

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

EDITED BY J. LYNDON SHANLEY

# The Illustrated Walden with Photographs from the Gleason Collection



PRINCETON LEGACY LIBRARY

The Illustrated  
Walden

*I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to  
brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing  
on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up.*

Henry D. Thoreau

THE ILLUSTRATED

# Walden

*WITH PHOTOGRAPHS*

*FROM THE GLEASON COLLECTION*

Text Edited by J. Lyndon Shanley

PRINCETON

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

1973



*The Center emblem means that one of a panel of textual experts serving the Center has reviewed the text of the original volume by thorough and scrupulous sampling, and has approved it for sound and consistent editorial principles employed and maximum accuracy attained. The accuracy of the text has been guarded by careful and repeated proofreading of printer's copy according to standards set by the Center.*

*Editorial expenses for the text have been supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities administered through the Center for Editions of American Authors of the Modern Language Association.*

*To preserve the accuracy of the CEAA-approved text, WALDEN is reproduced here by photo offset. Except for the Historical Introduction, the textual apparatus of the 1971 edition is omitted from THE ILLUSTRATED WALDEN.*

Copyright © 1971, 1973 by Princeton University Press  
Published by Princeton University Press, Princeton and London  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

LCC: 73-8266 ISBN: 0-691-01309-8

First Princeton Paperback Edition, 1974

Manufactured in the United States of America

by Princeton University Press

Illustrations printed by The Meriden Gravure Company

This book has been composed in Linotype Primer

# Contents

List of Illustrations	vii
On the Photographs of Herbert Wendell Gleason, by Roland Wells Robbins	xiii
Historical Introduction, by J. Lyndon Shanley	xvii
Economy	3
Where I Lived, and What I Lived For	81
Reading	99
Sounds	111
Solitude	129
Visitors	140
The Bean-Field	155
The Village	167
The Ponds	173
Baker Farm	201
Higher Laws	210
Brute Neighbors	223
House-Warming	238
Former Inhabitants; and Winter Visitors	256
Winter Animals	271
The Pond in Winter	282
Spring	299
Conclusion	320
Index by Paul O. Williams	335



## List of Illustrations

1. Ferns in Clintonia Swamp, Concord; January 17, 1903
2. Pines on Dakin's Hill, Concord; October 30, 1899
3. Cellar at site of Thoreau's cabin at Walden Pond; March 24, 1920
4. Old limekiln, Old Carlisle Road, Concord; May 11, 1903
5. Woods at Walden Pond; May 30, 1908
6. Thoreau's Cove, Walden Pond; June 11, 1901
7. Muskrat cabin, west side of Carlisle Reach, Concord; November 6, 1917
8. Road through woods at Walden Pond; November 17, 1917
9. Brister's Hill, toward the village of Concord; October 18, 1904
10. Old cellar on Brister's Hill, Concord; October 18, 1904
11. Old Conantum lilacs and wood road, Concord; May 15, 1918
12. Sunset, Egg Rock, Concord; June 15, 1918
13. Main street, Concord; March 31, 1920



viii LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

14. From Fair Haven Hill, down river, Concord; August 1, 1916
15. Black willows, at the foot of Barrett's Wall, Concord; March 26, 1918
16. Freight train, from Walden Pond; March 24, 1920
17. Fitchburg Railroad, northwest cove of Walden Pond, March 31, 1920
18. Tarbell's Bay, towards Davis's Hill, Concord; April 1, 1918
19. Flint's Pond, oak tree, Lincoln; November 9, 1899
20. Concord panorama, from Hollowell Place; November 6, 1899
21. Brister's Spring, Concord; July 30, 1900
22. Fair Haven Bay, from Pleasant Meadow; October 15, 1903
23. Conantum Pool, looking south across pasture, Concord; July 17, 1900
24. Ox-eye daisies, Concord; June 26, 1917
25. Main street (formerly called "The Mill-dam"), from the east, Concord; March 31, 1920
26. Town hall, Concord; March 24, 1920

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS ix

27. Library, Concord; May 6, 1918
28. Bridge near Concord Battle Ground; May 26, 1903
29. Brown's Wood, Concord; June 14, 1901
30. Edward Garfield (88 years old), Concord; May 15, 1918
31. Cows in pasture at Baker Farm, Concord; June 20, 1903
32. Apple tree in blossom, Hollowell Farm, Concord; May 15, 1918
33. Dicksonia fern, Conantum, Concord; July 17, 1900
34. Nine Acre Corner, from pasture back of Conantum, Concord; November 3, 1899
35. Joel Barrett's place (old William Brewster house), Concord; May 26, 1900
36. Indian Rock at Owl-Nest Swamp, Concord; June 15, 1918
37. View down river from Fair Haven Hill, Concord; October 15, 1903
38. Northeast shore of Walden Pond; March 24, 1920
39. Fairyland Woods, Concord; February 17, 1902

X      LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

40. Heavy snow, Thoreau's Cove, Walden Pond; February 17, 1902
41. Heywood's Meadow, Concord; March 23, 1916
42. Fox tracks, Walden Pond; February 18, 1918
43. Rabbit tracks, along wood road near Andromeda Pond, Concord; March 5, 1918
44. Southern shore of Walden Pond; March 31, 1920
45. Hoarfrost, Hubbard Bridge, Concord; November 8, 1899
46. Fitchburg Railroad, train coming through deep cut near Walden Pond; October 21, 1920
47. Sand foliage, bank of deep cut on railroad near Walden Pond; March 17, 1900
48. Old stump and woodpecker's hole, Corner Spring Woods, Concord; October 25, 1899
49. White Maple buds opening by Red Bridge, Concord; May 26, 1918
50. Partridge nest under juniper, Concord; June 3, 1901
51. Sand-cherry blossoms, Concord; May 19, 1918

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS    xi

52. Spray of ground-nut, Bridgton, Maine; August 14, 1908
53. Flood, down river from Nawshawtuct Hill, Concord; June 4, 1901
54. Sunset reflection on Assabet River, Concord; July 3, 1916
55. Spring flood, east from Nawshawtuct Hill, Concord; April 17, 1901
56. Walden Pond, from Emerson's Hill; November 7, 1899
57. The sand-bar, Walden Pond; April 24, 1918
58. White Pond, Concord; July 16, 1900
59. Goose Pond, Concord; October 21, 1920
60. South shore of Walden Pond, from railroad; May 30, 1903
61. Sunset clouds over Mill Brook, from J. B. Moore's meadow, Concord; October 18, 1904
62. River Reach, from Carlisle Bridge to Ball's Hill; June 11, 1905
63. Path along north shore of Walden Pond; November 7, 1899
64. Thoreau's Cove, Walden Pond; May 19, 1908

xii    LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

65.    Arbor Vitae, near Concord Battle Ground; May 18, 1902

66.    Fog, from Nawshawtuct Hill, Concord; August 23, 1900

*Note:* The Gleason glass negatives (5 x 7 in.) have been adapted as necessary for use in this book. Some illustrations represent cropped versions of the prints; others are enlarged details.

