THE ESSAYS OF HENRY D. THOREAU

SELECTED AND EDITED

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ANNOTATIONS

NATURAL HISTORY OF MASSACHUSETTS

In January 1842, both Thoreau's brother, John, and Emerson's young son, Waldo, died, throwing Thoreau into several months of depression and inactivity. In April, in Boston, Emerson came upon a set of scientific reports, each four hundred or five hundred pages long, about the flora and fauna of Massachusetts, and he asked Thoreau to review them for the new transcendentalist journal *The Dial*. Thoreau soon had a draft essay, and in the July 1842 issue of *The Dial* this review appeared. As Robert D. Richardson, Jr., writes: "By one of those little ironies that make life harder to believe than fiction, Thoreau had been writing in his journal on the two days before John [died] about how books of natural history restored one to a sense of health."

3 **Audubon:** John James Audubon (1785–1851), American naturalist, ornithologist, and artist. His five-volume *Ornithological Biography*, published between 1832 and 1839, mixes descriptions of American birds with anecdotes about his life and adventures. Volume 1 (1832) includes descriptions of the magnolia, the cottonwood tree, and the migrations of the ricebird. Volume 2 (1835) has two accounts of a visit to the Florida Keys.

3 **rice-bird:** the bobolink, *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*.

3 **Within the circuit:** Thoreau's own poems, such as this one, appear in his work without quotation marks; poems by other writers appear in quotation marks.

3n ***Reports*:** Each of these was "published agreeably to an Order of the Legislature, by the Commissioners on the Zoölogical and Botanical Survey of the State." They are:

David Humphreys Storer, *Reports on the Fishes, Reptiles, and Birds of Massachusetts* (Boston: Dutton and Wentworth, 1839).

Chester Dewey, *Report on the Herbaceous Flowering Plants of Massachusetts, and on the Quadrupeds of Massachusetts* (Cambridge, Mass.: Folsom, Wells, and Thurston, 1840).

Thaddeus William Harris, *A Report on the Insects of Massachusetts, Injurious to Vegetation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Folsom, Wells, and Thurston, 1841).

Augustus A. Gould, *Report on the Invertebrata of Massachusetts, Comprising the Mollusca, Crustacea, Annelida, and Radiata* (Cambridge, Mass.: Folsom, Wells, and Thurston, 1841).

4 **Johnswort:** Saint-John's-wort. The common variety in New England is *Hypericum perforatum*, an herb with bright-yellow flowers.
4 **mead:** meadow.
4 **fieldfare:** British name of the European thrush *Turdus pilaris.*
4 **hoar:** white with frost.
4 **service-berries:** fruit of the shadbush, or serviceberry, a bush of the genus *Amelanchier* that flowers very early in the spring.
4 **Labrador and East Main:** sites in northern Canada. Labrador is the northeastern coast of what is now Newfoundland. East Main (or Eastmain) is a town on James Bay in northwestern Quebec, the oldest of the Hudson's Bay Company posts.
4 **wots:** knows; is aware.
4 **Great Pine Forest:** or Great Pine Swamp, now Penn Forest in Carbon County, Pennsylvania. It is a site often mentioned by Audubon, who once had a cabin there.
4 **Mohawk:** a river in New York State.
4 **Sing-Sing:** a town on the Hudson River in New York; now Ossining.
4 **Sullivan's Island:** on the north side of the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina. Usually spelled "Sullivans Island."
5 **life-everlasting:** a flower of the genus *Gnaphalium.*
5 **Great Slave Lake:** a three-hundred-mile-long lake in northern Canada that empties into the Mackenzie River.
5 **Esquimaux:** French spelling of "Eskimo."
5 **hyla:** the spring peeper, a small brown tree frog, *Hyla crucifer.*
5 **cupboard:** clock case.
6 **Thales:** Greek philosopher (625?–546? B.C.) who gained fame for his knowledge of astronomy. He is said to have predicted a solar eclipse in 585 B.C.
6 **Linnæus:** Carolus Linnaeus, the Latin pen name of Carl von Linné (1707–1778), Swedish naturalist and creator of the Latin binomial nomenclature by which living things are classified in terms of genus and species.
6 **Russian campaign:** In 1805 and 1806 Napoleon Bonaparte defeated the Russian army in a series of battles.

6 **harvest-fly:** the cicada. In the United States the "dog day harvest-fly" is *Cicada tibicen.*
6 **Anacreon:** Greek lyric poet (570?–485? B.C.) known for short, urbane poems on love and wine. Thoreau translated a group of Anacreon's poems from the Greek, two of them appearing here and the rest in *The Dial*, April 1843.
6 **"We pronounce thee":** Thoreau's version of a poem by Anacreon.
7 **death-watch:** common name of a number of small beetles that bore into old wood and make a clicking sound, supposed to be an omen of death.
7 **snowbird:** the junco, the common snowbird in the United States being *Junco hiemalis.*
8 **Teian poet:** Anacreon, who was born in Teos, a city on the western coast of Asia Minor north of Ephesus. The poem following, "Return of Spring," is Thoreau's version of another poem by Anacreon.
8 **Titan:** the sun.
8 **harrows:** diagonals.
8 **on its beam ends:** tipped on its side.
9 **Nuttall:** Thomas Nuttall (1786–1859) was a botanist and ornithologist who had been the director of the Harvard Botanical Garden and then held the Chair of Natural History at Harvard until replaced by Asa Gray in 1842. Nuttall wrote the standard bird book used during much of the nineteenth century, *A Manual of the Ornithology of the United States and of Canada*, 4 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Hilliard and Brown; Boston: Hilliard, Gray, 1832–1834).
9 **Argonautic expedition:** In Greek mythology the Argonauts were heroes who sailed in search of the Golden Fleece.
9 **flight over Parnassus:** figuratively, to rise to poetry or song, Parnassus being the Greek mountain sacred to the Muses.
9 **Goldsmith:** Oliver Goldsmith (1728–1774), English poet, playwright, and novelist. Goldsmith describes the bittern in *A History of the Earth and Animated Nature*, writing that of all the sounds to be heard "by the sedgy sides of unfrequented rivers . . . , there is none so dismally hollow as that which comes from the bittern's croaking voice."
9 **quire:** variant of "choir."
10 **Philip:** Metacomet (1639?–1676), a leader of the Wampanoag Indians, called Philip by the English settlers. In 1662 Metacomet renewed the treaties that his father had made with the settlers. The colonists, however, encroached on native lands, and Metacomet formed a confederation of tribes and led an uprising now known as King Philip's War.
10 **Powhatan:** Algonquian Indian leader (1550?–1618) whose real name was Wahun-sen-a-cawh. He was the chief of the Powhatan Confederacy of Algonquian tribes, in what is now Virginia, when the English first settled there in 1607. He was supposed to have been set to kill the Englishman John Smith when his daughter, Pocahontas, intervened and saved Smith's life.
10 **Winthrop:** John Winthrop (1588–1649). With about seven hundred Puritan set-

tlers, Winthrop in 1630 landed in Massachusetts, where he was then the English colonial administrator and first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

11 **Smith:** John Smith (1579?–1631), English colonizer in North America who in 1607 helped establish Jamestown, Virginia, the first permanent English settlement.

13 **Penobscot:** a Native American tribe formerly dwelling around the Penobscot River in Maine. The Penobscot were the Indians Thoreau actually knew. They used to set up camp along the rivers in Concord and Cambridge, and they were his guides on trips to Maine.

13 **Pilpay:** a collection of ancient Hindu fables drawn from the Pancha Tantra, also known as the *Fables of Bidpai* or the *Book of Kalilah and Dimna.* Thoreau might have known them from the 1819 English translation by the Reverend Wyndham Knatchbull. See also the note for "Veeshnoo Sarma," page 59 of "Paradise (To Be) Regained."

13 **Æsop:** Greek fabulist of the sixth century B.C., to whom are ascribed such fables as "The Fox and the Grapes."

14 **Angler's Souvenir:** a book by William Andrew Chatto (1799–1864), *The Angler's Souvenir* (London: C. Tilt, 1835).

14 **fain:** glad; pleased. Thoreau more often uses the word as an adverb meaning happily or gladly.

14 **"Can such things be":** *Macbeth* III.iv.111–12. Emerson cited the full sentence in *Nature* (1836): "Can such things be, / And overcome us like a summer's cloud, / Without our special wonder?"

14 **seines of flax:** fishnets.

15 **wain:** wagon.

15 **Ararat:** traditionally, the Asian mountain where Noah's ark came to rest after the Flood.

16 **Nahshawtuck:** a hill that sits where the Assabet and Sudbury Rivers join to form the Concord River. Also spelled Nawshawtuck.

16 **Golden Horn:** an inlet off the Bosporus that is the natural harbor of Istanbul.

16 **crate, or jack:** a basket or cage.

17 **cucullo:** firefly; also spelled "cucuyo."

17 **Charon:** in Greek myth the ferryman who carries the shades of the dead over the river Styx. In Roman myth Pluto is the ruler of the underworld.

17 **weight:** pounds.

19 **"winter of *their* discontent":** altering the first line of *Richard III*, "Now is the winter of our discontent."

19 **Baffin's Bay:** a sea passage west of Greenland.

19 **Mackenzie's River:** The Mackenzie River rises in the Canadian Rocky Mountains and flows northwest into the Beaufort Sea.

19 **Minerva:** Roman goddess of handicrafts, arts, and trade. Like the Greek Athena, she embodies the powers of calculation and invention.

19 **Ceres:** goddess of grain and harvest in old Italian mythology, later identified by the Romans with the Greek earth goddess Demeter.

19 **Nereus:** a Greek sea god with shape-shifting powers.

19 **Triton:** a son of Poseidon, human in his upper body and a fish below; often described riding over the sea on sea monsters or horses.

19 **hoar-frost:** white frost formed by the freezing of dew.

20 **creatures of but one law:** Robert D. Richardson, Jr., points out that Thoreau was much influenced by an 1837 reading of Goethe's *Italian Journey.* Goethe had long sought an "original" plant form, one that might have given rise to all other forms. "While walking in the Public Garden of Palermo," Goethe wrote, "it came to me in a flash that in the organ of the plant which we are accustomed to call the *leaf* lies the true Proteus who can hide or reveal himself in all vegetal forms. From first to last, the plant is nothing but leaf." Thoreau expands the idea, claiming that the law governing plants governs *all* kinds of growth, including the growth of crystals.

22 **Bigelow:** Jacob Bigelow (1786–1879), American botanist. Thoreau knew two of Bigelow's books, *American Medical Botany* (Boston: Cummings and Hilliard, 1817–1821) and *Florula Bostoniensis: A Collection of Plants of Boston and Its Environs . . . .* 2nd ed. (Boston: Cummings, Hilliard, & Co., 1824).

22 **demoniacal:** arising from an indwelling spirit, a demon, or genius.

23 **Baconian:** in the style of Francis Bacon (1561–1626), English statesman and philosopher whose method of inquiry was a forerunner of modern empiricism. In scientific study, Bacon wrote, "all depends on keeping the eye steadily fixed upon the facts of nature, and so receiving their images simply as they are; for God forbid that we should give out a dream of our own imagination for a pattern of the world." Thoreau's natural science would keep the first clause, the careful attention to detail, but invert the second, believing that we cannot know the world unless imagination is added to the data that the senses impart. As Emerson says in his essay on transcendentalism, "The senses give us representations of things, but what are the things themselves, they cannot tell."

A WINTER WALK

In May 1843 Thoreau moved from Concord to Staten Island, New York, where he wrote the final draft of this essay. It was first published in the October 1843 issue of *The Dial.* Before it appeared, it was edited considerably by Emerson, and Thoreau apparently accepted the changes. Emerson's journal entry on the essay is often cited: "Henry Thoreau sends me a paper with the old fault of unlimited contradiction. The trick of his rhetoric is soon learned: it consists in substituting for the obvious word and thought its diametrical antagonist. He praises wild mountains and winter forests for their domestic air; snow and ice for their warmth; villagers and wood-choppers for their urbanity, and the wilderness for resembling Rome and Paris. . . . [William Ellery] Channing declared the piece is excellent: but it makes me nervous and wretched to read it, with all its merits." This was, of course, the Emerson whose "Self-Reliance" essay argues eloquently against consistency and in favor of contradiction.

28 **Tartarean:** having to do with Tartarus, the deepest underworld in Greek mythology.
29 **"the sea smokes":** The source for this citation is not known.
30 **fain:** happily; gladly.
31 **gadding:** restless and idle.
32 **"The foodless wilds":** lines 233–34 of "Winter, a Poem," part of *The Seasons* by the Scottish poet James Thomson (1700–1748).
32 **Lapland . . . Spitzbergeners:** a list of northern places and peoples, Lapland being the most northerly part of the Scandinavian Peninsula, Labrador being the northern coast of Newfoundland, Esquimaux (now Eskimo or Inuit) being the original inhabitants of Arctic coastal North America, Knistenaux (more commonly called the Cree) being the original inhabitants of north-central Canada, Dog-Ribs being an Athabascan group of northwest Canada, Novazemblaites and Spitzbergeners being the inhabitants of Arctic islands (Novaya Zemlya, north of Russia, and Spitsbergen, north of Norway).
32 **caddis-worms:** the aquatic larvae of caddis flies or mayflies.
32 **Plicipennes:** obsolete name of the order Trichoptera, the caddis flies.
32 **Seine or Tiber:** rivers in northern France and central Italy, respectively.
33 **Palmyra:** ancient Syrian city in the desert northeast of Damascus destroyed in A.D. 273 and now famous for its ruins.
33 **Hecatompolis:** or Hecatompylos, ancient capital of Parthia, the ruins of which lie in present-day Iran, two hundred miles east of Tehran.
33 **flexure:** bend or curve.
34 **Abu Musa:** Abu Musa al-Ashari, seventh-century Muslim governor and religious teacher from Yemen. Thoreau's source for the citation is not known. Thoreau was living on Staten Island when he wrote this essay, and a letter to Emerson from July 1843 makes it clear that he was homesick for Concord: "My thoughts revert to those dear hills. . . . Others may say, 'Are there not the cities of Asia?' But what are they? Staying at home is the heavenly way."
35 **deal table:** one made of fir or pine.
35 **Alexander:** Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.), king of Macedonia and conqueror of Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, Babylonia, and Persia.
37 **Parry or Franklin:** Sir William Edward Parry (1790–1855) and Sir John Franklin (1786–1847), celebrated English Arctic explorers. Thoreau had read both Parry's *Three Voyages for the Discovery of a Northwest Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific* . . . . 2 vols. (New York: Harper's Family Library, 1841) and Franklin's *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea* (Philadelphia: H. C. Carey & I. Lea, 1824).
37 **"the mower whet his scythe":** John Milton, "L'Allegro," line 66 ("the Mower whets his sithe").
38 **cabinet of curiosities:** display of rare and odd items.
38 ***hortus siccus*:** dry garden; a herbarium.
38 **screw or gum:** referring to the method by which naturalists then collected samples of plants.

38 **dreadnaught:** garment made of thick cloth for protection against the weather.
39 **Nootka Sound:** an inlet of the Pacific, on the west coast of Vancouver Island in southwest British Columbia, Canada.
39 **"The snowflakes fall":** *Iliad* XII.278–86.
39 **entablature:** the part of a classical building lying above the columns.
40 **"Drooping the lab'rer ox":** lines 240–42, slightly altered, from Thomson's "Winter." See the note for page 32 above.
41 **"the mansion of the northern bear":** The source for this citation is not known. The "bear" is the constellation Ursa Major, the Big Dipper.
41 **"The full ethereal round":** lines 738–41 of Thomson's "Winter." See the note for page 32 above.

PARADISE (TO BE) REGAINED

This book review, written while Thoreau was living on Staten Island, New York, was first published in the *United States Magazine, and Democratic Review* 13 (November 1843). The text of the first printing differs from the text used here because someone, almost certainly Thoreau, revised the essay before it was reprinted as part of the volume *A Yankee in Canada, with Anti-Slavery and Reform Papers* (1866).

45 **Etzler:** John Adolphus Etzler, a German immigrant who had come to the United States in 1831 as a member of the Mühlhausen Emigration Society. Influenced by Charles Fourier (see below), he spent much of his life writing about and then trying to establish utopian communities, first in Cincinnati and finally in Venezuela. Little is known about him before he emigrated in 1831, and nothing after the failure of his enterprise in Venezuela in 1846.

Etzler was a passionate inventor of large machines such as Thoreau describes. Some were actually built in prototype, though none ever worked very well. By contrast, another German, John Augustus Roebling (1806–1869), who accompanied Etzler to the United States in 1831, went on to design the first-ever suspension bridge (across the Ohio River in Cincinnati) and, finally, the Brooklyn Bridge.

45 **originally published:** in 1833 by Etzler and Reinhold, that is, by Etzler himself, in Pittsburgh, where he was then living and editing a German-language newspaper. The book was perhaps the first technological utopia published in America, and Thoreau's review the first rebuttal.
45 **Fourier:** Charles Fourier (1772–1837), French philosopher and socialist whose writings set out ambitious plans for cooperative living. Fourier imagined reorganizing society by dividing it into communes, or phalanxes, each to number sixteen hundred individuals living in a large communal building surrounded by a collective farm.

Fourier's ideas were introduced into the United States by Albert Brisbane (1809–1890), author of *The Social Destiny of Man* (published in 1840 by C. F. Stollmeyer of Philadelphia, who also published Etzler's later work). For more

than a year before Thoreau wrote this review, Horace Greeley's *New-York Tribune* had been publishing a daily column by Brisbane discussing Fourier's doctrines. In 1843 Brisbane and his friends established a Fourierist community in Red Bank, New Jersey, the North American Phalanx. Between 1840 and 1850, in fact, at least forty phalanxes were founded in America, the most famous being Brook Farm (1841–1847) in West Roxbury, Massachusetts.

