶



June 14. Pm to Lime kiln with Mr Bacon of Natic.

Sisymbrium amphibium (?) of Big. some days at foot of Loring's land. Common Mallows well out how long? What is that sisymbrium or Mustard-like plant at foot of Loring's? *Erigeron strigosus*?? out earliest say yesterday. Observed a ribwort near Simon Brown's barn by road with elongated spikes & only pistillate flowers— Hedge mustard how long? Pepper grass how long — sometime— *Scirpus lacustris* maybe some days. I see a black caterpillar on the black willows nowadays with red spots. Mr Bacon thinks that cherry birds are abundant where canker worms are — says that only female mosquitoes sting (not his observation alone) That there is one or two arbor vitæ native in Natic— He has found the *Lygodium palmatum* there— There is one pure-blooded Indian woman there. Pearl [?] I think he called her. He thought those the exuviae of mosquitoes on the river weeds under water— Makes his own microscopes & uses garnets— He called the huckleberry apple a


255. STATUTES AT LARGE, XII. 40.

256. Notice, please, that this is precisely the [steamboat](#) adventure upon which [Thoreau](#) would embark during May 1861, in order to approach [Minnesota](#).


1853-1854

1853-1854

parasitic plant — pterospora which grows on & changes the nature of the huckleberry.— Observed a diseased andromeda paniculata twig prematurely in blossom— Caught a locust properly Harvest-fly — (cicada) drumming on a birch — which Bacon & Hill (of Waltham) think like the *septendecim* except that ours has not red eyes, but black ones. [Harris's](#) other kind the Dog day Cicada (*canicularis*) or harvest fly — He says it begins to be heard invariably at the beginning of Dog days — he Harris heard it for many years in succession with few exceptions on the 25th of July. Bacon says he has seen pitch pine pollen in a cloud going over a hill a mile off is pretty sure—

 June 15, Thursday: At 5:30 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) went to the Island and Hill, and in the afternoon he took his boat up the [Assabet River](#) to Garlic Wall.

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.
 — [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 10



At 7 PM he walked along the railroad tracks to the Cliff, and found a nest of 10 buried [tortoise eggs](#) which he took home and reburied in his garden.

At Tsarskoye Selo, Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka began writing his memoirs.

On the far eastern island, the remains of the American Robert Williams were moved for internment.

The funeral of [Jefferson Davis](#) and [Varina Davis](#)'s son Samuel Emory Davis was at home.



[Charles Wesley Slack](#) wrote from New-York to Eva Evelina E. Vannevar Slack in Boston, detailing his activities.



June 15. 5.30 A.M. — To Island and Hill.

A young painted tortoise on the surface of the water, as big as a quarter of a dollar, with a reddish or orange sternum. I suppose that my skater insect is the hydrometer. Found a nest of tortoise eggs, apparently buried last night, which I brought home, ten in all, — one lying wholly on the surface, — and buried in the garden. The soil *above* a dark virgin mould about a stump was unexpectedly hard.²⁵⁷

P.M. — Up Assabet to Garlic Wall.

That tall grass opposite the Merrick Swimming-Place is getting up pretty well, and blossoming with a broad and regular spike, for some time. This is the third afternoon that we have had a rumbling thunder-cloud arise in the east, — not to mention the west, — but all signs have failed hitherto, and I resolve to proceed on my voyage, knowing that I have a tight [roof] in my boat turned up. The froth on the alders, andromeda, etc., — not to speak of the aphides, — dirties and apparently spots my clothes, so that it is a serious objection to walking amid these bushes these days. I am covered with this spittle-like froth. At the Assabet Spring I must have been near a black and white creeper's [**Black-and-white Warbler**  *Mniotilta varia* (~~Black and white Creeper~~)] nest. It kept up a constant chipping. Saw there also, probably, a chestnut-sided warbler [**Chestnut-sided Warbler**  *Dendroica pensylvanica*]. A yellow crown, chestnut stripe on sides, white beneath, and two yellowish bars on wings. A red oak there has many large twigs drooping withered, apparently weakened by


257. These were stinkpots and only a few feet from water's edge.

1853-1854

1853-1854

some insect. May it not be the locust of yesterday? Black willow is now gone to seed, and its down covers the water, white amid the weeds. The swamp-pink apparently two or even three days in one place. Saw a wood tortoise, about two inches and a half, with a black sternum and the skin, which becomes orange, now ochreous merely, or brown. The little painted tortoise of the morning was red beneath. Both these young tortoises have a distinct dorsal ridge. The garlic not in flower yet. I observed no *Nuphar lutea* var. *Kalmiana* on the Assabet.

7 P.M. — To Cliff by railroad.

Cranberry. *Prinos levigatus*, apparently two days. Methinks the birds sing a little feebler nowadays. The note of the bobolink [**Bobolink**  *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*] begins to sound somewhat rare. The sun has set, or is at least concealed in a low mist. As I go up Fair Haven Hill, I feel the leaves in the sprout-land oak, hickory, etc., cold and wet to my hand with the heavy dew that is falling. They look dry, but when I rub them with my hand, they show moist or wet at once. Probably I thus spread minute drops of dew or mist on their surface. It cannot be the warmth of my hand, for when I breathe on them it has no effect. I see one or two early blueberries prematurely turning. The *Amelanchier Botryapium* berries are already reddened two thirds over, and are somewhat palatable and soft, — some of them, — not fairly ripe.



June 16, Friday: The Reverend Doctor William Andrew Scott lectured before the Mercantile library Association, at Musical Hall in [San Francisco, California](#), on the topic of the influence of great cities.

According to page 139 of [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#)'s 2017 book out of Harvard University Press, THE BOATMAN: [HENRY DAVID THOREAU](#)'S RIVER YEARS, [Henry Thoreau](#) went out before dawn this morning to hear the fragrant white water lilies on the river “pop open.” Quote unquote. Well, as you can see in the journal entry, recorded below, Thoreau actually did not report any such sound effects. There had indeed been a Sunday on which he had gone out onto the river before dawn to watch the water lilies as they opened, but that had been a Sunday morning that had gone down several years earlier, on July 4th, 1852. And, in his journal entry for that Sunday dawn several years earlier, Thoreau had paid meticulous attention to the early light and had paid meticulous attention to exactly when the 1st water lily opened in the golden rays, and then had reported other water lilies as they also opened. Although Thoreau had mentioned in that earlier journal entry a sound, the sound of a humming bird, he had mentioned there no other such sound, nothing such as a “pop,” as any lily had opened in the early rays of the Sunday morning sun!

So how is it that Professor Thorson has committed such an error? I am unable to find, in the literature, any mention that any water lily blossom ever makes any audible sound as it opens in the morning — because, in actual fact, water lily blossoms do not make any sound whatever as they open! Nothing. Nada. Never. Although there does happen to be a popping sound associated with this plant, it is a popping sound that is associated not with its flower, not with the opening of its flower in the golden rays of the dawn, but with its pads, which is to say, its roundish leaves that lie flat on the surface of the water. This “pad pop” occurs frequently and randomly during both day and night, because it is generated when some fish such as a sunfish randomly comes up underneath a lily pad and sucks an insect, and a fragment of the green pad, into its mouth, leaving a little oval hole in the green pad. That “pad pop” sound is in no way to be associated with the opening of this plant's flower, or with the dawn. No way. Nope.



June 16. 5 A.M. — Up railroad.

As the sun went down last night, round and red in a damp misty atmosphere, so now it rises in the same manner, though there is no dense fog. Poison-dogwood yesterday, or say day before, *i.e.* 11th. *Rubus hispidus*, perhaps yesterday in the earliest place, over the sand. Mullein, perhaps yesterday. Observed yesterday the erigeron with a purple tinge. I cannot tell whether this, which seems in other respects the same with the white, is the *strigosus* or *annuus*. The calla which I plucked yesterday sheds pollen to-day; say to-day, then. A *Hypericum perforatum* seen last night will probably open to-day. I see on the *Scirpus lacustris* and *pontederia* leaves black patches for some days, as if painted, of minute closely placed ova, above water. I suspect that what I took for milfoil is a sium. Is not that

1853-1854

1853-1854

new mustard-like plant behind Loring's, and so on down the river, *Nasturtium hispidum*, or hairy cress? Probably the first the 19th. Heart-leaf. *Nymphæa odorata*. Again I scent the white water-lily, and a season I had waited for is arrived. How indispensable all these experiences to make up the summer! It is the emblem of purity, and its scent suggests it. Growing in stagnant and muddy [water], it bursts up so pure and fair to the eye and so sweet to the scent, as if to show us what purity and sweetness reside in, and can be extracted from, the slime and muck of earth. I think I have plucked the first one that has opened for a mile at least. What confirmation of our hopes is the fragrance of the water-lily! I shall not soon despair of the world for it, notwithstanding slavery, and the cowardice and want of principle of the North. It suggests that the time may come when man's deeds will smell as sweet. Such, then, is the odor our planet emits. Who can doubt, then, that Nature is young and sound? If Nature can compound this fragrance still annually, I shall believe her still full of vigor, and that there is virtue in man, too, who perceives and loves it. It is as if all the pure and sweet and virtuous was extracted from the slime and decay of earth and presented thus in a flower. The resurrection of virtue! It reminds me that Nature has been partner to no Missouri compromise. I scent no compromise in the fragrance of the white water-lily. In it, the sweet, and pure, and innocent are wholly sundered from the obscene and baleful. I do not scent in this the time-serving irresolution of a Massachusetts governor, nor of a Boston Mayor. All good actions have contributed to this fragrance. So behave that the odor of your actions may enhance the general sweetness of the atmosphere, that, when I behold or scent a flower, I may not be reminded how inconsistent are your actions with it; for all odor is but one form of advertisement of a moral quality. If fair actions had not been performed, the lily would not smell sweet. The foul slime stands for the sloth and vice of man; the fragrant flower that springs from it, for the purity and courage which springs from its midst. It is these sights and sounds and fragrances put together that convince us of our immortality. No man believes against all evidence. Our external senses consent with our internal. This fragrance assures me that, though all other men fall, one shall stand fast; though a pestilence sweep over the earth, it shall at least spare one man. The genius of Nature is unimpaired. Her flowers are as fair and as fragrant as ever.

Three days in succession, — the 13th, 14th, and 15th, — thunder-clouds, with thunder and lightning, have risen high in the east, threatening instant rain, and yet each time it has failed to reach us, and thus it is almost invariably, methinks, with thunder-clouds which rise in the east; they do not reach us. Perhaps they are generated along, and confined to, the seacoast.

The warmer, or at least *drier*, weather has now prevailed about a fortnight. Once or twice the sun has gone down red, shorn of his beams. There have been showers all around us, but nothing to mention here yet. Yet it is not particularly dry. I hear nowadays the anxious notes of some birds whose young have just flown, — crow blackbirds [**Common Grackle** ■ *Quiscalus quiscula* (~~Crow blackbird~~)], etc., etc.

As for birds, I think that their quire begins now to be decidedly less full and loud. I hear the phœbe note of the chickadee [**Black-capped Chickadee** ■ *Parus atricapillus* (~~Titmouse, Titmiee~~)] occasionally. I see only a stray, probably summer, duck [**Wood Duck** ■ *Aix sponsa* (summer duck)] very rarely on the river. The blue-bird [**Eastern Bluebird** ■ *Sialia sialis*] is lost and somewhat rare-looking. The quail [**Northern Bobwhite** ■ *Colinus virginianus* (~~Quail~~)] begins to be *heard*. Very few if any hawks ■ are commonly noticed. The cow troopials [**Brown-headed Cowbird** ■ *Molothrus ater* (~~Cow Troopial~~)] have [been] seen in small flocks flitting about within a week. Along low roads, the song sparrows [**Song Sparrow** ■ *Melospiza melodia* (~~melodia~~)], bay-wings [**Vesper Sparrow** ■ *Poocetes gramineus* (~~Bay-wing or White-in-tail or Grass-Finch or Grass-bird~~)], Savannah [**Savannah Sparrow** ■ *Passerculus sandwichensis* (~~passerina or seringo or seringo-bird~~)] (?), and yellow-winged [**Grasshopper Sparrow** ■ *Ammodramus savannarum* (~~Yellow-winged Sparrow or Savannarum or savanna~~)] (?) (*i.e.* ochreous-throated) quite commonly sing. Woodpeckers ■ not noticeable as in spring. Rush sparrow [**Field Sparrow** ■ *Spizella pusilla* (~~Rush Sparrow~~)] at sundown. Methought I heard a pine warbler [**Pine Warbler** ■ *Dendroica pinus* (~~Pine Creeper~~)] to-day. Many chip-birds [**Chipping Sparrow** ■ *Spizella passerina* (~~chip-bird~~)] have flown. The blue herons [**Great Blue Heron** ■ *Ardea herodias* (~~Blue Heron~~)] appear not to remain here this summer, and wood thrushes [**Wood Thrush** ■ *Hylocichla mustelina*] are not so numerous within my range as formerly. Kingfishers [**Belted Kingfisher** ■ *Ceryle alcyon*] are quite common, perhaps especially at Walden, where the water is clear, and on the Assabet. The black and white creeper [**Black-and-white Warbler** ■ *Mniotilta varia* (~~Black-and-white Creeper~~)] sings

1853-1854

1853-1854

much. The pine warbler [**Pine Warbler** █ *Dendroica pinus* (~~Pine Creeper~~)], as usual, and the evergreen forest note (golden-winged (?) warbler) [**Black-throated Green Warbler** █ *Dendroica virens* or *Setophaga virens* ~~Evergreen forest bird~~]. Thrasher [**Brown Thrasher** █ *Toxostroma rufum* (~~Red Mavis~~)] and catbird [**Gray Catbird** █ *Dumetella carolinensis*] sing still; summer yellowbird [**Yellow Warbler** █ *Dendroica petechia* (~~Yellow bird or Summer Yellow bird~~)] and Maryland yellow-throat [**Common Yellowthroat** █ *Geothlypis trichas* (~~Maryland Yellow throat~~)] sing still; and oven-bird [**Ovenbird** █ *Seiurus aurocapillus*] and veery [**Veery** █ *Catharus fuscescens* (~~Wilson's Thrush~~)]. The bobolink [**Bobolink** █ *Dolichonyx oryzivorus* (~~Rice bird~~)], full strains, but further between. The red-eye [**Red-eyed Vireo** █ *Vireo olivaceus* (~~red eye~~)] incessant at midday. Goldfinches [**American Goldfinch** █ *Carduelis tristis*] twitter over as usual. The wood pewee [**Wood-Pewee, Eastern** █ *Contopus virens* (~~Wood-Pewee or Peawee~~)] prominent. The nighthawk [**Common Nighthawk** █ *Chordeiles minor* (~~Booming Nighthawk~~)] in full blast. Cherry-birds [~~Cherry bird~~ (**Cedar Waxwing** █ *Bombycilla cedrorum*)] numerous, — the bold, combative-looking fellows, — etc., etc.

Since spring — say for a month or so — we have had no *tumultuous* water, — waves running, with whitecaps.

Caterpillars have some time been grown on apple and cherry trees, and now the trees are leafing again. Other caterpillars on oaks, black willows, etc. Dragonflies of various sizes and colors are now extremely abundant, hovering just over the surface of the river and coupling there, — a blue and brown or a blue and green one united. Alighting on the least surface of a weed. One kind of cicada, at least, began a fortnight ago, — a sort of black-eyed *septendecim*. Shad-flies are *probably* disappearing. *Great* moths now abroad. Rose-bugs have just come. Various plants are frothy.

Tortoises, of all kinds, as I have seen, but *odoratus*, are laying their eggs for some time. I find their eggs dropped. Apparently young brems over nests. Frog-spawn apparently, in river; stringy, ash-color.

The effect of a good government is to make life more valuable, — of a bad government, to make it less valuable. We can afford that railroad and all merely material stock should depreciate, for that only compels us to live more simply and economically; but suppose the value of life itself should be depreciated. Every man in New England capable of the sentiment of patriotism must have lived the last three weeks with the sense of having suffered a vast, indefinite loss. I had never respected this government, but I had foolishly thought that I might manage to live here, attending to my private affairs, and forget it. For my part, my old and worthiest pursuits have lost I cannot say how much of their attraction, and I feel that my investment in life here is worth many per cent. less since Massachusetts last deliberately and forcibly restored an innocent man, Anthony Burns, to slavery. I dwelt before in the illusion that my life passed somewhere only *between* heaven and hell, but now I cannot persuade myself that I do not dwell wholly within hell. The sight of that political organization called Massachusetts is to me morally covered with scoriæ and volcanic cinders, such as Milton imagined. If there is any hell more unprincipled than our rulers and our people, I feel curious to visit it. Life itself being worthless, all things with it, that feed it, are worthless. Suppose you have a small library, with pictures to adorn the walls, — a garden laid out around, — and contemplate scientific and literary pursuits, etc., etc., and discover suddenly that your villa, with all its contents, is located in hell, and that the Justice of the peace is one of the devil's angels, has a cloven foot and a forked tail, — do not these things suddenly lose their value in your eyes? Are you not disposed to sell at a great sacrifice?

I feel that, to some extent, the State has fatally interfered with my just and proper business. It has not merely interrupted me in my passage through Court Street on errands of trade, but it has, to some extent, interrupted me and every man on his onward and upward path, on which he had trusted soon to leave Court Street far behind. I have found that hollow which I had relied on for solid.