## On the Photographs of Herbert Wendell Gleason

“LEST any should assume that the fondness for New England scenery here avowed is due to lack of acquaintance with other regions more famous for their grandeur, it may be stated that during this same period the writer made two trips to Alaska, six to California and the Pacific Coast, three to the Grand Canyon of Arizona, seven to the Canadian Rockies, two to Yellowstone Park, and three to the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. Yet after every one of these trips, it was a genuine delight to return to the simple beauty of New England.” This was Herbert Wendell Gleason recalling his camera travels throughout North America from the turn of this century to 1916, when he was preparing the Introduction to his book *Through the Year with Thoreau*.

Born in Malden, Massachusetts, June 5, 1855, Herbert Wendell Gleason graduated from Williams College in 1877, attended Union and Andover seminaries, and settled in Minnesota as a Congregational minister in 1883. In 1899 he withdrew from the ministry and began a new life of arduous dedication to photography, lecturing, writing, and studying nature and the wilderness. He followed his new career for the next thirty-eight years, until his death in 1937 at the age of eighty-three.

During the early years of this century, Gleason visited and photographed the national parks of both the United States and Canada; Luther Burbank and his horticultural experiments in California; and gardens and estates along the north and south shores of

Boston, in Connecticut, Newport, and on Long Island. His pictures have appeared in *The National Geographic* magazine and in many books, including John Muir's *Travels in Alaska* (1915).

Herbert Gleason's interest in Thoreau began when the Houghton Mifflin Company commissioned him to illustrate an edition of Thoreau's writings. To fulfill his assignment, Gleason followed Thoreau's footsteps through Massachusetts and Maine, and photographed hundreds of the scenes Thoreau described in *Cape Cod*, *The Maine Woods*, *Walden*, and his journal. Houghton Mifflin published *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau* in twenty volumes, illustrated with more than 100 of Gleason's photographs, in 1906.

After publication of the 1906 edition, Gleason's enthusiasm for the author and for New England continued, and in my collection of the nearly 6,000 Gleason negatives are 1,200 that illustrate Thoreau country. Some of these appeared in Gleason's *Through the Year with Thoreau*, published in 1917, but it seemed likely that he had other plans for the rest of this Thoreau material. This proved to be true.

In 1972, William L. Howarth, an English professor at Princeton University, spent several months of his sabbatical year in Concord, where he discovered a sheaf of Gleason's papers, lists of his meticulously catalogued glass negatives matched with references from the twenty volumes of the 1906 *Writings of Henry David Thoreau*. Gleason was preparing another pictorial publication to be called "Thoreau's World," but the material had been set aside and was never published.

The photographs in *The Illustrated Walden* have been carefully chosen from the enormous selection

Gleason had laid aside for his unpublished volumes of "Thoreau's World." They are superb examples of Herbert Wendell Gleason's warm feeling for "the simple beauty of New England."

ROLAND WELLS ROBBINS  
LINCOLN, MASSACHUSETTS





# Historical Introduction

## I

IN HIS own day Henry David Thoreau was noted, to some notorious, because for two years he lived alone in a small house of his own building by Walden Pond, a mile or so from Concord, Massachusetts; and because for the rest of his life he deliberately spent as little time as necessary, no more than two months in a year, he said, in earning what he needed to live. Since his day he has become far more famous not only in his own country but in many other lands: in part for his essay "Civil Disobedience," which was important to Mahatma Gandhi and more recently has given support to those working for freedom and civil rights for all; but most of all for *Walden*, one of the masterpieces of American literature.

"A good book," wrote Milton, "is the precious life-blood of a master spirit." Such is *Walden*. The pond, Thoreau tells us, was "one of the oldest scenes stamped on my memory" (p. 155),<sup>1</sup> and his book was steeped in the Concord and New England he loved. Moreover, *Walden* grew directly out of the central experience of Thoreau's life, and he devoted a considerable part of eight years of his life to writing and rewriting it.

From 1837, when he graduated from Harvard College, to 1845, Thoreau was variously and unsatisfactorily occupied. He taught school for two and a half years with his brother John; he lived at the home of Ralph Waldo Emerson as a handyman in 1841-43;

<sup>1</sup> References for quotations are to the pages of this edition of *Walden*; references for sections of material are by chapter title and paragraph.

and then he spent six months as a tutor in the house of Emerson's brother on Staten Island. At times he helped his father make and sell pencils; he also helped to edit the Transcendentalist little magazine, *Dial*, and published a number of pieces in it and in other papers; he also lectured in Concord. But in all this he did not find his proper occupation; in his own words, he had not worked his feet down to hard bottom.

In the winter of 1844-45 he decided to take the time to do so. As early as December 24, 1841, he had written in his journal: "I want to go soon and live away by the pond. . . . But my friends ask what I will do when I get there. Will it not be employment enough to watch the progress of the seasons?"<sup>2</sup> Moreover, by 1845 he had a big piece of writing to finish, the account of his trip in 1839 on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers with his brother. He had written some of it, but he needed a long spell in which to work steadily at it. To do so he had to get away from his hard-working and critical neighbors; they had little respect for a college graduate who did not work regularly at a job. He had also to get away from his home, with its interruptions of household chores, work in his father's pencil shop, and too much chatter from his mother and her boarders.