45 **"Fellow-men!":** As with other citations from Etzler, Thoreau reproduces the sense of the text but silently makes dozens of small changes (about forty in this paragraph alone), as if he were a copy editor working with an unpublished manuscript. Etzler writes that canals will "intersect every-where the land," for example, and Thoreau changes this to "intersect the land everywhere." Most of Thoreau's changes improve or at least standardize Etzler's usage.

46 **ails:** ailments.

46 **Hygeia:** Greek goddess of health.

47 **magnetism, the daguerreotype, electricity:** Great advances in the uses of electricity and magnetism marked the 1830s. Between 1830 and 1831, for example, the British physicist and chemist Michael Faraday (1791–1867) discovered electromagnetic induction, and the American physicist Joseph Henry (1797–1878) made the first powerful electromagnets, the first true "magnetic" telegraph, and one of the first electromagnetic motors.

A daguerreotype is a photograph made on a light-sensitive metallic plate. The method was invented in France in 1837 by Louis Daguerre (1789–1851) and became the first widely practiced form of photography. The earliest images of Thoreau himself, made in 1856, were daguerreotypes.

48 **Hymettus:** a high mountain in Attica, bounding the Athenian plain on the southeast. Its bees produce a flavorful honey from the mountain's aromatic herbs.

48 **Hybla:** an ancient town in Sicily, Hybla Major, on the river Symaethus.

48 **Columella:** Lucius Junius Moderatus Columella, a first-century Roman agricultural writer who, along with other Latin authors (Pliny, Cato, Varro, Palladius), influenced Thoreau's thinking about agriculture. Around 1838 Thoreau had read Columella's *Of Husbandry* in an English translation.

48 ***in extenso*:** at full length; in full.

48 **behoof:** benefit.

49 **" 'life is short, but art is long' ":** an aphorism of Hippocrates (460?–370? B.C.) on the art of healing ("Life is short, the art long, opportunity fleeting, experiment treacherous, judgment difficult"), better known in abbreviated Latin form, *Ars longa, vita brevis.*

49 **"Mechanical System":** *The New World; or, Mechanical System, to Perform the Labours of Man and Beast by Inanimate Powers, That Cost Nothing, for Producing and Preparing the Substances of Life* (Philadelphia: C. F. Stollmeyer, 1841).

50 **chip:** "ship" in the first printing.

50 **careening:** turning a ship on its side for cleaning, caulking, or repairing.

50 ***point d'appui*:** French: point of support; fulcrum; base.

50 **spring and neap tide:** Spring tides are the highest and lowest, occurring at new and full moons; neap tides have the least difference between high and low and occur at the first and third quarters of the moon.

50 ***terrae infirmae*:** unsteady lands, Thoreau's inversion of the standard *terra firma*, firm or solid ground.

51 **terreners:** "dry-landers," Thoreau's neologism to match "mariners."

51 **Green Mountains:** part of the Appalachian range running from southern Quebec through Vermont and into western Massachusetts.

51 **burning-mirrors:** concave mirrors by which the rays of the sun may be concentrated on an object so as to burn it. Legend has it that Archimedes constructed such mirrors to set Roman ships on fire during the siege of Syracuse.

52 **rood:** variant spelling of "rod," a rod being both a unit of linear measure (sixteen and a half feet) and a unit of square measure (the fourth part of an acre), the latter being the sense here.

53 **matting:** fabric woven of coarse material such as hemp, bast, or grass.

53 **as Columbus did:** In his journal for October 11, 1492, Columbus describes seeing, that night, a light in the distance. Columbus's original journal has been lost, but the summary of it made by Bartolomé de Las Casas says that "the Admiral had seen a light at ten in the evening. . . . The light was spotted a couple of times, and it was like a small wax candle being raised and lowered, which struck very few people as being a sign of land, but the Admiral was certain that he was near land." The next day Columbus did in fact make landfall. Thoreau knew the story from Washington Irving's *A History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, 4 vols. (London: J. Murray, 1831).

54 **term-time:** period of gestation.

54 **"tie up the rudder and sleep before the wind":** phrase from a passage in *Christian Morals* by Sir Thomas Browne (1605–1682): "In this virtuous Voyage of thy Life hull not about like the Ark, without the use of Rudder, Mast, or Sail, and bound for no port. . . . Think not that you are Sailing from *Lima* to *Manillia* [sic], when you may fasten up the Rudder, and sleep before the Wind; but expect rough Seas, Flaws, and contrary Blasts."

54 **Manilla:** or Manila, capital city of the Philippines, founded in 1571. To sail from Lima to Manila is to cross the Pacific east to west, carried by the South Equatorial Current, which flows in that direction.

54 **crystal palaces:** In 1840 at Chatsworth (the gardens of the duke of Devonshire), the English gardener and architect Sir Joseph Paxton (1801–1865) built a three-hundred-foot-long conservatory using newly developed techniques for making large sheets of glass. This in turn became the model for the famous Crystal Palace that Paxton built for London's 1851 Great Exhibition, which stood 108 feet high and was at the time the largest building in the world. A replica of it was built in New York in 1853. Thoreau is writing in 1843, so his phrase either refers to Paxton's early conservatory or is a prescient figure of speech.

54 **Fox:** George Fox (1624–1691), English preacher who founded the Society of Friends (the Quakers). When a young man, Fox traveled around England wearing a gray leather outfit (breeches, doublet, and hat), a mode of dress associated with working people and indicating the disdain for fashion typical of religious dissenters.

54 **"glutinated":** glued, as with gluten.

57 **prevalence:** effective power or force; influence.

58 Μέλλει τὸ θεῖον δ' ἐστι τοιοῦτον φύσει: Euripides, *Orestes*, line 420. Menelaus has just asked Orestes, "Does not Loxias [Apollo] shield you from these evils?" and Orestes replies with this line: "He delays: such is the nature of the divine." Thoreau alters the Greek punctuation slightly.

59 **Mahometan's heaven:** Heaven in the Qur'an is a place of gardens, running streams, and liquors that intoxicate without intoxicating. The pure are promised beautiful maidens (*houri*) as their consorts. Muslim theologians have stressed the metaphorical and spiritual nature of such images, but Westerners (Edward Gibbon, for example, in his history of Rome) have emphasized their carnality so that, in Thoreau's time, it was known as a heaven of "comfort and pleasure merely."

59 **Veeshnoo Sarma:** or Vishnu-Sarma, the legendary author of the *Hitopadésa*, an ancient collection of Hindu animal fables and proverbial wisdom. In 1842 Thoreau read, and here cites from, an early translation from Sanskrit, *The Hĕĕtōpădēs of Vĕĕshnŏŏ-Sărmā, in a Series of Connected Fables, Interspersed with Moral, Prudential, and Political Maxims* (Bath, U.K.: R. Cruttwell, 1787). In his introduction the translator, Charles Wilkins, notes that the *Hitopadésa* "resembles" what was also known in English as *The Fables of Pilpay.*

60 **Raleigh:** Sir Walter Raleigh (1554–1618), English writer and explorer, prominent at the court of Queen Elizabeth I. Thoreau had lectured on Raleigh before the Concord Lyceum in February 1843. This citation is from Raleigh's *The History of the World*, chap. 1, sec. 11.

KTAADN

Thoreau traveled to Mount Katahdin in Maine at the end of August 1846. He was living at Walden Pond at the time; he finished a draft of this essay before he left the pond the following autumn. In March 1848 he sent it to his friend Horace Greeley, editor of the *New-York Tribune*, who arranged for its publication (in five installments) in John Sartain's *Union Magazine of Literature and Art*, July to November 1848. The version printed here has revisions that Thoreau made in later years when he prepared the manuscript for inclusion in *The Maine Woods*, a posthumous collection published in 1864.

63 **Ktaadn:** now spelled Katahdin; at 5,267 feet, the highest mountain in Maine.

63 **a relative:** George A. Thatcher, the husband of Thoreau's cousin Rebecca Billings.

63 **batteau:** a large, flat-bottomed boat. One that Thoreau measured on a later trip was at its extremities 31 feet long and 5½ feet wide.

64 **Jackson:** Charles T. Jackson (1805–1880) was the brother of Emerson's wife Lydia and of Lucy Jackson Brown, a boarder in the Thoreau home. Thoreau met him at least once, when he lectured at the Concord Lyceum in 1843. Jackson's report of climbing Katahdin is in the *Second Annual Report on the Geology of the Public Lands, Belonging to the Two States of Maine and Massachusetts* (Augusta, Maine: Luther Severance, 1838), pp. 16–19.

64 **two young men:** Edward Everett Hale and William Francis Channing. Hale published an account of the journey in the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, August 15, 1845. Channing was the cousin of Thoreau's friend William Ellery Channing.

64 **Sawyer:** the stock surname of one who runs a sawmill.

64 **riddle:** usually an instrument for cleaning grain, being a large sieve with a perforated bottom that permits grain to pass through but retains the chaff.

66 **"hogging":** bowed; bent.

66 **Charlevoix:** Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix (1682–1761), French Jesuit missionary to Canada and author of *Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle France* . . . . 3 vols. (Paris: Chez la Veuve Ganeau, 1744).

67 **Abenaki:** the Algonquian-speaking native North Americans, the Penobscot being one of five primary tribes. The Abenaki Confederacy had allied itself with the French in the seventeenth century, and those who converted to Christianity became Roman Catholics.

67 **fish-hawk:** the osprey.

67 **some troops:** a reference to the Aroostook War of 1839–1842. The issue was the boundary between Maine and New Brunswick or, more important, timber rights on disputed land. The Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842 established a permanent boundary before any shots were fired, which is why Thoreau says the troops marched "towards Mars' Hill, though not to Mars' *field*."

67 **what the name implies:** The Abenaki word "Passadumkeag" means "where the water goes into the river above the falls."

68 **scions:** the cut shoots or twigs containing buds from a woody plant, used in grafting.

69 **Pomola:** the storm bird of Penobscot tradition, said to live on the summit of Katahdin. Thoreau knew to ask this question because he had read Jackson's *Second Annual Report*, which describes an 1837 ascent of the mountain. Louis Neptune had been Jackson's guide, and Jackson reports that when the party was hit with a snowstorm, "Louis declared that Pomola was angry with us for presuming to measure the height of the mountain, and revenged himself upon us by this storm."

For a full account of Pomola, see Fannie Hardy Eckstorm, "The Katahdin Legends," *Appalachia*, December 1924, pp. 39–52. Eckstorm says that the Indians spell the name "Bumole," "which they pronounce *Bahmolai*." Some say the name is pronounced onomatopoetically, in imitation of thunder.

69 **he had planted letter:** Thoreau's sense is obscure; he may be capturing Neptune's syntax and referring to a custom of leaving messages on mountaintops.

71 **patent hay-scales:** Around 1830 the Vermont farmer Thaddeus Fairbanks (1796–1886) invented a platform scale that could weigh a cartload of hay. The mechanism for balancing the scale lay in a shallow chamber below the platform, which was itself the size of a farmer's cart.

71 **bespoken:** ordered; arranged for.

71 **penetralia:** the innermost parts of a building.

71 **the burning:** the land being cleared by burning it over.

71 **canalés:** percussion caps for a gun with a grooved bore.

72 **to be laid down:** Forest soils are not particularly fertile, but if the trees and brush are burned, the ash provides a few years of fertility; farmers at the time would clear by burning, then take a crop or two of grain, after which the land would be "laid down" to grass.

72 **Province man:** one from the province of New Brunswick, Canada.

72 **Greenleaf's Map of Maine:** Moses Greenleaf (1777–1834), cartographer. Thoreau used his book *A Survey of the State of Maine* (Portland, Maine: Shirley and Hyde, 1829). His map of Maine was published posthumously in 1844.

72 **tow:** the coarse and broken part of flax or hemp, used to stop the charge of powder in a gun and for pressing it close to the shot.

72 **Map of the Public Lands:** a large, sectional map, produced to help resolve land disputes between Maine and Massachusetts. The legend reads, in part: "A Plan of the Public Lands in the State of Maine Surveyed under Instructions from the Commissioners & Agents of the States of Massachusetts and Maine. . . . Copied from the original surveys . . . & corrected by Geo. W. Coffin, Land Agent of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. . . . 1835. Pendleton's Lithography, Boston. Drawn on stone by J. Eddy." The Concord Free Public Library owns Thoreau's copy of the section showing Mount Katahdin, a portion of which is reproduced in Robert F. Stowell's *A Thoreau Gazetteer* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 15. There are full copies of the map in the Maine State Library, Augusta, and in the Public Record Office, London, England (reference: CO. 700/21).

73 **diet-drink:** medicated liquors; drink prepared with medicinal liquors.

73 **whistler-duck:** the American goldeneye.

73 **pigeon-woodpecker:** the flicker.

73 **bran new:** or "brand-new," said of a manufactured item so new that the brand has not worn off.

76 **"Elegy":** "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," poem by Thomas Gray (1716–1771). The phrases and verse that follow come from lines 45–60.

78 **white pine:** *Pinus strobus.* The largest tree in the old-growth forests of New England, the white pine could grow to four hundred years of age and stand two hundred feet high. They were cut as masts for ships and as lumber. No old-growth trees remain in New England.

78*n* **Springer:** John S. Springer, *Forest Life and Forest Trees: Comprising Winter Camp-Life among the Loggers, and Wild-Wood Adventure; with Descriptions of Lumbering Operations on the Various Rivers of Maine and New Brunswick* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1851), pp. 68–71. Springer, born in Maine in 1811, worked in the Maine woods for a decade when a young man, first as a lumberjack, later as a boss hand. At the time he wrote his book, he was a Methodist minister in Massachusetts.

79 **intervale:** a low, level track of land.

79 **Kennebec man:** one from the Kennebec River region, in central Maine.

80 **life-ever-lasting:** wild flowers of the genus *Gnaphalium*.

80 **axe-helves:** ax handles.

81 **Wandering Jew:** Eugène Sue's novel *Le Juif errant* (1844–1845) had recently been translated from the French and published in several American editions.

81 **Criminal Calendar:** an annual product, for example, *The United States Criminal Calendar: or, An Awful Warning to the Youth of America; Being an Account of the Most Horrid Murders, Piracies, Highway Robberies*, compiled from the best authorities by Henry St. Clair (Boston: C. Gaylord, 1835).

81 **Parish's Geography:** Elijah Parish (1762–1825), *A New System of Modern Geography.* There were many editions; for example, Newburyport, Mass.: Thomas and Whipple, 1810.

81 **flash novels:** novels about crime; cheap popular fiction.

82 **Hodge:** James T. Hodge (1816–1871), whose remark cited here comes from a section ("Mr. Hodge's Report") of Jackson's *Second Annual Report,* p. 52. Jackson calls Hodge "my excellent assistant."

82 **buck-beans:** *Menyanthes trifoliata*; also called bog beans.

83 **beer:** made from the young twigs of black spruce.

85 **thole pins:** wooden pegs set in pairs in the gunwales of a boat to serve as an oarlock.

86 **Argo . . . Symplegades:** In Greek mythology the *Argo* was the boat that Jason and his companions sailed in search of the Golden Fleece. The Symplegades were dangerous rocks guarding the entrance to the Euxine Sea.

86 **"the torrent's smoothness":** from Thomas Campbell (1777–1844), "Gertrude of Wyoming," part III, stanza v, line 4.

87 **boom:** "made by fastening the ends of the trunks of long trees, so as to prevent them from scattering over the lake on the breaking up of the ice" (Springer, *Forest Life and Forest Trees*, p. 159).

87*n* **Abnaquiois:** Abenaki; see the note for page 67 above.

87*n* **No. 10 Relations, for 1647:** *Jesuit Relations. Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la Nouvelle France, en l'années 1633–1672* (Paris: [various publishers], 1633–1672). The Harvard Library owned most of this vast series of reports by Jesuit missionaries in Canada, and Thoreau read everything it had.

88 **Emerson's Address:** a thirty-four-page pamphlet, *An Address Delivered in the Court-House in Concord, Massachusetts, on 1st August, 1844: On the Anniversary of the Emancipation of the Negroes in the British West Indies* (Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1844).

88 ***Liberty party*:** an antislavery party founded in 1840.

88 **Westminster Review:** British quarterly established in 1824 by James Mill and Jeremy Bentham.

88 **History of the Erection of the Monument on the Grave of Myron Holley:** A pamphlet by this title was published in Utica, New York, by H. H. Curtiss in 1844. Holley (1779–1841), from Rochester, New York, was one of the founders of the Liberty Party.

88 **full of the moon:** September 5, 1846.

90 **"Row, brothers":** from "A Canadian Boat Song" by Thomas Moore (1779–1852), an Irish poet who had visited Canada in 1804. Thoreau's "Utawas' tide" alters the original, "Ottawa's tide," the Ottawa being a river flowing into the St. Lawrence at the western tip of Montreal Island.

94 **ferruled:** strengthened by a ring or band.

94 **Michaux:** François André Michaux (1770–1855), French botanist. Thoreau read a three-volume translation of his work *The North American Sylva* (Paris: C. d'Hautel, 1819). All the quotations in this paragraph are from volume 3, pages 166–67.

94*n* **"A steady current":** Springer, *Forest Life and Forest Trees*, p. 64.

95 **"two lines":** about a sixth of an inch. In Michaux's day the Paris line was the twelfth part of a French inch.

99 **Oak Hall:** a Boston clothing store.

100 **Murch Brook:** now called Katahdin Stream.

101 **chivin:** or "chevin," a variety of chub, a river fish of the carp family.

101 **roaches:** In Europe the roach is a small freshwater fish (*Leuciscus rutilus*) of the carp family; in the United States various fish bear the name, including sunfish and chub.