I am surprised to see men going about their business as if nothing had happened, and say to myself, "Unfortunates! they have not heard the news;" that the man whom I just met on horseback should be so earnest to overtake his newly bought cows running away, — since all property is insecure, and if they do not run away again, they may be taken away from him when he gets them. Fool! does he not know that his seed-corn is worth less this year, — that all beneficent harvests fail as he approaches the empire of hell? No prudent man will build a stone house under these circumstances, or engage in any peaceful enterprise which it requires a long time to accomplish. Art is as long as ever, but life is more interrupted and less available for a man's proper pursuits. It is time we had done

1853-1854

1853-1854

referring to our ancestors. We have used up all our inherited freedom, like the young bird the albumen in the egg. It is not an era of repose. If we would save our lives, we must fight for them.

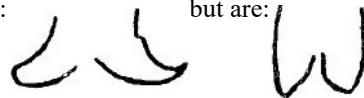
The discovery is what manner of men your countrymen are. They steadily worship mammon — and on the seventh day curse God with a tintamarre from one end of the *Union* to the other. I heard the other day of a meek and sleek devil of a Bishop Somebody, who commended the law and order with which Burns was given up. I would like before I sit down to a table to inquire if there is one in the company who styles himself or is styled Bishop, and he or I should go out of it. I would have such a man wear his bishop's hat and his clerical bib and tucker, that we may know him.

Why will men be such fools as [to] trust to lawyers for a *moral* reform? I do not believe that there is a judge in this country prepared to decide by the principle that a law is immoral and therefore of no force. They put themselves, or rather are by character, exactly on a level with the marine who discharges his musket in any direction in which he is ordered. They are just as much tools, and as little men.

P.M. To Baker Ditch *via* almshouse.

Autumnal dandelion, some time, in Emerson's Meadow pasture. *Potentilla Norvegica*, a day or two, in low ground; very abundant at Baker Ditch with other weeds, on a cleared and ditched swamp. Veiny-leaved hawkweed at Heywood Peak appears shut up at midday, — also the autumnal dandelion. A veiny-leaved hawkweed without veins. Is not this my *Gronovii*? [Think not. *Vide* forward, July 1st.] Panicked cornet well out on Heywood peak. There is a cool east wind, — and has been afternoons for several days, — which has produced a very thick haze or a fog. I find a tortoise egg on this peak at least sixty feet above the pond. There is a fine ripple and sparkle on the pond, seen through the mist. But what signifies the beauty of nature when men are base? We walk to lakes to see our serenity reflected in them. When we are not serene, we go not to them. Who can be serene in a country where both rulers and ruled are without principle? The remembrance of the baseness of politicians spoils my walks. My thoughts are murder to the State; I endeavor in vain to observe nature; my thoughts involuntarily go plotting against the State. I trust that all just men will conspire. Dogsbane, apparently to-morrow. I observed that the *Viburnum dentatum* was very conspicuous and prevalent along the river, as if few other flowers were in bloom.

An abundance of *Galium trifidum* in low grounds, some smooth, some rough, with four leaves, or five or six; I do not distinguish the varieties. Am in doubt whether the polygonum which I find just opening at the ditch (say to-morrow) is *sagittatum* [Yes] — a rank one — or *arifolium* [crossed out; *Vide* Aug. 19]. The lobes of the leaves do not spread thus: but are:



Three or four styles and four or five angled pods. Epilobium, probably *coloratum*, yet rather downy, to-morrow. It is worth the while to see the rank weeds which grow here on this cleared and ditched swamp, — *Potentilla Norvegica*, touch-me-not, *Polygonum sagittatum* (?), night-shade, etc., etc. The *Rosa nitida* grows along the edge of the ditches, the half-open flowers showing the deepest rosy tints, so glowing that they make an evening or twilight of the surrounding afternoon, seeming to stand in the shade or twilight. Already the bright petals of yesterday's flowers are thickly strewn along on the black mud at the bottom of the ditch.

The *R. nitida*, the earlier (?) with its narrow shiny leaves and prickly stem and its moderate-sized rose-pink petals.

The *R. lucida*, with its broader and duller leaves. but larger and perhaps deeper-colored and more purple petals, perhaps yet higher scented, and its great yellow centre of stamens.

The smaller, lighter, but perhaps more delicately tinted *R. rubiginosa*.

One and all drop their petals the second day. I bring home the buds of the three ready to expand at night, and the next day they perfume my chamber. Add to these the white lily (just begun), also the swamp-pink, and probably morning-glory, and the great orchis, and mountain laurel (now in prime), and perhaps we must say that the fairest flowers are now to be found. Or say a few days later. (The arethusa is disappearing.)

It is eight days since I plucked the great orchis; one is perfectly fresh still in my pitcher. It may be plucked when the spike is only half opened, and will open completely and keep perfectly fresh in a pitcher more than a week. Do I not live in a garden, — in paradise? I can go out each morning before

1853-1854

1853-1854

breakfast — I do — and gather these flowers with which to perfume my chamber where I read and write, all day. The note of the cherry-bird [~~Cherry-bird~~ (Cedar Waxwing █ *Bombycilla cedrorum*)] is fine and ringing, but peculiar and very noticeable. With its crest it is a resolute and combative-looking bird. The mountain laurel is remarkable for its great dense and naked (for it runs to flower now) corymbs of large and handsome flowers. And this is a prevailing underwood on many of our mountainsides! Perhaps it is more appreciated in this neighborhood, where it is comparatively rare, — rare as poetry. Whitest in the shade. Meadow-sweet tomorrow.



June 17, Saturday: At 5 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) went to climbing fern.

On this day, in [New-York](#), the anti-immigrant [Know-Nothing](#) Party was meeting under the name “Order of the Star Spangled Banner.”



June 17. Saturday. 5 A.M. — To Hill.

A cold fog. These mornings those who walk in grass are thoroughly wetted above mid-leg. All the earth is dripping wet. I am surprised to feel how warm the water is, by contrast with the cold, foggy air. The frogs seem glad to bury themselves in it. The dewy cobwebs are very thick this morning, little napkins of the fairies spread on the grass. Whorled utricularias. A potamogeton off Dodd's with fine, grassy, thread-like leaves and stems (somewhat flattish), and small globular spikes, maybe some time? *Ranunculus reptans*, maybe a day or more. A duck, probably wood duck [x], which is breeding here. From the Hill I am reminded of more youthful mornings, seeing the dark forms of the trees eastward in the low grounds, partly within and against the shining white fog, the sun just risen over it. The mist fast rolling away eastward from them, their tops at last streaking the mist and dividing it into vales. All beyond them a submerged and unknown country, as if they grew on the seashore. Why does the fog go off always toward the sun, — is seen in the east when it has disappeared in the west? The waves of the foggy ocean divide and flow back for us Israelites of a

1853-1854

1853-1854

day to march through. I hear the half-suppressed guttural sounds of a red squirrel on a tree; at length he breaks out into a sharp bark.

Slavery has produced no sweet-scented flower like the water-lily, for its flower must smell like itself. It will be a carrion-flower.

Saw the sun reflected up from the Assabet to the hilltop, through the dispersing fog, giving to the water a peculiarly rippled, pale-golden line, — “gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy.”

The judges and lawyers, and all men of expediency, consider not whether the Fugitive Slave Law is right, but whether it is what they call constitutional. They try the merits of the case by a very low and incompetent standard. Pray, is virtue constitutional, or vice? Is equity constitutional, or iniquity? It is as impertinent, in important moral and vital questions like this, to ask whether a law is constitutional or not, as to ask whether it is profitable or not. They persist in being the servants of man, and the worst of men, rather than the servants of God. Sir, the question is not whether you or your grandfather, seventy years ago, entered into an agreement to serve the devil, and that service is not accordingly now due; but — whether you will not now, for once and at last, serve God, — in spite of your own past recreancy or that of your ancestors, — and obey that eternal and only just Constitution which he, and not any Jefferson or Adams, has written in your being. Is the Constitution a thing to live by? or die by? No, as long as we are alive we forget it, and when we die we have done with it. At most it is only to swear by. While they are hurrying off Christ to the cross, the ruler decides that he cannot *constitutionally* interfere to save him. The Christians, now and always, are they who obey the higher law, who discover it to be according to their constitution to interfere. They at least cut off the ears of the police: the others pocket the thirty pieces of silver. This was meaner than to crucify Christ, for he could better take care of himself.

P.M. — To Walden and Cliffs *via* almshouse.

Rumex obtusifolius (?), maybe some days. The evergreen-forest bird at old place in white pine and oak tops, top of Brister's Hill on right. I think it has black wings with white bars. Is it not the black-throated green warbler [x]? The unmistakable tanager [x] sits on the oaks at midday and sings with a hoarse red-eye note, *pruit, prewee, prewa, prear, preā* (often more notes), some of the latter notes clearer, without the *r*. It does not sing so continuously as the red-eye, but at short intervals repeats its half-dozen notes. *Iris Virginica* well out at Peltandra Meadow, probably a day or two, though not yet at Arum Meadow. The sorrel-fields are now turning brown.

Another remarkably hazy day; our view is confined, the horizon near, no mountains; as you look off only four or five miles, you see a succession of dark wooded ridges and vales filled with mist. It is dry, hazy June weather. We are more of the earth, farther from heaven, these days. We live in a grosser element. We [are] getting deeper into the mists of earth. Even the birds sing with less vigor and vivacity. The season of hope and promise is past; already the season of small fruits has arrived. The Indian marked the midsummer as the season when berries were ripe. We are a little saddened, because we begin to see: the interval between our hopes and their fulfillment. The prospect of the Heavens is taken away, and we are presented only with a few small berries. Before sundown I reached Fair Haven Hill and gathered strawberries. I find beds of large and lusty strawberry plants in sprout-lands, but they appear to run to leaves and bear very little fruit, having spent themselves in leaves by the time the dry weather arrives. It is those still earlier and more stunted plants which grow on dry uplands that bear the *early* fruit, formed before the droughts. But the meadows produce both leaves and fruit.

I begin to see the flowering fern at a distance in the river meadows. Butter-and-eggs, some days perhaps: one or two well out, while the rest show no forwardness. Tephrosia well out, apparently some days. Lupines are going to seed. Morning-glory, apparently yesterday. Well named morning-glory. Its broad, bell- and trumpet-shaped flowers, faintly tinged with red, are like the dawn itself. The new pitcher-plant leaf is formed in some places, now free from insects. Pogonia, *perhaps* a day or two.

The sun goes down red again, like a high-colored flower of summer. As the white and yellow flowers of spring are giving place to the rose, and will soon to the red lily, etc. so the yellow sun of spring has become a red sun of June drought, round and red like a midsummer flower, production of torrid heats.

Massachusetts sits waiting his decision, as if the crime were not already committed. The crime consists first of all and chiefly in her permitting an innocent man to be tried for more than his life,

1853-1854

1853-1854

— for his liberty. They who talk about M. Loring's decision, and not about their own and the State's consenting that he shall be the umpire in such a case, waste time in words and are weak in the head, if not in the heart alone [*sic*].

(June 9th, continued.) — The amount of it is, if the majority vote the devil to be God, the minority will live and behave accordingly, and obey the successful candidate, trusting that some time or other, by some Speaker's casting-vote, they may reinstate God again. Some men act as if they believed that they could safely slide down-hill a little way, — or a good way, — and would surely come to a place, by and by, whence they could slide up again. This is expediency, or choosing that course which offers the fewest obstacles to the feet (of the slider). But there is no such thing as accomplishing a moral reform by the use of expediency or policy. There is no such thing as sliding up-hill. In morals the only sliders are backsliders.

Let the judge and the jury, and the sheriff and the jailer, cease to act under a corrupt government, — cease to be tools and become men.

Certainly slavery, and all vice and iniquity, have not had power enough to create any flower thus annually to charm the senses of men. It has no life. It is only a constant decaying and a death, offensive to all healthy nostrils. The unchangeable laws of the universe, by a partial obedience to which even sin in a measure succeeds, are all on the side of the just and fair. It is his few good qualities misallied which alone make the slaveholder at all to be feared; it is because he is in some respects a better man than we.

Why, who are the real opponents of slavery? The slaveholders know, and I know. Are they the governors, the judges, the lawyers, the politicians? Or are they Garrison, Phillips, Parker & Co.? The politicians do now, and always will, instinctively stand aloof from such.

And at this very time I heard the sound of a drum in our streets. There were men or boys training; and for what? With an effort I could pardon the cocks for crowing still, for they had not been beaten that morning; but I could not excuse this rubadub of the trainers.



June 18, Sunday: [Henry Thoreau](#) had to reappraise the idea that the [tortoise eggs](#) he had found had been laid just before he discovered them, for he learned that [J. Dugan](#) had seen the nest on June 7th.

JENNY DUGAN



June 18. Sunday. P.M. — To climbing fern.

The tephrosia is interesting for the contrast of yellowish or cream-color with red. On every dry or sandy bank I see the curled egg-shells of tortoises, which the skunks have sucked. The *Rosa lucida* is pale and low on dry sunny banks like that by Hosmer's pines. The leaves of what I call *Rumex obtusifolius* are now lighter green and broader and less curled and, I think, shorter-petioled than those of the curled dock, and the root is not yellow but white at core. The great water (?) dock, with its broad but pointed leaves, is just beginning to be obvious. The flowering fern seed ripe, probably [a] good while in some places. There are many strawberries this season, in meadows now, just fairly begun there. The meadows, like this Nut Meadow, are now full of the taller grasses, just beginning to flower, and the graceful columns of the rue (*Thalictrum*), not yet generally in flower, and the large tree- or shrub-like archangelica, with its great umbels, now fairly in bloom along the edge of the brook.

What we want is not mainly to colonize Nebraska with free men, but to colonize Massachusetts with free men, — to be free ourselves. As the enterprise of a few individuals, that is brave and practical; but as the enterprise of the State, it is cowardice and imbecility. What odds where we squat, or how much ground we cover? It is not the soil that we would make free, but men.

As for asking the South to grant us the trial by jury in the case of runaway slaves, it is as if, seeing a righteous man sent to hell, we should run together and petition the devil first to grant him a trial by jury, forgetting that there is another power to be petitioned, that there is another law and other precedents.

Am surprised to find the *Cirsium horridulum*, or great yellow thistle, out, some already withering, turned a dark purple, possibly a week old.

1853-1854

1853-1854

I discover that J. Dugan found the eggs of my snapping turtle of June 7th, apparently the same day. It did not go to a new place then, after all. I opened the nest to-day. It is, perhaps, five or six rods from the brook, in the sand near its edge. The surface had been disturbed over a foot and a half in diameter and was *slightly* concave. The nest commenced five inches beneath, and at its neck was two and a half inches across and from this nearly four inches deep, and swelled out below to four inches in width; shaped like a short, rounded bottle with a broad mouth; and the surrounding sand was quite firm. I took out forty-two eggs, close packed, and Dugan says he had previously broken one, which



made forty-three.²⁵⁸ They are a dirty white and spherical, a little more than one and one sixteenth inches in diameter, — soft-shelled, so that my finger left a permanent dimple in them. It was now ten days since they had been laid, and a little more than one half of each was darker-colored (probably the lower half) and the other white and dry-looking. I opened one, but could detect no organization with the unarmed eye. The halves of the shell, as soon as emptied, curled up, as we see them where the skunks have sucked them. They must all have been laid at one time. If it were not for the skunks, and probably other animals, we should be overrun with them. Who can tell how many tortoise eggs are buried thus in this small desert?

Observed in two places golden-crowned thrushes [~~Night-warbler (Ovenbird)~~ **Seiurus aurocapillus**, or **Common Yellowthroat** **Geothlypis trichas?**]²⁵⁹, near whose nests I must have been, hopping on the lower branches and in the underwood, — a somewhat sparrow-like bird, with its golden-brown crest: and white circle about eye, carrying the tail somewhat like a wren, and inclined to run along the branches. Each had a worm in its bill, no doubt intended for its young. That is the chief employment of the birds now, gathering food for their young. I think I heard the anxious peep of a robin [**American Robin** **Turdus migratorius**] whose young have just left the nest.

Examined, as well as I could with the glass, what I will call the *tweezer-bird* [**Northern Parula** **Parula americana** (~~Tweezer-bird~~), *-tra-wee, shreea-shre*, — raspingly. I have heard [it] perhaps as long as the evergreen-forest. It is a slender, somewhat small, vireo-like bird, yellow and yellowish all beneath, except a chestnutish (?) crescent on breast, with apparently a white spot on the wing, and certainly a yellow or greenish-yellow back between wings. Keeping rather high in the trees, I could not see the general color of the upper parts, but thought it was dark olivaceous or maybe slaty. Can it be the blue yellow-back warbler [**Black-throated Blue Warbler** **Setophaga caerulea** (~~Indigo-bird~~)]?²⁶⁰²⁶¹

Small grasshoppers very abundant in some dry grass. I find the lygodium, a late fern, now from a foot to eighteen inches high and not yet flower-budded or the leaves fully expanded. *Platanthera flava* at the Harrington Bathing-Place, possibly yesterday, — an unimportant yellowish-green spike of flowers. A large fresh stone-heap eight or ten inches above water just below there, — quite sharp, like Teneriffe. *Aralia hispida*. *Typha latifolia* may have shed pollen two or three days. I am surprised at the abundance of its sulphur-like pollen, on the least jar covering my hands and clothes, — green; at least it does not burn. The female part of the spike green and solid and apparently *immature*. *Epilobium augustifolium* up railroad, this end of high wood.

Another round red sun of dry and dusty weather to-night, — a red or red-purple helianthus. Every year men talk about the dry weather which has now begun as if it were something new and not to be expected.

258. Daniel Foster says he found forty-two this summer, in a nest in his field in Princeton.


259. Thoreau was never sure about his night warbler. Though on August 5, 1858, he identified the Common Yellowthroat as his mysterious singer, Cruickshank says on most occasions it was probably the Ovenbird *Seiurus aurocapillus* giving its aerial song.