Fortunately, his good friend Emerson had bought land around Walden Pond in October 1844, and would let him use it; free land and some twenty-five dollars, which was all Thoreau had (p. 60), were enough so long as one also had a "little common

<sup>2</sup> All references to the journal are to *The Journal of Henry David Thoreau* (14 vols.; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1906, 1949). Where possible, they are by date; where date is not clear, volume and page are given in a footnote.

sense, a little enterprise and business talent" (p. 20).

Few ventures of such ultimate consequence can have begun so simply. "Near the end of March, 1845, I borrowed an axe and went down to the woods by Walden Pond, nearest to where I intended to build my house, and began to cut down some tall arrowy white pines, still in their youth, for timber" (p. 40). "It was on the morning of the 4th of July 1845 that I put a few articles of furniture some of which I had made myself into a hayrigging which I had hired, drove down to the woods, put my things in their places, & commenced housekeeping" (HM 924, version IV).<sup>3</sup>

Thoreau's life at Walden was a full one. He had his beans to hoe, a chimney to build, walls to be plastered; he had his work on *A Week* and also on a lecture-essay on Carlyle. In addition there was the life around him to attend to: the sounds of morning, afternoon, evening, and night; the surveying of the pond; the freezing and thawing of the ponds and the signs of spring; the habits of his animal neighbors; and visits and talks with many different people. All this was to be recorded in his journal, which was not simply a record, but also a storehouse that Thoreau would draw on later, presumably after finishing *A Week*.

But he was moved to begin *Walden*, in some small way at least, before he had been nine months at the pond. An immediate stimulus was the curiosity of his townsmen about how he managed to live as he did, what he ate, whether he wasn't lonely, what he

<sup>3</sup> HM 924, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California, contains the seven drafts of *Walden* that Thoreau wrote in 1846-54.

would have done if he had been sick. He wrote in his journal, before March 13, 1846:<sup>4</sup> "After I lectured here before, this winter [he lectured on Carlyle at the Concord Lyceum on February 4, 1846],<sup>5</sup> I heard that some of my townsmen had expected of me some account of my life at the pond. This I will endeavor to give to-night." Obviously he was looking toward a lecture, as he was in another undated journal entry of about the same time: "I wish to say something to-night not of and concerning the Chinese and Sandwich Islanders, but *to* and concerning you who hear me."<sup>6</sup>

Just when Thoreau began to write out the first version of *Walden* is not certain, but he had completed some of it by February 10 and 17, 1847, for he read parts of it on those dates at the Concord Lyceum.<sup>7</sup> He was still writing it later in the winter, for he wrote of the ice-cutters: "This winter [later changed to "In the winter of 46 & 7"], as you all know, there came a hundred men"; and "They have not been able to break up our pond any earlier than usual this year as they expected to—for she has got a thick new garment to replace the old."<sup>8</sup> Following this second passage Thoreau wrote only some twenty-odd more pages in this first version; it would seem almost certain that he finished the version before he left the pond on September 6. Although Thoreau states that he wrote the "bulk" of the pages of *Walden* when he was living at the pond (p. 3), he could have meant only that he wrote more of *Walden* at

<sup>4</sup> I, 485.

<sup>5</sup> Walter Harding, "A Check List of Thoreau's Lectures," *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, 52 (1948), 80.

<sup>6</sup> I, 395.

<sup>7</sup> Harding, "A Check List," p. 80.

<sup>8</sup> J. Lyndon Shanley, *The Making of "Walden"* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957, 1966), pp. 199, 200.

that time than he did at any one other time; the version he wrote at the pond was only about half the length of the published text.

Thoreau probably did not return to work on *Walden* until well into 1848. During the last months of 1847 and the first half of 1848 he would have been occupied in preparing his lectures on "Ktaadn" (January [?], 1848) and the relation of the individual to the state (January 26, 1848);<sup>9</sup> and he was certainly busy revising *A Week* in the spring and part of the summer of 1848.<sup>10</sup> But about a year after he had left the pond, he began to revise the first version of *Walden* and rewrote a considerable part of it twice.<sup>11</sup> At this time he did not lengthen his work significantly but was content to polish what he had already done, with the hope of early publication, as is obvious from the advertisement of *Walden* in the first edition of *A Week*, published in the spring of 1849. It was a vain hope, however, because *A Week* did not sell.<sup>12</sup> Having paid for the publication of it, Thoreau could not pay for a second book, and a publisher would hardly risk it. It was, however, a fortunate delay, for Thoreau's later work on *Walden* was essential for its excellence.

Thoreau did little if any work on *Walden* between 1849 and May 1851, but by early 1852 he had begun a far greater reworking of it than he had undertaken in his earlier revising,<sup>13</sup> though he probably did not foresee how extensive his task was to be. In the

<sup>9</sup> Harding, "A Check List," pp. 80-81.

<sup>10</sup> Shanley, *The Making of "Walden,"* p. 27.

<sup>11</sup> For a detailed account of the writing of *Walden* see Shanley, *The Making of "Walden,"* chapters II-V.

<sup>12</sup> On October 28, 1853, Thoreau received 706 unsold copies of *A Week* from the publishers, Munroe and Company; 75 had been given away (*Journal*); only 219 of the 1,000 copies printed had been sold.

<sup>13</sup> Shanley, *The Making of "Walden,"* pp. 30-31.

fourth version (1851-52) he added material by simply inserting it in the manuscript at hand by interlining or on separate leaves. But as he went on, his conception of *Walden* kept growing, and he accumulated such quantities of new material that in the fifth version (1852-53) he had to make fresh copy of most of the second half of *Walden*. Then, as he made even further additions which led to extensive rearranging of material, he wrote an even greater amount of fresh copy in the sixth version (1853-54). At the end of this version Thoreau wrote "The End," but there is a seventh set of revisions in the *Walden* manuscript, and the copy for the printer, now lost, written in the late winter and spring of 1854, was the eighth and final version; Thoreau made only very minor substantive changes in the page proof and, after publication, in his own copy of *Walden*.

