

HENRY D. THOREAU

GLEANINGS  
OR WHAT TIME  
HAS NOT REAPED  
OF MY  
JOURNAL

[The small manuscript volume bearing on its first fly-leaf the legend printed on the preceding page is evidently a transcript of unused passages in the early journals, and this is also the case with several succeeding small volumes. See note on page 342. The following mottoes occupy the next three pages of the book.]

“By all means use sometimes to be alone.  
Salute thyself: see what thy soul doth wear.  
Dare to look in thy chest; for 't is thine own:  
And tumble up and down what thou find'st there.  
Who cannot rest till he good fellows find,  
He breaks up house, turns out of doors his mind.”  
HERBERT, *The Church Porch.*

“Friends and companions, get you gone!  
'T is my desire to be alone;  
Ne'er well, but when my thoughts and I  
*Do domineer in privacy.*”  
BURTON, *Anatomy of Melancholy.*

“Two Paradises are in one,  
To live in Paradise alone.”  
MARVELL, *The Garden.*

## THE JOURNAL OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU

### I

1837

(ÆT. 20)

Oct. 22. “What are you doing now?” he asked.  
“Do you keep a journal?” So I make my first entry  
to-day.

#### SOLITUDE

To be alone I find it necessary to escape the present, —  
I avoid myself. How could I be alone in the Roman  
emperor's chamber of mirrors? I seek a garret. The  
spiders must not be disturbed, nor the floor swept, nor  
the lumber arranged.

The Germans say, “Es ist alles wahr wodurch du  
besser wirst.”

#### THE MOULD OUR DEEDS LEAVE

Oct. 24. Every part of nature teaches that the passing  
away of one life is the making room for another. The  
oak dies down to the ground, leaving within its rind  
a rich virgin mould, which will impart a vigorous life  
to an infant forest. The pine leaves a sandy and sterile  
soil, the harder woods a strong and fruitful mould.

So this constant abrasion and decay makes the soil  
of my future growth. As I live now so shall I reap. If

I grow pines and birches, my virgin mould will not sustain the oak; but pines and birches, or, perchance, weeds and brambles, will constitute my second growth.<sup>1</sup>

SPRING

Oct. 25. She appears, and we are once more children; we commence again our course with the new year. Let the maiden no more return, and men will become poets for very grief. No sooner has winter left us time to regret her smiles, than we yield to the advances of poetic frenzy. "The flowers look kindly at us from the beds with their child eyes, and in the horizon the snow of the far mountains dissolves into light vapor." — GOETHE, *Torquato Tasso*.

THE POET

"He seems to avoid — even to flee from us, —  
To seek something which we know not,  
And perhaps he himself after all knows not." — *Ibid*.

Oct. 26.

"His eye hardly rests upon the earth;  
His ear hears the one-clang of nature;  
What history records, — what life gives, —  
Directly and gladly his genius takes it up:  
His mind collects the widely dispersed,  
And his feeling animates the inanimate.  
Often he ennobles what appeared to us common,  
And the prized is as nothing to him.  
In his own magic circle wanders

<sup>1</sup> [*Week*, p. 375; Riv. 464.]

The wonderful man, and draws us  
With him to wander, and take part in it:  
He seems to draw near to us, and remains afar from us:  
He seems to be looking at us, and spirits, forsooth,  
Appear to him strangely in our places." — *Ibid*.

HOW MAN GROWS

"A noble man has not to thank a private circle for his culture. Fatherland and world must work upon him. Fame and infamy must he learn to endure. He will be constrained to know himself and others. Solitude shall no more lull him with her flattery. The foe *will* not, the friend *dares* not, spare him. Then, striving, the youth puts forth his strength, feels what he is, and feels himself soon a man."

"A talent is builded in solitude,  
A character in the stream of the world."

"He only fears man who knows him not, and he who avoids him will soonest misapprehend him." — *Ibid*.

ARIOSTO

"As nature decks her inward rich breast in a green variegated dress, so clothes he all that can make men honorable in the blooming garb of the fable. . . . The well of superfluity bubbles near, and lets us see variegated wonder-fishes. The air is filled with rare birds, the meads and copses with strange herds, wit lurks half concealed in the verdure, and wisdom from time to time lets sound from a golden cloud sustained words, while

frenzy wildly seems to sweep the well-toned lute, yet holds itself measured in perfect time."