260. Thoreau's "indigo-bird" of May 4, 1853, was a **Black-throated Blue Warbler** **Setophaga caerulea**.

261. Probably is. *Vide* May 7, 1855.

1853-1854

1853-1854

Often certain words or syllables which have suggested themselves remind me better of a bird's strain than the most elaborate and closest imitation. Heard young partridges [**Ruffed Grouse**  **Bonasa umbellus** (Partridge)].

It is not any such free-soil party as I have seen, but a free-man party, — *i.e.* a party of free men, — that is wanted. It is not any politicians, even the truest and soundest, but, strange as it may sound, even godly men, as Cromwell discovered, who are wanted to fight this battle, — men not of policy but of probity. Politicians! I have looked into the eyes of two or three of them, but I saw nothing there to satisfy me. They will vote for my man to-morrow if I will vote for theirs to-day. They will whirl round and round, not only horizontally like weathercocks, but vertically also.

My advice to the State is simply this: to dissolve her union with the slaveholder instantly. She can find no respectable law or precedent which sanctions its continuance. And to each inhabitant of Massachusetts, to dissolve his union with the State, as long as she hesitates to do her duty.



June 19, Monday: In the afternoon, despite the threat of a thunderstorm, [Henry Thoreau](#) went by boat up the [Assabet River](#).

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), *THE BOATMAN*, page 10



June 19. Monday. P.M. — Up Assabet.


A thunder-shower In the north. Will it strike us? How impressive this artillery of the heavens! It rises higher and higher. At length the thunder seems to roll quite across the sky and all round the horizon, even where there are no clouds, and I row homeward in haste. How by magic the skirts of the cloud are gathered about us, and it shoots forward over our head, and the rain comes at a time and place — which baffles all our calculations! Just before it the swamp white oak in Merrick's pasture was a very beautiful sight, with its rich shade of green, its top as it were incrusting with light. Suddenly comes the gust, and the big drops slanting from the north, and the birds fly as if rudderless, and the trees bow and are wrenched. It comes against the windows like hail and is blown over the roofs like steam or smoke. It runs down the large elm at Holbrook's and shatters the house near by. It soon shines in silver puddles in the streets. This the first rain of consequence for at least three weeks.

Amelanchier berries now generally reddening. Methinks the *Botryapium* has broader, more ovate, often rounded and pointed leaves, the calyx-lobes recurved on the fruit, while the *oblongifolia* is inclined to obovate and narrower leaves and erect calyx-lobes. Flowering raspberry, perhaps yesterday.

Men may talk about measures till all is blue and smells of brimstone, and then go home and sit, down and expect their measures to do their duty for them. The only measure is integrity and manhood.

1853-1854

1853-1854

 June 20, Tuesday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Shad-bush Meadow.

In [San Francisco](#), Volunteer Engine Co. No. 7 was organized and quartered on Pine Street between Montgomery Street and Sansome Street.

The Reverend [Samuel Joseph May](#) wrote to his son Joseph May:



The most angry, warlike passions have at times been stirred within me. But I know these are not right and so I have been in conflict with myself.



June 20. Tuesday. Motherwort to-morrow. Elder. A cloud of minute black pollywogs in a muddy pool. I see where the crickets are eating the wild strawberries.

P.M. — To Shad-bush Meadow.

Heard a *new* bird — *chut-eheeter-warren-cleaner-w-it* — on the low bushes, about the size of



1853-1854

1853-1854

Wilson's thrush [Veery] *Catharus fuscescens* (~~Wilson's Thrush or Yorrick~~) apparently. Apparently olivaceous (?) above, most so on head, yellow front, dark bill, dark wings with two white bars, all yellow or yellowish breast and beneath. Perhaps never heard it before. Cow-wheat, apparently two or three days. A three-leaved *Lysimachia stricta* apparently, with reddish flowerbuds, not open. Shad-berries almost, but scarce. There seems to be much variety in the *Rosa lucida*, — some to have stouter booked prickles than the *R. Carolina*. Upland haying begun, or beginning. Common nettle.



June 21, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) walked to [Walden Pond](#).

Russian forces abandoned their siege of Silistria, retreating north across the Danube.

The US Senate for obvious reasons approved a bill to provide more federal regulation of American vessels with destinations on the coast of Africa.

"Mr. Seward asked and obtained leave to bring in a bill (Senate, No. 407) to regulate navigation to the coast of Africa in vessels owned by citizens of the United States, in certain cases; which was read and passed to a second reading." June 22d, ordered to be printed. SENATE JOURNAL, 33rd Congress, 1st session, pages 448, 451; CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE, 33rd Congress, 1st session, pages 1456, 1461, 1472.

INTERNATIONAL SLAVE TRADE



June 21. Wednesday. We have had thick fog, and rain fell through it this morning.

P.M. — To Walden, etc.

Mitchella in Deep Cut woods, probably a day or two. Its scent is agreeable and refreshing, between the mayflower and rum cherry barb, or like peach-stone meats. *Pyrola secunda* at Laurel Glen, a day or two (?). A third of the spike now out. Most hieraciums (*venosum*) are shut by day: some open this cloudy afternoon. When I see the dense, shady masses of weeds about water, — already an unexplorable maze, — I am struck with the contrast between this and the spring, [when] I wandered about in search of the first faint greenness along the borders of the brooks. Then an inch or two of green was something remarkable and obvious afar. Now there is a dense mass of weeds along the waterside, where the muskrats lurk, and overhead a canopy of leaves conceals the birds and shuts out the sun. It is hard to realize that the seeds of all this growth were buried in that bare, frozen earth. The glyceria is budded and drooping at the pond, but hardly in flower.

In the little meadow pool, or bay, in Hubbard's shore, I see two old pouts tending their countless young close to the shore. The former are slate-colored. The latter are about half an inch long and very black, forming a dark mass from eight to twelve inches in diameter. The old are constantly circling around them, — over and under and *through*, — as if anxiously endeavoring to keep them together, from time to time moving off five or six feet to reconnoitre. The whole mass of the young — and there must be a thousand of them at least — is incessantly moving, pushing forward and stretching out. Are often in the form of a great pout, apparently keeping together by their own instinct chiefly, now on the bottom, now rising to the top. Alone they might be mistaken for pollywogs. The old, at any rate, do not appear to be very successful in their apparent efforts to communicate with and direct them. At length they break into four parts. The old are evidently very careful parents. One has some wounds apparently. In the second part of the story of Tanner it is said: "*Ah-wa-sis-sic* — Little catfish. The Indians say this fish hatches its young in a hole in the mud, and that they accompany her for some time afterwards." Yet in Ware's Smellie it is said that fishes take no care of their young. I think also that I see the young breems in schools hovering over their nests

1853-1854

1853-1854

while the old are still protecting them.

t see two varieties of *Galium trifidum*, apparently equally early, one smooth, the other rough; sometimes it grows in very dense tufts. Peltandra well out, apparently yesterday; quite abundant and pretty, raised two or three inches above the water. *Prinos verticillatus*, possibly yesterday. *Hypericum ellipticum*. Eriocaulon. Partridges [Ruffed Grouse ■ *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] drum still. The effect of the pond on its shore while standing at a great height is remarkable. Though considerably lower than it was, it appears much higher in some places, where it has worn away a barrier between itself and a meadow and so made the water deeper there.

Rambled up the grassy hollows in the sprout-lands north (?) of Goose Pond. I felt as if in a strange country, — a pleasing sense of strangeness and distance. Here, in the midst of extensive sprout-lands, are numerous open hollows more or less connected, where for some reason²⁶² the wood does not spring up, — and I am glad of it, — filled with a fine wiry grass, with the panicked andromeda, which loves dry places, now in blossom around the edges, and small black cherries and sand cherries straggling down into them. The woodchuck loves such places and now wabbles off with a peculiar loud squeak like the sharp bark of a red squirrel, then stands erect at the entrance of his hole, ready to dive into it as soon as you approach. As wild and strange a place as you might find in the unexplored West or East. The quarter of a mile of sprout-land which separates it from the highway seems as complete a barrier as a thousand miles of earth. Your horizon is there all your own.

Indigo, apparently a day in *some* places. Calopogon a day or two at least in Hubbard's Close, — this handsomest of its family after the arethusa. Again I am attracted by the deep scarlet of the wild moss rose half open in the grass, all glowing with rosy light.

262. Maybe frosts.

1853-1854

1853-1854

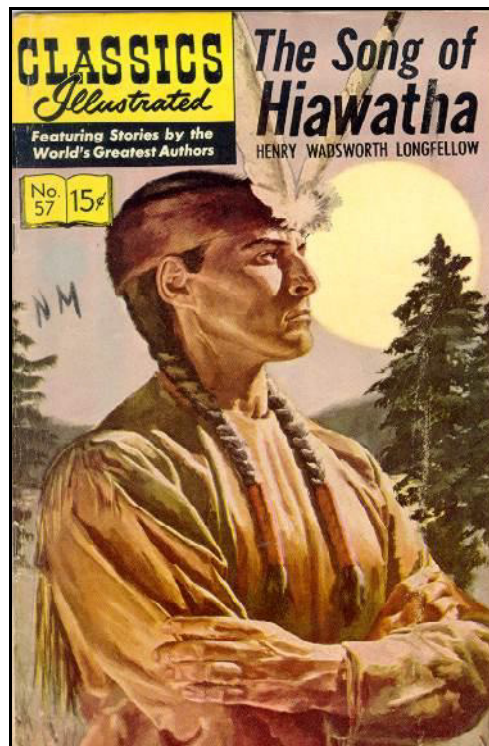


June 22, Thursday: [Charles Wesley Slack](#) wrote from Concord, New Hampshire to Eva Evelina E. Vannevar Slack in Boston, detailing his travel plans.

There was a political convention at [Concord](#) attended by [George Frisbie Hoar](#), with the objective of fusing the Free Soilers and the more dissident members of the Whigs of Massachusetts into a new political party, to which few Whigs came.



[Henry Wadsworth Longfellow](#) determined to utilize the trochaic dimeter measure of the Finnish epic KALEVALA for an epic poem of his own, on the American Indians. This would become THE SONG OF "HIAWATHA". Begun at Nahant, continued in [Newport, Rhode Island](#), the poem would be finished in Cambridge on March 21, 1855.



1853-1854

1853-1854



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR JUNE 22D]



June 23, Friday: The Antwerp/Roosendaal railway was put into use.

A reward of \$100 was being offered for the retrieval of 17-or-18-year-old Mulatto Negro Boy "Billy," who had escaped from an Alabama plantation early in June. According to the advertising slavemaster, Nathaniel Reese, Billy was well formed except for some scars occasioned by a burn, was of a yellow complexion, and had been "raised" on this country plantation and had never been out of the county "until decoyed off by some villain."

FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD—
 Ran away or stolen from my plantation, near Lowndesboro', Lowndes county, Alabama, on the 10th of June, a Mulatto Negro Boy, named BILLY, 17 or 18 years of age, 6 feet 8 or 10 inches high, well formed, yellow complexion, a fine head and features, quick spoken and intelligent, has some large scars on his body and thighs, occasioned by a burn. Said boy was raised on my plantation, in this county, and was never out of the county until decoyed off by some villain. The above reward will be given for the apprehension of the thief, with such testimony as will convict him, or one hundred dollars will be given for the negro, secured in any jail, so I get 'n'm again.
 NATHL. REESE.
 Lowndesboro', Lowndes county, Ala., June 19, 1854.
 Je23— itaw2m

(If this led to the apprehension and successful conviction of the thief the reward would be increased to \$500.)

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked to [Walden Pond](#) and the Cliffs.



June 23. Friday. There has been a foggy haze, dog-day-like, for perhaps ten days, more or less. Today it is so cold that we sit by a fire. A little skunk, a quarter or a third grown, at the edge of the North River, under hill. Birds do not sing this afternoon, though cloudy, as they did a month ago. I think they are most lively about the end of May.

P.M. — Walden and Cliffs.


I see by the railroad causeway young barn swallows [[Barn Swallow](#) [Hirundo rustica](#)] on the fences learning to fly. Lactuca, maybe a day or two, but the heads not upright yet. Whiteweed now for three weeks has frosted the fields like snow; getting old. *Polygonum Convolvulus*. Wool-grass tops. *Pyrola rotundifolia* in cut woods to-morrow. A black snake in Abel Brooks's wood [?], on a warm dry side of it, his head concealed in a stump, rapidly vibrating his tail, which struck upon the leaves. Five feet one inch long; uniform coal-black above, with greenish coal reflections; bluish or slaty beneath; white beneath head; about 189 abdominal plates; tail more than one foot long and slender. When the head was dead, exerted great power with its body; could hardly hold it.


Early blueberries have begun on the Brown sproutland, Fair Haven. This the third summer since the woods were cut, and the first for any quantity of berries, I think; so of Heywood's lot on Walden, which I think was cut also in '51-'52.

Lysimachia stricta, perhaps yesterday, at Lincoln bound, Walden. After one or two cold and rainy days the air is now clearer at last. From the Cliffs the air is beautifully clear, showing the glossy and light-reflecting greenness of the woods. It is a great relief to look into the horizon. There is more

1853-1854

1853-1854

room under the heavens. Specularia, handsome, dark-purple, on Cliffs, how long? Disturbed three different broods of partridges [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] in my walk this afternoon in different places. One in Deep Cut. Woods, big as chickens tell days old, went flying in various directions a rod or two into the hillside. Another by Heywood's meadow, the young two and a half inches long only, not long hatched, making a fine peep. Held one in my hand, where it squatted without winking. A third near Well Meadow Field. We are now, then, in the very midst of them. Now leading forth their young broods. The old bird will return mewing and walk past within ten feet.

 June 24, Saturday: Alfonso und Estrella D.732, an opera by [Franz Schubert](#) to words of Schober, was performed for the initial time, in Weimar, conducted by Franz Liszt on the birthday of Grand Duke Carl Alexander. Also premiered by Liszt was the Solemn Overture for chorus, organ and orchestra by Anton Rubinstein. The composer had received the commission 6 days earlier.



[Emma Hart Willard](#) traveled to London to attend the World's Educational Convention. With her family she would tour France, Switzerland, Northern Italy, Germany, and Belgium. She would visit [Louise Swanton Belloc](#) and [Adélaïde Jeanne Emilie de Montgolfier](#) in Paris. She would be appointed to represent women on the editorial board of the New York Teacher.




[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR JUNE 24TH]

 June 25, Sunday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Assabet Bathing-Place and Derby Bridge.



June 25. P.M. — To Assabet Bathing-Place and Derby Bridge. Mayweed, say 27th. At Ludwigia Poke-logan, a cinder-like spawn in a white, frothy jelly. A green bittern [~~Stake-driver~~ (American Bittern  *Botaurus lentiginosus*)], apparently, awkwardly alighting on the trees and uttering its hoarse, zarry note, *zскеow-xскеow-xскеow*. Shad-berry ripe. Garlic open, eighteen inches high or more. The calla fruit is curving down. I observe many kingfishers [**Belted Kingfisher**  *Ceryle alcyon*] at Walden and on the Assabet, very few on the dark and muddy South Branch. *Asclepias* (the mucronate-pointed, what?) yesterday. A raspberry on sand by railroad, ripe. Through June the song of the birds is gradually growing fainter. *Epilobium coloration*, railroad above red house unless the one observed some time ago was a downy *coloratum*, with lanceolate leaves. *Trifolium arvense*.

 June 26, Monday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) took his boat to Purple Utricularia Shore on the [Sudbury River](#).

The US Senate approved the bill that had been proposed by Senator Clayton on May 22d.

"A bill for the more effectual suppression of the slave trade in American built vessels."

[INTERNATIONAL SLAVE TRADE](#)



1853-18



1853-1854

June 26. Monday. P.M. — Up river to Purple Utricularia Shore.

"Upriver," "To Fairhaven," and "To Clamshell" were other common opening phrases. This signified a southward trip up the lakelike Sudbury River, which zigzagged between rocky cliffs and lush meadows. Its current could be detected only at narrows and shallows. Parallel lines of sweet-scented lily pads, aquatic flowers rooted in shoreline mud, and buttonbush swamps flanked the river for much of its length. With a breeze from the north or east, he would usually sail. Otherwise he would row.

— Professor Robert M. Thorson, THE BOATMAN, page 11

Cornus sericea, yesterday at least. Small front-rank polygonum, a smut-like blast in the flower. Small form of arrowhead in Hubbard's aster meadow, apparently several days. I am struck, as I look toward the Dennis shore from the bathing-place, with the peculiar agreeable dark shade of June, a clear air, and bluish light on the grass and bright silvery light reflected from fresh green leaves. *Sparganium*, apparently *ramosum*, two or three days. The largest apparently the same, but very rarely in blossom; found one, however, with a branched scape, but not concave leaves except below. *Gratiola*. *Cicuta maculata*, apparently to-morrow.



June 27, Tuesday: In the afternoon Henry Thoreau walked through Hubbard meadow to the Cliffs. He was being written to from Cambridge by the entomologist Thaddeus William Harris, about the cicada.

Cambridge, Mass. June 27. 1854.

Mr. Henry D. Thoreau.

Dear Sir.

Your letter of the 25th, the books, and the Cicada came to hand this evening, — and I am much obliged to you for all of them; — for the books, — because I am very busy with putting the Library in order for examination, & want every book to be in its place; — for the letter, because it gives me interesting facts concerning Cicadas; and for the specimen because it is new to me, as a species or as a variety.

The Cicada seems to be a female, and of course when living could not make the noise peculiar to the other sex. It differs from my specimens of Cicada septemdecim (& indeed still more from all the other species in my collection).