In every stage of his writing and rewriting, Thoreau drew upon his journal, and he used the experiences and thoughts of all times so long as they were relevant and true to the nature and tenor of his life at the pond. *Walden* contains material from the journals as early as April 8, 1839, and as late as April 27, 1854.<sup>14</sup> From the beginning, it was far more than a simple chronological record of his days and years; it was rather a re-creation of his experience.<sup>15</sup> He could and did use many journal entries with little or no revision, but more often he worked them over to clarify and sharpen his expression, to develop his thought, and to add details to his story. In addition to revising single passages, Thoreau had also to arrange and combine the material he selected. In some instances he used the notes of one journal entry in

<sup>14</sup> Respectively, material on the teamster, p. 7, and on the rise and fall of the pond, p. 181, ll. 7-12.

<sup>15</sup> As Thoreau said ("Where I Lived," 7), "putting the experience of two years into one" (p. 84).

widely separated places. For example, in the first version, material from the entry of July 6, 1845, appears in "Economy," paragraph 8, and "Where I Lived," 16 and 20. Just as often he brought material from widely separated times together, as he did in creating the lyrical celebration of the new life in earth and water and sky, "Spring," 13, 14, 15; the passage depends on observations Thoreau made at Staten Island, September 29, 1843;<sup>16</sup> March 26, 1846, while he was living at the pond; and March 20, 21, and April 1, 1853, on later visits to the pond.

Before Thoreau was satisfied with his reworking of *Walden*, he had doubled its original length. Writing the first version, as he did, before the end of his two years in the woods, he could not see those years clear and whole. Not until time allowed him to look back upon them again and again could he recall and recreate them so as to convey their full significance and value. One of his own comments on his writing puts the case clearly (March 28, 1857): "Often I can give the truest and most interesting account of any adventure I have had after years have elapsed, for then I am not confused, only the most significant facts surviving in my memory. Indeed, all that continues to interest me after such a lapse of time is sure to be pertinent, and I may safely record all that I remember."

Thoreau made a few minor additions in the revisions of 1848-49, but it was only in the fourth and later versions written after 1851 that he enlarged *Walden* significantly. He extended the second half of the book more than the first, but generally speaking he added all sorts of material—details of his life, comment, argument, allusions—in all places so

<sup>16</sup> HM 13182; also in *The First and Last Journeys of Thoreau*, ed. F. B. Sanborn (Boston: Bibliophile Society, 1905), I, 69-71.



that one cannot characterize the successive versions according to what was added in each. But one effect of many of his additions is more significant than any other: that is, the development of the progress of the seasons—summer, fall, winter, spring.

The seasonal pattern is the major one in the structure of *Walden*, and upon it depends the expression of what some thoughtful readers regard as the heart of *Walden*: “the myth of rebirth” or the “fable of the renewal of life.” Though the cycle of the seasons was in the work from the start, it was incomplete in the early versions: they lack most of “Brute Neighbors” and “House-Warming,” all of “Winter Visitors,” and considerable portions of “Winter Animals” and “The Pond in Winter.” Thoreau added all this material in the versions written after 1851.<sup>17</sup> Without it, the coming of fall and the gradual closing in of winter are hardly touched upon; his story passes somewhat abruptly from the summer of the earlier chapters to the winter of the later ones. Many of the deep-felt changes and rich variety of the passing year are missing. With the additions and with Thoreau’s careful and extensive reordering of a considerable amount of material, the cycle is fully set out. He also reordered material to establish the cycle of the day in “Sounds” and in “The Bean-Field” through “Baker Farm,” and also to achieve the nice articulation of the chapters.

Version VII in HM 924 contains material from the journal for February 1854, but Thoreau must have begun writing the eighth version, the copy for the

<sup>17</sup> *Journal*, April 18, 1852: “For the first time I perceive this spring that the year is a circle.” Also Sherman Paul, *The Shores of America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1958), p. 279; I disagree, however, with Professor Paul’s interpretation of the cycle of the seasons.

printer, near the beginning of March. He commented in his journal on 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 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 for comparison, I can review the rejected sentences and easily detect those which deserve to be readmitted." The copy for the printer was a new version; Thoreau revised many sentences, cut out and added material, re-ordered passages, and even reversed the order of "Winter Animals" and "Former Inhabitants; and Winter Visitors." He also changed the names of two chapters and the motto on the title page in version VII, and discarded a brief preface.

Thoreau noted in his journal for March 28, "Got first proof of 'Walden'"; this was simply the first batch of page proof, not the proof of the whole book: material from the journal of April 1854 and the page proof<sup>18</sup> itself give conclusive evidence that Thoreau was writing throughout April, and sending copy and receiving proof piecemeal. He most likely finished his work sometime in May; there is no evidence for an exact time. By June 7 the publishers, Ticknor and Fields, had complete proofsheets, and a complete volume by July 18; but they delayed publication in the United States while they sought someone to publish *Walden* simultaneously in England; their search was in vain. *Walden* was published in the United States August 9, 1854.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> See *Walden* (1971), ed. J. Lyndon Shanley, pp. 388-89.

<sup>19</sup> *The Cost Books of Ticknor and Fields*, ed. Warren S. Tryon and William Charvat (New York: The Bibliographical Society of America, 1949), pp. 289-90.

## II

*Walden* is now regarded as one of the masterpieces of American literature, and every year sees many reprintings of it, often new editions, and as often as not new translations in various parts of the world. It has not always been thus.

The first printing, 1854, of *Walden* was 2,000 copies; a second printing of 280 copies was not made until 1862;<sup>20</sup> and not until 1889 was a new edition published in the United States. The reviews and notices on *Walden*'s first appearance were not such as to create any considerable demand for it. Horace Greeley, always ready to help Thoreau, praised it and quoted several passages from it in a prepublication notice in his *Tribune*, July 29, 1854. And there were other favorable reviews such as that in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* which stressed "the simple grandeur of Thoreau's position."<sup>21</sup> In England George Eliot reviewed *Walden* briefly in 1856, noting Thoreau's "keen eye," "deep poetic sensibility," and "refined as well as . . . hardy mind."<sup>22</sup> But, overall, praise was modest, and the sales were no greater than the praise: on December 15, 1858, the publisher told Thoreau: "We have never been out of the book but there is very little demand for it."<sup>23</sup> In the years

<sup>20</sup> All figures on the printings of *Walden* through 1890 are from the *Cost-Books of Ticknor & Co.*, MS Am 1185.6, and *Cost-Books of H. O. Houghton & Co.*, fMS Am 1185.7; both are in the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

<sup>21</sup> December 16, 1854; reprinted in *Thoreau: A Century of Criticism*, ed. Walter Harding (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1954), pp. 8-11; hereafter referred to as Harding, *A Century*.