101 **cousin-trout:** In his annotations to Thoreau's journal, Robert Sattelmeyer suggests that "what Thoreau calls alternatively the chivin, the roach, and the cousin trout is probably the modern fall-fish (*Semotilus corporalis*)."

101 **fluviatile:** fluvial.

101 **Proteus:** the shape-shifter of Greek mythology.

101 **Lescarbot:** Marc Lescarbot (1570–1642), French explorer and author of *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France*. Thoreau read the second edition (Paris: Chez Jean-Millot, 1612).

101 **Champdoré . . . de Monts:** early French explorers of the coast of North America, the former being a ship's captain, Pierre Angibault (but called Champdoré), the latter being Pierre du Guast, Sieur de Monts (1560?–1628?).

101 **"qu'en mettant":** "that in putting the boiler on the fire, they had caught enough [fish] for them to eat dinner before the water was hot."

102 **"A quart":** from an anonymous poem, "The Dragon of Wantley," which Thoreau knew from a one-volume edition of Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765). Thoreau changes the original "aqua vitae" to "*arbor*-vitae."

103 **a large slide:** Abol Slide.

104 **Nimrod:** in the Hebrew Bible, a mighty hunter.

104 **Murch Brook:** in fact, Abol Stream ("Abol" being short for "Aboljacknagesic").

106 **Satan's . . . through Chaos:** The reference is to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, which Thoreau begins to cite below.

106 **nipt:** pinched.

106 **bears' dens:** an unlikely assertion, in line with the passage's Miltonic exaggeration.

106 **"nigh founder'd, on he fares":** Milton, *Paradise Lost* II.740–42. Satan, vengeful and proud, is struggling up out of Chaos.

107 **the summit:** Katahdin has two peaks, Baxter (5,267 feet) and South (5,240 feet). Thoreau probably climbed to the saddle between the two, three or four hundred feet below the true summit.

108 **Atlas:** in Greek mythology a Titan condemned by Zeus to support the heavens on his shoulders.

108 **Vulcan:** Roman god of fire and metalworking.

108 **Cyclops:** in Greek mythology one of the three one-eyed Titans who forged thunderbolts for Zeus.

108 **Prometheus:** a Titan who stole fire from Olympus and gave it to humankind, for which Zeus chained him to a rock and sent an eagle to eat his liver, which grew back daily.

108 **Caucasus:** an extensive range of mountains in the northern part of Asia, lying between the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea. From the stories of Prometheus and of the Argonauts, it appears that the Greeks regarded Caucasus as one of the extremities of the earth.

108 **Æschylus:** Greek tragic dramatist (525–456 B.C.). Thoreau's translation of Aeschylus's play *Prometheus Bound* appeared in the January 1843 issue of *The Dial*.

108 **Titanic:** of the Titans; that is, the giants of Greek mythology who sought to rule heaven and were overthrown by the family of Zeus.

109 **"Chaos and ancient Night":** Milton, *Paradise Lost* II.970–74.

110 **"mirror broken":** from J. K. Laski's description of a botanical expedition to Katahdin. In a letter dated October 24, 1847, Thoreau wrote to thank his sister Sophia for clipping the account from the *Bangor Daily Whig & Courier*.

110 **Gazetteer:** *The New England Gazetteer* (1839) by John Hayward (1781–1862). The volume is unpaginated, but the entries are alphabetic, and Thoreau refers to the one for Penobscot County, Maine.

110 **the boundary question:** See the note for Thoreau's mention of "some troops," page 325 above.

110 **Penobscot county:** Hayward's *Gazetteer* was outdated; in 1846 Katahdin lay in Piscataquis County, as it does today.

110 **Murch Brook:** actually Abol Stream.

111 **Robinson Crusoe:** eponymous hero of Daniel Defoe's 1719 novel.

111 **sitz:** a bath in which one sits; a hip bath.

113 **unhandselled:** unused; untested; untried. The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives this sentence as the second of only two examples, the first being from Emerson: "Out of unhandselled savage nature . . . come at last Alfred and Shakespeare."

113 **lea:** open meadow or pasture.

113 **Matter:** Thoreau is playing with the etymological link between "matter" and "mother."

114 **Balboa:** Vasco Núñez de Balboa (1475–1519), Spanish explorer who first saw the Pacific from the Isthmus of Darien (now the Isthmus of Panama).

114 **"When we first came":** from Hodge writing in Jackson's *Second Annual Report*, p. 68.

115*n* **instant:** current.

119 **of the first water:** of the finest quality; the color or luster of a jewel being its water.

120 ***leucisci*:** generic name for freshwater whitefish—chub, dace, carp, minnows, and so on.

120 **Cabot . . . Raleigh:** British explorers or colonizers of North America: John Cabot (1450?–1498?), Bartholomew Gosnold (d. 1607), John Smith (1580?–1631), and Sir Walter Raleigh (1554–1618).

120 **Americus Vespucius:** Latin name of Amerigo Vespucci (1454–1512), Italian explorer of the coast of South America.

120 **New Holland:** Australia.

121 **Fulton:** Robert Fulton (1765–1815) developed the first useful steamboat in 1807 and ran it up the Hudson River from New York to Albany.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

Thoreau's title for this essay changed over the years. A version was first given as a Concord Lyceum lecture on January 26, 1848, under the title "On the Relation of the Individual to the State." When first published the next year in the journal *Aesthetic Papers*, it was called "Resistance to Civil Government." In 1866, four years after Thoreau died, it was reprinted as "Civil Disobedience" in *A Yankee in Canada, with Anti-Slavery and Reform Papers.* We do not know if Thoreau himself changed the title or if his family and publisher did.

The title "Civil Disobedience" is plausibly Thoreau's, because he argues in the essay against William Paley, a British political philosopher whose book *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* has a chapter titled "The Duty of Civil Obedience."

Whatever the later case, with the earlier "Resistance" title Thoreau distinguishes himself from the pacifist abolitionists who called themselves nonresisters (because they opposed resisting injury with injury, evil with evil). In a manuscript essay called "Reform," Thoreau wrote that "after all the peace lectures and non resistance meetings it was never yet learned from them how any of the speakers would conduct in an emergency, because a very important disputant, one Mr. Resistance was not present to offer his arguments." In this essay, Mr. Resistance speaks.

125 **"That government is best":** motto on the title page of a monthly journal, the *United States Magazine, and Democratic Review*, where the sentence reads "The best government is that which governs least." The quotation comes from the introductory essay to the first issue of the journal (October 1837), written by the editor, John Louis O'Sullivan. Thoreau published the third essay in this collection, "Paradise (To Be) Regained," in the *Democratic Review* in 1843.

125 **standing army:** a permanent army maintained in times of peace and war. Before the American Revolution there were two primary complaints against the standing armies that the king maintained in the American colonies. First, the British constitutional tradition held that a peacetime standing army should exist only by consent of the local community (the Declaration of Independence invokes that tradition when it complains that the king had kept armies in the colonies "without the consent of our legislatures"). Second was the question of civil liberties: What was to stop the government from using a standing army to police civilians?

The Revolutionary War was fought by a combination of the Continental army and local militia. After the war, Congress cut the army to fewer than a hundred soldiers, believing that a large standing army was "dangerous to the liberties of a free people."

125 **the present Mexican war:** 1846–1848, between the United States and Mexico. Many abolitionists opposed the war, fearing that territories won from Mexico would become slave states. Though not a "present war" in 1849, when the essay was first published, it had been so when Thoreau was arrested for refusing to pay his poll tax and when he delivered the earliest version of the essay as a lecture.

126 **no-government men:** Nonresisters such as William Lloyd Garrison and Adin Ballou subordinated "human government" to "divine government" and refused to participate in the former. "We recognize but one King and Lawgiver," Garrison wrote. "We are bound by the laws of a kingdom which is not of this world."

Nonresisters would not hold government office, or bring actions at law, or vote, contending that all governments, even democracies, maintain themselves by coercion (jailing those who refuse to pay taxes, for example) and deeming such coercion contrary to the commands of the Gospel.

127 **powder-monkeys:** young soldiers employed to carry gunpowder from the storehouse to the guns.

127 **Navy-Yard:** the U.S. Navy Yard in Boston.

127 **"Not a drum was heard":** from "The Burial of Sir John Moore at Corunna" by Charles Wolfe (1791–1823).

127 ***posse comitatus*:** a group of citizens summoned by a sheriff to aid in law enforcement.

127 **to be "clay," and "stop a hole":** Shakespeare, *Hamlet* V.i.236–37.

128 **"I am too high-born":** Shakespeare, *King John* V.ii.79–82.

128 **Revolution of '75:** The opening battles of the Revolution were fought in Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775.

128 **a whole country is unjustly overrun:** that is, Mexico.

128 **Paley:** William Paley (1743–1805), British Anglican priest and proponent of theological utilitarianism. Paley's book *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* (1785) was a standard text when Thoreau was a student at Harvard. At home in Concord, the pastor of the First Parish Church read to his parishioners from Paley when they began to stray, Paley's then being a canonical voice of reasonable theology and politics.

In the chapter Thoreau refers to, "The Duty of Submission to Civil Government Explained," Paley sets out "to prove civil obedience to be a moral duty." He considers and rejects the idea that such duty derives from an ancient and enduring social compact, then announces his own proposition: "We assign for the only ground of the subject's obligation, THE WILL OF GOD, AS COLLECTED FROM EXPEDIENCY." The logic that leads to this conclusion he outlines as follows:

> The steps by which the argument proceeds are few and direct.—"It is the will of God that the happiness of human life be promoted:"—this is the first step, and the foundation, not only of this, but of every moral conclusion. "Civil society conduces to that end:"—this is the second proposition. "Civil societies cannot be upheld, unless in each, the interest of the whole society be binding upon every part and member of it:"—this is the third step, and conducts us to the conclusion, namely, that "so long as the interest of the whole society requires it, that is, so long as the established government cannot be resisted or changed without public inconveniency, it is the will of God (which will universally determines our duty) that the established government be obeyed,"—and no longer.
>
> This principle being admitted, the justice of every particular case of resistance is reduced to a computation of the quality of the danger and grievance on the one side, and of the probability and expense of redressing it on the other.

Paley calls his conclusion the "rule of expediency" and says its goal is to augment "the *sum* of public prosperity."

Paley's book was first published in 1785, and the American Revolution was much on his mind, as was the earlier Puritan Revolution. He needs to allow for those events, and thus for fundamental political change, and when he does so, he seemingly supports Thoreau's own position. In particular he admits exceptions to the duty of "submission to civil government":

> It may be as much a duty, at one time, to resist government, as it is, at another, to obey it; to wit, whenever more advantage will . . . accrue to the community, from resistance, than mischief.

But Paley's resistance is not Thoreau's resistance, as becomes apparent when Paley turns to the American Revolution. His defense of civic duty includes the

clause "the interest of the whole society [should] be binding upon every part and member of it," and he returns to the point later in discussing "the question of right between Great Britain and her revolted colonies." He argues that colonies should judge their actions with a view toward increasing the prosperity of the whole. "Had [he] been an American," he writes, he would have felt obliged to ask if "the whole happiness of the empire was likely to be promoted" by the Revolution and concludes that it would not. After all, the empire was large and the colonies small and "thinly populated."

Paley elaborates the tension between part and whole by way of colony and empire, but his point applies as well to conflict between individuals and the nation, citizens being urged to judge any impulse toward resistance in terms of "the whole society." In this manner, Paley's utilitarianism provides the moral and theological rationale for majority rule.

This is precisely where an American interested in ongoing revolution parts company. Thoreau was one of many at the time who worried that democracy ran the risk of replacing the despotism of kings with the despotism of the crowd. His scorn of expediency is thus linked to his refusal to submit matters of conscience to majority rule. Paley proposes an obligation of civic duty that allows for change, even for revolution, but he contains both of these with the arithmetic of collective happiness. Thoreau marks the containing strategy and refuses it. In considering civic obligations, Paley looks first to the good of the collective; Thoreau looks first to his conscience. Thoreau, if forced to choose, would rather preserve rectitude than preserve the nation. "This people must cease to hold slaves," he says, "though it cost them their existence as a people."

129 **unjustly wrested a plank:** Thoreau answers Cicero's question "If a fool should snatch a plank from a wreck, shall a wise man wrest it from him if he is able?" *De officiis* III.xxiii.

129 **he that would save his life:** Luke 9:24; Matthew 10:39.

129 **"A drab of state":** Cyril Tourneur (1575?–1626), *The Revenger's Tragedy* IV.iv.72–73. The first line should read: "A drab of State, a cloath, a silver slut."

129 **a hundred thousand merchants:** The Cotton Whigs of Massachusetts, especially those whose income depended on New England cotton mills, preferred to absent themselves from the politics of slavery.

129 **leaven the whole lump:** paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 5:6.

129 **prices-current:** regularly published lists of the prices at which merchandise has recently been sold.

130 **All voting:** Thoreau is here in accord with the no-government nonresisters, who refused to vote. "If *we* cannot occupy a seat in the legislature, or on the bench, neither can we elect *others* to act as our substitutes in any such capacity," wrote William Lloyd Garrison. Thoreau never voted.

130 **a convention . . . at Baltimore:** the 1848 Democratic Party convention, in which delegates remained silent on the question of slavery. Lewis Cass was nominated as the presidential candidate, later to be defeated by the Whig Zachary Taylor.

130 **Odd Fellow:** a member of a secret benevolent society whose U.S. branch was founded in 1819. The object of the order was declared to be "to visit the sick, relieve the distressed, bury the dead, and educate the orphan, to improve and elevate the character of man."

131 **almshouses:** houses for the common residence of the publicly supported paupers of a town. The almshouse in Concord was on the Walden Road between Walden Pond and the center of town.

131 **virile garb:** the toga virilis, or adult clothing, that a Roman boy was permitted to wear upon reaching age fourteen.

131 **substitute:** someone paid to serve in the military in the place of a conscript.

131 **petitioning the State to dissolve the Union:** the followers of William Lloyd Garrison, for example. The motto of Garrison's journal, *The Liberator*, was "No union with slaveholders."

132 **Copernicus:** Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543), Polish astronomer who argued that the planets revolve around the sun. His work on the solar system was banned by the Catholic Church, but as he died soon after it was published, he was not excommunicated.

132 **Luther:** Martin Luther (1483–1546), German theologian and leader of the Protestant Reformation. He was excommunicated in 1521 by Pope Leo X as a result of his attacks on the wealth and corruption of the papacy and his contention that salvation depended on faith alone, not on works.

132 **nine shillings:** It is not clear why Thoreau uses this sum. In his own case, the tax he refused to pay was $1.50. A shilling is the twentieth part of a British pound and was worth about 23 cents in Thoreau's time, meaning his tax was equivalent to six shillings.

133 **Constitution is the evil:** The U.S. Constitution, being from the outset a compromise between free and slave states, offered no redress in regard to laws upholding slavery. See Section IV of the Introduction.

133 **majority of one:** an idea that goes back to John Knox (1513?–1572), the founder of Scottish Presbyterianism, who declared that "a man with God is always in the majority."

134 **the State's ambassador:** By South Carolina law, "any free negro, or person of color" coming to the state "on board any vessel, as a cook, steward or mariner" had to be taken from the ship while it was in port and confined "closely in jail" until the ship was ready to leave, at which point the ship's captain had to redeem the prisoner by paying "the expenses of his or her commitment." The law had been passed in 1835 as part of a wave of legislation following the 1831 slave revolt led by Nat Turner, the fear being that any free black entering the state might incite further rebellions.

When the state of Massachusetts found its own black citizens being incarcerated in South Carolina, it tried to challenge the law's constitutionality. No one in the South would help bring a test case, however, and thus in 1844 Massachusetts sent one of its own lawyers south with instructions to commence prosecutions in order to settle the question.

The "State's ambassador" for this task was the former congressman from Concord "Squire" Samuel Hoar (1778–1856). As soon as Hoar arrived in Charleston, the South Carolina legislature passed a resolution censuring him for meddling and expelling him from the state. Before he could be apprised of that order, however, white citizens in Charleston forced him from the city under threat of violence.

The incident was incendiary on both sides. In Massachusetts the legislature resolved that the treatment of Hoar was a plausible cause for war between the states. In Charleston, on the other hand, *The Southern Quarterly Review* declared that "if our rights . . . are to be trampled upon without mercy,—let the sword be raised, and the sooner, perhaps, the struggle comes, the better!"

134 **the prisons of Carolina:** It was black seamen, not Samuel Hoar, who were threatened with imprisonment, Thoreau's point being more figurative: Northern reformers are apt to talk of human rights and litigate in distant cities but not to engage in acts of resistance close to home.

134 **Indian come to plead:** This adds a third issue, after slavery and the Mexican War, to Thoreau's complaint.

135 **the Herodians:** followers of King Herod of Judaea. The Pharisees and the Herodians try to trap Jesus in several Gospel versions of the question of paying taxes to Caesar.

135 **"Show me the tribute-money":** Matthew 22:15–22.

135 **"Render therefore to Cæsar":** Matthew 22:15–22.

136 **Confucius:** Chinese philosopher and political theorist (551–479 B.C.) whose *Analects* contain sayings and dialogues compiled by his disciples. Thoreau's quotations from Confucius are usually his own translations from Jean-Pierre-Guillaume Pauthier's *Confucius et Mencius*, 2 vols. (Paris: Charpentier, 1841).

136 **"If a state is governed":** *The Analects* 8.13.

136 **the State met me in behalf of the Church:** For a discussion of the church tax in Concord, see the Introduction, pp. xxiv–xxvi. It is unlikely that Thoreau was threatened with jail for refusing to pay his tax, "signing off" being a common practice at the time.

136 **another man saw fit to pay it:** This might be more of Thoreau's self-dramatizing, as he would have owed no tax once he signed off. Or perhaps someone paid the tax as a matter of decorum. If so, it might have been Samuel Hoar. In 1843 both Bronson Alcott and Charles Lane were arrested for refusal to pay the poll tax, and Hoar paid the tax for them.