It is not so large as the C. 17; it has more orange about its thorax; the wing-veins are not so vividly stained with orange, and the dusky zigzag on the anterior or upper wings, which is very distinct in the C. 17, is hardly visible in this specimen. It has much the same form as the female C. 17; but I must see the male in order to determine positively whether it be merely a variety or a different species. I should be very glad to get more specimens and of both sexes. Will you try for them?

Your much obliged





1853-1854

1853-1854

Thaddeus William Harris.



June 27. P.M. — Cliffs via Hubbard meadow. Smooth sumach at Texas house, two days. Hellebore in full bloom; how long? For the most part does not bloom. *Polygonum sagittatum*, probably also some time at Baker Swamp. *Enothera biennis*, two or more days. *Scutellaria galericulata*, to-morrow. *Polygonum Persicaria*. *Marchantia polymorpha*. Hydrocotyle, a day or two in Potter's field near Corner road by apple tree. Blueberries pretty numerous ripe on Fair Haven. P. Hutchinson says that he can remember when haymakers from Sudbury, thirty or forty years ago, used to come down the river in numbers and unite with Concord to clear the weeds out of the river in shallow places and the larger streams emptying in. The three lecheas show reddish and flower-like at top, — the second of Gray apparently a little the most forward.



1853-1854

1853-1854



June 28, Wednesday: The 1st interment in [San Francisco](#)'s Laurel Hill Cemetery.

Generals D. Dulce and Leopoldo O'Donnell launched a right-wing revolt against the Spanish crown and its liberal ministry.

In America's fleet in the far eastern waters, the *Mississippi* and *Powhatan* got under way, towing the *Southampton*. The *Macedonian* and *Supply* were still awaiting favorable winds.

The following item has been extracted from page 3, column 4 of the [Worcester Palladium](#) of this date by [Bradley P. Dean](#), to add to our understanding of the context for [Henry Thoreau](#)'s delivery of a portion of "[SLAVERY IN MASSACHUSETTS](#)" on a mourning-crepe-draped platform of the 4th of July commemoration at the Harmony Grove in [Framingham, Massachusetts](#):

Meeting for True Freedom ON THE FOURTH OF JULY.

THE Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society invite, without distinction of party or sect, and without reference to varieties of opinion, ALL who mean to be known as on LIBERTY'S side, in the great struggle which is now upon us, to meet in full and earnest convention, at THE GROVE IN FRAMINGHAM, on the approaching FOURTH OF JULY, there to pass the day in no idle and deceptive glorying in our country's liberties, but in deep humiliation for her Disgrace and Shame, and in resolute purpose —God being our leader— to rescue old Massachusetts at least from being bound forever to the car of Slavery.

SPECIAL TRAINS will run on that day, to the Grove, from Boston, Worcester, and Milford — leaving each place at 9.25 A.M. Returning — leave the Grove about 5 1-2 P.M. FARE, by all these Trains, to the Grove and back, FIFTY CENTS.

The beauty of the Grove, and the completeness and excellence of its accommodations, are well known. Eminent Speakers, from different quarters of the State, will be present.

RESISTING THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

In the morning [Thoreau](#) went by boat to the Island. On this day [Senator Charles Sumner](#) was speechifying, quite falsely, that "In all her annals, no person was ever born a slave on the soil of Massachusetts."²⁶³ In fact, it had been in the Bay Colony, in 1639, that there had occurred one of the earliest—if not the very earliest—project on this continent for the breeding of slaves. As the honest historian [George H. Moore](#) would point out in 1866, although there were no longer any slaves in Massachusetts, slavery was **still** theoretically possible as a point of Massachusetts law as of the very day of the passage of the XIIIth Amendment to the US Constitution in 1865.

263. How could someone get elected who was this ignorant, or this obtuse? According to [Bliss Perry](#), it had been Friend [John Greenleaf Whittier](#) the behind-the-scenes political manipulator who had "sent Sumner to the US Senate." According to Claude M. Fuess, it was this Quaker single-issue-advocate politician's "avowed aim to extort from the Massachusetts Congressmen every concession to anti-slavery principles which could be secured by any kind of strategy short of criminal methods."

1853-18



June 28. A.M. — To Island.
Tall anemone. Pontederia to-morrow.
A thunder-shower in the afternoon.

1853-1854



June 29, Thursday: The American fleet in far eastern waters lay off the island of Oshima, [Japan](#).

The US federal congress ratified the [Gadsden Purchase](#), adding to the United States of America parts of present-day New Mexico and Arizona. In connection with this purchase a Delegate Elect, Sylvester Mowry, had written a Memoir of the Proposed Territory of Arizona:

READ THE FULL TEXT

[President Franklin Pierce](#), a proslavery white man, appointed [Andrew Horatio Reeder](#), a Democrat and therefore another proslavery white man, to the office of the governor of the [Kansas Territory](#). Let's make sure what goes down in this venue, shall we?

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked to the limekiln.

The Surveyor General's Office completed its survey of the southern portion of the De Haro Rancho near [San Francisco](#).

William George Scandlin had been born in 1828 near Portsmouth in England as the youngest of 15 children, and from an early age had followed the sea. After 14 years he had fled the British navy, arriving in Boston during May 1850 and there falling under the influence of the Methodist Reverend Edward Thompson Taylor — Father Taylor of the Bethel Church. Sponsored by the Seamen's Mission, he attended Unitarian Theological School in Meadville, Pennsylvania, graduating on this day and returning to Boston to preach for Father Taylor during summer vacation. However, his Meadville studies would have so undermined the Methodist theology that he would become a minister-at-large for the Unitarian Benevolent Fraternity of Churches of Boston (he would be ordained under Unitarian auspices in the Hollis Street Church).



June 29. Another clear morning after last evening's rain.

P.M. — To lime-kiln.

Spurry, a good while. Cichorium at Simon Brown's, three or four days (early); also catnep, about two days. Canada thistle yesterday. Earliest cultivated cherries, a week ago. Hazelnut burs now make a show. *Veronica serpyllifolia* still. The cherry-bird [[Cedar Waxwing](#) █ [Bombycilla cedrorum](#) (~~Cherry-bird~~)]'s note is like the fine peep of young partridges [[Ruffed Grouse](#) █ [Bonasa umbellus](#) (~~Partridge~~)] or woodcocks [[Woodcock](#), [American](#) █ [Scolopax minor](#)].



1853-1854

1853-1854



June 30, Friday: Spanish government troops engaged conservative rebels at Vicálvaro without strategic result.

The Emperor [Napoléon III](#) decreed that henceforward the Paris Opéra would be controlled by the Minister of State.

The Americans on their fleet in far eastern waters encountered and boarded the English ship *Great Britain*, out of Shanghai headed toward London. Her captain explained he thought the American ships were Russians, and had therefore attempted to evade, since England and France had entered hostilities with Russia. The *Mississippi* arrived within sight of the port of Naha, Lew Chew, and anchored there the morning of July 1st. At this point in volume one of his journal, William Speiden, Jr. inserted “Lines found in a [Japanese](#) Tea box” as translated by the Reverend S. Wells Williams.

[Alfred Hawkins](#) died in Québec (the body would be placed at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity).

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked to [Walden Pond](#) and Hubbard’s Close.



June 30. P.M. — Walden and Hubbard’s Close.

Jersey tea. Young oak shoots have grown from one and a half to three or four feet, but now in some cases appear to be checked and a large bud to have formed. Poke, a day or two. Small crypta Elatine, apparently some days at least, at Callitriche Pool. *Rubus triflorus* berries, some time, — the earliest fruit of a rubus. The berries are very scarce, light (wine?) red, semitransparent, showing the seed, — a few (six to ten) large shining grains and rather acid. *Lobelia spicata*, to-morrow.



1853-1854

1853-1854

SUMMER 1854

Summer: [Brownson's Quarterly Review](#), No. 2

CATHOLICISM

- I. Uncle Jack and His Nephew
- II. Protestantism Developed
- III. Temporal Power of the Popes
- IV. Where is Italy?
- V. The Mercesburg Hypothesis
- VI. Literary Notices and Criticisms

MAGAZINES

ORESTES AUGUSTUS BROWNSON

As the very difficult and very long-distance courtship between [Henry Browne Blackwell](#) and [Lucy Stone](#) had continued, Blackwell had learned to shift his argument in the direction of how couples could simply disregard society's norms while shaping in private their own intimate relationships. After 9 additional months of such reasoning, and some brief meetings, he and she met in Pittsburgh for a clandestine 3-day rendezvous. Nobody but them now knows what went on during those days and nights in Philadelphia, but afterward Stone would agree to marry him. Through continued correspondence the couple would arrange the terms of a private agreement aimed at protecting their financial independence and personal liberty. Blackwell proposed that their marriage be considered a business partnership, in economic matters, with husband and wife as "joint proprietors of everything except the results of previous labors." Neither would have claim to lands belonging to the other nor any obligation for the other's costs of holding them. While married and living together they would share earnings but, if they should separate, they would relinquish claim to the other's subsequent earnings. Each would be able to will their property to whomever they pleased unless they had children. Blackwell advised Stone to secure all her money in the hands of a trustee for her benefit.

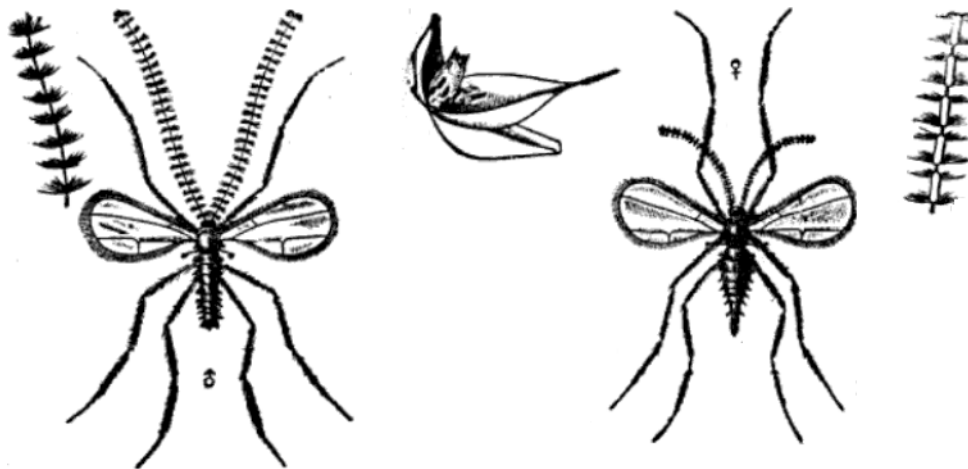
In addition to financial independence, the couple agreed that each would enjoy personal independence and autonomy: "Neither partner shall attempt to fix the residence, employment, or habits of the other, nor shall either partner feel bound to live together any longer than is agreeable to both." And Blackwell agreed that Stone would choose "when, where and how often" she would "become a mother." This was Blackwell's way of agreeing that Stone would control their sexual relations as advocated by [Henry C. Wright](#) in his 1854 [MARRIAGE AND PARENTAGE: OR, THE REPRODUCTIVE ELEMENT IN MAN, AS A MEANS TO HIS ELEVATION AND HAPPINESS](#) Stone had earlier given to Blackwell, and asked him to accept its principles. Stone disagreed on the issue of marital support, insisting that after a divorce she would be responsible for half their mutual expenses. When Blackwell objected strenuously, Stone would remain on this point adamant.

The western end of the State of [New York](#) had its hottest summer as yet on record. Severe drought conditions throughout the state would result in poor crop yields. The city of Albany cracked down on the sows running loose in its streets by rounding up some 15,000 of these mothers.

1853-1854

1853-1854

➡ Devastation by the wheat midge *Diplosis tritici* (known generally to American farmers as “Red Weevil” due to the color of its larvae on the wheat kernel when young — in the illustration, the flower of the wheat plant is shown at the center with larvae of the midge around its kernel) was more serious than ever before, causing some \$15,000,000 in agricultural losses in the state of New York alone. Losses as far west as Indiana were nearly as severe. This species had been known perhaps since 1741 in England, and certainly in 1795 it was observed by the Reverend William Kirby in the vicinity of Ipswich in Suffolk. The species had been introduced into the region of Quebec, Canada, and from there had spread by 1820 to Vermont. In 1835/1836 the insect destroyed wheat crops across Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine and in the northern regions of New York state, leading to abandonment of wheat as a crop in that region. The pest would do further damage to crops in 1861 in conjunction with the grain aphid *Siphonophora avenae*. The adult male appears, as marked, to the left, and the female to the right. Enlargements of the antenna of the male are to the left, and of the female to the right.




➡ Late Summer: Someone in Missouri offering the name “Samuel Clemens” contacted Frederick Jackson, the treasurer of the Boston Vigilance Committee, and wheedled from him \$24.50 for train fare to [Boston](#), by representing himself as a northern [abolitionist](#) who had been imprisoned for a couple of years in Missouri for “aiding fugitives to escape.” However, no Missouri record of the incarceration of any such person has ever been found and there is no abolitionist record of any publicity due to this hero Samuel Clemens’s arrival in Boston. The only person we can find in Missouri records who used any similar name was in fact the [Samuel Langhorne Clemens](#) who would later begin to write for publication, and therefore Professor Robert Sattelmeyer believes that this may well have been an early scam by the personage who would later make himself well known to the world as “[Mark Twain](#).” It is known that Clemens was not at that time particularly concerned over the fact of human enslavement — and so it is plausible that he would not have had moral scruples about the diversion of funds into his own pocket that would otherwise be used for the functioning of the Underground Railroad. It is also known that for a brief period during this year, Clemens was at Washington DC.




1853-1854

1853-1854

 Summer or Early Fall: [Mr. and Mrs. Eben J. Loomis](#) stayed at the Thoreau boarding house in [Concord](#) while [Samuel Worcester Rowse](#) was in town, at work on his commissioned portrait of [Waldo Emerson](#).²⁶⁴

Mrs. Thoreau invited Mrs. Loomis and myself to spend the summer of 1854 with her at Concord.... I was very much interested in watching him [Rowse] while he was watching the Expression of Henry's face.... It is for me, on the whole, the most satisfactory likeness, for it represents Henry just as he was in that summer, so memorable to me ... memorable for my intimacy with Henry.

 Late Summer: Someone in Missouri offering the name "Samuel Clemens" contacted Frederick Jackson, the treasurer of the Boston Vigilance Committee, and wheedled from him \$24.50 for train fare to [Boston](#), by representing himself as a northern [abolitionist](#) who had been imprisoned for a couple of years in Missouri for "aiding fugitives to escape." However, no Missouri record of the incarceration of any such person has ever been found and there is no abolitionist record of any publicity due to this hero Samuel Clemens's arrival in Boston. The only person we can find in Missouri records who used any similar name was in fact the [Samuel Langhorn Clemens](#) who would later begin to write for publication, and therefore Professor Robert Sattelmeyer believes that this may well have been an early scam by the personage who would later make himself well known to the world as "[Mark Twain](#)." It is known that Clemens was not at that time particularly concerned over the fact of human enslavement — and so it is plausible that he would not have had moral scruples about the diversion of funds into his own pocket that would otherwise be used for the functioning of the Underground Railroad. It is also known that for a brief period during this year, Clemens was at Washington DC.

264. Unfortunately the original crayon has deteriorated to the point at which its copies are now better than it.

1853-1854

1853-1854



So: Who Knew First When It Started To Rain?

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

1853-1854

1853-1854



1853-1854

1853-1854

JULY 1854

→ July: This month's issue of [Harper's New Monthly Magazine](#).

CONSULT THIS ISSUE

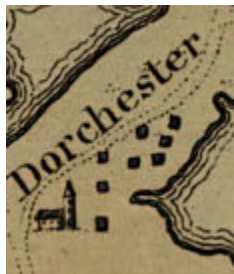
→ July: 650 people died of [cholera](#) in the Brooklyn suburb of [New-York](#).



[New-York](#)'s Fulton Street Ferry went into operation, connecting Brooklyn to Washington Avenue in the Bronx.

→ July: Someone bombed the [Catholic](#) Church in [Dorchester](#).

ANTI-CATHOLICISM



1853-1854

1853-1854

→ July: In anticipation of the national black emigration convention being organized by [Martin Robison Delany](#) in Cleveland, Ohio, [Frederick Douglass](#) declared that American blacks “will ever remain the principal inhabitants of the United States, in some form or other.”



Four members of the [Matthew Flounoy Ward](#) jury were indicted by a grand jury on charges of perjury. Only one of the jurors, T.M. Yates, would be tried, and when he would be acquitted in December, charges against other jurors would be dismissed.

→ July: During this period we indulged ourselves in a week of naval shelling and burning at the port of San Juan del Norte (Greytown) on the coast of Nicaragua, in order to avenge ourselves for some sort of insult the country had allegedly made to our American Minister. –Or so ’twas being explained.

US MILITARY INTERVENTIONS

→ At about the middle of this year [Louisa May Alcott](#) wrote to her older sister [Anna Bronson Alcott](#) about the stories which she had created while she was doing babysitting at the age of 16, for the amusement of little [Ellen Emerson](#), the little volume which eventually would be entitled FLOWER FABLES:

I've shed my quart [of tears] ... over the book not coming out, for that was a sad blow, and I waited so long it was dreadful when my castle in the air came tumbling about my ears. Pride made me laugh in public, but I wailed in private, and no one knew it.