<sup>22</sup> George Eliot, *Westminster Review*, 9 (January 1856), 302-303, quoted in James Plaisted Wood, "English and American Criticism of Thoreau," *New England Quarterly*, 6 (December 1933), 733-34.

<sup>23</sup> *The Correspondence of Henry David Thoreau*, ed. Walter

1862-69, 2,400 copies were printed; in sum, the demand for *Walden* averaged slightly less than 300 copies a year in the fifteen years following its publication.

That even this rate was achieved was probably owing in part to a number of eulogistic notices of Thoreau's death and to the interest and enterprise of James T. Fields, partner in Ticknor and Fields and editor of *The Atlantic Monthly* from 1861 to 1870. In addition to *Walden*, Ticknor and Fields reprinted *A Week* in 1862 (and published a second edition in 1868), and between 1863 and 1866 published five new volumes of Thoreau's writings: *Excursions*, 1863; *The Maine Woods*, 1864; *Cape Cod*, 1865; *Letters to Various Persons*, 1865; *A Yankee in Canada with Anti-Slavery and Reform Papers*, 1866. Moreover, Fields published seven essays by Thoreau in *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1862-64, and saw to it that his books were reviewed. In 1865-66 1,000 copies of *Walden* were printed.

But the demand did not last long. In the years 1870 through 1880 only 1,285 copies of *Walden* were printed. Thoreau's views of progress and money-making were hardly suited to the dominant opinion of those days. James Russell Lowell's strictures on Thoreau in a review in 1865 were reprinted in the volume *My Study Window* in 1871; a few of his derogatory phrases will fairly illustrate his estimate of Thoreau's work, including (and perhaps especially aimed at the attitudes in) *Walden*: "intellectual selfishness," "itch of originality," "perversity of thought," "no humor."<sup>24</sup> In 1879 Robert Louis Stevenson called

---

Harding and Carl Bode (New York: New York University Press, 1958), p. 532.

<sup>24</sup> *North American Review*, 101 (October 1865), 602, 603, 604.

Thoreau a "skulker."<sup>25</sup> That he made amends when more fully informed about Thoreau does not affect the significance of his understanding of Thoreau based only on his reading. Both Lowell and Stevenson were too sensitive, however, to miss the virtue of Thoreau's style; Lowell's praise of it was, in fact, glowing: "His better style as a writer is in keeping with the simplicity and purity of his life. We have said that his range was narrow, but to be a master is to be a master. . . . there are sentences of his as perfect as anything in the language, and thoughts as clearly crystallized. . . ."<sup>26</sup> Stevenson wrote: "Whatever Thoreau tried to do was tried in fair, square prose, with sentences solidly built, and no help from bastard rhythms."<sup>27</sup> Henry James also paid tribute to Thoreau's writing: "Whatever question there may be of his talent, there can be none, I think, of his genius." But he added that Thoreau was "inartistic" and "parochial."<sup>28</sup> Their praise of his sentences was far short, however, of the much later recognition of his complete artistry in *Walden* and did little to increase recognition of the book.

With the 1880s, interest in *Walden* grew considerably. It was known in England from 1854 on, but it was first published in London and Edinburgh in 1884; the first new English edition appeared in 1886. There were ten reprintings and new editions in England in the next twenty years.<sup>29</sup> In the United States,

<sup>25</sup> "Henry David Thoreau: His Character and Opinions," *Cornhill Magazine*, 41 (June 1880), 666.

<sup>26</sup> *North American Review*, p. 607.

<sup>27</sup> *Cornhill Magazine*, 41 (June 1880), 675.

<sup>28</sup> Henry James, Jr., *Hawthorne* (New York, 1880), pp. 93-94; first published 1879.

<sup>29</sup> Walter Harding, *A Centennial Check-List of the Editions of Henry David Thoreau's Walden* (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press for the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, 1954).

instead of the average of less than 120 copies a year printed in 1870-80, 1881-88 saw an average of 460 a year, and in 1889 Houghton Mifflin published the first new American edition of *Walden* (all previous printings were from the plates of 1854). This edition, 1,000 copies in two volumes, was carefully designed for the publishers' Riverside Aldine Series; the next year, 1890, they printed another 500 copies from the 1854 plates. There was a general increase of interest in Thoreau—that is, in Thoreau the writer on nature, not the man of ideas: "His 'thoughts' are of no use to anybody nowadays, but his pictures of hill and valley, forest and field and stream, have an enduring and great value."<sup>30</sup> Between 1881 and 1892 H. G. O. Blake, one of Thoreau's most devoted and solemn admirers, published extensive selections from Thoreau's journals in four volumes, arranged by the seasons.<sup>31</sup> They were successful enough for Houghton Mifflin to publish the ten-volume Riverside Edition of Thoreau's works in 1893; it included Blake's volumes. It was not only John Burroughs and other naturalists and nature-lovers who admired *Walden*. Early in his career as a literary critic, Paul Elmer More, a confirmed anti-romantic humanist, wrote a warm appreciation of the true and wholesome attitude toward nature, the unsentimental love for it, and the sense of objective awe in the face of it, that he found in *Walden*.<sup>32</sup>

By the early 1900s, interest in *Walden* was firmly established even if not everywhere enlightened. In

<sup>30</sup> *The New York Commercial Advertiser*, July 12, 1888, quoted in Henry Seidel Canby, *Thoreau* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1939), p. 446.

<sup>31</sup> *Early Spring in Massachusetts* (1881), *Summer* (1884), *Winter* (1888), and *Autumn* (1892); the publisher was Houghton Mifflin and Company.