136 **schoolmaster:** Thoreau himself was a schoolmaster at the time he refused the First Parish tax. From 1838 to 1841 he and his brother ran the Concord Academy. They charged their students six dollars per quarter. The ministerial poll tax that Thoreau refused was about eight dollars in 1840.

136 **lyceum:** in New England a cooperative town institution for lectures and debates (the name derives from the gymnasium outside Athens where Aristotle taught philosophy). Thoreau was always active in the Concord Lyceum; in 1842–1843 he was its curator and organized the lecture series.

137 **"Know all men":** Thoreau's statement signing off from First Parish is preserved in the Concord Free Public Library. It reads: "Mr Clerk Concord Jan 6th 1841. I do not wish to be considered a member of the First Parish in this town. Henry D. Thoreau."

137 **poll-tax:** A poll is a head and hence a person. It is also an individual enumerated in a list, and hence the list itself, made up to enumerate taxpayers or voters. A poll tax, or capitation, is one levied at so much per head of the adult population. Such taxes had been a standard source of revenue since colonial days.

137 **six years:** The essay was written in 1848 and published in 1849, meaning Thoreau stopped paying taxes in either 1842 or 1843. The former is more likely, because he was living on Staten Island in 1843 and would not have owed taxes in Concord. In either case, it should be noted that the Mexican War is one of the issues Thoreau says he is protesting, but the war did not start until several years after he stopped paying his taxes.

137 **walls of solid stone:** The jail in question was not a small-town lockup but the Middlesex County Jail, three stories high and built of granite blocks.

139 **shire town:** the town that is the seat of county government. Concord and Cambridge both served as Middlesex County seats.

139 **some one interfered:** probably Thoreau's aunt Maria Thoreau.

140 **huckleberry:** the fruit of a New World shrub of the genus *Gaylussacia*, of which there are several species. The most common in Concord is the black huckleberry, which Thoreau calls *Gaylussacia resinosa* and which is now classified as *G. baccata*. In notes for a lecture on huckleberries, Thoreau writes that the Concord berries ripen in the first half of July, "are thick enough to pick about the twenty-second, at their height about the fifth of August, and last fresh till after the middle of that month." Thoreau was arrested on July 23 or 24, and thus was released just as the berries were "thick enough to pick."

140 **tackled:** harnessed.

140 **"My Prisons":** a reference to *Le mie prigioni* (1832), the memoirs of the Italian patriot Silvio Pellico (1789–1854). Thoreau had read an 1836 English translation.

141 **the course of my dollar:** The tax Thoreau paid would not, in fact, have gone to hire a soldier or buy a musket. Concord's poll tax was not a federal tax but a composite levy for the town, county, and (sometimes) state. Neither the town nor the county provided any financial support for slavery or the war with Mexico, and the state of Massachusetts had passed "personal liberty laws" that forbade the use of state resources to support federal fugitive slave laws.

As Lawrence Rosenwald points out, however, "in linking the slave's government and the poll tax, Thoreau was strictly wrong but broadly and prophetically right." After 1850, whenever a fugitive slave was captured in Massachusetts, events soon demonstrated that there were no clear demarcations between town, county, state, and federal governments. In Boston, city police and state militia would soon be called out to support federal troops enforcing the fugitive slave laws, personal liberty laws notwithstanding.

142 **Mussulman:** a Muslim.

142 **Orpheus:** in Greek mythology the poet whose song had the power to charm even inanimate things.

142 **"We must affect our country":** George Peele (1558?–1598?), *The Battle of Alcazar* II.ii.425–30, inexactly copied. These lines were added after the first printing (1849).

142 **the State will soon:** John Broderick suggests that this is "almost certainly a reference to the possibility that the poll tax would be abolished, and, since the poll tax was the only tax for which Thoreau was liable (except the highway tax, which he paid), he would have no opportunity to demonstrate his patriotism by assessing the actions of the state."

143 **no resting-place without:** a reference to Archimedes (287?–212 B.C.), who supposedly said, "Give me a place to stand and I will move the Earth," meaning that if one had a place to put a fulcrum and a long enough lever, one could lift any weight, no matter how large. A similar image of desired metaphysical mechanics recurs in Thoreau. In *Walden* he imagines finding a *point d'appui* (a base or fulcrum) by getting outside "poetry and philosophy and religion." In "Paradise (To Be) Regained" he asserts that love "can move the globe without a resting-place." Here he argues that true political change requires a total removal from politics.

143 **Webster:** Daniel Webster (1782–1852), famous orator and U.S. senator from Massachusetts whose willingness to compromise with the South in order to save the Union was seen as a betrayal by abolitionists.

143 **the men of '87:** that is, 1787, the year of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia.

143 **"I have never made an effort":** taken, slightly altered, from Webster's Senate speech of December 22, 1845, "The Admission of Texas."

143 **"Because it was a part":** The source for this sentence is not known. Webster elaborated the idea in his famous Senate speech of March 7, 1850, "The Constitution and the Union," but that speech was delivered ten months after this essay first appeared in print.

143 **"The manner":** taken, slightly altered, from Webster's Senate speech of August 12, 1848, "Exclusion of Slavery from the Territories."

144 **gird up their loins:** "Let your loins be girded about." Luke 12:35.

144 **Chinese philosopher:** Confucius. See the note for page 136 above. This sentence was added to the text of the first printing (1849).

WALKING

This essay began as an 1851 lecture, "Walking, or the Wild," which grew as Thoreau delivered it over the years until he split it into two lectures, one on walking and one on wildness. These were finally reassembled by Thoreau just before he died, the final essay appearing posthumously in *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1862.

The manuscript page reproduced here is from 1851, as the first sentence implies. It reads: "I feel that I owe my audience an apology for speaking to them tonight on any other subject than the Fugitive Slave Law, on which every man is bound to express a distinct opinion,—but I had prepared myself to speak a word now for *nature*—for absolute freedom & wildness, as compared with a freedom and culture simply civil—to regard man as an inhabitant, or a part and parcel of nature—rather than a member of society. I wish to make an extreme statement, if so I may make an emphatic one—for there are enough champions of civilization—the minister and the school committee—and every one of you will take care of that." The manuscript is in the Houghton Library at Harvard (MS Am278.5, folder 21B).

149 ***sauntering*:** Thoreau takes this false etymology from Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), where "to saunter" is derived as follows: "*aller à la sainte terre*, from idle people who roved about the country, and asked charity under pretence of going *à la sainte terre*, to the holy land; or *sans terre*, as having no settled home." Thoreau may have been led to Johnson by Richard Chenevix Trench's *On the Study of Words* (New York: Redfield, 1852), which paraphrases Johnson in the context of a discussion of Crusades to the Holy Land (pp. 86–87). Lexicographers now say that "saunter" is of obscure origin.

150 **Peter the Hermit:** Peter of Amiens (1050–1115), French monk and one of the leading preachers of the Crusades. In 1096 he led the advance division of the first Crusade as far as Asia Minor. Trench's *On the Study of Words* (see the previous note) mentions him just before the discussion of "saunter." When the abolitionist John Brown attacked Harpers Ferry in 1859, the *Chicago Press and Tribune* compared him to Peter the Hermit: the name belongs to the nineteenth century's list of heroic individualists (see the note for "rural exterior," page 359 below).

150 **embalmed hearts:** Nobles who fell during the Crusades, when it was impossible to send a body home, might have their hearts removed, embalmed, and sent home for burial.

150 **Equestrians, Chevaliers, Ritters:** None of these is an actual order of knights; rather, the etymology of each implies men who ride horses.

150 ***Ambulator nascitur, non fit*:** A walker is born, not made. Thoreau alters the Latin proverb *Poeta nascitur, non fit.*

150 **foresters:** officers appointed to watch or maintain a forest.

151 **"When he came to grene wode":** lines 1777–84 of "A Gest of Robyn Hode," the fullest of the early Robin Hood texts. It was first printed around 1530 but probably composed a century earlier.

151 **three-o'clock-in-the-morning courage:** Emerson's *Representative Men* (1850) contains an essay on Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821) and quotes him as saying: "As to moral courage, I have rarely met with the two-o'clock-in-the-morning kind: I mean unprepared courage; that which is necessary on an unexpected occasion, and which, in spite of the most unforeseen events, leaves full freedom of judgment and decision." The source is Napoleon's *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène* (1823), dictated to Emmanuel de Las Cases.

152 **Wordsworth:** William Wordsworth (1770–1850), English Romantic poet.

153 **mall:** in the nineteenth century, a public walk, both level and shady.

153 **"They planted groves":** Thoreau's source is not known.

153 **"Platanes":** plane trees; in America the plane tree is the sycamore.

153 ***subdiales ambulationes*:** pleasure walks in the open air.

153 **Dahomey:** a kingdom in West Africa, now part of Nigeria. From 1818 to 1858 Dahomey was ruled by King Gezo, who greatly extended the range of his dominions.

154 **quadrivial:** Although "quadrivial" literally means having four roads meeting (as "trivial" means having three roads meeting), Thoreau is inventing a superlative for the common sense of "trivial."

154 ***villa*:** a farm or country house; rightly the root of "village."

154 ***ved*:** Thoreau may be taking the Sanskrit *veda* (knowledge) as a form of "the way."

154 ***vella*:** Thoreau here follows the Roman author Marcus Terentius Varro (116–27 B.C.), who in his book on farming, *De re rustica*, says that the peasants call a farm a *vella* rather than a *villa* because of the connection to *veho*, the verb meaning "to carry." This is not now an accepted etymology.

154 **teaming:** hauling goods with a team (of horses, oxen, and such).

154 ***vellaturam facere*:** See *De re rustica* I.ii.14, where Varro derives "teaming" or "hauling" from *vectura*, cart.

154 ***vilis*:** of small price or value, cheap; common, worthless, vile.

154 ***villain*:** A "villein" is one class of feudal serf, from which "villain" came to mean a brutish peasant.

154 **roadster:** a horse ridden on the road, that is to say, for pleasure or light work rather than for draft.

155 **Menu:** or Manu Vaivasvata, legendary Hindu lawmaker. In 1843 Thoreau selected excerpts for *The Dial* from Sir William Jones's translation of this Sanskrit classic, *Institutes of Hindu Law, or the Ordinances of Menu*, 2 vols. (London: Rivingtons and Cochran, 1825).

155 **Americus Vespucius:** Amerigo Vespucci (1454–1512), Italian explorer of the coast of South America.

155 **Old Marlborough Road:** This road begins about two miles west of Walden Pond and runs southwest toward Marlborough, Massachusetts.

155 **Martial Miles:** a neighbor of Thoreau's whose house was near the Marlborough Road. Elijah Wood and Elisha Dugan were also neighbors.

156 **Quin:** generic Irish name.

156 **guide-boards:** signposts.

156 **Gourgas, Lee, Clark, Darby:** all surnames of Concord families.

156 **Grave:** engrave.

157 **man-traps:** traps formerly set on estates to catch poachers and trespassers. They

have spring-loaded jaws with serrated edges to catch and hold the leg of anyone who steps on the trigger.

158 **settlement of Australia:** Among the initial colonists in Australia were deported felons from England and Ireland.

158 **Tartars:** the Mongolian peoples. Thoreau knew of "the eastern Tartars"—inhabitants of western China—from his 1852 reading of a book by the Christian missionary Évariste Régis Huc, *Recollections of a Journey through Tartary, Thibet, and China, during the Years 1844, 1845, and 1846* . . . (New York: Appleton & Co., 1852). The citation below is from this book. For a good discussion of Thoreau's knowledge of Asia, see chapter 10 of John Aldrich Christie's *Thoreau as World Traveler.*

158 **Thibet:** variant of Tibet.

158 **Lethean stream:** In Greek mythology Lethe is a river in Hades whose waters induce forgetfulness. The Styx is also a river in Hades, across which the dead must be ferried.

159 **"Than longen folk":** lines 12–13 of the "Prologue" to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales.* When spring has come, Chaucer writes, "then folk long to go on pilgrimages, and palmers [pilgrims] to seek out foreign shores."

159 **Atlantis:** in antiquity, a legendary sunken island city lying to the west of the known world. The earliest version of the Atlantis legend is found in Plato's *Timaeus.*

159 **Hesperides:** in Greek mythology, celebrated nymphs, "the Western Maidens," whose garden of golden apples lies at the end of the Western world.

159 **Castile and Leon:** two Spanish kingdoms, united under one rule in 1230. Isabella I and Ferdinand V, the sponsors of Columbus's voyages, had succeeded to the throne of Castile and León in 1474.

159 **"And now the sun had stretched":** the last lines of John Milton's "Lycidas" (emphasis added).

159 **Michaux:** Thoreau quotes from François Michaux's *The North American Sylva*, vol. 1, p. 1. See the note for page 94 of "Ktaadn."

159 **Humboldt:** Baron Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859). He describes the forests of the Amazon in his *Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of America during the Years 1799–1804*, 3 vols. (London: H. G. Bohn, 1852).

160 **Guyot:** Arnold Henry Guyot (1807–1884), Swiss-born geographer who taught at Princeton. Thoreau quotes from his book *The Earth and Man: Lectures on Comparative Physical Geography, in Its Relation to the History of Mankind* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1851), pp. 232–33. As Richard J. Schneider has explained, Guyot's book provided a scientific rationale for the ideology of Manifest Destiny.

160 **The younger Michaux:** the same Michaux as above, here differentiated from his father, André Michaux (1746–1802), also a botanist. Thoreau quotes from Michaux's *Voyage à l'ouest des monts Alléghanys* (Paris: Dentu, 1808).

160 **Head:** Sir Francis Bond Head (1793–1875). In February 1852 Thoreau read his book *The Emigrant* (London: J. Murray, 1847); the following citation comes from page 47.

160 **Buffon:** Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707–1788), celebrated French naturalist. Buffon's encyclopedic *Natural History* (published in forty-four volumes beginning in 1749) had famously announced that nature in the Old World was superior to nature in the New. Compared with the Old World lion, for example, the American lion, or puma, not only has no mane, "it is . . . much smaller, weaker, and more cowardly than the real lion." The Americas have no rhinoceroses, no hippopotamuses, no camels, no giraffes. "Elephants belong to the Old Continent and are not found in the New. . . . One cannot even find there any animal that can be compared to the elephant for size or shape." Buffon suspected that the land and climate caused such diminution, claiming that European domestic animals transported to America become smaller as they acclimate. Finally, he claimed that the natives themselves lack vivacity and liveliness of soul. "The savage is feeble and small in his organs of generation; he has neither body hair nor beard, and no ardor for the female of his kind."

Thomas Jefferson dined with Count Buffon while in Paris serving as American minister and, when the conversation turned to the relative degeneracy of the New World, suggested that the diners rise. The Americans each stood over six feet tall, while the Frenchmen averaged just over five. The count was still not convinced, however, and Jefferson later mounted expeditions to send him antlers, bones, and skins in an effort to correct his misconception.

For a full account of Buffon's ideas and the arguments that followed, see Antonello Gerbi's *The Dispute of the New World* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973). Thoreau knew Buffon through his reading of Joseph Adrien Lelarge de Lignac's *Lettres à un Amériquain sur l'histoire naturelle, générale et particuliere de Monsieur de Buffon* (Hamburg, 1751–1756).

160 **Linnæus:** Carolus Linnaeus, Swedish naturalist. See the note for page 6 of "Natural History of Massachusetts."

161 **"Westward the star of empire":** first line of a poem by George Berkeley (1685–1753), "On the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America." Thoreau substitutes "star" for the original "course." Berkeley was an Anglo-Irish clergyman and philosopher who once traveled to Rhode Island in hopes of establishing a college. Thoreau's source may actually be John Quincy Adams, whose 1802 "Oration at Plymouth" also cites Berkeley and substitutes "star" for "course."

161 **their inheritance:** Under a system of primogeniture, where the eldest son inherits, the younger sons must travel for their fortunes.

161 **panorama:** a painting on a canvas too long to be viewed at once, and so exhibited by being unrolled and made to pass continuously before the viewer. The "panorama of the Mississippi" that Thoreau mentions below was probably the one painted by either Sam Stockwell or John Banvard (1815–1891). At twelve feet high and perhaps five thousand feet long, Banvard's panorama was considered the largest oil painting ever completed. He exhibited it all over the United States and England. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow saw it in Boston in December 1846, just as he was beginning to write *Evangeline*. For more information,

see John Francis McDermott, *The Lost Panoramas of the Mississippi* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

162 **Ehrenbreitstein, Rolandseck, Coblentz:** German cities on the Rhine. Coblentz is also spelled Koblenz.

162 **Nauvoo:** an Illinois town on the Mississippi River. In the early 1840s it was the largest city in the state, ten thousand Mormons having settled there after being driven out of Missouri. In 1846 they were driven farther west, and Nauvoo was abandoned.

162 **Moselle:** river flowing into the Rhine at Koblenz.

162 **Dubuque:** a city on the Mississippi River in northeastern Iowa; also the French-Canadian explorer after whom it is named, Julien Dubuque (1762–1810).

162 **Wenona's Cliff:** Winona, Minnesota, on the Mississippi River, is surrounded by high bluffs.

162 **the Wild:** Thoreau's journal for January 27, 1853, records his reaction to the etymology of this word as given by Trench in *On the Study of Words*, p. 203: "Trench says a wild man is a *willed* man. Well, then, a man of will who does what he wills or wishes, a man of hope and of the future tense, for not only the obstinate is willed, but far more the constant and persevering. The obstinate man, properly speaking, is one who will not. The perseverance of the saints is positive willedness, not a mere passive willingness. The fates are wild, for they *will*; and the Almighty is wild above all."