THE ALCOTT FAMILY

1853-1854

1853-1854

July: The New York Times reported that, according to its Paris correspondent, there had been a sad accident. An inventor, M. Leroy, had devised a vehicle powered by steam, which he had for a decade been attempting to run upon the ordinary post roads of France. However, in descending a hill while heading toward the English Channel, where he was to ship his device to London for exhibition, the engine struck an obstacle, tipped over, and poured the contents of its boiler on to M. Leroy, who was too badly scalded to hope for recovery. The Scientific American magazine for July 15th, 1854 picked up this story, editorializing that locomotives might make sense on rail roads but made no sense at all on post roads, and adding the observation that M. Leroy had been “foolish” to re-produce steam carriages for common roads, after the invention of railroads and locomotives. He might as well have been “going to mill with corn in a bag, having a stone in one end to balance the grain in the other.”

ROAD VEHICLES
STEAM ENGINES



WALDEN: If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter, -we never need read of another. One is enough.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Henry David Thoreau’s 38th stanza began on his birthday, July 12th, Wednesday, 1854.

(38TH YEAR OF HDT’S LIFE)

- Thoreau’s profile was sketched by the Reverend William Henry Furness.



- Publication of WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS by Ticknor and Fields. The book was scathingly condemned in the pages of the New-York Times. Its author, Mr. Henry D. Thoreau or “Thorrau” was erratic, impracticable, and apt to confuse rather than arrange the order of things mental and physical. He imagines himself a philosopher but presents us with no philosophy. He is not a Christian but, perhaps, is a Communist. His new manifesto is of interest only as a contribution to the comic literature of America, yada yada yada. The book was reviewed in the Daily Alta California as a very strange book, the history of a philosopher living in the woods, a sort of Robinson Crusoe life. It shows the simplicity with which life can be conducted, stripped of some of its conventionalities, and the whole narrative is imbued with a deep philosophic spirit. All together besides being beautifully written, it has an air of originality which is quite taking.
- “SLAVERY IN MASSACHUSETTS” appeared in Garrison’s The Liberator and in The National Anti-Slavery Standard.
- A new lecture “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” was advertised in The Liberator and in all 4 of Providence, Rhode Island’s major newspapers—the Daily Post, Daily Journal, Bulletin, and Daily



Tribune.

THOREAU'S SERMON

[Various versions of "[LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE](#)", variously titled, would be delivered:
["WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT"](#) on December 6, 1854 at Railroad Hall in [Providence](#)
["WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT"](#) on December 26, 1854 in the [New Bedford](#) Lyceum
["WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT"](#) on December 28, 1854 at the Athenaeum on [Nantucket Island](#)
 On January 4, 1855 in the [Worcester](#) Lyceum, as "The Connection between Man's Employment and His Higher Life"
["WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT"](#) on February 14, 1855 in the [Concord](#) Lyceum
["WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT"](#) on November 16, 1856 for the [Eagleswood](#) community
 "Getting a Living" on December 18, 1856 in the vestry of the [Congregational Church](#) of Amherst, [New Hampshire](#)
["LIFE MISSPENT"](#) on Sunday morning, October 9, 1859 to the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#)'s 28th Congregational Society in [Boston Music Hall](#)
["LIFE MISSPENT"](#) on Sunday, September 9, 1860 at Welles Hall in [Lowell](#).]

- At the new opera-house in [New-York](#), Thoreau attended a performance of [Vincenzo Bellini](#)'s final opera [I puritani](#) featured dramatic soprano [Madame the Marquise Giulia Grisi](#) as the Puritan roundhead revolutionary daughter Elvira and her husband or consort the tenor [Sir Giovanni Matteo de Candia](#) as Lord Arthur Talbot, one of [King Charles I](#)'s cavalier loyalists.



BACKGROUND EVENTS OF 1854
BACKGROUND EVENTS OF 1855

Read ■ [Henry Thoreau's Journal for July 1854 \(æf. 36-37\)](#)

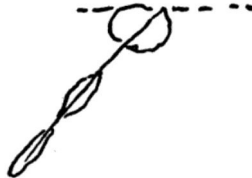
July 1, Saturday: The *Mississippi* and *Powhatan* anchored at port at Naha, Lew Chew.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked to the Cliffs.



July 1. Saturday. P.M. — To Cliffs.

From the hill I perceive that the air is beautifully clear after the rain of yesterday, and not hot; fine-grained. The landscape is fine as behind a glass, the horizon-edge distinct. The distant vales toward the northwest mountains lie up open and clear and elysian like so many Tempes. The shadows of trees are dark and distinct. On the, river I see the two broad borders of pads reflecting the light, the dividing line between them and the water, their irregular edge, perfectly distinct. The clouds are separate glowing masses or blocks floating in the sky, not threatening rain. I see from this hill their great shadows pass slowly here and there over the top of the green forest. Later a breeze rises and there is a sparkle on the river somewhat as in fall and spring. The wood thrush and tanager sing at 4 P.M. at Cliffs. The anychia in steep path beyond springs, almost. Some boys brought me to-night a singular kind of spawn found attached to a pole floating in Fair Haven Pond. Some of it six feet below



the surface, some at top, the uppermost as big as a water-pail; a very *firm* and clear jelly, the surface covered



1853-1854

1853-1854

with small rayed or star-shaped spawn (?) A great quantity of it.

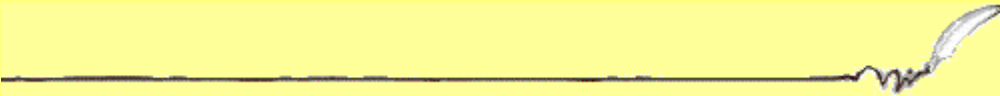


July 2, Sunday: The Reverend Mr. G.H. Morton (Moreton), an English missionary at Lew Chew, delivered the sermon for Divine Service aboard the side-wheel steam frigate *USS Mississippi*. William Speiden, Jr. concluded the 1st volume of his journal by writing: "This day I close this book, I know that there are a great many mistakes in it, such as misspelt words, words left out & tautology. I have endeavored to please myself. I do not know how it will please others, hope, well." He followed the entry with a roster of officers of the *Mississippi*, penned in the last pages of the journal.

At 4 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Hill. In the afternoon he and [Ellery Channing](#) went to Flint's Pond and Smith's Hill.

"Downriver," "To Great Meadow," and "To Hill" signified a northward trip down the Concord River below the triple point of the confluence. After passing through a straight reach aligned by the local bedrock strike, arched by two bridges, and flanked by gravel bars of historic sediment that were repeatedly dredged, he entered the north side of Great Meadow. Bounded by the site of the Old North Bridge to the southwest and Ball's Hill to the northeast, it was two miles long and half a mile across. When in flood, the meadow was his favorite inland sea to sail upon because the wind was least impeded and the waves were highest.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), *THE BOATMAN*, page 11



The Reverend [Theodore Parker](#)'s sermon this morning at [Boston Music Hall](#) in beautiful downtown [Boston](#) would be taken down "phonographically" (which is to say, stenographically) by [Rufus Leighton](#) and printed by James Manning Winchell Yerington as [A SERMON OF THE DANGERS WHICH THREATEN THE RIGHTS OF MAN IN AMERICA](#); PREACHED AT THE MUSIC HALL, ON SUNDAY, JULY 2, 1854, BY THEODORE PARKER, MINISTER OF THE XXVIII. CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY. {PHONOGRAPHICALLY REPORTED BY MESSRS. YERINGTON AND LEIGHTON.]



July 2. Sunday. 4A.M. — To Hill.

Hear the chip-bird and robin very lively at dawn.

From the Hill, the sun rising, I see a fine river fog wreathing the trees — elms and maples — by the shore. I mark the outlines of the elms and *Salix Purshiana*, now so still and distinct, looking east. It is clear summer now. The cocks crow hoarsely, ushering in the long-drawn thirsty summer day. A day for cows. The morning the spring of the day. A few bullfrogs trump.

P.M. — To Flint's Pond and Smith's Hill with [C](#).

Thimble-berries. Parsnip at Tuttle's. Tobacco-pipe well up. Spatulate or long-leaved sundew, some days. *Hypericum Canadense*, some days. *Pyrola elliptica*, apparently some days, or directly after *rotundifolia*, on east side of Smith's Hill. *Asclepias phytolaccoides*, a new plant, apparently two or three days on Smith's Hill. A blue high blueberry ripe. An abundance of red lilies in the upland dry meadow, near Smith's Spring trough; low, — from one to two feet high, — upright-flowered, more or less dark shade of red, freckled and sometimes wrinkle-



1853-1854

1853-1854

edged petals; must have been some days. This has come with the intense summer heats, a torrid July heat like a red sunset threatening torrid heat. (Do we not always have a dry time just before the huckleberries turn?) I think this meadow was burnt over about a year ago.

Did that make the red lily grow? The spring now seems far behind, yet I do not remember the interval. I feel as if some broad invisible lethean gulf lay behind, between this and spring. *Geum strictum*, a new plant, apparently a week or ten days; some of the heads already five eighths of an inch in diameter; roadside at Gourgas sproutland; aspect of a buttercup and *Potentilla Norvegica* with burs. [Also near (north of) Assabet Bathing-Place, out of bloom, July 8.] I see some *Lysimachia stricta* (?), with ends of petals coppery-reddish.



1853-1854

1853-1854



July 3, Monday: On this day, with the US steam frigate *Mississippi* in port at Naha, Lew Chew, William Speiden, Jr. began a 2d volume of his Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) expedition journal, beginning the new volume with the case of William Board, the American who was alleged to have committed a home invasion while intoxicated on shore, during which he was alleged to have raped an Okinawan woman. This man's body had been discovered on June 12th and it appeared he had been chased down by villagers, stoned, and drowned (if course, nobody was willing to turn the perpetrators over to the "justice" of the western fleet).

Leos Janáček was born in Hukvaldy, northern Moravia, the 10th of 14 children born to Jirí Janáček, a teacher and musician, and Amálie Grulichová, daughter of a weaver (5 of the 14 would not survive into adulthood). This child was christened Leo Eugen.

The 1st herd of Texas longhorns reached [New-York](#).

Streetcars were put into service in Brooklyn.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went by boat to Hubbard's Bridge.

HDT

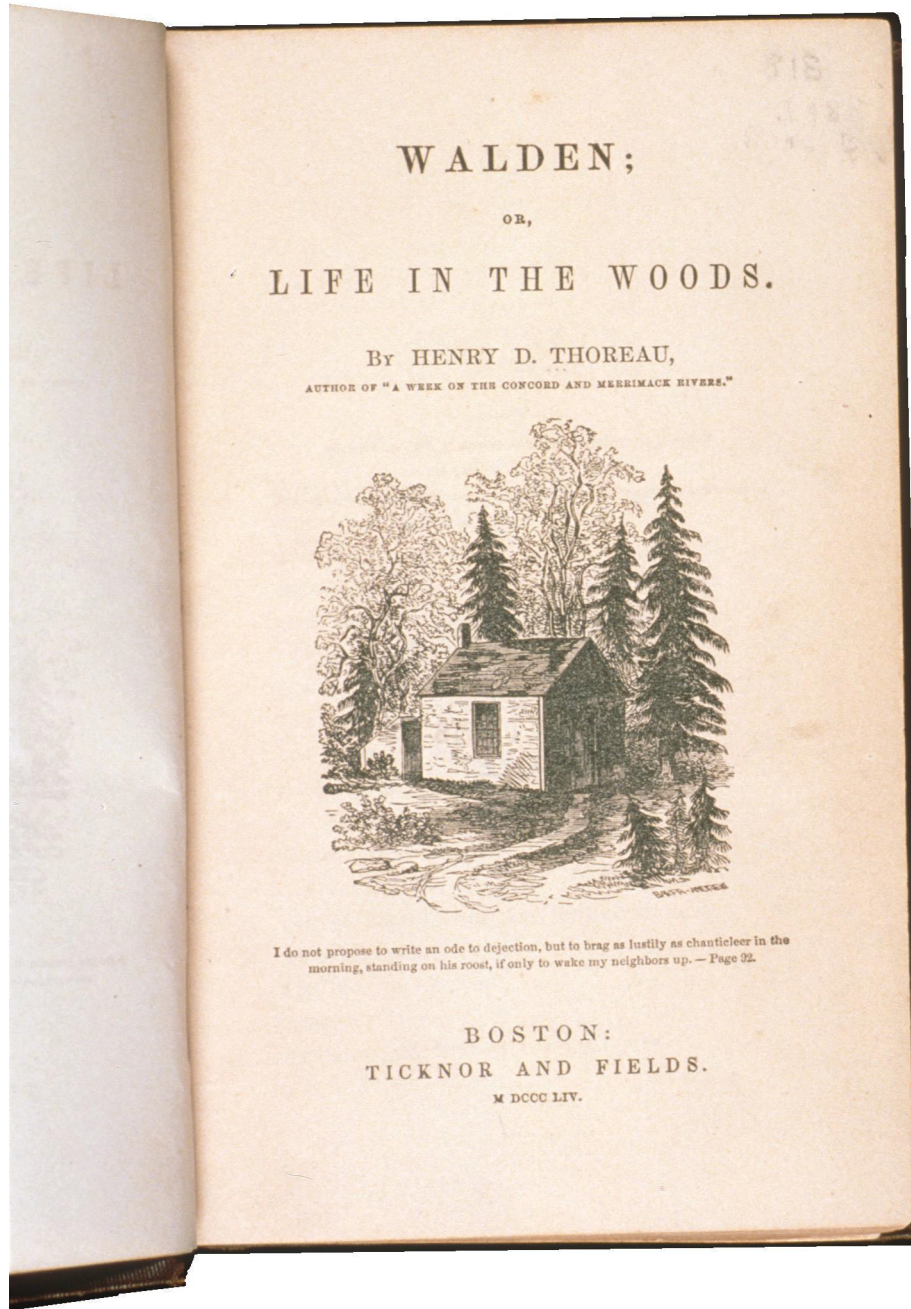
WHAT?

INDEX

1853-1854

1853-1854

In [Boston](#), the sheets of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) were passing through the printing press!





1853-1854

1853-1854

The firm of Baker & Andrew, Engravers of Boston had rendered [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#)'s drawing of the shanty on the pond as an engraving for the title page.

[WILLIAM JAY BAKER](#)

[JOHN ANDREW](#)

[TIMELINE OF WALDEN](#)



[Judge Ebenezer Rockwood Hoar](#), considering the death of one of the members of the Marshall's posse, a deputized truckman named [James Batchelder](#), during the attempt to rescue [Anthony Burns](#) from the slavecatchers, issued the following pronouncement:

A man whose private conscience leads him to disobey a law recognized by the community [the federal Fugitive Slave Law] must take the consequences of that disobedience. It is a matter solely between him and his Maker. He should take good care that he is not mistaken, that his private opinion does not result from passion or prejudice, but, if he believes it to be his duty to disobey, he must be prepared to abide by the result; and the laws as they are enacted and settled by the constituted authorities to be constitutional and valid, must be enforced, although it may be to his greivous harm.

[RESISTING THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW](#)



July 3. Monday. I hear the purple finch [[Purple Finch](#) [Carpodacus purpureus](#) (~~American Linnet~~)] these days about the houses, — à twitter witter weeter wee, à witter witter wee.

P.M. — To Hubbard Bridge by boat.

On the great hummock dropped on Dennis's meadow last winter, I see now flourishing, of small plants, water milkweed, *Lysimachia stricta*, hedgehog (?) grass, horse-mint, arrowhead, onoclea, *Viola lanceolata*, gratiola, and the small-flowered hypericum, as well as meadow-grass.

The river and shores, with their pads and weeds, are now in their midsummer and hot-weather condition, now when the pontederias have just begun to bloom. The seething river is confined within two burnished borders of pads, gleaming in the sun for a mile, and a sharp snap is heard from them from time to time. Next stands the upright phalanx of dark-green pontederias. When I have left the boat a short time the seats become intolerably hot. What a luxury to bathe now! It is gloriously hot, — the first of this weather. I cannot get wet enough. I must let the water soak into me. When you come out, it is rapidly dried on you or absorbed into your body, and you

1853-1854

1853-1854

want to go in again. I begin to inhabit the planet, and see how I may be naturalized at last. The clams are so thick on the bottom at Hubbard's Bathing-Place that, standing up to my neck in water, I brought my feet together and lifted up between them, so as to take off in my hand without dipping my head, three clams the first time, though many more dropped off. When you consider the difficulty of carrying two melons under one arm and that this was in the water, you may infer the number of the clams. A cone-flower (newplant), — *Rudbeckia hirta* (except that I call its disk not dull brown but dull or dark purple or maroon; however, Wood calls it dark purple), — in Arethusa Meadow. Saw one plucked June 25; blossomed probably about that time. Many yesterday in meadows beyond almshouse. Probably introduced lately from West. *Pycnanthemum muticum* at Hypericum corymbosum Ditch. Proserpinaca at Skull-cap Pool, apparently five or six days. Touch-me-not, good while, — ten days at least; some seeds now spring. As I return down the river, the sun westering, I admire the silvery light on the tops and extremities of the now densely leaved golden willows and swamp white oaks and maples from the under sides of the leaves. The leaves have so multiplied that you cannot see through the trees; these are solid depths of shade, on the surface of which the light is variously reflected. Saw a fresh cherry-stone (must be cultivated cherry; wild not ripe) in the spring under Clamshell Hill, nearly half a mile from a cherry tree. Must have been dropped by a bird. Mulberries some time.



Our national birthday, Tuesday the 4th of July: This was [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#)'s 50th birthday.



Rowland Hussey Macy (1822-1919) had gotten started in retail in 1851 with a dry goods store in downtown [Haverhill](#). Macy's policy from the very first was "His goods are bought for cash, and will be sold for the same, at a small advance." On this date Macy's 1st parade marched down the main drag of the little New England village. It was too hot and only about a hundred people viewed his celebration. In 1858 Macy would sell this store and, with the financial backing of Caleb Dustin Hunking of Haverhill, relocate the retail business to easier pickings in New-York. (So, have you heard of the New York Macy's department store? –Have you shopped there?)