<sup>32</sup> Paul Elmer More, "A Hermit's Notes on Thoreau,"

1906 Houghton Mifflin published the twenty-volume Manuscript and Walden editions of Thoreau's writings including all but small portions of his journals.<sup>33</sup> *Walden* was published in "The World's Classics" of the Oxford University Press in 1906, and in "Everyman's Library" in 1908. But how far many enthusiasts were from real comprehension of the book is quite clear. In 1909 the Bibliophile Society published the preposterous edition that F. B. Sanborn made up from HM 924, the worksheets of *Walden*; in the preface, the presumably book-loving president of the society wrote: "Thoreau's writings are peculiarly suited to all classes; they are alike instructive and entertaining: to the poorer class because he proves conclusively what comfort, and even happiness, may be enjoyed with the minimum of effort and expense; and to the opulent they satisfy an important desideratum in the form of the most wholesome entertainment."<sup>34</sup>

Elsewhere, however, the ideas of *Walden* were essential in establishing its importance in the 1880s and 1890s. In England, Henry Salt, one of Thoreau's early biographers, wrote of *Walden* in 1886: ". . . it is incomparable alike in matter and in style, and deserves to be a sacred book in the library of every cultured and thoughtful man."<sup>35</sup> And it became just about that to many. In May 1887 Yeats wrote to a friend about The Society of the New Life whose mem-

---

*Atlantic Monthly*, 87 (June 1901), 857-64; reprinted in part in Harding, *A Century*, pp. 97-102.

<sup>33</sup> *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau* (20 vols.; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1906).

<sup>34</sup> *Walden* (2 vols., Boston: Bibliophile Society, 1909), 1, xii-xiii.

<sup>35</sup> "Henry D. Thoreau," *The Critic*, 8, New Series (December 3, 1887), 291, a reprinting from *Temple Bar*, 78 (November 1886).

bers sought to carry out "some of the ideas of Thoreau and Whitman."<sup>36</sup> In 1893 Robert Blatchford published *Merrie England, a plain exposition of socialism, what it is, and what it is not*, and he strongly recommended *Walden* to his readers for its ideas.<sup>37</sup> Years later H. M. Tomlinson reported: "It was *Merrie England* which woke [the young reformers] up. . . . Most of those ardent young disciples of Blatchford's carried *Walden* about with them. They founded literary societies in English industrial districts and named them after a little pond lost somewhere in New England, U.S.A."<sup>38</sup> In Russia Chekhov found the thoughts of *Walden* fresh and original, but the construction difficult.<sup>39</sup> Tolstoy valued "Civil Disobedience and some thoughts in *Walden*, but he did not value *Walden* as a whole."<sup>40</sup> Other writers enjoyed *Walden* for its artistry and richness. W. H. Hudson called it "the one golden book in any century of books."<sup>41</sup> Yeats's father read parts of *Walden* to him when he was in his teens, and its images inspired him early and late.<sup>42</sup> Proust urged the Comtesse de Noail-

<sup>36</sup> *The Letters of W. B. Yeats*, ed. Allan Wade (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), pp. 39-40.

<sup>37</sup> (New York: Commonwealth Company, 1895), p. 12.

<sup>38</sup> H. M. Tomlinson, "Two Americans and a Whale," *Harper's Magazine*, 152 (April 1926), 620.

<sup>39</sup> A. P. Chekhov, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii i Pisem* (Moscow, 1948), XIII, 376.

<sup>40</sup> Valentin Bulgakov, *L. N. Tolstoi v Poslednii God Ego Zhizni* (Moscow, 1957), pp. 261, 474, n. 2.

<sup>41</sup> W. H. Hudson, *Birds in a Village* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1893), p. 190.

<sup>42</sup> *The Autobiography of William Butler Yeats* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938), pp. 64, 134. See also: Robert Francis, "Of Walden and Innisfree," *Christian Science Monitor* (November 6, 1952); Wendell Glick, "Yeats's Early Reading of *Walden*," *Boston Public Library Quarterly*, 5 (July 1953), 164-66; J. Lyndon Shanley, "Thoreau's Geese



les to read "les pages admirable de Walden" and once thought of translating it.<sup>43</sup>

But praise was neither unanimous nor uniform. There was, rather, "a confusion of appraising voices . . . taking years to blend into anything which approximates a chorus."<sup>44</sup> The influential Barrett Wendell acknowledged (1901) Thoreau's artistry but was disturbed by his individuality.<sup>45</sup> William C. Brownell failed to include Thoreau in his *American Prose Masters* (1909); yet John Macy (1913) praised *Walden* as "alive with the reality of daily doings," and, anticipating present judgment, added: "'Walden' is one of those whole, profound books in which the best of an author is distilled."<sup>46</sup> The *Cambridge History of American Literature* (1917) held *Walden* imperishable because of the "Robinson Crusoe part."<sup>47</sup> Norman Foerster (1923) wrote, "Henry David Thoreau, foremost among American authors who deal with nature, remains to this day something of a mystery."<sup>48</sup> Vernon Parrington (1927) admired

---

and Yeats's Swans," *American Literature*, 30 (November 1958), 361-64.

<sup>43</sup> Marcel Proust, *Lettres à la Comtesse de Noailles*, 1901-1919 (Paris: Libraire Plon, 1931), p. 70; *Marcel Proust to Antoine Bibesco*, trans. and introd. by Gerard Hopkins (London: Thames and Hudson, n.d.), p. 92.

<sup>44</sup> Townsend Scudder in *Literary History of the United States*, ed. Robert E. Spiller, Willard Thorp, Thomas H. Johnson, Henry Seidel Canby, Richard M. Ludwig (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948, 1963), I, 388. The comment refers to the estimate of Thoreau, but it serves nicely to summarize the estimates of *Walden*.

<sup>45</sup> Barrett Wendell, *A Literary History of America* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1901), pp. 332, 336.

<sup>46</sup> John Macy, *The Spirit of American Literature* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page, & Co., 1913), pp. 182, 183.

<sup>47</sup> (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1918), II, 12.

<sup>48</sup> *Nature in American Literature: Studies in the Modern View of Nature* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923), p. 69.