A recent writer on wilderness, Roderick Nash, agrees on the origins if not the tone: "In the early Teutonic and Norse languages . . . , the root seems to have been 'will' with a descriptive meaning of self-willed, willful, or uncontrollable. From 'willed' came the adjective 'wild' used to convey the idea of being lost, unruly, disordered, or confused." See *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 3rd ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 1.

162 **Romulus and Remus:** in Greek mythology, twin sons of Mars. Abandoned, they were rescued by a she-wolf, then raised by shepherds. Romulus was the legendary founder of Rome.

162 **Hottentots:** aboriginal South African language group, now known as Khoikhoi.

163 **stolen a march:** gained an advantage; anticipated.

163 **Cumming:** Roualeyn George Gordon-Cumming (1820–1866), Scottish sportsman who lived in South Africa in the 1840s. In December 1850 Thoreau read his account *Five Years of a Hunter's Life in the Far Interior of South Africa*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1850). Thoreau refers to vol. 1, p. 218.

163 **"A white man bathing":** from chapter 18, "Tahiti and New Zealand," of Charles Darwin's *Voyage of the "Beagle"* (1839).

163 **"How near to good":** line 296 from a masque, *Love Freed from Ignorance and Folly* (1611), by the English dramatist and poet Ben Jonson (1572–1637).

164 **parterres:** ornamental flower gardens with beds and paths arranged in a pattern.

164 **Dismal Swamp:** the actual one lies on the Virginia–North Carolina border, just southwest of Norfolk.

164 **Burton:** Sir Richard Francis Burton (1821–1890). Thoreau read two of Burton's books: *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El Medinah and Meccah* (New York: G. P. Putnam & Co., 1856) and *The Lake Region of Central Africa* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1860). The citation is from the first of these, p. 101.

165 **Tartary:** western China and Tibet. See the note for "Tartars," page 340 above. The citation is from Father Huc's *Recollections of a Journey through Tartary.*

165 ***sanctum sanctorum*:** the holy of holies (often used in reference to the innermost chamber of the old Temple of Jerusalem, where the Ark of the Covenant was kept).

165 **the Reformer:** St. John the Baptist, whose desert food was locusts and wild honey (Matthew 3:3–4).

165 **they sold bark:** as a source of tannic acid, used in tanning hides.

165 **"to work the virgin soil":** from Guyot, *The Earth and Man*, p. 236, as above.

166 **bushwhack:** a short, heavy scythe for cutting bushes.

166 **mallard:** The *Oxford English Dictionary* reports the conjecture that the English "mallard" derives from the Old High German *Madelhart*, which in turn may have been the name for the wild duck in a Germanic beast-epic, now lost. Thoreau's source for the etymological link is not known.

166 **'mid falling dews:** paraphrase of the opening line of "To a Waterfowl" by William Cullen Bryant (1794–1878).

166 **Lake Poets:** the English Romantics, especially Wordsworth and Coleridge.

167 **Augustan . . . Elizabethan age:** figuratively, golden ages or expansive times, both Augustus Caesar (63 B.C.–A.D. 14) in Rome and Elizabeth I (1533–1603) in England having ruled during periods of high cultural achievement.

167 **dragon-tree of the Western Isles:** a huge tree, *Dracaena draco*, of the Canary Islands that yields a resin called dragon's blood. Thoreau read of the great age of the dragon-tree in Alexander von Humboldt's *Views of Nature* (London: H. G. Bohn, 1849), p. 269.

168 **"indicate a faint":** from Robert Hunt, *The Poetry of Science, or Studies of the Physical Phenomena of Nature* (Boston: Gould, Kendall, & Lincoln, 1850), p. 269.

168 **fossil tortoise:** "Although the idea of an elephant standing on the back of a tortoise was often laughed at as an absurdity, Captain Cautley and Dr. Falconer at length discovered in the hills of Asia the remains of a tortoise in a fossil state of such a size that an elephant could easily have performed the feat" (Hunt, *Poetry of Science*, p. 270).

168 **partridge loves peas:** a Wolof proverb, Wolof being the dominant language of those living in the Senegal-Gambia region of western Africa. Thoreau's source for the proverb is not known.

169 **Confucius:** *The Analects* 12.8. See the note for page 136 of "Civil Disobedience." This remark about animal skins is from Pauthier, vol. 1, p. 140.

171 **heating manures:** a reference to the use of the composted manure, warmed by its own decay, that served as the bottom layer of a hotbed for forcing plants in early spring.

171 **Niepce:** In 1826 the French inventor Joseph-Nicéphore Niépce (1765–1833) made the first permanent photographic images using a bitumen-coated plate exposed in a camera obscura. Thoreau's citations come from Hunt, *Poetry of Science*, pp. 133–34. The language belongs to Hunt, not to Niépce.

171 **Cadmus:** In Greek mythology Cadmus brings the initial letters of the alphabet from Phoenicia to Greece.

171 ***Gramática parda*:** *Gramática* means grammar or knowledge, and *parda* means dun colored or brownish gray, but the phrase *gramática parda* means native wit, horse sense, worldly wisdom, instinctive knowledge.

171 **Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge:** Founded in London in 1826, the society's aim was to "impart useful information to all classes of the community, particularly to such as are unable to avail themselves of experienced teachers, or may prefer learning by themselves." It published books, maps, and a journal, *The Penny Magazine* (1832–1845). A Boston Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge was organized in 1828; its first president was Daniel Webster.

172 **more things in heaven and earth:** Shakespeare, *Hamlet* I.v.166.

172 **Chaldean Oracles:** A recent commentary tells us that "the Chaldean Oracles are a collection of abstruse, hexameter verses purported to have been 'handed down by the gods' . . . to a certain Julian the Chaldean and/or his son, Julian the Theurgist, who flourished during the late second century C.E." No full text survives from antiquity, only fragments cited by various ancient authors. Rather than referring to ancient Chaldea, "Chaldean" means metaphorically that the author was adept in magic or was associated with the wisdom of the East. In a modern translation, the line that Thoreau cites reads, in its context: "For there exists a certain Intelligible which you must perceive by the flower of mind. For *if you should* incline your mind toward it and *perceive it as a specific thing, you would not perceive it.*" See Ruth Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles* (Leiden and New York: E. J. Brill, 1989), especially pp. 48–49. Thoreau's source is not known.

172 **Vishnu Purana:** the best known of the eighteen Puranas, a group of Sanskrit scriptures. Thoreau quotes from *Vishnupurāna. The Vishñu Puráńa: A System of Hindu Mythology and Tradition* (London: J. Murray, 1840).

173 **Dante, Bunyan:** Dante Alighieri (1265–1321), author of *The Divine Comedy*, and John Bunyan (1628–1688), author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, a religious allegory.

173 **Mahomet:** or Muhammad (570?–632), the prophet of Islam. Thoreau's knowledge of Islam came from Washington Irving's *Mahomet and His Successors*, 2 vols. (New York: George P. Putnam, 1850), and from travel narratives such as Burton's *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El Medinah and Meccah.*

173 **"Gentle breeze":** lines 2–5 of "Ca-Lodin," in Patrick Macgregor, *The Genuine Remains of Ossian, Literally Translated* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1841), p. 121. "Loira" is the name of a stream.

Ossian is a legendary Gaelic hero and bard of the third century A.D. In the late eighteenth century the Scottish poet James Macpherson (1736–1796) published *The Poems of Ossian*, which purported to be translations of the ancient bard but which were actually a creative mixture of translations from surviving Gaelic texts and imaginative additions by Macpherson himself. The Ossian that Thoreau knew was not Macpherson's, however, but Patrick Macgregor's later translations from Gaelic.

For a good explanation of the Ossian-Macpherson story, see Fiona Stafford's introduction to *The Poems of Ossian*, ed. Howard Gaskill (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996). In Macpherson's version of Ossian, the poem Thoreau cites is titled "Cath-loda."

173 **moss-trooper:** one who ranges over mosses or bogs; in the seventeenth century a marauder inhabiting the borderlands of England and Scotland.

174 **Spaulding's Farm:** an invented site.

174 **not as in knots and excrescences embayed:** that is, not manifested or made obvious, "embayed" being a poetic way of saying "bathed" or "steeped."

175 **mast:** food, especially acorns, beechnuts, and such.

175 **Shanghai and Cochin-China:** breeds of poultry imported from China.

177 **Elysium:** the paradise of Homeric Greek mythology, lying at the westernmost edge of the world.

SLAVERY IN MASSACHUSETTS

Prompted by the affair of the fugitive slave Anthony Burns (1834–1862), described below, Thoreau first delivered a portion of this essay as a lecture in Framingham, Massachusetts, on July 4, 1854. The entire essay was then published in William Lloyd Garrison's abolitionist newspaper, *The Liberator*, July 21, 1854. At the time, proofs for *Walden* had arrived, but *Walden* itself was not published until August.

181 **meeting of the citizens of Concord:** Emerson and Samuel Hoar called a meeting on June 22, 1854, to condemn the Kansas-Nebraska Act, to urge the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law, and to begin organizing a new antislavery party. The Republican Party came into being through this and other meetings held that summer in Massachusetts.

181 **destiny of Nebraska:** The Kansas-Nebraska Act had been passed by Congress on May 24, 1854, the same day that the fugitive slave Anthony Burns was arrested in Boston. The act left the question of slavery up to the settlers in Kansas and Nebraska, and thus repealed the Missouri Compromise, which had forbidden slavery in the northern part of the Louisiana Purchase. For a fuller discussion, see Section IV of the Introduction.

181 **citizens of Massachusetts are now in prison:** Abolitionists attacked the Boston Court House, attempting (and failing) to free the fugitive slave Burns. A deputy U.S. marshal, James Batchelder, was killed in the attack, and twelve of the men who led the assault were being held, charged variously with riot, assault, interfering with a federal officer, and murder. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a friend of Thoreau's, was one of those being held.

181 **their own bridges:** The key event of the 1775 Battle of Concord was the successful defense of the town's North Bridge against the advancing British.

181 **Buttricks, and Davises, and Hosmers:** Major John Buttrick, Captain Isaac Davis, and Abner Hosmer took part in the defense of the North Bridge in the Battle of Concord. Davis and Hosmer were killed.

181 **Lexington Common:** British redcoats met Massachusetts militia on the common early in the morning of April 19, 1775. This was the first battle of the Revolutionary War, followed the same day by the Battle of Concord.

181 **Fugitive Slave Law:** a federal law passed in 1850 that made it much more difficult for fugitive slaves to find refuge in the North. See Section IV of the Introduction.

181 **compromise compact of 1820:** the Missouri Compromise. See Section IV of the Introduction.

182 **full of armed men:** Federal and state troops had secured the Boston Court House after the attempt to free Burns.

182 **Loring:** Edward Greely Loring, Boston judge of probate and U.S. commissioner under the Fugitive Slave Law. Loring had written several articles in defense of that law.

182 **Governor:** Emory Washburn (1800–1877). Washburn, a Whig attorney, and his party were handily defeated in the next election as a consequence of their handling of the Burns affair.

Thoreau's scorn of "the Governor" appears in his 1851 journal entries on the Sims case (see below), and the target then would have been Governor George S. Boutwell (1818–1905). In fact, Thoreau never mentions Boutwell or Washburn by name, and neither man played much of a public role in the fugitive-slave cases. Thus it is the generic term Thoreau intends, for he wants to cast the conflict in terms of morals (there can be no real "governor" without conscience) and in terms of states' rights (the executive officer should act if state and federal laws are at odds).

182 **Simm's:** In April 1851 the fugitive slave Thomas Simms (or Sims) was captured in Boston and sent back to Savannah, Georgia, where he was given a nearly fatal public whipping.

183 **speech to his accomplices:** Five days after Burns was sent back to Virginia, Governor Washburn spoke at a dinner honoring one of the militia units that had helped secure the courthouse.

183 **recent law:** Massachusetts's 1843 "Latimer Law" (named in honor of a fugitive slave, George Latimer). One of a series of Personal Liberty Laws, this statute sought to nullify the federal Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 by making it illegal for the state of Massachusetts to aid in the capture and remanding of slaves.

183 **replevin:** Two lawyers prepared writs of personal replevin in the Burns case. Like a writ of habeas corpus, a writ of replevin is meant to force a hearing to decide if a prisoner is being legally held. Provisions for such writs had been added to the Massachusetts code as part of the Personal Liberty Law of 1837, intended to help fugitive slaves. These writs had no standing in federal courts, and in this case one of them was denied, the other ignored.

183 **Anthony Burns:** a fugitive slave, arrested in Boston in May and sent back to Virginia on June 2, 1854. See the Introduction, p. xxxiv.

183 **military force of the State:** After the abolitionist assault on the courthouse, the mayor of Boston called out two companies of Massachusetts militia to guard the building. A few days later, when Commissioner Loring remanded Burns, the mayor put the city under martial law. Federal troops were also involved (with the express approval of President Franklin Pierce), and by the time martial law was declared, the state's militia had effectively been federalized.

All these things were illegal under the state's "Latimer Law."

183 **Suttle:** Charles F. Suttle of Alexandria, Virginia, was Burns's master. He had traveled to Boston, had Burns arrested, and took him back to Virginia.

184 **citizen of Massachusetts from being kidnapped:** the "citizen" being Burns. Abolitionists described the remanding of slaves as kidnapping.

184 **rob Mexico:** The United States acquired a great deal of land, including all of California, as a result of the Mexican War (1846–1848). See Section IV of the Introduction.

184 **the 19th of April, 1775:** date of the Battles of Lexington and Concord; the beginning of the American Revolution.

184 **the 12th of April, 1851:** date that the fugitive slave Sims was sent from Boston back to Georgia.

185 **Edward G. God:** a stab at Boston's fugitive-slave commissioner, Edward G. Loring.

185 **Webster:** Daniel Webster (1782–1852), who had supported the compromise of 1850, including the Fugitive Slave Law.

185 **the dirt-bug and its ball:** a dung beetle, such as the American *Phanaeus vindex*, that makes a ball of dung to bury with its egg.

186 **Boxboro:** a small Massachusetts town northwest of Concord.

188 ***Liberator* and *Commonwealth*:** *The Liberator* was William Lloyd Garrison's abolitionist journal; the *Commonwealth* was a Free-Soil paper dedicated to keeping slavery out of the western territories.

188 **time-serving:** obsequiously complying with the humors of men in power.

188 **Mitchell's *Citizen*; Boston *Post*, *Mail*, *Journal*, *Advertiser*, *Courier*, and *Times*; Boston *Herald*:** contemporary newspapers, mostly from Boston. *The Citizen*, published in New York by John Mitchel (1815–1875), addressed itself to the Irish and supported slavery.

188 **groggery:** a tavern.

189 **Do what you will . . . with my wife and children:** an ironic reference to a famous speech by the Unitarian minister Orville Dewey (1794–1882), in which he had announced that he would prefer to see his brother, his son, even himself enslaved than to sacrifice the Union.

189 **expediency:** a key term in William Paley's *Principles of Moral and Political Philos-*

ophy, a standard text that Thoreau read in college. See the note on Paley for page 128 of "Civil Disobedience."

190 **Mammon:** the god or personification of riches and worldliness. Luke 16:13: "No servant can serve two masters. . . . You cannot serve God and mammon."

190 **Seventh Day:** Quaker term for Sunday. The earlier version of this, in Thoreau's journal for June 16, 1854, reads: "Your countrymen . . . steadily worship mammon—and on the seventh day curse God with a tintamarre from one end of the *Union* to the other."

190 **tintamar:** a confused noise; an uproar.

192 **scoriæ:** plural of "scoria": dross; cinder; slag.

192 **villa:** Andrew Jackson Downing's 1841 book, *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*, initiated a mid-nineteenth-century fad in the building of villas. The term meant not a large country house but a simple woodland or lakeside cottage, such as Thoreau built at Walden Pond.

192 **Court street:** site of the state courthouse where Burns was imprisoned.

193 **white water-lily:** Burns was sent back to Virginia on June 2, 1854; Thoreau spoke on July 4. His journal for June 16 includes this entry: "*Nymphæa odorata.* Again I scent the white water-lily, and a season I had waited for is arrived."

193 ***Nymphæa Douglasii*:** an invented variant on the scientific name of the water lily. Thoreau's target is either Stephen Douglas (1813–1861), Democratic senator from Illinois, or Frederick Douglass (1817–1895), the abolitionist and former slave, whose slave narrative had been published in 1845.

Senator Douglas was instrumental in passing the Compromise of 1850, a package of bills that included the Fugitive Slave Law. He also presented the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Later, in the 1858 presidential campaign, he famously debated Abraham Lincoln.

Frederick Douglass was a compromiser to some abolitionists, because he was willing to work with the Constitution, reading it for its promise of freedom, not for its acceptance of slavery.

In the first printing of Thoreau's essay, published by William Lloyd Garrison in *The Liberator*, the phrase reads "*Nymphæa Douglassii*," making Douglass the target. This makes some sense, because both Thoreau and Garrison questioned the authority of the Constitution (at the July 4 antislavery rally where Thoreau first read the essay, Garrison had read out the pro-slavery clauses in the Constitution, and then burned the document).

The first book publication of the essay, in *A Yankee in Canada, with Anti-Slavery and Reform Papers* (1866), also prints the phrase as "*Nymphæa Douglassii.*"

Later editions print the phrase as "*Nymphæa Douglasii,*" which to my mind makes more sense, because Stephen Douglas's willingness to compromise was the issue of the day.

LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE

A version of this essay was first given as a lecture in December 1854. Thoreau delivered it (under various titles, typically "What Shall It Profit a Man?") seven or eight more times over the next six years. It was finally published with the present title as one of the group of essays Thoreau prepared just before his death, appearing posthumously in *The Atlantic Monthly*, October 1863.

197 **superficies:** outer surfaces.

197 **go to law for my meat:** press me for my substance (the metaphoric "meat" here being that of a nut or a shellfish).

198 **making a minute:** writing a note.