## BEAUTY

"That beauty is transitory which alone you seem to honor." — GOETHE, *Torquato Tasso*.

## THE FOG

Oct. 27. The prospect is limited to Nobscot and Annursnack. The trees stand with boughs downcast like pilgrims beaten by a storm, and the whole landscape wears a sombre aspect.

So when thick vapors cloud the soul, it strives in vain to escape from its humble working-day valley, and pierce the dense fog which shuts out from view the blue peaks in its horizon, but must be content to scan its near and homely hills.

## DUCKS AT GOOSE POND

Oct. 29. Two ducks, of the summer or wood species, which were merrily dabbling in their favorite basin, struck up a retreat on my approach, and seemed disposed to take French leave, paddling off with swan-like majesty. They are first-rate swimmers, beating me at a round pace, and — what was to me a new trait in the duck character — dove every minute or two and swam several feet under water, in order to escape our attention. Just before immersion they seemed to give each other a significant nod, and then, as if by a common understanding, 't was heels up and head down in the shaking of a duck's wing. When they reappeared, it was amus-

ing to observe with what a self-satisfied, darn-it-how-he-nicks-'em air they paddled off to repeat the experiment.

## THE ARROWHEAD

A curious incident happened some four or six weeks ago which I think it worth the while to record. John and I had been searching for Indian relics, and been successful enough to find two arrowheads and a pestle, when, of a Sunday evening, with our heads full of the past and its remains, we strolled to the mouth of Swamp Bridge Brook. As we neared the brow of the hill forming the bank of the river, inspired by my theme, I broke forth into an extravagant eulogy on those savage times, using most violent gesticulations by way of illustration. "There on Nawshawtuct," said I, "was their lodge, the rendezvous of the tribe, and yonder, on Clamshell Hill, their feasting ground. This was, no doubt, a favorite haunt; here on this brow was an eligible look-out post. How often have they stood on this very spot, at this very hour, when the sun was sinking behind yonder woods and gilding with his last rays the waters of the Musketaquid, and pondered the day's success and the morrow's prospects, or communed with the spirit of their fathers gone before them to the land of shades!

"Here," I exclaimed, "stood Tahatawan; and there" (to complete the period) "is Tahatawan's arrowhead."

We instantly proceeded to sit down on the spot I had pointed to, and I, to carry out the joke, to lay bare an ordinary stone which my whim had selected, when lo! the first I laid hands on, the grubbing stone that was to

be, proved a most perfect arrowhead, as sharp as if just from the hands of the Indian fabricator!!!

## SUNRISE

Oct. 30. First we have the gray twilight of the poets, with dark and barry clouds diverging to the zenith. Then glows the intruding cloud in the east, as if it bore a precious jewel in its bosom; a deep round gulf of golden gray indenting its upper edge, while slender rules of fleecy vapor, radiating from the common centre, like light-armed troops, fall regularly into their places.

## SAILING WITH AND AGAINST THE STREAM

Nov. 3. If one would reflect, let him embark on some placid stream, and float with the current. He cannot resist the Muse. As we ascend the stream, plying the paddle with might and main, snatched and impetuous thoughts course through the brain. We dream of conflict, power, and grandeur. But turn the prow down stream, and rock, tree, kine, knoll, assuming new and varying positions, as wind and water shift the scene, favor the liquid lapse of thought, far-reaching and sublime, but ever calm and gently undulating.

## TRUTH

Nov. 5. Truth strikes us from behind, and in the dark, as well as from before and in broad daylight.

## STILL STREAMS RUN DEEPEST

Nov. 9. It is the rill whose "silver sands and pebbles sing eternal ditties with the spring." The early frosts bridge its narrow channel, and its querulous note

is hushed. Only the flickering sunlight on its sandy bottom attracts the beholder. But there are souls whose depths are never fathomed, — on whose bottom the sun never shines. We get a distant view from the precipitous banks, but never a draught from their mid-channels. Only a sunken rock or fallen oak can provoke a murmur, and their surface is a stranger to the icy fetters which bind fast a thousand contributory rills.<sup>1</sup>

## DISCIPLINE

Nov. 12. I yet lack discernment to distinguish the whole lesson of to-day; but it is not lost, — it will come to me at last. My desire is to know *what* I have lived, that I may know *how* to live henceforth.