*Walden* as "the handbook of an economy that endeavors to refute Adam Smith and transform the round of daily life into something nobler than a mean gospel of plus and minus."<sup>49</sup>

But the babble of praise eventually became a chorus—though not all joined in—as more and more readers discovered not only the Robinson Crusoe adventure and the unique insights into nature, but also the wit and wisdom, and the superb prose of *Walden*. Robert Frost's judgments speak for the admirers of the book today; in 1915 he wrote: "I'm sure I'm glad of all the unversified poetry of *Walden*—and not merely nature-descriptive, but narrative as in the chapter on the play with the loon on the lake, and character-descriptive as in the beautiful passage about the French-Canadian woodchopper. That last alone with some things in Turgenieff must have had a good deal to do with the making of me."<sup>50</sup> Some forty years later he praised *Walden* for its adventure, its spirit of independence, and its wisdom, and said: "Thoreau's immortality may hang by a single book, but the book includes even his writing that is *not* in it. Nothing he ever said but sounds like a quotation from it. Think of the success of a man's pulling himself together all under one one-word title. Envidable!"<sup>51</sup>

The entries for *Walden* in *Books in Print* are indicative of the surge of interest in recent years: six in 1948, eleven in 1958, twenty-three in 1968.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>49</sup> *Main Currents in American Thought* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1927), II, 400.

<sup>50</sup> *Selected Letters of Robert Frost*, ed. Lawrance Thompson (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 182.

<sup>51</sup> "Thoreau's *Walden*," *The Listener*, 52 (August 26, 1954), 319.

<sup>52</sup> *An author-title-series index to the Publishers' Trade List Annual*, ed. B. A. Uhlendorf, 1948; ed. Sarah L. Prakken,

The experience of Derek Roberts, the Australian author of *Bellbird Eleven: Life in the Woods*, is common: "Hardly a week goes by that I do not come across [Thoreau's] name in a paper or a magazine or a book which I open."<sup>53</sup> Some of these references are undoubtedly to the Thoreau of "Civil Disobedience," but the Thoreau of *Walden* is so much a part of everyday thought that he is the subject of many cartoons; quotations from *Walden* appear frequently in advertisements—even on subway cards; it has been referred to in at least one comic strip; and the singer of a hit song of January 1968 runs "to a different drum."

An adequate account of the interest in *Walden* and the reasons for it (or lack of it) in foreign countries has yet to be made. *Walden* has been and still is treasured by some readers in many lands: it has been translated, often more than once, into Russian, Czechoslovakian, German, Dutch, French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese (in Latin America), Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Finnish, Hungarian, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, Japanese, Chinese, Urdu, Bengali, Malayalam, Kannada, and other languages of India.<sup>54</sup> New translations have been published fairly frequently in recent years: the first one into Hebrew in 1962, and in the same year a careful Russian translation with notes published by the Soviet Academy of Sci-

---

1958, 1968 (New York: R. R. Bowker Company). Only entries with *Walden* in the title are counted.

<sup>53</sup> (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1965), p. 182. I am indebted to an as yet unpublished essay by Joseph Jones, on "Thoreau in Australia" for this reference. The essay is to appear in a collection of essays on Thoreau's effect and influence in other countries; the editor, Professor Eugene Timpe, generously allowed me to see the collection.

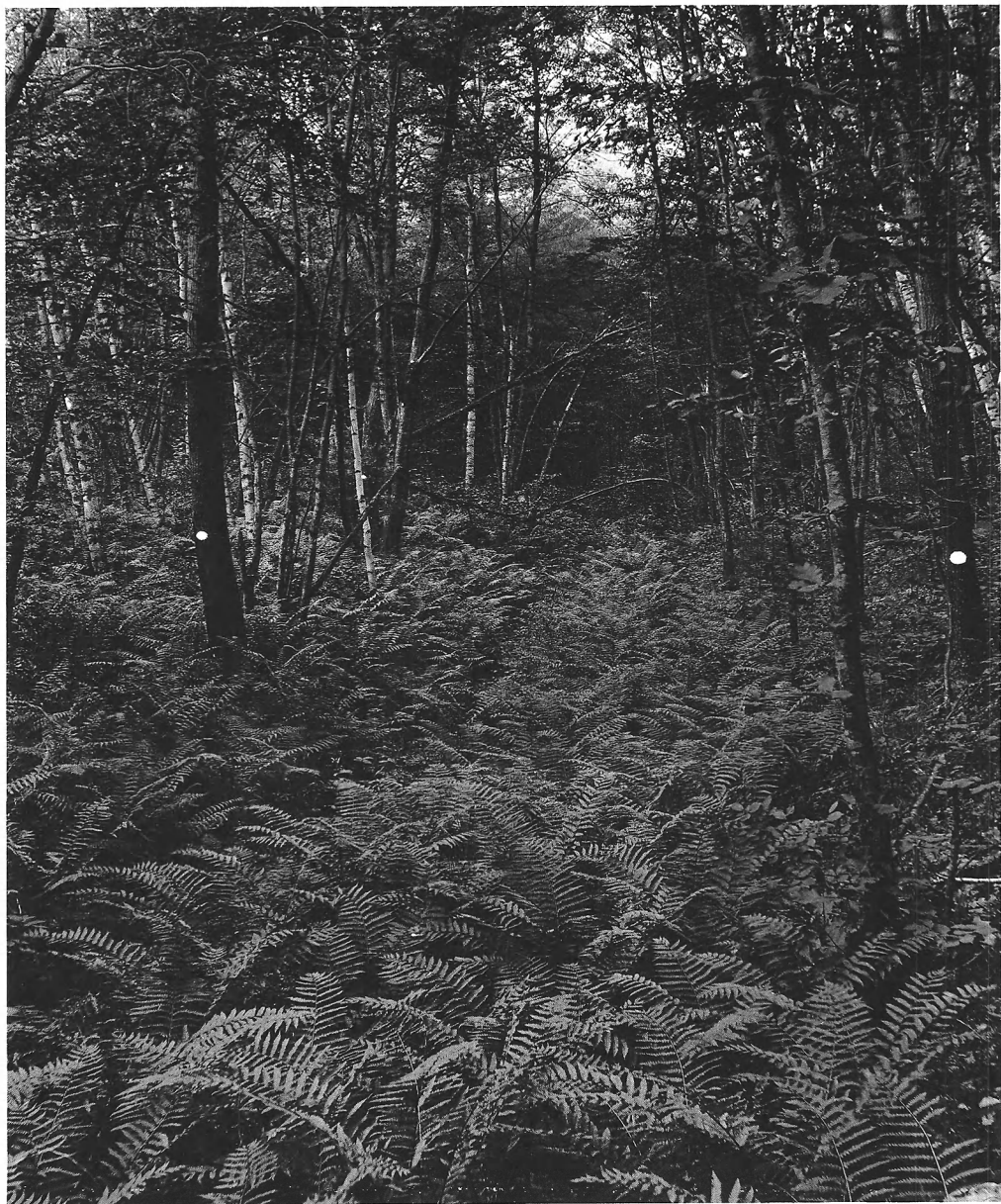
<sup>54</sup> Harding, *A Centennial Check-List* and the bibliographies in the issues of the *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, published quarterly.