When the mayor of Wilmington, Delaware jailed City Council member Joshua S. Valentine for setting off firecrackers, he was mobbed by a group of indignant citizens.

CELEBRATING OUR B-DAY

America's Independence Day was celebrated with a reading of the Declaration of Independence by officers and crew aboard the *USS Mississippi* in far-eastern waters, plus the singing of "The Star Spangled Banner," plus a recitation "America, My Native Home," while "Hail Columbia" and "Yankee Doodle" were rendered by the vessel's band of musicians.

[Henry Thoreau](#) went at "8 A.M. – [To Framingham](#)."

At this abolitionist picnic celebrating our nation's birthday and the [Declaration of Independence](#) and the

1853-1854

successful completion of the [1st Great American Disunion](#), attended by some 600, a man the [Standard](#) described as “a sort of literary recluse,” name of Henry David Thoreau, declared for dissolution of the federal union.



ROSS/ADAMS COMMENTARY

[Thoreau](#) was a secessionist — he considered that New Englanders should secede from the federal union of the United States of America, as the necessary step in disentangling themselves from the US national sin of race slavery.

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

[Sojourner Truth](#) was another of the speakers, although we do not know whether she spoke before of after Thoreau (the newspaper reporter who was present failed entirely to notice that Sojourner took part), nor whether he sat on the platform beside her. [Stephen Symonds Foster](#) and [Abby Kelley Foster](#) were present



(Abby probably brought her daughter Alla to the pic nic, for it was always a family affair, with swings for the children, boating on a nearby pond, and a convenient refreshment stand since the day would be quite hot,

1853-1854

1853-1854

and confined her remarks to an appeal for funds), and [Lucy Stone](#), as were [Wendell Phillips](#), [Charles Lenox](#)



[Remond](#), and [William Lloyd Garrison](#).²⁶⁵





1853-1854

1853-1854

When the meeting in the shady amphitheater was called to order at 10:45AM by Charles Jackson Francis, the first order of business had to be election of officials for the day. [Garrison](#) became the event's president and [Francis Jackson](#) of Boston, [William Whiting](#) of [Concord](#), Effingham L. Capron of Worcester, Dora M. Taft of Framingham, [Charles Lenox Remond](#) of Salem, [John Pierpont](#) of Medford, Charles F. Hovey of Gloucester, [Jonathan Buffum](#) of Lynn, Asa Cutler of Connecticut, and [Andrew T. Foss](#) of [New Hampshire](#) its vice presidents. The Reverend [Samuel J. May, Jr.](#), of Leicester, William H. Fish of Milford, and R.F. Wallcut of Boston became its secretaries. [Abby Kelley Foster](#), Ebenezer D. Draper, Lewis Ford, Mrs. Olds of Ohio, [Lucy Stone](#), and Nathaniel B. Spooner would constitute its Finance Committee. Garrison then read from Scripture, the assembly sang an [Anti-Slavery](#) hymn, and Dr. Henry O. Stone issued the Welcome.

A.D. FOSS

265. There was an active agent of the Underground railroad on that platform, we may note, and it was not the gregarious Truth but the "sort of literary recluse" Thoreau. That is, please allow me to state the following in regard to the existence of eyewitness testimony, that the Thoreau home in Concord was in the period prior to the Civil War a waystation on the Underground Railway: we might reappraise [Thoreau](#)'s relationship with [Sojourner Truth](#), of whom it has been asserted by [Ebony Magazine](#) that she was a "Leader of the Underground Railroad Movement" (February 1987), by asking whether there is any comparable eyewitness testimony, that Truth ever was involved in that risky and illegal activity? Her biographer refers to her as a "loose cannon," not the sort of close-mouthed person who could be relied upon as a participant in a quite secret and quite illegal and quite dangerous endeavor, and considers also that no such evidence has ever been produced. The Thoreaus, in contrast, not only were never regarded as loose in this manner, but were, we know, regarded as utterly reliable — and in the case of the Thoreau family home the evidence for total involvement exists and is quite conclusive.

I will quote a couple of paragraphs about the course of the meeting from the Foster biography, AHEAD OF HER TIME:

Heading the finance committee, Abby made her usual appeal for funds, Stephen called on the friends of liberty to resist the Fugitive Slave Law, "each one with such weapons as he thought right and proper," and Wendell Phillips, Sojourner Truth, and Lucy Stone held the audience in thrall with their "soul-eloquence." After an hour's break for refreshments Henry Thoreau castigated Massachusetts for being in the service of the Slaveholders and demanded that the state leave the Union. "I have lived for the last month—and I think that every man in Massachusetts capable of the sentiment of patriotism must have had a similar experience—with the sense of having suffered a vast and indefinite loss. I did not know what ailed me. At last it occurred to me that what I had lost was a country."

Thoreau's speech is still reprinted, but William Lloyd Garrison provided the most dramatic moment of that balmy July day. Placing a lighted candle on the lectern, he picked up a copy of the Fugitive Slave Law and touched it to the flame. As it burned, he intoned a familiar phrase: "And let all the people say **Amen.**" As the shouts of "Amen" echoed, he burned the U.S. commissioner's decision in the Burns case. Then he held a copy of the United States Constitution to the candle, proclaiming, "So perish all compromises with tyranny." As it burned to ashes, he repeated, "And let all the people say **Amen.**" While the audience responded with a tremendous shout of "Amen," he stood before them with arms extended, as if in blessing. No one who was present ever forgot the scene; it was the high point of unity among the Garrisonian abolitionists.

This biography of [Abby Kelley](#), with its suggestion that [Thoreau](#)'s speech, which it condenses to three sentences, must have been significant because it is "still reprinted," overlooks the fact that Thoreau had not been granted an opportunity to read his entire lecture. A contemporary comment on the speech was more accurate:



Henry Thoreau, of Concord, read portions of a racy and ably written address, the whole of which will be published in [The Liberator](#).

That is, Thoreau delivered a 4th-of-July oration at [Framingham, Massachusetts](#) on "[SLAVERY IN MASSACHUSETTS](#)", criticizing the governor and the chief justice of Massachusetts who were in the audience.

1853-1854**1853-1854**

–But, he was not allowed the opportunity to read his entire essay.

The whole military force of the State is at the service of a Mr. Suttle, a slaveholder from Virginia, to enable him to catch a man whom he calls his property; but not a soldier is offered to save a citizen of Massachusetts from being kidnapped! Is this what all these soldiers, all this training has been for these seventy-nine years past? Have they been trained merely to rob Mexico, and carry back fugitive slaves to their masters? These very nights, I heard the sound of a drum in our streets. There were men training still; and for what? I could with an effort pardon the cockerels of Concord for crowing still, for they, perchance, had not been beaten that morning; but I could not excuse this rub-a-dub of the "trainers." The slave was carried back by exactly such as these, i.e., by the soldier, of whom the best you can say in this connection is that he is a fool made conspicuous by a painted coat.

Note that on paper, at least, if not verbally as well, he made a reference to martyrdom by [hanging](#): "I would side with the light, and let the dark earth roll from under me, calling my mother and my brother to follow." In other words, lets us New Englanders secede from the federal union of the United States of America, as the necessary step in our clearing ourselves of this US national sin of race slavery.

Here is another account of the actual speech, as opposed to what was printed later, from one who was there in



1853-1854

1853-1854

the audience standing before that platform draped in mourning black:

He began with the simple words, "You have my sympathy; it is all I have to give you, but you may find it important to you." It was impossible to associate egotism with Thoreau; we all felt that the time and trouble he had taken at that crisis to proclaim his sympathy with the "Disunionists" was indeed important. He was there a representative of Concord, of science and letters, which could not quietly pursue their tasks while slavery was trampling down the rights of mankind. Alluding to the Boston commissioner who had surrendered Anthony Burns, Edward G. Loring, Thoreau said, "The fugitive's case was already decided by God, -not Edward G. God, but simple God." This was said with such serene unconsciousness of anything shocking in it that we were but mildly startled.

— AUTOBIOGRAPHY, MEMORIES, AND EXPERIENCES OF MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY (Boston MA: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.), Volume I, pages 184-5.

[[Moncure Daniel Conway](#)]

DISUNION

ANTHONY BURNS

EDWARD GREELEY LORING

At the end of the morning meeting [Thoreau](#) was on the platform while [Garrison](#), the featured speaker, burned [the federal Constitution](#) on a pewter plate as a "covenant with death" because it countenanced the return of runaway slaves to their owners — [Margaret Fuller](#)'s grandfather Timothy Fuller Sr., who had refused to consent to that document when it was originally promulgated because of its ridiculous mincing about slavery, would have been proud of him! Thoreau's inflammatory oratory was less inflammatory than addresses made on that occasion by Garrison, [Wendell Phillips](#), and [Charles Lenox Remond](#), for their speeches drew comments but Thoreau's did not.

TIMELINE OF ESSAYS

On our nation's birthday the platform had been draped in black crepe as a symbol of mourning, as at a state funeral, and carried the insignia of the State of Virginia, which stood as the destination of [Anthony Burns](#), and this insignia of the State of Virginia was decorated with — with, in magnificent irony, ribbons of triumph! Above the platform flew the flags of [Kansas](#) and Nebraska, emblematic of the detested new [Kansas/Nebraska Act](#). As the background of all this, the flag of the United States of America was hung, but it was upside down, the symbol of distress, and it also was bordered in black, the symbol of death.

I think no great public calamity, not the death of [Daniel Webster](#), not the death of [Charles Sumner](#), not the loss of great battles during the War, brought such a sense of gloom over the whole State as the surrender of [Anthony Burns](#).

RESISTING THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

1853-1854**1853-1854**

[Garrison](#) placed a lighted candle on the lectern, and touched a corner of the Fugitive Slave Law to the flame. As it burned, he orated “And let all the people say **Amen**” and the crowd shouted “Amen!” Then he touched a corner of the US commissioner’s decision in the Burns case to the candle flame. Then he touched a corner of a copy of [the federal Constitution](#) to the candle flame, and orated “So perish all compromises with tyranny.” As the paper was reduced to ashes, he orated “And let all the people say **Amen**” and stood with his arms extended as if in blessing.



[William Lloyd Garrison \(in 1865\)](#)

[Moncure Daniel Conway](#)’s comment, later, about the moment when [Garrison](#) set the match to the constitution, and the few scattered boos and hisses were drowned out by the thunderous “Amen” of the crowd, was:

That day I distinctly recognized that the antislavery cause was a religion.

In the afternoon [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) spoke, as a Virginian aristocrat, a child of position and privilege. Look at me! It was his 1st antislavery attempt at identity politics grandstanding. Leaning on the concept, he insisted that the force of public opinion in his home state was so insane and so hotheaded that every white man with a conscience, “or even the first throbbings of a conscience,” was a **slave** to this general proslavery public posture. He offered that to resist this Southern certitude, each Northerner would need to “abolish slavery in his

1853-1854

1853-1854

heart.”²⁶⁶

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

VOLUME II



(So, you see, the white man has been self-enslaved: the problem is not so much that slavery harms the black man as that slavery harms the white man, shudder.)

Then [Wendell Phillips](#) spoke.

We know that [Sojourner Truth](#) spoke from that mourning-draped platform after a white man from Virginia had described his being thrown in jail there on account of his antislavery convictions, because in her speech she commented on this: how helpful it was for white people to obtain some experience of oppression. She warned that “God would yet execute his judgments upon the white people for their oppression and cruelty.” She asked why it was that white people hated black people so. She said that the white people owed the colored race a debt so huge that they would never be able to pay it back — but would have to repent so as to have this debt forgiven them. Nell Painter has characterized this message as “severe and anguished,” and has commented that despite the cheers and applause, “Her audiences preferred not to grapple with all she had to say.” Her humor must have been such, Painter infers, as to allow her white listeners to exempt themselves from this very general denunciation:

They did not hear wrath against whites, but against the advocates of slavery. It is understandable, no doubt, that Truth’s audiences, who wanted so much to love this old black woman who had been a slave, found it difficult to fathom the depths of her bitterness.

266. We may note how different this was from the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#)’s “kill the Negro in us.”

1853-1854

1853-1854

Carleton Mabee's BLACK FREEDOM

Americans at large often held the abolitionists responsible for the war. They argued that the abolitionists' long agitation, strident as it often was, had antagonized the South into secession, thus beginning the war, and that the abolitionists' insistence that the war should not end until all slavery had been abolished kept the war going. In 1863 the widely read New York Herald made the charge devastatingly personal. It specified that by being responsible for the war, each abolitionist had in effect already killed one man and permanently disabled four others. ... While William Lloyd Garrison preferred voluntary emancipation, during the war he came to look with tolerance on the abolition of slavery by military necessity, saying that from seeming evil good may come. Similarly, the Garrisonian-Quaker editor, Oliver Johnson, while also preferring voluntary emancipation, pointed out that no reform ever triumphed except through mixed motives. But the Garrisonian lecturer Pillsbury was contemptuous of such attitudes. Freeing the slaves by military necessity would be of no benefit to the slave, he said in 1862, and the next year when the Emancipation Proclamation was already being put into effect, he said that freeing the slaves by military necessity could not create permanent peace. Parker Pillsbury won considerable support for his view from abolitionist meetings and from abolitionist leaders as well. Veteran Liberator writer Edwin Percy Whipple insisted that "true welfare" could come to the American people "only through a **willing** promotion of justice and freedom." Henry C. Wright repeatedly said that only ideas, not bullets, could permanently settle the question of slavery. The recent Garrisonian convert, the young orator Ezra Heywood, pointed out that a government that could abolish slavery as a military necessity had no antislavery principles and could therefore re-establish slavery if circumstances required it. The Virginia aristocrat-turned-abolitionist, Moncure Daniel Conway, had misgivings that if emancipation did not come before it became a fierce necessity, it would not reflect true benevolence and hence could not produce true peace. The Philadelphia wool merchant, Quaker Alfred H. Love, asked, "Can so sublime a virtue as ... freedom ... be the offspring of so corrupt a parentage as war?" The long-time abolitionist Abby Kelley Foster—the speak-inner and Underground Railroader—predicted flatly, if the slave is freed only out of consideration for the safety of the Union, "the hate of the colored race will still continue, and the poison of that wickedness will destroy us as a nation." Amid the searing impact of the war—the burning fields, the mangled bodies, the blood-splattered hills and fields—a few abolitionists had not forgotten their fundamental belief that to achieve humanitarian reform, particularly if it was to be thorough and permanent reform, the methods used to achieve it must be consistent with the nature of the reform. ... What abolitionists often chose to brush aside was that after the war most blacks would still be living in the South, among the same Confederates whom they were now trying to kill.



July 4. A sultry night the last; bear no covering; all windows open.

8 A.M. — To Framingham.

Great orange-yellow lily, some clays, wild yellow, lily, drooping, well out. *Asclepias obtusifolia*, also day or two. Some chestnut trees show at distance as if blossoming. Buckwheat, how long? I probably saw *Asclepias purpurascens* (??) over the walls. A very hot day.



1853-1854

1853-1854

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT



July 5, Wednesday: George Scott and LeRoy Arnold, a 3d assistant engineer, were brought before Court Martial on board the *USS Powhatan* (Arnold would in 1856 resign his naval commission).

The following item has been extracted from page 2, column 2 of the Boston Commonwealth of this date by [Bradley P. Dean](#), to add to our understanding of the context for [Henry Thoreau](#)'s delivery "[SLAVERY IN MASSACHUSETTS](#)" during the previous day, on the mourning-crepe-draped platform of the 4th of July commemoration at the Harmony Grove in [Framingham](#):

ANTI-SLAVERY CELEBRATION AT FRAMINGHAM

A meeting of Anti-Slavery people, called under the auspices of the Mass. Anti-Slavery Society, was held at Framingham yesterday. A beautiful grove near the lake, furnished a fine place for the meeting. Many people entertained themselves by taking a sail upon the lake. About two thousand persons were present, extra trains being there from Boston and Worcester. Mr. [William Lloyd] Garrison presided, and speeches were made by him, Wendell Phillips, C. L. Remond, Lucy Stone, John Pierpont, S.S. Foster, John C. Cluer, and others. At the close of Mr. Garrison's speech he burned the Fugitive Slave Act, Commissioner Loring's decision and the Constitution of the United States. The burning of the Slave Act and Loring's decision was received with decided approbation; but the burning of the Constitution was witnessed with disgust and indignation by a large number of those who were assembled, some of whom vented their feelings by hisses and ou[t]cries.

RESISTING THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

JOHN PIERPONT

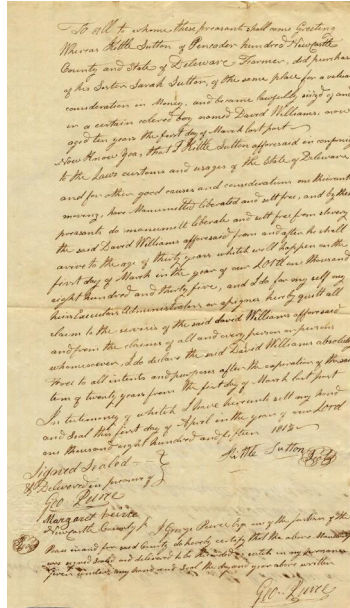
THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**1853-1854****1853-1854**

It is no more than fair to state that Mr. Garrison said that he did not do this as the act of the meeting, but as his own individual expression of opinion[.] But this furnishes no excuse for the proceeding. By the printed notice of the meeting, all "friends of Impartial Freedom and Universal Emancipation," "all who reject with indignation the wild and guilty fantasy that man can hold property in man," were invited to be present at Framingham. Under this invitation, anti-slavery men, who hold that the Constitution of the United States furnishes no aid whatever to slavery and that under it, the most radical anti-slavery action is legal and proper, had a right to be present, without having their feelings and principles insulted by such a performance. We speak now only of the act of discourtesy: whether it was worth while to perform an act, at this time, which could gratify only a few men, and must inevitably tend to increase the odium under which all true anti-slavery men have to labor, is another question which we do not now discuss. We take the occasion, speaking as we have no doubt we do, in behalf of a very large majority of the "friends of impartial freedom and universal emancipation," in this community, to repudiate this act of Mr. Garrison's, and say that they have no sympathy with it or approved of it.

[WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON](#)[WENDELL PHILLIPS](#)[CHARLES LENOX REMOND](#)[LUCY STONE](#)[JOHN PIERPONT](#)[STEPHEN S. FOSTER](#)[EDWARD GREELEY LORING](#)

At this last moment [Henry Thoreau](#) would be adding admonitions to avoid despair and desperate haste to Chapter 1 of his [WALDEN](#) manuscript. To me, it seems likely that he did this because of Mr. [Garrison](#)'s ill-advised act of desperation on that black-mourning-bunting-draped platform.



July 5. Another very hot night, and scarcely any dew this morning. *Lysimachia lanceolata*, var. *hybrida*, a day or two, at Merrick's Bathing-Place. Bass at Island.

P.M. — To White Pond.

One hundred and nine swallows on telegraph-wire at bridge within eight rods, and others flying about. *Stachys aspera*, Clamshell Ditch. The blue-curls and fragrant everlasting, with their refreshing aroma, show themselves now pushing up in dry fields, bracing to the thought. Horse-mint under Clamshell, apparently yesterday. On Lupine Knoll, picked up a dark-colored spear-head three and a half inches long, lying on the bare sand; so hot that I could not long hold it tight in my hand. Now the earth begins to be parched, the corn curls, and the four-leaved loose-strife, etc., etc., wilt and wither. *Sericocarpus*. Small *circæa* at Corner Spring, some days. *Rosa Carolina*, apparently a day or two, Corner causeway; dull leaves with fine serrations, twenty-five to thirty, plus, on a side, and narrow closed stipules. *Asclepias incarnata* var. *pulchra*.

1853-1854

1853-1854

To all to whom these presents shall come Greeting
 Whereas Little Sutton of Pencader hundred New Castle
 County and State of Delaware Farmer, did purchase
 of his Sister Sarah Sutton, of the same place for a valuable
 consideration in Money, and became lawfully seized of and
 in a certain colored boy named David Williams, now
 aged ten years the first day of March last past
 Now Know you, that I Little Sutton aforesaid in conformity
 to the laws customs and usages of the State of Delaware
 and for other good cause and considerations on their
 moving, have Manumitted liberated and set free, and by these
 presents do manumitt liberate and set free from slavery
 the said David Williams aforesaid from and after he shall
 arrive to the age of thirty years whitch will happen on the
 first day of March in the year of our Lord one thousand
 eight hundred and thirty five, and I do for my self my
 heirs Executors Administrators or assignes hereby quit all
 claim to the service of the said David Williams aforesaid
 and from the claims of all and every person or persons
 whomsoever, I do declare the said David Williams absolutely
 free to all intents and purposes after the expiration of the said
 term of twenty years from the first day of March last past
 In testimony of whitch I have hereunto set my hand
 and Seal this first day of April in the year of our Lord
 one thousand eight hundred and fifteen

Signed Sealed
 of Delaware in presence of
 Geo. P. Little
 Margaret Little
 New Castle County

Little Sutton

Geo. P. Little

I George Peverly one of the Justices of the
 Peace in and for said County do hereby certify that the above Manumitt
 was signed Sealed and delivered to be the said David Williams in my presence
 from under my hand and Seal the day and year above written

Geo. P. Little

In the inserted paragraph he contrasted Christianity's preoccupation with past and future to the neglect of the present. Paganism would have had it right had paganism recognized that

The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted; but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of this earth every where.



1853-1854

1853-1854



July 6, Thursday: The “[Republican Party](#)” was founded at a convention in Jackson, Michigan (continuous with but substantially different from today’s “Republican Party” in the same manner in which the prehistoric *moeritherium* is continuous with but substantially different from today’s African and Indian elephants :-). This launching was ratified by a group of former Whigs, Democrats, and Free-Soilers opposed to the Kansas-Nebraska Act.



In the Manzanares Proclamation (an obvious appeal for leftist support) General O’Donnell pledged that once he gained control of the Spanish government he would restore the militia.


Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#), dissatisfied that Okinawans had neglected to voluntarily turn over to Western justice the killer of William Board, an American accused of a drunken home invasion and rape, took possession of the *Ameku Dera*, which his US Squadron had been using as a hospital. He desired the islanders “to make stronger efforts to find out the murderer of the man, Board.”

Lloyd Tabb Hubard was born to Mary Troutman Hubard and [William James Hubard](#).

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked to Beck Stow’s Swamp.



July 6. P.M. — To Beck Stow’s.


Euphorbia maculata, good while. *Polygonum aviculare*, a day or two. Now a great show of elder blossoms. *Polygala sanguinea*, apparently a, day or more. *Galium asprellum* in shade; probably earlier in sun. Partridges [[Ruffed Grouse](#)  [Bonasa umbellus](#) (Partridge)] a third grown. Veery still sings and toad rings.

On the hot sand of the new road at Beck Stove's, headed toward the water a rod or more off, what is probably *Cistudo Blandingii*; had *some* green conferva (?) on its shell and body. Length of upper shell, 6½ inches; breadth behind, 4⁵/₈; tail beyond shell, 2¼. Did not see it shut its box; kept running out its long neck four inches or more; could bend it directly back to the posterior margin of the



second [?] dorsal plate. Ran out its head further and oftener than usual. The spots pale-yellow or buff. Upper half of head and neck blackish, the former quite smooth for $1\frac{5}{8}$ inches and finely sprinkled with yellowish spots, the latter warty. The snout lighter, with five perpendicular black marks. Eyes large (?), irides dull green-golden. Under *jaw and throat clear chrome-yellow*. Under parts of neck and roots of fore legs duller yellow: inner parts behind duller yellow still. Fore legs with black scales, more or less yellow spotted above; at root and beneath pale-yellow and yellowish. Hind legs uniformly black above and but little lighter beneath. Tail black all round. No red or orange about the animal. No hook or notch to jaw.



Plantain, some days, and gnaphalium, apparently two or three days.


 July 7, Friday: As tension over the William Board affair escalated on the island of Okinawa, the American fleet prepared to land marines with a howitzer, to take further possessions in Lew Chew. This was prevented, however, by the Lew Chewan regent and his entourage coming aboard the Western flagship, bringing with them the local person who they said had killed Board. Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) decreed that the man should suffer the same punishment as if he had murdered a fellow island native in response to those aggravated circumstances (home invasion, rape). Informed that what the native authorities would normally do would be to banish such an offender to an uninhabited island for the remainder of his life, the Commodore allowed the man to be removed from the ship and taken back to the island to be disposed of by the native authorities as they saw fit.


[Henry Thoreau](#) visited the lycopodium.



July 7. P.M. — To lycopodium.

Verbena urticaria. *Spiranthes*, three or four days back, flat east of Clamshell Shore. Large form of arrowhead, two or more days. Woodcock [**American Woodcock**  *Scolopax minor*] at the spring under Clamshell. *Campanula aparinoides*, apparently three or four days. The clover heads are turned brown and dry, and whiteweed is also drying up. I think that that is the water dock just opening in J.P. Brown's meadow. Disturbed two broods of partridges [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] this afternoon, — one a third grown, flying half a dozen rods over the bushes, yet the old, as anxious as ever, rushing to me with the courage of a hen. Columbines still.

Lygodium palmatum hardly yet in flower, I should say; for the most very green and tender atop and not much flattened out. Saw a pretty large hawk  with narrow, and long wings, black-tipped beneath, and white rump, light beneath, circling over the Ministerial Swamp with a loud, shuffling, jay-like and somewhat flicker-like sound.

 July 8, Saturday: The 1st railroad line in Portugal opened between Sacavém and Vila Franca de Xira.

Albany, [New York](#)'s Lumber District was reported to contain 46 businesses that were taking in more than \$500,000 annually (an additional 29 of them were taking in more than \$100,000).

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Assabet Bathing-Place. That evening at 8 PM, by the light of a full moon, he took his boat to Hubbard's Bend. The following handbill was distributed:



July 8. Saturday. P.M. — To Assabet Bathing-place.

Melilot, a day or two. *Spiranthes gracilis*, a day or two (?). A *Lysimachia stricta* (?) by birch fence in path beyond Shad-bush Meadow, with whorls of three leaves and spike about eight inches long, about June 26th; lower half now out of bloom, one quarter in bloom, upper quarter budded. Ludwigia. The 4th and 5th were the

1853-1854

1853-1854

LAND SURVEYING

Of all kinds, according to the best methods known; the necessary data supplied, in order that the boundaries of Farms may be accurately described in Deeds; *Woods* lotted off distinctly and according to a regular plan; *Roads* laid out, &c., &c. Distinct and accurate Plans of Farms furnished, with the buildings thereon, of any size, and with a scale of feet attached, to accompany the Farm Book, so that the land may be laid out in a winter evening.

Areas warranted accurate within almost any degree of exactness, and the Variation of the Compass given, so that the lines can be run again. Apply to

HENRY D. THOREAU.

*near the depot
Concord Mass*



1853-1854

1853-1854

hot bathing days thus far; thermometer at 98 and 96 respectively. Sium almost; say 9th.

8 P.M. — Full moon; by boat to Hubbard's Bend.

There is wind, making it cooler and keeping off fog, delicious on water. The moon reflected from the rippled surface like a stream of dollars. I hear a few toads still. See a bat; how long? The bullfrogs trump from time to time. It is commonly a full round *err; err; err; err* (gutturally, and increasing in volume), and then coarsely trilled (?), *er-er-er; er-er-er; er-er-er*; occasionally varied like the looing of a bull. The whip-poor-wills are heard, and the baying of dogs.

The *Rosa nitida* I think has [been] some time done; the *lucida* generally now ceasing, and the *Carolina* (?) just begun.

The middle lechea not quite.

1853-1854

1853-1854

→ July 9, Sunday: The [Reverend Thomas Starr King](#) of the Universalist Church in [Charlestown, Massachusetts](#) thanked [James Thomas Fields](#) for a “luscious copy” of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#).²⁶⁷



TIMELINE OF WALDEN

The Reverend would review the gift for the [Christian Register](#):

A young man, eight years out of college, of fine scholarship and original genius, revives, in the midst of our bustling times, the life of an anchorite. By the side of a secluded pond in Concord, he builds with his own hands a hut which cost him twenty-eight dollars and twelve and a half cents; and there he lived two and a half years, “cultivating poverty,” because he “wanted to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and suck out all its marrow.”

Here he found that the labor of six weeks would support him through the year; and so he had long quiet days for reading, observation, and reflection, learning to free himself from all

267. James T. Fields. BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES AND PERSONAL SKETCHES. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 188, page 89.

1853-1854**1853-1854**

the hollow customs and false shows of the world, and to pity those who by slavery to inherited property seemed to be doing incredible and astonishing penance.

In the account he gives us of his clothes, house, food, and furniture, we find mingled many acute and wise criticisms upon modern life; while in his descriptions of all living things around him, birds, fishes, squirrels, mice, insects, trees, flowers, weeds, it is evident that he had the sharpest eye and the quickest sympathy.

One remarkable chapter is given to the sounds that came to his ear, with suggestions, full of poetry and beauty, of the feelings which these sounds awakened. But nothing interested him so much as the Pond, whose name gives the title to his book.

He describes it as a clear sheet of water, about a mile in circumference; he bathed in it every morning; its cool crystal depths were his well, ready dug; he sailed upon its bosom in summer, he noted many curious facts pertaining to its ice in winter; in short, it became to him a living thing, and he almost worshiped it.

But we must not describe the contents of this book any farther. Its opening pages may seem a little caustic and cynical; but it mellows apace, and playful humor and sparkling thought appear on almost every page....

Rarely have we enjoyed a book more, or been more grateful for many and rich suggestions...

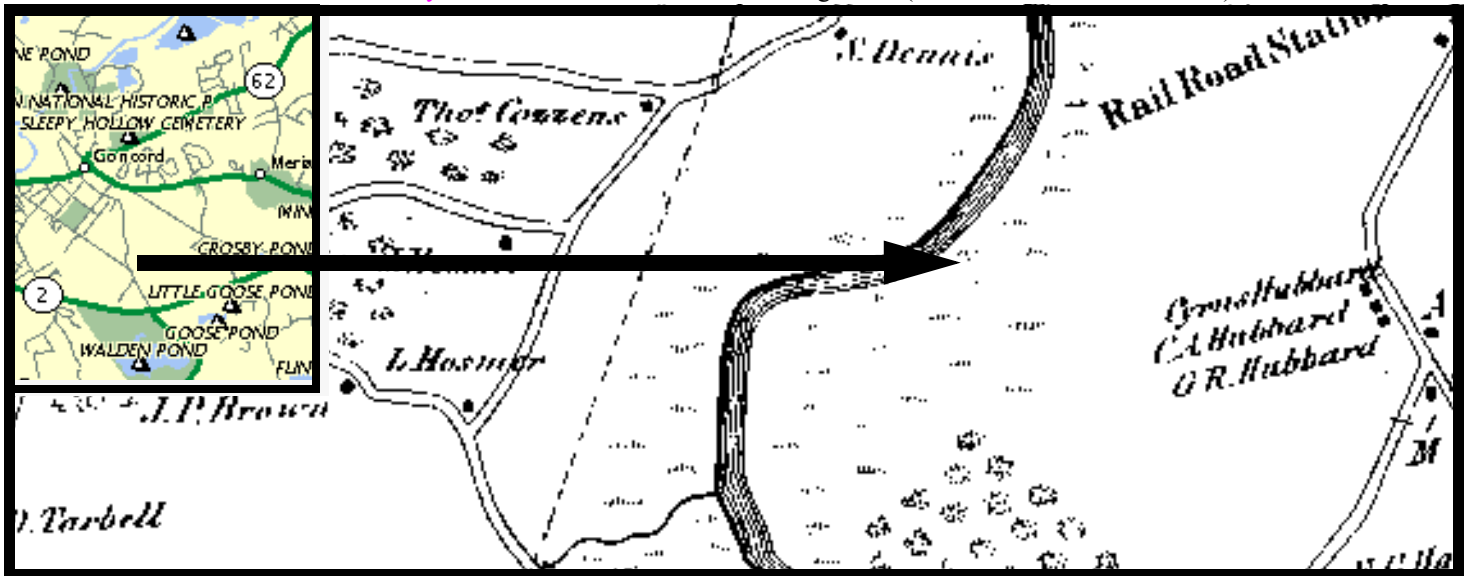
As we shut the book up, we ask ourselves, will the great lesson it teaches of the freedom and beauty of a simple life be heeded? Shall this struggle for wealth, and this bondage to the impedimenta of life, continue forever? Will the time ever come when it will be fashionable to be poor, that is, when men will be so smitten with a purpose to seek the true ends of life that they will not care about laying up riches on the earth?

Such times we know there have been, and thousands listened reverently to the reply, given in the last of these two lines, to the inquiry contained in the first; "O where is peace, for thou its path hast trod?" "In poverty, retirement, and with God." Who can say that it is impossible that such a time may come round, although the fashion of this world now runs with such a resistless current in the opposite direction.

1853-1854

1853-1854

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Hubbard's Bathing-Place (and from there to Fair Haven).



This day saw the first meeting of Concord's "Vigilance Committee," organized in the wake of [Anthony Burns](#)'s return to slavery earlier that year ([Thoreau](#) doesn't mention such a meeting in his journal entry for the day). Attendees were: Mary Merrick Brooks, Waldo and Lidian Emerson, [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) and [John Thoreau](#), Mary Rice, Charles Bowers, Joshua R. Brown, Nathan B. Stowe, Nathan Henry Warren, James Weir, Stearns Wheeler, and [William Whiting](#). Since, at this informal meeting, the attenders signed a pledge that they would do whatever was in their power to aid fleeing slaves, some incautious commentators have presumed that this meeting, and this new committee, had something to do with the [Underground Railroad](#)! What the attenders did, however, was merely to agree to sponsor a weekly series of public meetings on the topic of slavery. Emerson for instance agreed to invite the Reverend Theodore Parker to deliver an opening lecture. Of course they would honor their pledge, but of course, the Emersons couldn't be expected to invite persons of color to enter their home, so it wouldn't be within their power to interpret this pledge as including the aiding of any actual fleeing slave individuals. Surely such a pledge should be categorized as pious attitudinizing, or as righteous posturing, or as good public relations proselytizing, rather than as some incautious historians have supposed, the sort of Underground Railroad activism in which Cynthia and John and Henry Thoreau, were involved, for which they were putting their own persons and the assets of their family on the line. (I cannot presently cite any occasion on which any person of color ever was allowed to enter the Emerson home in Concord at any point during the 19th Century, before or after the Civil War, even as a servant. If a person is to be categorized as "vomit" on the basis of the color of his or her skin, would they then proceed to allow such a "vomit" person through the door — just because they were in need?)