## SIN DESTROYS THE PERCEPTION OF THE BEAUTIFUL

Nov. 13. This shall be the test of innocence — if I can hear a taunt, and look out on this friendly moon, pacing the heavens in queen-like majesty, with the accustomed yearning.

## TRUTH

Truth is ever returning into herself. I glimpse one feature to-day, another to-morrow; and the next day they are blended.

## GOETHE

Nov. 15. "And now that it is evening, a few clouds in the mild atmosphere rest upon the mountains, more stand still than move in the heavens, and immediately after sunset the chirping of crickets begins to increase; then feels one once more at home in the world, and not

<sup>1</sup> [Week, p. 314: Riv. 390.]

as an alien, — an exile. I am contented as though I had been born and brought up here, and now returned from a Greenland or whaling voyage. Even the dust of my Fatherland, as it is whirled about the wagon, which for so long a time I had not seen, is welcome. The clock-and-bell jingling of the crickets is very agreeable, penetrating, and not without a meaning. Pleasant is it when roguish boys whistle in emulation of a field of such songstresses. One imagines that they really enhance each other. The evening is perfectly mild as the day. Should an inhabitant of the south, coming from the south, hear of my rapture, he would deem me very childish. Alas! what I here express have I long felt under an unpropitious heaven. And now this joy is to me an exception, which I am henceforth to enjoy, — a necessity of my nature.” — *Italiänische Reise*.<sup>1</sup>

## PONKAWTASSETT

*Nov. 16.* There goes the river, or rather is, “in serpent error wandering,” the jugular vein of Musketaquid. Who knows how much of the proverbial moderation of the inhabitants was caught from its dull circulation?

The snow gives the landscape a washing-day appearance, — here a streak of white, there a streak of dark; it is spread like a napkin over the hills and meadows. This must be a rare drying day, to judge from the vapor that floats over the vast clothes-yard.

A hundred guns are firing and a flag flying in the village in celebration of the whig victory. Now a short dull report, — the mere disk of a sound, shorn of its

<sup>1</sup> [*Week*, p. 352; Riv. 435, 436.]

beams, — and then a puff of smoke rises in the horizon to join its misty relatives in the skies.

## GOETHE

He gives such a glowing description of the old tower, that they who had been born and brought up in the neighborhood must needs look over their shoulders, “that they might behold with their eyes, what I had praised to their ears, . . . and I added nothing, not even the ivy which for centuries had decorated the walls.” — *Italiänische Reise*.<sup>1</sup>

## SUNRISE

*Nov. 17.* Now the king of day plays at bo-peep round the world’s corner, and every cottage window smiles a golden smile, — a very picture of glee. I see the water glistening in the eye. The smothered breathings of awakening day strike the ear with an undulating motion; over hill and dale, pasture and woodland, come they to me, and I am at home in the world.

## THE SKY

If there is nothing new on earth, still there is something new in the heavens. We have always a resource in the skies. They are constantly turning a new page to view. The wind sets the types in this blue ground, and the inquiring may always read a new truth.<sup>2</sup>

## VIRGIL

*Nov. 18.* “Pulsae referunt ad sidera valles”<sup>3</sup> is such

<sup>1</sup> [*Week*, p. 348; Riv. 430.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Week*, p. 383; Riv. 473.]

<sup>3</sup> [*Week*, p. 417; Riv. 515.]

a line as would save an epic; and how finely he concludes his "agrestem musam," now that Silenus has done, and the stars have heard his story, —

"Cogere donec oves stabulis, numerumque referre  
Jussit, et invito processit Vesper Olympo."

## HARMONY

Nature makes no noise. The howling storm, the rustling leaf, the pattering rain are no disturbance, there is an essential and unexplored harmony in them. Why is it that thought flows with so deep and sparkling a current when the sound of distant music strikes the ear? When I would muse I complain not of a rattling tune on the piano — a Battle of Prague even — if it be harmony, but an irregular, discordant drumming is intolerable.