ences. There were four new translations in 1964, two in 1965, and two new French translations in late 1967. But its readers are not numerous everywhere: Sholom J. Kahn of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem writes that the Hebrew version "has not had many takers," and without the French versions just mentioned, *Walden* was for many-years obtainable in France only in editions in English imported primarily for students. In Japan, however, where *Walden* has long been admired and studied, seven translations and six textbooks were published between 1946 and 1962.<sup>55</sup>

Thoreau hoped *Walden* would wake up his neighbors who were "said to live in New England." A century ago his success was modest indeed. Today his readers are counted by the thousands rather than by the hundreds, and, like the ice from the pond, *Walden* has reached the Ganges and many distant ports of which Thoreau only heard the names.

J. LYNDON SHANLEY

<sup>55</sup> I am indebted for information on recent translations and interest in *Walden* in Israel, Russia, France, and Japan to essays by Sholom J. Kahn, Jerzy R. Krzyzanowski, Maurice Gonnaud and Micheline Flak, and Katsuhiko Takeda; these essays are to appear in Professor Timpe's collection (see n. 53).



I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately,  
to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could  
not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die,  
discover that I had not lived. (90)



I borrowed an axe and went down to the woods by Walden Pond, nearest to where I intended to build my house, and began to cut down some tall arrowy white pines, still in their youth, for timber. (40)



I dug my cellar in the side of a hill sloping to the south, where a woodchuck had formerly dug his burrow, down through sumach and blackberry roots, and the lowest stain of vegetation, six feet square by seven deep, to a fine sand where potatoes would not freeze in any winter. (44)





I was surprised to see how thirsty the bricks were which drank up all the moisture in my plaster before I had smoothed it, and how many pailfuls of water it takes to christen a new hearth. I had the previous winter made a small quantity of lime by burning the shells of the *Unio fluviatilis*, which our river affords, for the sake of the experiment; so that I knew where my materials came from. I might have got good limestone within a mile or two and burned it myself, if I had cared to do so. (246)





My "best" room, however, my withdrawing room, always ready for company, on whose carpet the sun rarely fell, was the pine wood behind my house. Thither in summer days, when distinguished guests came, I took them, and a priceless domestic swept the floor and dusted the furniture and kept the things in order. (141-142)



I love a broad margin to my life. Sometimes, in a summer morning, having taken my accustomed bath, I sat in my sunny doorway from sunrise till noon, rapt in a revery, amidst the pines and hickories and sumachs, in undisturbed solitude and stillness. . . . ( I I I )

# The Illustrated Walden



## Economy

WHEN I wrote the following pages, or rather the bulk of them, I lived alone, in the woods, a mile from any neighbor, in a house which I had built myself, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Massachusetts, and earned my living by the labor of my hands only. I lived there two years and two months. At present I am a sojourner in civilized life again.

I should not obtrude my affairs so much on the notice of my readers if very particular inquiries had not been made by my townsmen concerning my mode of life, which some would call impertinent, though they do not appear to me at all impertinent, but, considering the circumstances, very natural and pertinent. Some have asked what I got to eat; if I did not feel lonesome; if I was not afraid; and the like. Others have been curious to learn what portion of my income I devoted to charitable purposes; and some, who have large families, how many poor children I maintained. I will therefore ask those of my readers who feel no particular interest in me to pardon me if I undertake to answer some of these questions in this book. In most books, the *I*, or first person, is omitted; in this it will be retained; that, in respect to egotism, is the main difference. We commonly do not remember that it is, after all, always the first person that is speaking. I should not talk so much about myself if there were any body else whom I knew as well. Unfortunately, I am confined to this theme by the narrowness of my experience. Moreover, I, on my side, require of every writer, first or last, a simple and sincere account of his own life, and not merely what he has heard of other men's lives; some such account as he would send to his kindred from a distant land; for

if he has lived sincerely, it must have been in a distant land to me. Perhaps these pages are more particularly addressed to poor students. As for the rest of my readers, they will accept such portions as apply to them. I trust that none will stretch the seams in putting on the coat, for it may do good service to him whom it fits.

I would fain say something, not so much concerning the Chinese and Sandwich Islanders as you who read these pages, who are said to live in New England; something about your condition, especially your outward condition or circumstances in this world, in this town, what it is, whether it is necessary that it be as bad as it is, whether it cannot be improved as well as not. I have travelled a good deal in Concord; and every where, in shops, and offices, and fields, the inhabitants have appeared to me to be doing penance in a thousand remarkable ways. What I have heard of Brahmins sitting exposed to four fires and looking in the face of the sun; or hanging suspended, with their heads downward, over flames; or looking at the heavens over their shoulders "until it becomes impossible for them to resume their natural position, while from the twist of the neck nothing but liquids can pass into the stomach;" or dwelling, chained for life, at the foot of a tree; or measuring with their bodies, like caterpillars, the breadth of vast empires; or standing on one leg on the tops of pillars,—even these forms of conscious penance are hardly more incredible and astonishing than the scenes which I daily witness. The twelve labors of Hercules were trifling in comparison with those which my neighbors have undertaken; for they were only twelve, and had an end; but I could never see that these men slew or captured any monster or finished any labor. They have no friend Iolas to burn with a hot iron the root of the hydra's