My guess would be that we can take a clue from the fact that [Thoreau](#) hadn't bothered to attend this meeting, and recognize from that, that actually this meeting didn't have one doggone thing to do with the [Underground Railroad](#). (If it did have something to do with such covert agendas — then this would be the very first instance of which we have any record of anyone ever putting anything having to do with that clandestine operation into incriminating ink on an incriminating piece of paper other than Bronson Alcott scribbling in a voluminous personal journal that he could be quite confident nobody but himself would trouble themselves to glance at.)

We need constantly to bear in mind that there were two very distinct types of white abolitionist, the non-racist abolitionist and the racist abolitionist. The non-racist abolitionists wanted to help improve the lives of black Americans and were opposed to race slavery because it harmed the lives of black Americans. The racist abolitionists didn't think there even ought to be such a thing as a black American, and were opposed to race

1853-1854

1853-1854

slavery because it created a place for black people in America, where they ought not to have any place at all. Likewise, there were two reasons for being in favor of the [Underground Railroad](#), because it helped black people who needed help, and because it helped remove black people from the local area by shuffling them off toward the north where there might or might not be a place for them and that didn't matter. (The genius of the abolition movement was to make strange bedfellows of these two very different sorts of personality, the non-racist Thoreau personality and the racist Emerson personality, enabling them to work together at a common task.) The point is that people like [Thoreau](#), who wanted to help improve people's lives, would sometimes be willing to place their own homes at risk of confiscation, but people like Emerson who just wanted weeds to grow somewhere else than in their own vicinity would never place their fine homes at risk of confiscation. That, to mix a metaphor, would be to risk throwing the clean white baby out with the dirty black bathwater!



July 9. Sunday. P.M. — Fair Haven Hill via Hubbard's Bathing-Place.

Vaccinium vacillans berry, four or five days; common blue huckleberry. Hubbard aster, some days. Is it not *Tradescanti*-like? Begins to blossom low in the grass. *Hypericum corymbosum*, not yet. Tansy by railroad causeway, a day or more. *Chenopodium album*.

Examined a lanceolate thistle which has been pressed and laid by a year. The papers being taken off, its head sprang up more than an inch and the downy seeds began to fly off.



July 10, Monday: [Henry Thoreau](#) dug up one of the small tortoise eggs he had buried in his garden on June 15th. "The eye was remarkable, developed in the colorless and almost formless head, one or two large dark circles of the full diameter; a very distinct pulsation where the heart should be and along the neck was perceptible; but there seemed to be no body but a mass of yellow yolk." [Tortoise Eggs](#) In the afternoon Thoreau went to Hubbard's Close and to [Walden Pond](#).



July 10. Monday. Took up one of the small tortoise eggs which I had buried June 15th. The eye was remarkable, developed in the colorless and almost formless head, one or two large dark circles of the full diameter; a very distinct pulsation where the heart should be and along the neck was perceptible; but there seemed to be no body but a mass of yellow yolk.

P.M. — To Hubbard's Close, spotted pyrola, and Walden.

Gaultheria, apparently two or three days in open ground. Some choke-berry leaves in dry places are now red, some locust leaves and elm leaves yellow.

Lycopus sinuatus, a day or two. *Platanthera lacera*, in one place, apparently a week; Stow's strawberry meadow ditch. *Ludwigia palustris*, same place, apparently, three or four days. *Pycnanthemum lanceolatum*, two or three days. *Polygala cruciata*, Hubbard's Close, two or three days. I find that most of the wild gooseberries are dried up and blackened. *Solidago stricta*, apparently to-morrow or next day. Northern wild red cherry ripe apparently some, days. Low blackberry. A sericocarpus (?) in Poorhouse Meadow with linear, or narrowly-spatulate, entire, blunt leaves.

The following are the birds I chanced to hear in this walk (did not attend much): The seringos [[Savannah Sparrow](#) [Passerculus sandwichensis](#)] on fences, link of bobolink [[Bobolink](#) [Dolichonyx oryzivorus](#)], crow [[American Crow](#) [Corvus brachyrhynchos](#)], oven-bird [[Ovenbird](#) [Seiurus aurocapillus](#)], tanager [[Scarlet Tanager](#) [Piranga olivacea](#)], chewink [[Rufous-sided Towhee](#) [Pipilo erythrophthalmus](#)], huckleberry-bird [[Field Sparrow](#) [Spizella pusilla](#) (~~Rush Sparrow or junco~~ or ~~George Minot's huckleberry-bird~~)] (pretty often and loud), flicker [[Yellow-shafted Flicker](#) [Colaptes auratus](#)] cackle, wood thrush [[Wood Thrush](#) [Hylocichla mustelina](#)], robin [[American Robin](#) [Turdus migratorius](#)] (?), before 3 P.M.; then red-eye [[Red-eyed Vireo](#) [Vireo olivaceus](#)], veery [[Veery](#) [Catharus fuscescens](#)] trill, catbird [[Gray Catbird](#) [Dumetella carolinensis](#)] rigmarole, etc., etc.

This is what I think about birds now generally: See a few hawks [about](#).

Have not heard owls [lately](#), not walking at night.

Crows [[Crow](#), [American](#) [Corvus brachyrhynchos](#)] are more noisy, probably anxious about young.

Hear phoebe note of chickadee [[Chicadee](#), [Black-capped](#) [Parus atricapillus](#) ~~Titmouse, Titmice~~] occasionally; otherwise inobvious.

1853-1854

1853-1854

Partridge [Ruffed Grouse [■](#) *Bonasa umbellus*], young one third grown.
 Lark [Horned lark [■](#) *Eremophila alpestris*] not very common, but sings still.
 Have not heard conqueree of blackbird [■](#) for about a month, methinks. [Heard one conqueree July 11th. Chattering flocks now of females and young over river.]
 Robin [American Robin [■](#) *Turdus migratorius*] still sings, and in morning; song sparrow [Song Sparrow [■](#) *Melospiza melodia*] and bay-wing [Vesper Sparrow [■](#) *Poocetes gramineus*].
 See no downy woodpeckers [Downy Woodpecker [■](#) *Picoides pubescens*] nor nuthatches [White-breasted Nuthatch [■](#) *Sitta carolinensis* (White-bellied Nuthatch)].
 Crow blackbirds [Crow, American [■](#) *Corvus brachyrhynchos*] occasionally chatter.
 Hear flicker [Yellow-shafted Flicker [■](#) *Colaptes auratus*] rarely.
 Rush sparrow [Field Sparrow [■](#) *Spizella pusilla* (~~Rush Sparrow or *juncorum* or George Minott's huckleberry-bird~~), common and loud.
 Saw a snipe [Common Snipe [■](#) *Gallinago gallinago*] within two or three days. [And July 11th.]
 Woodcock [American Woodcock [■](#) *Scolopax minor*] seen within two or three days.
 Think I have heard pine warbler [Pine Warbler [■](#) *Dendroica pinus* (~~Pine Creeper~~)] within a week.
 Cuckoo [Yellow-billed Cuckoo [■](#) *Coccyzus americanus*] and quail [Northern Bobwhite [■](#) *Colinus virginianus*] from time to time.
 Barnswallow [Barn Swallow [■](#) *Hirundo rustica*], bankswallow [Bank Swallow [■](#) *Riparia riparia*], etc., numerous with their young for a week or two.
 I hear the plaintive note of young bluebirds [Bluebird, Eastern [■](#) *Sialia sialis*].
 Chip-sparrow [Chipping Sparrow [■](#) *Spizella passerina*] in morning.
 Purple finch [Purple Finch [■](#) *Carpodacus purpureus* (~~American Linnet~~)] about and sings.
 Martin [Purple Martin [■](#) *Progne subis*] lively.
 Warbling vireo [Warbling Vireo [■](#) *Vireo gilvus*] still, and wood thrush [Wood Thrush [■](#) *Hylocichla mustelina*], and red-eye [Red-eyed Vireo [■](#) *Vireo olivaceus*], and tanager [Scarlet Tanager [■](#) *Piranga olivacea*], all at midday.
 Catbird [Gray Catbird [■](#) *Dumetella carolinensis*]'s rigmarole still.
 Chewink [Rufous-sided Towhee [■](#) *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*] sings; and veery [Veery [■](#) *Catharus fuscescens*] trill from out shade.
 Whip-poor-will [Whip-poor-will [■](#) *Caprimulgus vociferus*] at evening.
 Summer yellowbird [Yellow Warbler [■](#) *Dendroica petechia*] and yellow-throat [Common Yellowthroat [■](#) *Geothlypis trichas* (~~Maryland Yellow-throat~~)] rarely.
 Goldfinch [American Goldfinch [■](#) *Carduelis tristis*] oftener twitters over.
 Oven-bird [Ovenbird [■](#) *Seiurus aurocapillus*] still.
 Evergreen-forest [Black-throated Green Warbler [■](#) *Dendroica virens* or *Setophaga virens* Evergreen forest bird] note, I think, still.
 Night-warbler [Ovenbird [■](#) *Seiurus aurocapillus*, or Common Yellowthroat [■](#) *Geothlypis trichas*? Night-warbler²⁶⁸] of late.
 Hardly a full bobolink [Bobolink [■](#) *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*].
 Kingbird [Kingbird, Eastern [■](#) *Tyrannus tyrannus*] lively.
 Cherry-bird [Cedar Waxwing [■](#) *Bombycilla cedrorum* (~~Cherry-bird~~)] commonly heard.
 Think I saw turtle dove [Mourning Dove [■](#) *Zenaidra macroura* (~~Turtle Dove~~)] within a day or two.
 The singing birds at present are: —
 Villageous: Robin [American Robin [■](#) *Turdus migratorius*], chip-bird [Chipping Sparrow [■](#) *Spizella passerina*], warbling vireo [Warbling Vireo [■](#) *Vireo gilvus*], swallows [■](#).
 Rural: Song sparrow [Song Sparrow [■](#) *Melospiza melodia*], seringos [Savannah Sparrow [■](#) *Passerculus sandwichensis*], flicker [Yellow-shafted Flicker [■](#) *Colaptes auratus*], kingbird [Kingbird, Eastern [■](#) *Tyrannus tyrannus*], goldfinch [American Goldfinch [■](#) *Carduelis tristis*], link of bobolink [Bobolink [■](#) *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*], cherry-bird [Cedar Waxwing [■](#) *Bombycilla cedrorum* (~~Cherry-bird~~)].
 Sylvan: Red-eye [Red-eyed Vireo [■](#) *Vireo olivaceus*], tanager [Scarlet Tanager [■](#) *Piranga olivacea*], wood thrush [Wood Thrush [■](#) *Hylocichla mustelina*], chewink [Rufous-sided Towhee [■](#) *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*], veery [Veery [■](#) *Catharus fuscescens*], oven-bird [Ovenbird [■](#) *Seiurus aurocapillus*], — all even at midday. Catbird [Gray Catbird [■](#) *Dumetella carolinensis*] full strain, whip-poor-will [Whip-poor-will [■](#) *Caprimulgus vociferus*], crows [Crow, American [■](#) *Corvus brachyrhynchos*].

268. Thoreau was never sure about his night warbler. Though on August 5, 1858, he identified the Common Yellowthroat as his mysterious singer, Cruickshank says on most occasions it was probably the Ovenbird *Seiurus aurocapillus* giving its aerial song.

July 11, Tuesday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) took his boat to Fair Haven.

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.
 – [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 10

[Ellen Channing](#) recorded that subsequent to her separation from [Ellery Channing](#) due to her fear of him in his mental condition (“Oh Wentworth I am really **afraid of him**”) and her resettlement with their children in Dorchester, Massachusetts, the forlorn husband had been writing letters replete with affectionate regard:

He really persuades himself that he has been a fond & devoted father.

SPLITSVILLE		
1851	Edwin Forrest	Catherine Sinclair
1852	Ellery Channing	Ellen Kilshaw Fuller Channing
1853	Lola Montez	Patrick Purdy Hull

Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) brought a present of agricultural implements ashore on Lew Chew (Ryukyu) and met with local authorities. A compact between the United States and the local government was negotiated to help govern future encounters and avoid the kind of difficulties already experienced. It stipulated that help be provided for arriving American ships in navigating the coastal waters and seeking anchorage, and courtesy and protection should be extended to Americans shipwrecked in the vicinity. It also stipulated a burial yard for the bodies of citizens of the United States of America. Although Americans would be free to come ashore at Naha without being monitored or spied upon, if they “violently go into houses, or trifle with women, or force people to sell them things, or do other such illegal acts; they shall be arrested by the local officers, but not maltreated, and shall be reported to the Captain of the ship to which they belong, for punishment by him.” This Treaty of Naha was signed in English and Chinese at the town hall of Naha by the Commodore as commander-in-chief of the U.S. Naval Forces in East India, China, and Japan Seas, by Sho Fu Fing, Superintendent of Affairs in Lew Chew, and by Ba Rio-si, Treasurer of Lew Chew at Shui, on behalf of the government of Lew Shew under the reign of Hien Fung (salient in the background of such a document was, of course, its implicit recognition that the islands were not dependencies either of [Japan](#) or of [China](#).)

An armed [nativist](#) mob attacked the [Irish](#) district of Lawrence, Massachusetts.

William T. Sherman completed the construction of a bank building for Lucas, Turner & Company at 800 Montgomery Street in [San Francisco](#).

1853-1854



1853-1854

July 11. Tuesday. P.M. — By boat to Fair Haven.

White gum, probably about the 5th (not the 3d).

Pontederia now makes a handsome show. The female red-wings and their young now fly in small chattering flocks over the river. The smallest-flowered hypericum, several days; have I mentioned it? Purple utricularia well out since the 5th; say 7th. The black high blueberries are a trifle earlier, small and acid. The *Rosa lucida* still common. *Utricularia cornuta* at Fair Haven, apparently two days. The water-target is common off this shore. *Hypericum corymbosum* in front of Lee's Cliff, a day or two. The drought is very obvious on these rocks now, which are so verdurous in spring.

The ivy (*Toxicodendron*), *Arenaria serpyllifolia*, etc., are quite sere and brown. Pennyroyal, thimble-berries, and ferns also are withering. Some huckleberries quite as if dried on a pan. Ampelopsis out three or four days on the rock. Parietaria, apparently two or three days against rock. Handsome now from these rocks the bay (on the south side of Fair Haven at the inlet of river), with its spit of shining pads. *Lobelia inflata*, a day or more. *Veronica serpyllifolia* about done. There is much large bur-reed



leaves afloat and lodged in the middle of the river at Clamshell Bend. Did the wind tear it up? I heard Conant's cradle crunching the rye behind the fringe of bushes in the Indian field. Reaping begun. Sun set when I was off Nut Meadow. A straight edge of massy cloud had advanced from the south-southeast and now stretched overhead from west-southwest to east-northeast, and after sunset reflected a soft fawn-colored (?) light on the landscape, lighting up with harmonious light the dry parched and shorn hillsides, the soft, mellow, fawn-colored light seeming to come from the earth itself.



July 12, Wednesday: [George Eastman](#) was born in Waterville, New York.

Commander Henry A. Adams, who had been dispatched during April to convey the Kanagawa treaty to the United States, arrived in [Washington DC](#).

[Frederick Douglass](#) was rising to prominence in a world that was excited and anxious about new inventions such as railroad trains and telegraph wires, but was fully aware that the ends to which science could be used were forever bound up with the moral choices of its practitioners. "It is the province of prejudice to blind; and scientific writers, not less than others, write to please, as well as to instruct, and even unconsciously to themselves, (sometimes,) sacrifice what is true to what is popular," he said during a speech to the [Philozetian Society](#) of [Western Reserve College](#) in Hudson, Ohio, "[The Claims of the Negro, Ethnologically Considered](#):"

1853-1854

1853-1854

[an address before the literary societies of Western Reserve College, at commencement, by Frederick Douglass, July 12, 1854,](#)” “Fashion is not confined to dress; but extends to philosophy as well — and it is fashionable now, in our land, to exaggerate the differences between the Negro and the European.” In that lecture he attacked one of the most prominent scientific fields of the era, ethnology, sometimes then deemed the “science of race.” The ethnologists of that day were forever scientifically discovering stuff that they were proclaiming to be scientifically true, that today we would merely laugh at as pseudoscientific prejudicial nonsense. The most accomplished professors engaged in this and the general public of course ate it up — except in the case of persons such as Douglass who were privileged to see right through it.

In the afternoon our birthday boy went to Dodge’s Brook.



July 12. P.M. — To Dodge’s Brook.

The early cotton-grass is now about gone from Hubbard’s Close. With this month began the reign of river-weeds obstructing the stream. Potamogetons — & heart-leaves, etc., now for a long time covered with countless mosquito cases (?). They catch my oars and retard the boat. A rail will be detained a month by them in mid-stream, and tortoises (Sternotherus or Emys picta), four or five or more in a row, lie along it. Many young learn (r) swallows (they have a darker crescent on the breast and long tail-feathers not grown) sit in flocks on the bared dead willows over the water and let me float within four or five feet. Birds do not distinguish a man sitting in a boat. I see a green bittern wading in a shallow muddy place, with an awkward teetering, fluttering pace. Button-bush XXX. Observed a pickerel in the Assabet, about a foot long, headed upstream, quasi-transparent (such its color), with darker and lighter parts contrasted, very still while I float quite near. There is a constant motion of the pectoral fins and also a waving motion of the ventrals, apparently to resist the stream, and a slight waving of the. anal, apparently to preserve its direction. It darted off at last by a strong sculling motion of its tail. See white maple leaves floating bottom up, covered with feathery aphides.

A lilium Canadense (at Dodge Brook corner by road), approaching Superbum, four and a half feet high, with a whorl of four flowers, and two more above, somewhat pyramidal, and petals recurved.



[Transcript]



**GO TO THE FOLLOWING YEAR
(38TH YEAR OF HDT’S LIFE)**