## SHADOWS

When a shadow flits across the landscape of the soul, where is the substance? Has it always its origin in sin? and is that sin in me?

## VIRGIL

*Nov. 20.* I would read Virgil, if only that I might be reminded of the identity of human nature in all ages. I take satisfaction in "jam laeto turgent in palmitum gemmae," or "Strata jacent passim sua quaeque sub arbore pomae." It was the same world, and the same men inhabited it.<sup>1</sup>

## NAWSHAWTUUCT

*Nov. 21.* One must needs climb a hill to know what a world he inhabits. In the midst of this Indian sum-

<sup>1</sup> [*Week*, p. 93; *Riv.* 116. *Excursions*, p. 138; *Riv.* 169.]

mer I am perched on the topmost rock of Nawshawtuuct, a velvet wind blowing from the southwest. I seem to feel the atoms as they strike my cheek. Hills, mountains, steeples stand out in bold relief in the horizon, while I am resting on the rounded boss of an enormous shield, the river like a vein of silver encircling its edge, and thence the shield gradually rises to its rim, the horizon. Not a cloud is to be seen, but villages, villas, forests, mountains, one above another, till they are swallowed up in the heavens.<sup>1</sup> The atmosphere is such that, as I look abroad upon the length and breadth of the land, it recedes from my eye, and I seem to be looking for the threads of the velvet.

Thus I admire the grandeur of my emerald carriage, with its border of blue, in which I am rolling through space.

## THOUGHTS

*Nov. 26.* I look around for thoughts when I am overflowing myself. While I live on, thought is still in embryo, — it stirs not within me. Anon it begins to assume shape and comeliness, and I deliver it, and clothe it in its garment of language. But alas! how often when thoughts choke me do I resort to a spat on the back, or swallow a crust, or do anything but expectorate them!

## HOAR FROST AND GREEN RIVER

*Nov. 28.* Every tree, fence, and spire of grass that could raise its head above the snow was this morning covered with a dense hoar frost. The trees looked like airy creatures of darkness caught napping. On this side

<sup>1</sup> [*Week*, p. 373; *Riv.* 461.]

they were huddled together, their gray hairs streaming, in a secluded valley which the sun had not yet penetrated, and on that they went hurrying off in Indian file by hedgerows and watercourses, while the shrubs and grasses, like elves and fairies of the night, sought to hide their diminished heads in the snow.

The branches and taller grasses were covered with a wonderful ice-foliage, answering leaf for leaf to their summer dress. The centre, diverging, and even more minute fibres were perfectly distinct and the edges regularly indented.

These leaves were on the side of the twig or stubble opposite to the sun (when it was not bent toward the east), meeting it for the most part at right angles, and there were others standing out at all possible angles upon these, and upon one another.

It struck me that these ghost leaves and the green ones whose forms they assume were the creatures of the same law. It could not be in obedience to two several laws that the vegetable juices swelled gradually into the perfect leaf on the one hand, and the crystalline particles trooped to their standard in the same admirable order on the other.

The river, viewed from the bank above, appeared of a yellowish-green color, but on a nearer approach this phenomenon vanished; and yet the landscape was covered with snow.<sup>1</sup>

## ICE-HARP

*Dec. 5.* My friend tells me he has discovered a new note in nature, which he calls the Ice-Harp. Chancing

<sup>1</sup> [*Excursions*, pp. 126, 127; *Riv.* 155, 156.]

to throw a handful of pebbles upon the pond where there was an air chamber under the ice, it discoursed a pleasant music to him.

Herein resides a tenth muse, and as he was the man to discover it probably the extra melody is in him.

## GOETHE

*Dec. 8.* He is generally satisfied with giving an exact description of objects as they appear to him, and his genius is exhibited in the points he seizes upon and illustrates. His description of Venice and her environs as seen from the Marcusthurm is that of an unconcerned spectator, whose object is faithfully to describe what he sees, and that, too, for the most part, in the order in which he saw it. It is this trait which is chiefly to be prized in the book; even the reflections of the author do not interfere with his descriptions.