198 **bank-wall:** a retaining wall to control erosion.

199 **Dexter:** Timothy Dexter (1747–1806), a rich merchant and self-proclaimed "Lord" from Newburyport, Massachusetts, was a study in pretentiousness and eccentricity.

199 **Chancery:** a Court of Chancery, which settled matters of debt or equity.

199 **pipe of wine:** a cask; a wine measure of about one hundred gallons. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the poet laureate annually received a cask of wine from the king.

200 **cord-wood:** A cord of firewood is 128 cubic feet, usually stacked 4 feet by 4 feet by 8 feet.

200 **tunnel a mountain:** In 1848 a firm was hired—for two million dollars—to tunnel through Hoosac Mountain in northeastern Massachusetts. Supposed to take five years, the project lasted eleven and cost fourteen million dollars.

201 **mess of pottage:** In Genesis 25:32–34, Esau sells his birthright to Jacob for "bread and pottage of lentils."

201 **"Greatness doth not":** from a fable found in *The Hĕĕtōpădēs of Vĕĕshnŏŏ-Sărmā.* See the note for page 59 of "Paradise (To Be) Regained."

202 **rush to California:** Gold was discovered in central California in January 1848, and the gold rush began the following spring.

202 **Mahomet:** See the note for page 173 of "Walking."

202 **upon a tree:** an allusion to Judas Iscariot's suicide after his betrayal of Jesus, Matthew 27:5.

203 **muck-rake:** allusion to John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* in which a man "that could look no way but downward" thus fails to see an offer to trade his muck rake for a celestial crown.

203 **Howitt:** William Howitt (1792–1879), English poet and travel writer. In October 1855 Thoreau read his book *Land, Labor, and Gold; or, Two Years in Victoria; with Visits to Sydney and Van Diemen's Land*, 2 vols. (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1855). Thoreau's citations below are from vol. 1, p. 21.

203 **Australian gold-diggings:** The Australian gold rush began in New South Wales in 1851. Ballarat and Bendigo are cities in southeastern Australia founded during the gold rush.

204 **cradles:** troughs on rockers in which gold-bearing dirt is shaken in water to separate and collect the gold.

204 **toms:** stationary troughs for washing gold from gravel.

205 **Isthmus of Darien:** the Isthmus of Panama. The *New-York Daily Tribune*, September 29, 1859, reported the story Thoreau comments on in this paragraph.

205 **New Granada:** old name of Colombia.

205 ***guacas*:** tombs or funeral mounds.

205 **Boca del Toro:** an inlet on the east coast of Panama.

205 **Burker:** one who murders by suffocation in order to sell the body for dissection. The word derives from a notorious criminal, William Burke (1792–1829), who was executed for this crime in Edinburgh.

205 ***illuminati*:** enlightened ones.

206 **Kane:** Elisha Kent Kane (1820–1857), American physician and explorer who joined an expedition to the Arctic, 1850–1851, that went in search of Sir John Franklin (1786–1847). Franklin, also an Arctic explorer, had last been heard from in the summer of 1845; the remains of his expedition were not found until 1859. The Masons (or Freemasons) are an international fraternal order.

206 **D. D.s:** Doctors of Divinity; ministers.

207 **Kossuth:** Lajos Kossuth (1802–1894), Hungarian patriot who tried unsuccessfully to establish an independent Hungarian republic in the late 1840s. He traveled and lectured in the United States, 1851–1852, stopping in Concord on May 11, 1852. Emerson introduced him on that occasion, so when Thoreau says that speeches for Kossuth expressed a "want of thought," he is sparring with his friend.

207 **Kossuth hat:** As Bradley Dean has explained, this was a black felt hat with the left side of the brim fastened to the crown and ornamented with a feather. John Nicholas Genin (1819–1878) owned a hat store in New York City in 1852 and had a warehouse full of dusty old black felt hats that he had been unable to sell. After modifying these hats to look similar to the hat Kossuth wore, Genin slipped aboard Kossuth's ship soon after it arrived in New York and distributed several of these hats to Kossuth's followers. When Kossuth and his cohorts were paraded through the city, "the arbiters of high fashion decreed that these 'Kossuth hats' were 'all the go,' " and a fad was born that eventually generated an estimated half-million dollars.

207 **serve two masters:** Luke 16:13: "No servant can serve two masters. . . . You cannot serve God and mammon."

207 **sporules:** spores.

207 ***thallus*:** young shoot or twig; a plant body not yet differentiated into stem, root, or leaf.

208 **live and move:** Acts 17:28.

208 **Tartars, Huns:** invading peoples, the Tartars being Turkic and Mongolian peoples who entered eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, and the Huns being nomads who invaded Europe in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D.

208 **"I look down":** from "Carric, a Poem," in Patrick Macgregor, *The Genuine Remains of Ossian, Literally Translated* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1841), p. 160. Thoreau silently drops four lines. "Lodin" in the Ossian poems is sometimes identified with the Norse god Odin. In James Macpherson's eighteenth-century edition of the Ossian material, the poem is titled "Carric-Thura," and Lodin is called Loda. See the note for "Gentle breeze," page 173 of "Walking."

208 **lumber:** to burden uselessly; to encumber.

208 **hypæthral:** open to the sky.

209 ***sanctum sanctorum*:** See the note for page 165 of "Walking."

209 **coggy:** fitted with cogs, as a machine.

209 **Parnassian:** of Mount Parnassus, home of the Muses.

209 **macadamized:** paved. John McAdam (1756–1836) invented a way to make a road by putting down layers of broken stone topped with stone dust.

210 **asphaltum:** asphalt.

210 **fane:** a temple, church, holy place.

210 **Pompeii:** ancient Italian city southeast of Naples, destroyed by an eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79. The ruins were discovered in 1748.

210 **"*ne quid res*-PRIVATA":** from Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Orations* (Boston, 1831), "Oratio pro Milone," lines 26–70. Cicero actually writes *respublica*, which Thoreau changes to '*res*-PRIVATA'." The Latin *res publica* means the public thing.

211 **quarter troops:** The paragraph recalls the Declaration of Independence, whose list of complaints against King George includes his "imposing Taxes on us without our Consent" and "quartering large Bodies of Armed Troops among us."

211 **Jonathans:** colloquial name for Americans.

211 **Irish question:** the question of Irish independence from Great Britain, and of relations between Catholics and Protestants, these perennial problems having been exacerbated by the potato famine of the 1840s and the economic changes brought on by the Industrial Revolution.

211 **natures are subdued:** Shakespeare, Sonnet 111, lines 6–7: "My nature is subdu'd / To what it works in, like the dyer's hand."

211 **knee-buckles:** breeches fastened at the knee with a small buckle. Small-clothes are close-fitting breeches fastened at the knee, but with buttons instead of a buckle. Both were fashionable during the late eighteenth century.

211 **cabinet of curiosities:** a display of rare and odd items.

211 **Decker:** Thomas Dekker (1570?–1632?), English dramatist. The remark about Christ comes from a play, *The Honest Whore*, by Dekker and Thomas Middleton (1570?–1627), act I, scene 13, line 777.

211 **Transalpine:** situated beyond the Alps, especially from Rome.

211 **Numas, Lycurguses, and Solons:** legendary lawgivers of the ancient world, Numa Pompilius in seventh-century Rome, Lycurgus in ninth-century Sparta, and Solon in sixth-century Athens.

212 **vessel:** On July 19, 1850, the ship *Elizabeth*, carrying Margaret Fuller-Ossoli, her husband, and their infant child from Leghorn (Livorno), Italy, wrecked off Fire

Island, New York. Thoreau traveled to the scene from Concord in hopes of retrieving the Ossolis' bodies and effects, though he came home with little more than a button from one of their coats, scavengers having picked the beaches clean in the five days it took Thoreau to arrive.

212 **bitters:** medicines, usually alcoholic, used to sharpen appetite, stimulate digestion, expel intestinal worms, and so on. The oils of both juniper berries and bitter almonds were possible ingredients.

212 **Herndon:** William Lewis Herndon (1813–1857), American naval officer. In 1851–1852 he was one leader of a party sent to explore the Amazon and its Peruvian tributaries. He was a co-author of *Exploration of the Valley of the Amazon* (Washington, D.C.: R. Armstrong, 1853–1854); Thoreau quotes from vol. 1, p. 251. Herndon was from Virginia and suggests in his book that Southern planters might "remove their slaves to [Brazil, and] cultivate its lands."

213 **Po:** the largest river in Italy.

213 **Fort Independence:** the army garrison in Boston Harbor.

213 ***infra*-human:** beneath the human.

213 **into quarters:** Thoreau refers to the proliferation of parties after the Compromise of 1850 began to undermine the old opposition between Whigs and Democrats.

214 **life . . . a forgetting:** allusion to William Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality," lines 59ff.

214 ***eu*peptics:** those with *good* digestion.

AUTUMNAL TINTS

This essay, begun in 1857, was first delivered as a lecture in February 1859. Thoreau would illustrate the talk with specimen autumn leaves mounted on white cardboard. When he sent a final text to *The Atlantic Monthly*, he gave instructions for them to print exactly the outline of a large scarlet oak leaf, as reproduced on page 216. *The Atlantic Monthly* eventually printed "Autumnal Tints" in October 1862, five months after Thoreau died.

217 **Thomson:** James Thomson (1700–1748), Scottish poet. Thoreau cites from *The Seasons,* "Autumn," lines 948–52 and 1051.

217 **"Imbrown":** embrown; that is, make brown or darken.

218 **physiologist:** William Carpenter (1813–1885), British naturalist. Thoreau paraphrases Carpenter's remarks on the death of leaves. See *Vegetable Physiology and Botany* (London: Wm. S. Orr and Co., 1854), p. 199.

218 **pellicle:** skin.

218 **"parenchyma":** Carpenter, *Vegetable Physiology*, p. 307. The parenchyma are the thin-walled cells forming the primary tissue of leaves.

219 **brakes:** ferns.

220 **selvages:** the edges of a fabric woven so that it will not fray. Thoreau uses the word more aptly in *Walden*: "The trees have ample room to expand on the water side, and each sends forth its most vigorous branch in that direction. There Nature has woven a natural selvage."

220 **timothy:** a grass of the genus *Phleum*, in this case probably *P. alpinum*, widely cultivated for hay. The name derives from Timothy Hanson, an eighteenth-century American farmer who dispersed the seed.

220 **culm:** the stem of a grass or similar plant.

220 ***lacca*, from *lac*, lake:** Lake is a pigment made from vegetable matter. Poke is a source of red lake, thus its genus name.

221 **pipes:** See the note for page 199 of "Life without Principle."

221 **ensanguined:** stained as if with blood.

221 **andropogons:** a large genus of grasses. The Greek roots mean "man + beard," the male flowers having plumose beards. There are about twenty-five species in the United States, where they are also known as broom grasses or broom sedge.

222 **upland haying:** In Thoreau's day, the ecologist David R. Foster writes, "the term 'meadow' had a specific and quite restricted meaning, referring to the grassy and uncultivated lowland areas bordering rivers and similar sites of low, moist vegetation. Fields on the uplands might consist of cultivated grains, scraggly pastures of chewed and matted grasses, thistles and shrubs, or 'mowings' covered with imported English grasses" (*Thoreau's Country*, pp. 47–48).

222 **horse-raking:** A horse rake is a large, horse-drawn rake.

222 **whetting of my scythe:** an allusion to John Milton, "L'Allegro" ("the Mower whets his sithe").

222 **August . . . commencements:** Nineteenth-century college commencements were held toward the end of August; Thoreau's from Harvard, for example, was August 30, 1837.

222 **guide-board:** signpost.

223 **congeners:** others belonging to the same taxonomic genus.

225 ***rubric*:** both *rubrum*, the species name of the red maple, and "rubric" (meaning a name or title) share a Latin root (*ruber*, red), the latter because the titles of laws were once written in red.

225 **Michaux:** François Michaux, *North American Sylva*. See the note for page 94 of "Ktaadn."

226 **tithing-men:** in early New England, town officers elected to police the general morals.

227 ***ulmarium*:** a plantation or nursery of elms.

227 **blasted:** dried or blighted. "Pig-corn" is corn grown for animal feed; "cob-meal" is made from corncobs ground down.

228 ***Lycopodium lucidulum*:** a species of club moss.

228 **Aaron's rod:** a magic staff. In the Bible, Aaron's rod variously turns into a serpent (Exodus 7:10), turns the waters of Egypt to blood (Exodus 7:14–24), and sprouts buds, blossoms, and ripe almonds (Numbers 17:8).

228 **Assabet:** river just north of Concord that joins with the Sudbury River to form the Concord River.

229 **knee:** in shipbuilding, a piece of timber with an angular bend, used to secure the beams of a ship to its sides.

229 **Charon:** in Greek mythology the ferryman who carries the shades of the dead over the river Styx. "Charon's boat" is also the name of a boat-shaped leaf (*cymbifolius*).

229 **coppers:** boilers or kettles.

230 **discounting:** One dictionary Thoreau used, John Walker's *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary* (1823), defines "to discount" as "to count, to pay back again."

230 **sulphur:** It is not clear why one might haggle over "sulphur." Farmers in Thoreau's day carted muck from swamps and low meadows to improve their upland soils. Perhaps a smell of sulfur was a sign of good muck. Or perhaps this is a reference to the fact that farmers spread gypsum, calcium sulfate, as a fertilizer, gypsum being widely used as ballast in ships.

230 **weeds:** widows' weeds, or mourning clothes.

231 **Mount Auburn:** The 1830s saw the beginnings of the "rural cemetery movement," the planting of "gardens for the dead." Mount Auburn, the first important landscaped cemetery, was established in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1831. Greenwood Cemetery, in Brooklyn, New York, soon followed.

231 **huckleberry-bird:** the field or rush sparrow. Thoreau called it *Fringilla juncorum,* following Thomas Nuttall; the current scientific name is *Spizella pusilla.*

232 **make some odds:** make a difference.

232 **paper-stainers:** makers of wallpaper.

232 **Naples yellow . . . Tyrian purple:** prepared pigments, Naples yellow being a light yellow based on antimoniate lead, Prussian blue a royal blue based on ferrocyanide of iron, raw Sienna a yellow-brown ocherous earth from Italy, burnt Umber a red-brown ocherous earth from Umbria, Gamboge a transparent yellow derived from plant resin, and Tyrian purple a crimson derived from the juices of various shellfish. This last supposedly came from the Mediterranean city of Tyre and was the most celebrated purple dye of the ancient world.

233 **cabinet-keepers:** keepers of cabinets of curiosities. See the note for page 211 of "Life without Principle."

233 **Nabobs, Begums, and Chobdars:** In India, a nabob was a provincial governor under the Mogul Empire and, figuratively, someone fond of luxury; begums were princesses or ranking ladies; chobdars were a superior class of footmen.

233 **costs no powder:** no gunpowder; that is, for firing ceremonial guns.

233 **liberty-pole:** a flagstaff set up in honor of liberty, usually topped with a liberty cap.

233 **cornwallis:** a muster of soldiers in masquerade commemorating the end of the Revolutionary War, the British general Charles Cornwallis having surrendered on October 19, 1781.

234 **shaking of props:** a reference to a gambling game popular in Boston in the 1850s. Props was a kind of dice game using small white seashells that were shaken in the hand and then thrown on a table.

234 **fluviatile egg-pop:** fluvial eggnog.

234 **ivy *never sere*:** allusion to Milton, "Lycidas," line 2.

234 **C——:** Concord (in Thoreau's journal draft of the passage, October 18, 1858). It was *The Atlantic Monthly*'s editorial policy to employ this anonymous form for all proper nouns used, as here, in an unflattering context.

235 **spiritual communication:** Crackings or knockings were believed to signify the presence of a spirit. In a letter to his sister Sophia on July 13, 1852, Thoreau refers to "idiots inspired by the cracking of a restless board, humbly asking, 'Please, Spirit, if you cannot answer by knocks, answer by tips of the table'!!!!!!"

235 **"Wrought in a sad sincerity":** from Emerson's poem "The Problem." Thoreau has changed the italicized words. The original refers to the architects of Christian churches and reads: "They builded better than they knew;— / The conscious stone to beauty grew."

235 **twelve species:** Thoreau owned Asa Gray's *Manual of the Botany of the Northern United States* (Boston: J. Munroe, 1848), which lists eighteen species of oak. The twelve local species Thoreau had likely seen are the scrub oak (*Quercus ilicifolia*), the black oak (*velutina*, then called *tinctoria*), the chestnut oak (*prinus*), the dwarf chinquapin oak (*prinoides*), the scarlet oak (*coccinea*), the shingle oak (*imbricaria*), the mossy-cup or bur oak (*macrocarpa*), the pin oak (*palustris*), the red oak (*rubra*), the swamp white oak (*bicolor*, then called *prinus discolor*), the white oak (*alba*), and the willow oak (*phellos*).

236 **arrow-headed character:** cuneiform script such as that used in ancient Sumerian, Assyrian, and Persian writing.

236 **Rosetta Stone:** the famous tablet bearing inscriptions in Greek, Egyptian hieroglyphic, and demotic scripts. It provided the key to deciphering hieroglyphics.

236 **embayed:** a poetic way of saying "bathed" or "steeped." Thoreau seems to intend a pun as well: the eye is bathed, but also held as if in a bay.

237 **friths:** firths, long narrow inlets of the sea.

237 **Dionysius:** Thoreau's journal entry for July 29, 1857, includes this: "Loudon in his 'Arboretum,' vol. iv, page 2038, says, 'Dionysius the geographer compares the form of the Morea in the Levant, the ancient Peloponnesus, to the leaf of this tree [the Oriental plane]; and Pliny makes the same remark in allusion to its numerous bays." Dionysius is probably Dionysius Periegetes (fourth century A.D.), the author of a geographical poem, *Oikumenes Periegesis.*

237 **Pliny:** Pliny the Elder (23–79), a celebrated Roman naturalist.