It would thus be possible for inferior minds to produce invaluable books.<sup>1</sup>

## MEASURE

*Dec. 10.* Not the carpenter alone carries his rule in his pocket. Space is quite subdued to us. The meanest peasant finds in a hair of his head, or the white crescent upon his nail, the unit of measure for the distance of the fixed stars. His middle finger measures how many *digits* into space; he extends a few times his thumb and finger, and the continent is *spanned*; he stretches out his arms, and the sea is *fathomed*.

## THOUGHT

*Dec. 12.* There are times when thought elbows her

<sup>1</sup> [*Week*, pp. 347, 348; *Riv.* 429, 430.]

way through the underwood of words to the clear blue beyond;

“O'er bog, or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,  
With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues *her* way,  
And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies; . . .”

but let her don her cumbersome working-day garment, and each sparkling dewdrop will seem a “slough of despond.”

#### PECULIARITY

When we speak of a peculiarity in a man or a nation, we think to describe only one part, a mere mathematical point; but it is not so. It pervades all. Some parts may be further removed than others from this centre, but not a particle so remote as not to be either shined on or shaded by it.

#### THORNS

No faculty in man was created with a useless or sinister intent; in no respect can he be wholly bad, but the worst passions have their root in the best, — as anger, for instance, may be only a perverted sense of wrong which yet retains some traces of its origin.<sup>1</sup> So a spine is proved to be only an abortive branch, “which, notwithstanding, even as a spine, bears leaves, and, in *Euphorbia heptagona*, sometimes flowers and fruit.”

#### JACK FROST

*Dec. 15.* As further confirmation of the fact that vegetation is a kind of crystallization, I observe that upon

<sup>1</sup> [Later.] We must consider war and slavery, with many other institutions and even the best existing governments, notwithstanding their apparent advantages, as the abortive rudiments of nobler institutions such as distinguish man in his savage and half-civilized state.

the edge of the melting frost on the windows, Jack is playing singular freaks, — now bundling together his needle-shaped leaves so as to resemble fields waving with grain, or shocks of wheat rising here and there from the stubble. On one side the vegetation of the torrid zone is presented you, — high-towering palms, and wide-spread banyans, such as we see in pictures of Oriental scenery; on the other are arctic pines, stiff-frozen, with branches downcast, like the arms of tender men in frosty weather.<sup>1</sup> In some instances the panes are covered with little feathery flocks, where the particles radiate from a common centre, the number of radii varying from three to seven or eight. The crystalline particles are partial to the creases and flaws in the glass, and, when these extend from sash to sash, form complete hedgerows, or miniature watercourses, where dense masses of crystal foliage “high over-arched imbower.”

#### FROZEN MIST

*Dec. 16.* The woods were this morning covered with thin bars of vapor, — the evaporation of the leaves according to Sprengel, — which seemed to have been suddenly stiffened by the cold. In some places it was spread out like gauze over the tops of the trees, forming extended lawns, where elves and fairies held high tournament;

“before each van

Prick forth the acry knights, and couch their spears,  
Till thickest legions close.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [*Excursions*, pp. 127, 128; Riv. 157.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Week*, p. 186; Riv. 231. *The Service*, Boston, 1902, p. 21].

The east was glowing with a narrow but ill-defined crescent of light, the blue of the zenith mingling in all possible proportions with the salmon-color of the horizon. And now the neighboring hilltops telegraph to us poor crawlers of the plain the Monarch's golden ensign in the east, and anon his "long levelled rules" fall sector-wise, and humblest cottage windows greet their lord.

## FACTS

How indispensable to a correct study of Nature is a perception of her true meaning. The fact will one day flower out into a truth. The season will mature and fructify what the understanding had cultivated. Mere accumulators of facts — collectors of materials for the master-workmen — are like those plants growing in dark forests, which "put forth only leaves instead of blossoms."

## DRUIDS

*Dec. 17.* In all ages and nations we observe a leaning towards a right state of things. This may especially be seen in the history of the priest, whose life approaches most nearly to that of the ideal man. The Druids paid no taxes, and "were allowed exemption from warfare and all other things." The clergy are even now a privileged class.