237 **Morea:** the Peloponnesus, the peninsula forming the southern portion of Greece.

237 **Oriental plane tree:** *Platanus orientalis*; the related American species is the sycamore or buttonwood, *P. occidentalis.*

237 **filibusters:** adventurers who engage in a private military action in a foreign country. In Thoreau's day the famous examples were Narciso López, who led an expedition against Cuba (1850–1851), and William Walker, who led expeditions against the Mexican state of Sonora (1853–1854) and against Nicaragua (1855–1858).

237 **New-found Island:** probably meant generically, though the Canadian province of Newfoundland contains many islands.

237 **Celebes:** an island of central Indonesia, first visited by Europeans in 1512.

238 **cliff:** Lee's cliff, about a mile and a half southwest of Walden Pond. Pine Hill straddles the Concord-Lincoln town line, two miles from Lee's cliff.

239 **Methuselah:** the biblical patriarch, said to have lived 969 years.

239 **China-aster:** *Callistephus chinensis.*

239 **Isle of Orleans:** an island near Quebec, Canada, in the St. Lawrence River.

240 **Hudson's Bay:** an inland sea of east-central Canada.

241 ***Juncaceae* and *Gramineae*:** at the time, the family names of the rushes and the grasses, respectively.

241 **Brocken spectre:** ghostly reflection. Specifically, an optical phenomenon named from the Brocken, a mountain of the Harz range in Germany, where it had been frequently observed. It consists of the shadow of the observer cast at sunrise or sunset in apparently gigantic size upon the mist or fog around the mountain summit.

241 **Swedenborg:** Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), Swedish scientist and mystical theologian (and one of the figures in Emerson's *Representative Men*).

241 **meadow-hen:** the Virginia rail, *Rallus limicola.*

242 **have the refusal:** may choose to accept or refuse.

THE SUCCESSION OF FOREST TREES

Thoreau's journals show that he began to focus on the problem of seed dispersal early in 1856. His observations culminated in this, his most scientific work, initially delivered as a lecture on September 20, 1860. It was first printed in the *New-York Weekly Tribune*, October 6, 1860, and soon thereafter in the *Transactions of the Middlesex Agricultural Society* for 1860.

A major event in the previous year had been the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, a copy of which arrived in Concord on January 1, 1860. The book sharpened the debate between those who believed in "special creation" (new species being placed in the world by God) and those who believed in the "developmental principle" or "descent with modification." Thoreau found the latter argument more persuasive, as this essay shows. As Robert D. Richardson, Jr., writes, in his intellectual biography of Thoreau, "Darwin's concluding chapter repeats his conviction . . . that 'we are as yet profoundly ignorant of the many occasional means of transport' of species from one place to another. The dispersion of seeds, then, was a topic that needed attention. . . . The more Thoreau could show about plants springing from other plants via seeds transported from one place to another, the less tenable the theory of special creation becomes."

245 **Cattle-Show:** the county fair or, more formally, the Exhibition of the Middlesex Agricultural Society. In 1860 the event included plowing matches with teams of horses and exhibitions of horses, fowl, swine, carts and wagons, boots and shoes, fruit, vegetables, butter, and needlework.

245 **cabinet:** that is, cabinet of curiosities for the display of rare and odd items.

247 **Patent Office:** At the time the U.S. Patent Office distributed packets of seed by mail (the squash seeds, for example, that Thoreau speaks of at the end of the essay).

248 **pericarp:** the wall of a ripened seed or fruit.

249 **pignuts:** seeds of the broom hickory, *Carya glabra.*

251 **Loudon:** John Claudius Loudon (1783–1843), Scottish landscape gardener and horticulturalist. In July 1857 Thoreau's journals begin referring to Loudon's encyclopedic work *Arboretum et fruticetum Britannicum; or, The Trees and Shrubs of Britain*, 2nd ed., 8 vols. (London: J. C. Loudon, 1844). The citations he gives here are from volume 3 of that work.

252 **chickaree:** popular name of the American red squirrel, *Tamiasciurus hudsonicus.*

252 ***Mus leucopus*:** now *Peromyscus leucopus*, the white-footed mouse.

253 **"when the nut":** from volume 3 of Loudon's *Arboretum et fruticetum.*

253 **rot-heap:** compost pile.

253 **Kane:** Elisha Kent Kane (1820–1857), American physician and Arctic explorer. In February 1854 Thoreau had read Kane's book *The U.S. Grinnell Expedition in Search of Sir John Franklin: A Personal Narrative* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1853).

254 **Dukes of Athol:** James, duke of Atholl, and his son John had estates at Dunkeld and Atholl in northern Scotland. They planted first thousands and then millions of larch trees on rocky ground. Thoreau knew of them from several sources, primarily Loudon's *Arboretum et fruticetum*, but also George Emerson's *A Report on the Trees and Shrubs Growing Naturally in the Forests of Massachusetts* (Boston: Dutton and Wentworth, 1846) and John S. Springer's *Forest Life and Forest Trees: Comprising Winter Camp-Life among the Loggers, and Wild-Wood Adventure; with Descriptions of Lumbering Operations on the Various Rivers of Maine and New Brunswick* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1851).

254 ***Tamias*:** The Greek root, ταμεια, means housekeeper or housewife, and related words mean steward or storeroom.

254 **Bartram:** William Bartram (1739–1823), American naturalist who wrote *Travels through North and South Carolina* (1791).

254 **Wilson:** Alexander Wilson (1766–1813), American ornithologist. Thoreau cites Bartram's remarks on the jay from Wilson's *American Ornithology* (Philadelphia: Bradford & Inskeep, 1808), vol. 1, pp. 16–17.

255 **"nuciferous":** bearing or producing nuts.

255 **"very few acorns":** from volume 3 of Loudon's *Arboretum et fruticetum.*

255 **beech mast:** beechnuts used as animal food.

255 **"acorns that have lain":** The source for this citation is not known.

255 **Emerson:** George B. Emerson (1797–1881), educator and naturalist. Thoreau cites from Emerson's *Report on the Trees and Shrubs*, p. 54.

255 **ancient Egyptian:** Both this and the story of the raspberry seeds come from William Carpenter, *Vegetable Physiology and Botany* (London: Wm. S. Orr and Co., 1854), p. 291.

256 **Carpenter:** William Carpenter (1813–1885). See the note for page 218 of "Autumnal Tints." The source is Carpenter's *Vegetable Physiology*, p. 290.

256 **Jackson:** Charles T. Jackson (1805–1880) wrote a series of annual reports on the geology of Maine. Thoreau's source here is Jackson's *Third Report* (1839). See the note for page 64 of "Ktaadn."

256 ***Urtica urens*:** the small stinging nettle, a European plant. Thoreau's account of finding these plants is in his journal for the mentioned date, September 22, 1857.

256 ***Chenopodium Botrys*:** a species of goosefoot or pigweed, commonly called both Jerusalem oak and feather geranium. It is a garden plant brought from Europe.

256 ***Solanum nigrum*:** also called common nightshade. It is an import from Europe.

257 **Linnæus:** See the note for page 6 of "Natural History of Massachusetts."

258 **Blitz:** Signor Blitz (1810–1877), a professional magician, was an accomplished ventriloquist, juggler, and bird handler.

A PLEA FOR CAPTAIN JOHN BROWN

On October 16, 1859, John Brown and twenty-one men attacked the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia (now West Virginia). Brown seems to have hoped to incite a slave insurrection and start a guerrilla war against the South.

News of the raid reached Concord on October 19. Brown was well known in town, having visited early in 1857 and again in May 1859, lecturing both times about the Free-Soil fight against slavery in the Kansas Territory (see Section IV of the Introduction).

Thoreau delivered this plea at the Concord Town Hall on October 30. Many of his neighbors thought it a bad idea for Thoreau to speak, but he insisted. Walter Harding, in his biography of Thoreau, writes: "Since he was a citizen of Concord, the selectmen could not deny him the use of the Town Hall, but they did refuse to ring the town bell to announce the meeting, so Thoreau rang it himself. The hall was filled. . . . Edward Emerson thought Thoreau read his paper 'as if it burned him' and noted that 'many of those who came to scoff remained to pray.' "

The speech was published the next year in James Redpath's anthology *Echoes of Harper's Ferry* (Boston: Thayer and Eldridge, 1860).

261 **fain:** happily; gladly.

261 **his grandfather:** Brown's paternal grandfather joined the Continental army but was probably not "an officer," as he died of dysentery a few weeks after enlisting.

261 **born:** in West Torrington, Connecticut, May 9, 1800.

261 **to Ohio:** In 1805 the Browns moved to Hudson, Ohio, southwest of Cleveland.

262 **troubles in Kansas:** A civil war had broken out in Kansas over the question of whether the territory would be Free-Soil or slaveholding. See the note for "destiny of Nebraska," page 181 of "Slavery in Massachusetts," and see Section IV of the Introduction.

262 **Kansas was made free:** Thoreau's past tense may refer to the fact that the Free State party had gained control of Kansas in the election of October 1857; Kansas did not actually enact a constitution prohibiting slavery until it entered the Union in January 1861.

262 **Germany:** Brown traveled to Europe in 1849 in hopes of selling wool in England; the trip included a visit to Hamburg.

262 **Ethan Allen and Stark:** heroes of the American Revolution. In what is now Vermont, Allen (1738–1789) organized a volunteer militia, the Green Mountain Boys, who helped capture Fort Ticonderoga from the British (1775). General John Stark (1728–1822) defeated the British at Bennington, Vermont (1777).

263 **"rural exterior":** from an article in the *Chicago Press and Tribune* as reprinted in the *New-York Daily Tribune*, October 24, 1859.

263 **Cromwell:** Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), who ruled England (1653–1658) after the Puritan Revolution.

263 **parched corn in remembrance:** An apocryphal story had it that during the summer of 1623 the Pilgrims had so little corn that they were forced to ration five kernels per person per day until the harvest. It had become the custom in Thoreau's time for a Forefathers' Day dinner to include five symbolic parched corn kernels on each plate in remembrance of the colonists' privations and perseverance.

263 **"In his camp":** Thoreau's source is James Redpath, who met Brown in Kansas shortly after the Pottawatomie massacre. Redpath, a journalist and would-be hagiographer, published his memoir of the meeting in the Boston *Atlas and Daily Bee* on the Monday before Thoreau's speech. The sketch later appeared in his 1860 book *Public Life of Capt. John Brown*.

263 **" 'Buford ruffians' ":** In the spring of 1856 a battalion of about four hundred armed Southerners, led by Jefferson Buford, entered the Kansas Territory prepared to fight the Free State settlers. Their banners read THE SUPREMACY OF THE WHITE RACE and ALABAMA FOR KANSAS—NORTH OF 36°30'.

264 **Cromwellian troop:** Of his troops during the Puritan Revolution Cromwell said, "We can only resist the superior training of the King's soldiers, by enlisting godly men."

264 **Border Ruffians:** pro-slavery settlers in the Kansas Territory, active along the Missouri-Kansas border.

264 **talking to Buncombe:** giving an empty or insincere speech. Buncombe is a county in North Carolina whose congressman in the 1820s had supposedly said that he was obligated to give a dull speech "for Buncombe."

264 **run an imaginary line:** This event supposedly happened in the spring of 1856 near Pottawatomie, Kansas, Brown and his son Salmon having disguised themselves as government surveyors to spy on a company of Georgians.

265 **price set upon his head:** After Brown had led a raid into Missouri in December

1858, President James Buchanan offered a reward of $250 for his capture; the state of Missouri offered $3,000. Brown and Thoreau would have had this exchange the following spring, when Brown was in Concord and stayed in the Thoreau household.

265 **Vallandigham:** Representative Clement L. Vallandigham (1820–1871), a conservative Democrat from Ohio. He arrived in Harpers Ferry the day after Brown was captured and participated in the interrogation, suspecting a conspiracy involving men from Ohio. The remarks Thoreau cites are from a letter to the editor of an Ohio newspaper Vallandigham wrote, October 22, 1859, describing his time in Harpers Ferry.

265 **deliver from bondage a dozen:** In December 1858 Brown and his men moved from southeastern Kansas into Missouri and attacked the homes of two planters, liberating eleven slaves. He and his party then moved eastward until they reached Detroit, where the slaves embarked for Canada.

266 **Governor of Virginia:** Henry A. Wise (1806–1876). Thoreau probably knew of his remarks from the report in the *New-York Tribune*, October 22, 1859.

267 **"surprise" party:** at the time, a party where a group of people, without invitation, brought food and gifts to a friend's house.

267 **four-and-sixpence:** a proverbial figure indicating the trifling sum for which the greedy might debase themselves.

267 **Balaclava:** During the Crimean War (1853–1856), the British won a battle at Balaklava, but not before Russian artillery had cut down more than five hundred men. Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–1892), the poet laureate, glorified the battle in his poem "The Charge of the Light Brigade."

267 **"insane":** Brown's lawyer tried to enter an insanity plea at his trial, but Brown rejected the attempt, calling it "a miserable artifice." After Brown's sentencing, a group of friends and relations tried to get the governor of Virginia to commute the death sentence, claiming that Brown was subject to a hereditary insanity. As Thoreau indicates, the newspapers were full of speculations about the state of his mind (*The Weekly Sentinel*, of Portage, Ohio, for example, proclaimed that Brown's backers were responsible for the crime, "not Brown, for he is mad"). Despite all this, and despite the fact that Brown could be stubborn and wildly single-minded, there is no evidence that he was insane in any modern sense of the word. For a good discussion of the topic, see Stephen Oates's biography, *To Purge This Land with Blood*, pp. 324–34.

267 **Plutarch:** Greek essayist (46?–120?), whose *Parallel Lives* presented exemplary biographies.

267 **Putnam:** Israel Putnam (1718–1790), a fabled general in the Revolutionary War who, when a boy, was supposed to have captured a wolf in its den.

267 **Tract Society:** The New England Tract Society, founded in Massachusetts in 1814, was dedicated to publishing and disseminating Christian literature. It became the American Tract Society in 1823.

267 **"American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions":** the first American foreign missionary society, established in 1810 by New England Congregationalists.

268 **salt:** Various kinds of "salt" (sulfur, usually) were used to deodorize outhouses.

269 **Wilson:** Republican senator Henry Wilson (1812–1875) of Massachusetts, a Free-Soiler who knew Brown but did not support his actions.

269 **egg of chalk:** such as may be put into the nest to encourage a hen to lay.

269 **game of straws . . . game of the platter:** games of chance. Thoreau's "Indian Notebooks," now in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, contain several references to these. See especially volume 11, page 129, the entry for which Thoreau drew from Louis Hennepin, *Description de la Louisiane* (Paris: Sebastian Huré, 1683), p. 46.

269 ***Liberator*:** William Lloyd Garrison's abolitionist newspaper.

270 **spile:** a wooden faucet.

270 **bung:** the hole in a cask through which it is filled.

271 **Walker:** William Walker (1824–1860), an adventurer from Tennessee. In 1853 he led an armed invasion of Baja California; in 1855 revolutionaries in Nicaragua enlisted his help, and he was briefly that country's president. Alternatively, Thoreau might mean Robert J. Walker (1801–1869), pro-slavery governor of the Kansas Territory in 1857–1858.

272 **Mason:** Senator James M. Mason (1798–1871) of Virginia. He arrived at Harpers Ferry on the day after Brown was captured.

272 **Pilate:** Roman governor who interrogated Jesus, then ordered his crucifixion.

272 **Gessler:** legendary fourteenth-century Austrian despot. See the note for William Tell, page 283 of "The Last Days of John Brown."

272 **Sharps' rifles:** long-range cartridge rifles designed by Christian Sharps; those manufactured in the mid-1850s later came to be called John Browns or Beecher's Bibles.

273 **"Any questions":** Brown and the surviving raiders were captured on the morning of October 18, a day and a half after the raid began. That afternoon a contingent of officials and reporters interrogated the imprisoned Brown, who lay wounded on a pile of bedding in one of the armory buildings. The interview lasted three hours and was reported in several newspapers. Thoreau read the version in the *New York Herald*, October 21, 1859. Here he cites Brown's response to a question from Virginia senator Mason, "How many are engaged with you in this movement?" Brown had already asserted that he would answer questions about himself "but not about others."

273 **Wise:** Henry A. Wise, governor of Virginia.

273 **"Colonel Washington":** Brown's men rounded up several hostages the night of the raid on Harpers Ferry, one of them being Colonel Lewis W. Washington, a local planter and the great-grandnephew of President George Washington.

273 **"Stevens":** Aaron D. Stevens, a guerrilla fighter and brawler whom Brown had first met in Nebraska in 1856.

273 **"Coppoc":** Edwin Coppoc, a twenty-four-year-old Quaker from Iowa, had joined Brown a year before the raid.

274 **Plug Uglies:** ruffians or rowdies, especially, at the time, those who practiced politics by intimidation.

274 **France and Austria:** In 1859 these countries were subject to autocratic rule, France under Napoleon III (1808–1873) and Austria under Emperor Franz Joseph (1830–1916).

274 **Treason:** Brown was charged with murder, conspiring to start a slave revolt, and treason against the state of Virginia. As Stephen Oates has noted, treason was an odd charge, because Brown "was not a citizen of that state and owed it no allegiance."

274 **cannon-founder:** one who casts the metal for cannons.

274 **coffle:** a group chained together in a line, said especially of slaves.

275 **Massachusetts . . . sent the marines:** On the first day of fighting at Harpers Ferry, President James Buchanan ordered three artillery companies and ninety U.S. Marines to the town. These were federal troops and thus supported by all the states in the Union.