In the last stage of civilization Poetry, Religion, and Philosophy will be one; and this truth is glimpsed in the first. The druidical order was divided into Druids, Bards, and Ouates. "The Bards were the poets and musicians, of whom some were satirists, and some encomiasts. The Ouates sacrificed, divined, and contem-

plated the nature of things. The Druids cultivated physiology and moral philosophy; or, as Diodorus says, were their philosophers and theologians."

## GOETHE

*Dec. 18.* He required that his heroine, Iphigenia, should say nothing which might not be uttered by the holy Agathe, whose picture he contemplated.

## IMMORTALITY POST

The nations assert an immortality *post* as well as *ante*. The Athenians wore a golden grasshopper as an emblem that they sprang from the earth, and the Arcadians pretended that they were *προσέληνοι*, or before the moon.

The Platos do not seem to have considered this back-reaching tendency of the human mind.

## THE PRIDE OF ANCESTRY

Men are pleased to be called the sons of their fathers, — so little truth suffices them, — and whoever addresses them by this or a similar title is termed a poet. The orator appeals to the sons of Greece, of Britannia, of France, or of Poland; and our fathers' homely name acquires some interest from the fact that Sakai-suna means sons-of-the-Sakai.<sup>1</sup>

## HELL

*Dec. 19.* Hell itself may be contained within the compass of a spark.

<sup>1</sup> [A fanciful derivation of the word "Saxons" ?]

## SAXONS

The fact seems at first an anomalous one that the less a people have to contend for the more tenacious they are of their rights. The Saxons of Ditmarsia contended for a principle, not for their sterile sands and uncultivated marshes.

We are on the whole the same Saxons that our fathers were, when it was said of them, "They are emulous in hospitality, because to plunder and to lavish is the glory of an Holsatian; not to be versed in the science of depredation is, in his opinion, to be stupid and base."

The French are the same Franks of whom it is written, "Francis familiare est ridendo fidem frangere;" "Gens Francorum infidelis est. Si perjeret Francus quid novi faciet, qui perjuriam ipsam sermonis genus putat esse non criminis."

## CRYSTALS

I observed this morning that the ice at Swamp Bridge was checkered with a kind of mosaic-work of white creases or channels; and when I examined the under side, I found it to be covered with a mass of crystallizations from three to five inches deep, standing, or rather depending, at right angles to the true ice, which was about an eighth of an inch thick. There was a yet older ice six or eight inches below this. The crystals were for the most part triangular prisms with the lower end open, though, in some cases, they had run into each other so as to form four or five sided prisms. When the ice was laid upon its smooth side, they resembled the

roofs and steeples of a Gothic city, or the vessels of a crowded haven under a press of canvas.

I noticed also that where the ice in the road had melted and left the mud bare, the latter, as if crystallized, discovered countless rectilinear fissures, an inch or more in length — a continuation, as it were, of the checkered ice.<sup>1</sup>

*Dec. 22.* About a year ago, having set aside a bowl which had contained some rhubarb grated in water, without wiping it, I was astonished to find, a few days afterward, that the rhubarb had crystallized, covering the bottom of the bowl with perfect cubes, of the color and consistency of glue, and a tenth of an inch in diameter.

## CRYSTALS

*Dec. 23.* Crossed the river to-day on the ice. Though the weather is raw and wintry and the ground covered with snow, I noticed a solitary robin, who looked as if he needed to have his services to the Babes in the Woods speedily required.

In the side of the high bank by the Leaning Hemlocks, there were some curious crystallizations. Wherever the water, or other causes, had formed a hole in the bank, its throat and outer edge, like the entrance to a citadel of the olden time, bristled with a glistening ice armor. In one place you might see minute ostrich feathers, which seemed the waving plumes of the warriors filing into the fortress, in another the glancing fan-shaped banners of the Lilliputian host, and in an-

<sup>1</sup> [*Excursions*, p. 128; Riv. 158.]

other the needle-shaped particles, collected into bundles resembling the plumes of the pine, might pass for a phalanx of spears.<sup>1</sup> The whole hill was like an immense quartz rock, with minute crystals sparkling from innumerable crannies. I tried to fancy that there was a disposition in these crystallizations to take the forms of the contiguous foliage.

#### REVOLUTIONS

*Dec. 27.* Revolutions are never sudden. Not one man, nor many men, in a few years or generations, suffice to regulate events and dispose mankind for the revolutionary movement. The hero is but the crowning stone of the pyramid, — the keystone of the arch. Who was Romulus or Remus, Hengist or Horsa, that we should attribute to them Rome or England? They are famous or infamous because the progress of events has chosen to make them its stepping-stones. But we would know where the avalanche commenced, or the hollow in the rock whence springs the Amazon. The most important is apt to be some silent and unobtrusive fact in history. In 449 three Saxon cyules arrived on the British coast, — “Three scipen gode comen mid than flode, three hundred enihten.”<sup>2</sup> The pirate of the British coast was no more the founder of a state than the scourge of the German shore.

#### HEROES

The real heroes of minstrelsy have been ideal, even when the names of actual heroes have been perpetuated.

<sup>1</sup> [*Excursions*, p. 128; Riv. 157, 158.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Familiar Letters*, Sept. 8, 1841.]

The real Arthur, who “not only excelled the experienced past, but also the possible future,” of whom it was affirmed for many centuries that he was not dead, but “had withdrawn from the world into some magical region; from which at a future crisis he was to reappear, and lead the Cymri in triumph through the island,” whose character and actions were the theme of the bards of Bretagne and the foundation of their interminable romances, was only an ideal impersonation.

Men claim for the ideal an actual existence also, but do not often expand the actual into the ideal. “If you do not believe me, go into Bretagne, and mention in the streets or villages, that Arthur is really dead like other men; you will not escape with impunity; you will be either hooted with the curses of your hearers, or stoned to death.”

#### HOMESICKNESS

The most remarkable instance of homesickness is that of the colony of Franks transplanted by the Romans from the German Ocean to the Euxine, who at length resolving to a man to abandon the country, seized the vessels which carried them out, and reached at last their native shores, after innumerable difficulties and dangers upon the Mediterranean and Atlantic.

#### THE INTERESTING FACTS IN HISTORY

How cheering is it, after toiling through the darker pages of history, — the heartless and fluctuating crust of human rest and unrest, — to alight on the solid earth where the sun shines, or rest in the checkered

shade. The fact that Edwin of Northumbria "caused stakes to be fixed in the highways where he had seen a clear spring," and that "brazen dishes were chained to them, to refresh the weary sojourner, whose fatigues Edwin had himself experienced," is worth all Arthur's twelve battles.<sup>1</sup> The sun again shines along the highway, the landscape presents us sunny glades and occasional cultivated patches as well as dark primeval forests, and it is *merry* England after all.

*Dec. 31.* As the least drop of wine tinges the whole goblet, so the least particle of truth colors our whole life. It is never isolated, or simply added as treasure to our stock. When any real progress is made, we unlearn and learn anew what we thought we knew before. We go picking up from year to year and laying side by side the *disjecta membra* of truth, as he who picked up one by one a row of a hundred stones, and returned with each separately to his basket.

<sup>1</sup> [*Week*, p. 163; *Riv.* 203.]

Summer: From the Journal of Henry David Thoreau, edited by Blake (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1884; London: Unwin, 1884). Winter: From the Journal of Henry David Thoreau, edited by Blake (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1888). Autumn: From the Journal of Henry David Thoreau, edited by Blake (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1892).<sup>^</sup> The Writings of Henry David Thoreau, Manuscript Edition, 20 volumes, edited by Bradford Torrey and Francis H. Allen (Boston & New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1906). The Variorum Walden, edited by Walter Harding (New York: Twayne, 1962; revised edition, New York: Washington Square Press, 1963). The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau, new edition, 12 volumes to date, edited by Walter Harding and others (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971 Henry David Thoreau (see name pronunciation; July 12, 1817 <sup>^</sup>“ May 6, 1862) was an American essayist, poet, and philosopher. A leading transcendentalist, he is best known for his book Walden, a reflection upon simple living in natural surroundings, and his essay "Civil Disobedience" (originally published as "Resistance to Civil Government"), an argument for disobedience to an unjust state.