275 **Vigilant Committee:** Following passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, Northern abolitionists organized vigilance committees to engage in acts of resistance. In Boston such committees were organized by the reformer Samuel Gridley Howe (1801–1876) and the minister Theodore Parker (1810–1860), both of whom were later among the small group—the "Secret Six"—who knew in advance of Brown's planned raid.

275 **Cadi:** in Muslim countries, a judge or magistrate.

277 ***Memento mori*:** remember to die; that is, that all must die.

278 **"dreaded by the Missourians":** Thoreau's source is the same as for "rural exterior," page 359 above.

278 **"Unless above himself":** from stanza 12 of "Epistle to the Lady Margaret, Countess of Cumberland," by Samuel Daniel (1562?–1619).

278 **Minotaur:** in Greek mythology a monster who devours humans.

280 **"No man sent me here":** This and the following quotations come from the *New York Herald* report of the interrogation of Brown cited above. Here, for example, Brown replies to Representative Vallandigham's question, "Who sent you here?" Thoreau drops part of the answer, which reads in full: "No man sent me here; it was my own prompting and that of my Maker, or that of the devil, whichever you please to ascribe it to. I acknowledge no master in human form."

280 **our revenge:** During the civil war in Kansas, one Martin White shot and killed Brown's son Frederick. Several years later Brown and his men stumbled upon White at his cabin in Missouri. Despite his companions' urgings, Brown refused to kill White. He later told a friend: "People mistake my objects. I would not hurt one hair on [White's] head. . . . I do not harbour the feelings of revenge. *I act from a principle.* My aim and object is to restore human rights." Brown's mention of "revenge" during the Harpers Ferry interrogation may have set Thoreau thinking of this story. Whether it did or not, the import is that true revenge is the triumph of principle.

THE LAST DAYS OF JOHN BROWN

Thoreau was invited to speak at a memorial for Brown, July 4, 1860, in North Elba, New York; he could not make the journey but sent this piece to be read. It was published later that month in *The Liberator*, July 27, 1860.

283 **six weeks:** from the raid on Harpers Ferry, October 16, to Brown's hanging, December 2, 1859.

283 **Cato:** Marcus Porcius Cato, called Cato the Younger (95–46 B.C.), Roman politician and opponent of Julius Caesar. After Caesar's decisive victory in North Africa, Cato first saw his comrades safely out of Utica, then calmly committed suicide. Thoreau was much interested in the school of the Stoics, for whom Cato was a kind of patron saint.

283 **Tell:** According to tradition, William Tell insulted the fourteenth-century Austrian despot Gessler, who then demanded that Tell shoot an arrow through the apple on the head of Tell's son. Tell's triumphs over Gessler are part of the legendary history of the origin of the Swiss Confederation.

283 **Winkelried:** Arnold Winkelried (d. 1386), legendary hero of the Battle of Sempach, in which the Swiss Confederation defended itself against the Habsburgs. Winkelried is supposed to have died drawing the fire of enemy spears toward himself so as to open a gap in the Habsburg phalanx. In the nineteenth century he became an example of the individual who sacrifices himself for the common good.

283 **"little dipper":** Thoreau's name for various small diving birds, usually the pied-billed grebe, sometimes the horned grebe.

284 **class-teacher:** Sunday-school teacher.

284 **golden rule:** Brown repeatedly said that he based his actions on the Golden Rule and the Declaration of Independence. At his sentencing he said to the court: "I see a book kissed which I suppose to be the Bible, or at least the New Testament, which teaches me that all things whatsoever I would that men should do to me, I should do to them."

285 **modern Democrat:** that is, one belonging to the Democratic Party, which presumed Brown's raid was a plot of the Republican Party and were demanding congressional investigations. Brown himself belonged to neither party, as the Republicans were quick to point out.

285 **office:** excrement.

285 **pachydermatous:** thick-skinned.

286 **her citizens . . . to Virginia:** It had been reported that the governor of Virginia was trying to have Franklin B. Sanborn (1831–1917), Samuel Gridley Howe (1801–1876), and others arrested and extradited.

286 **"extension":** The word can mean a permission for sale of alcoholic drinks until a later time than is usual (an allowed but unusual evening of drinking being an "extension night").

286 **Charles the First:** The king of England from 1625 to 1649, Charles was tried for treason and beheaded in 1649.

287 **Raleigh:** Sir Walter Raleigh (1554–1618) was imprisoned in the Tower of London for thirteen years, during which time he wrote *History of the World* (1614). See also the note for page 60 of "Paradise (To Be) Regained."

287 **American book:** In the time between his capture and his execution, Brown wrote scores of letters, many of which were printed in the newspapers.

287 **to his wife:** In a letter written on November 16, 1859, from the jail in Charleston, Virginia, Brown urges that his children be educated first in practical matters and "the common business of life": "The music of the broom, wash-tub, needle, spindle, loom, axe, scythe, hoe, flail, etc., should first be learned at all events, and that of the piano, etc., afterwards."

287 **Poor Richard:** Benjamin Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanack*, published annually from 1732 to 1757, contains conventional wise sayings.

287 **Irving:** The writer Washington Irving (b. 1783) died on November 28, 1859.

287 ***"It will pay"*:** The source for this remark is not known.

287 **pebbles in your mouth:** The Greek orator Demosthenes (384–322 B.C.) supposedly overcame his stammer by practicing speeches with pebbles in his mouth.

288 **slave woman:** a widespread but apocryphal story. Brown went from his jail cell to the hanging ground surrounded by soldiers and with his hands tied. In *The Life and Letters of John Brown* (1885), Franklin B. Sanborn writes that before leaving the jail John Brown was asked "if he desired the presence of a clergyman to give him 'the consolations of religion.' Brown . . . said . . . that he did not recognize as Christians any slaveholders or defenders of slavery, lay or clerical; adding that . . . if he had his choice he would rather be followed to his 'public murder,' as he termed his execution, by 'barefooted, barelegged, ragged slave children and their old gray-headed mother,' than such clergymen." Sanborn adds that from these words "arose the legend that on his way to the gallows he took up a little slave-child, kissed it, and gave it back to its mother's arms."

288 **"He nothing common did":** "An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland," by Andrew Marvell (1621–1678), lines 57–64. Thoreau silently drops two lines.

288 **transit:** passage; in astronomy the passage of a heavenly body across the meridian of any place or the passage of a celestial body across the sun's disk (as "the transit of Venus").

288 **his translation:** his conversion from a mortal into an immortal; his removal to heaven without death.

288 **North Elba:** In 1849 Brown moved his family to a farm in North Elba, New York. He is buried on the site.

288 **working in secret:** Brown's actions in Kansas were always "secret missions," and the few Northerners to whom he had revealed his Harpers Ferry plans were known as the Secret Six.

WILD APPLES

This essay was first given as a lecture before the Concord Lyceum in February 1860. It was published posthumously in *The Atlantic Monthly*, November 1862.

291 **geologist:** Louis Agassiz (1807–1873), Swiss-born naturalist then at Harvard, though Thoreau's source is actually Hugh Miller's book *The Testimony of the Rocks; or, Geology in Its Bearing on the Two Theologies, Natural and Revealed . . .* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1857). Miller elaborates on a remark by Agassiz.

291 ***Rosaceae*:** rose family.

291 **Tacitus:** Cornelius Tacitus (55?–120?), Roman historian. Thoreau's source is a three-volume edition of Tacitus, *Cornelii Taciti opera ex recensione io* (Boston: Wells and Lily, 1817).

291 **Niebuhr:** Barthold Georg Niebuhr (1776–1831), German classical historian. Thoreau's source for the following citation is Niebuhr's *The History of Rome* (Philadelphia: Thomas Wardel, 1835), p. 64.

292 **"As the apple-tree":** Song of Solomon 2:3 and 2:5. For "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples," the Revised Standard Version reads "Sustain me with raisins, refresh me with apples."

292 **Herodotus:** Greek historian of the fifth century B.C.

292 **"pears and pomegranates":** Homer, *The Odyssey* VII.117. Alcinoüs is the legendary king of the Phaeacians.

292 **Tantalus:** in Greek mythology a favorite of the gods until he was caught deceiving them, whereupon he was condemned to hang from a tree in the underworld, thirsty and hungry. Under the tree lay a pool of water, but if Tantalus stooped to drink, the pool dried up. Ripe fruit hung above him, but if he reached for it, the wind lifted the branches away. Homer describes these tortures in *The Odyssey* XI.582–92.

292 **Theophrastus:** (372?–287 B.C.), Greek philosopher. A student of Aristotle, he wrote on many topics, including natural history.

292 **Prose Edda:** a collection of ancient Scandinavian myths and legends, recorded around 1220 by the Icelandic aristocrat Snorri Sturluson.

292 **Iduna:** in Scandinavian mythology the goddess of spring, "The Rejuvenating One." She tended the garden where the Apples of Immortality grew.

292 **Ragnarök:** In Icelandic the gods are called *reginn*, which means organizing powers. *Ragna-* is the possessive plural of this word. The suffix *-rök* means marvels, fate, doom, and *ragnarök* thus means the gods' wonders or the gods' fate/doom. *Rök*, however, later became confused with *røkkr*, twilight, and thus the word took on a sense such as Thoreau offers.

292 **Loudon:** John Claudius Loudon (1783–1843). Here and below Thoreau cites from the second volume of his *Arboretum et fruticetum*. See the note for page 251 of "The Succession of Forest Trees."

292 **Pliny:** Pliny the Elder (23–79), celebrated Roman naturalist. Thoreau owned,

and cites from, Pliny's *Historiae mundi*, 3 vols. ([Geneva]: Apud Jacobum Storer, 1593).

293 **our Western emigrant:** probably a reference to John Chapman (1774–1845), also known as Johnny Appleseed, who is supposed to have dispersed apple seeds throughout the Ohio River valley.

293 **"The fruit of the crab":** The source for this citation is not known.

293 **canker-worm:** name of certain caterpillars destructive to apple (and other) trees. In the United States, for example, the spring cankerworm is *Paleacrita vernata*.

293 **cherry-bird:** the cedar waxwing, *Bombycilla cedrorum*. The kingbird is a flycatcher such as *Tyrannus tyrannus*.

294 **coddling:** stewing; boiling gently.

294 **Palladius:** Rutilius Taurus Aemilianus Palladius (fourth or fifth century A.D.), Roman author of *De re rustica*, parts of which Thoreau read in an anthology of Latin agricultural writing, *Scriptores rei rusticae* (Heidelberg: Hier. Commelini, 1595).

294 **"Michaelmas":** the feast of St. Michael, celebrated September 29; hence, colloquially, autumn. Thoreau's source for this couplet is not known.

294 **Pomona:** the ancient Roman goddess of fruit trees.

295 **apples are the heaviest:** in Pliny, *Historiae mundi*, book 13, chap. 55.

295 **pomace:** the pulp of apples, both before and after being pressed. The root is the Latin *pomum*, apple.

295 **Loki:** in Scandinavian mythology the mischief maker who, at the behest of the giant Thjassi, lures the keeper of the Apples of Immortality, Iduna, out of Asgard (the home of the gods) and into Jotunheim (the realm of giants). As a result of this transgression, the gods begin to age, until Loki repairs the damage.

295 **"The mo appelen":** The source for this citation is not known.

295 **bloom:** the powdery coating sometimes found on the skin of fresh fruit.

295 **fugacious:** fleeing; volatile.

296 **Brand:** John Brand (1744–1806), English antiquary and topographer. Thoreau's journals for the spring of 1860 record his reading Brand's *Observations on Popular Antiquities: Chiefly Illustrating the Origin of Our Vulgar Customs, Ceremonies, and Superstition*, 2 vols. (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, 1813). Bradley Dean points out that the following citations (from "on Christmas Eve" to "Hurra!") are from the second volume of Loudon's *Arboretum et fruticetum*. Loudon bases them on the "Notes to Twelfth Day" in the first volume of Brand's *Popular Antiquities*. The last word of the poem reads "Huzza" in the original, not "Hurra."

296 **toast:** in the old sense of bread browned at the fire and put in wine or some other drink. "In state" means done publicly, with ceremony and pomp.

296 **several:** in the sense of "different"; we would say, "three different times."

296 **"Stand fast":** The source for this citation is not known.

296 **Herrick:** Robert Herrick (1591–1674), English lyric poet. Thoreau quotes a four-line poem, "Another," from a series of Christmas poems by Herrick. The last line should read "As you doe give . . . ," not "so give." Brand cites the same poem in the "Twelfth Day" section of *Popular Antiquities*.

296 **"Wassaile":** The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives this 1648 verse by Herrick as the earliest use of the verb "to wassail," meaning "to drink to (fruit-trees, cattle) in wassail [that is, in salutation], in order to ensure their thriving."

297 **cider . . . wine:** Fermented cider was then common; wine was not.

297 **English Phillips:** John Philips or Phillips (1676–1709), English poet whose most ambitious work was *Cyder*, an imitation of Virgil's *Georgics*.

297 **ungrafted:** Cultivated varieties of apple do not breed true from seed and so are grown by grafting cuttings or scions.

297 **Easterbrooks Country:** a twelve-hundred-acre tract of largely uncultivated land lying about a mile and a half north of Concord. Thoreau identifies it as one of two such tracts in the Concord area, the other being Walden Woods.

298 **Michaux:** All citations in this paragraph come from François André Michaux's *North American Sylva*, vol. 2, pp. 67–68. See the note for page 94 of "Ktaadn."

298 **sweetmeats:** fruits preserved with sugar. Michaux writes that crab apples "make very fine sweet meats . . . , by the addition of a large quantity of sugar."

299 **"Glades":** In his comments on the crab apple, Michaux writes: "It abounds, above all, in the *Glades*, which is the name given to a tract 15 or 18 miles wide, on the summit of the Alleghenies, along the road from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh."

299 **St. Anthony's Falls:** in Minneapolis, the head of navigation on the Mississippi River.

299 **herbarium:** collection of dried plants.

299 **Nobscot Hill:** on the Framingham-Sudbury line, ten miles southwest of Concord.

300 **malic acid:** found in a range of unripe fruit, including apples, cherries, and tomatoes.

302 **Van Mons and Knight:** European horticulturists Jean-Baptiste Van Mons (1765–1842) in Belgium and Thomas Andrew Knight (1759–1838) in England. Each published books on the cultivation of fruit trees.

302 **Porter, Baldwin:** varieties of apple.

302 **Hesperides:** in Greek mythology the nymphs who guarded, with the dragon Ladon, the golden apples that had been Hera's wedding gift from the goddess Earth. One of the tasks imposed on Hercules by Eurystheus was to bring him some of this golden fruit.

303 ***"Et injussu":*** Thoreau's exact source is not known, though Palladius wrote only one book, an agricultural treatise usually called *De re rustica*, parts of which Thoreau knew from an anthology of Latin agricultural writing. See the note for Palladius, page 366 above.

303 **"inteneration":** the act of making soft or tender.

303 **"highest plot":** lines 31–32 of "An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland," by Andrew Marvell (1621–1678), a poem that Thoreau also cites on page 288 of "The Last Days of John Brown." The bergamot is an old and popular variety of pear.

303 **"the custom of grippling":** from Loudon, as above.

304 **"Fruits and Fruit-Trees":** generically, but also referring to A. J. Downing's *The Fruits and Fruit Trees of America* (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1845).

304 **pomological:** involved in pomology, the cultivation of fruit trees.

304 ***verjuice*:** "green-juice," the acid liquor expressed from crab apples, unripe grapes, and such, used in sauces, ragouts, and the like.

304 ***Pomaceæ*:** the apple family.

304 **"apples of a small size":** from Loudon, as above.

304 **Evelyn:** John Evelyn (1620–1706). Thoreau cites from Evelyn's *Sylva; or, A Discourse of Forest-Trees and the Propagation of Timber in His Majesties Dominions* . . . . 3rd ed. (London: Printed for John Martyn, printer to the Royal Society, 1679).

305 **Tityrus:** Virgil's first "Eclogue" is a dialogue between two shepherds, Tityrus and Meliboeus, the first still on his land, the second dispossessed and going into exile. In the final stanza of the poem Tityrus invites his exiled friend to pause for the night and share his apples, chestnuts, and cheese.

305 **"producing fruit":** Whitney's report was in the first volume (1785) of the *Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.* Northborough, Massachusetts, lies about twenty miles southwest of Concord.

306 **Nawshawtuct Hill:** just west of the confluence of the Assabet and Sudbury Rivers; also called Lee's Hill.

306 **squash-bug:** a dark-brown ill-smelling insect, *Anasa tristis*; the young feed on beans, melons, squash, and such.

306 ***"Prunes sibarelles"*:** from Loudon, as above. The phrase is not a Latin binomial. The French *prunes* means plums; *sibarelles* is not a word in French (or Latin, or Spanish . . .), though apparently related to the Latin *sibilare*, to whistle. Provence is a region in the south of France.

306 ***papillæ*:** taste buds.

306 **"Nor is it every":** The source for this citation is not known.

306 **"Deuxan":** This and "Greening" are varieties of apple.

306 **"beshrewed":** cursed.

306 **"golden strife":** In Greek mythology the goddess of discord, Eris, threw a golden apple bearing the inscription "For the fairest" into an assembly of the gods. Aphrodite, Hera, and Pallas contended for it; the ensuing strife ended in the Trojan War.

307 **meridional lines:** north-south lines of meridian (on the globe).

308 ***lingua vernacula*:** native language; local dialect.

308 **fourteen hundred:** from Loudon, as above.

308 **Wood Apple:** The names are Thoreau's inventions, the Latin echoing the English. *Musketaquidensis* alludes to the Native American name of the Concord River, the Musketaquid (Meadow) River. "Chickaree" is another name for the red squirrel. *Choleramorbifera aut dysenterifera, puerulis dilectissima* means "cholera morbus and dysentery, loved by young boys," which is to say, stomach troubles attractive to youth. In Greek mythology Atalanta is a virgin huntress; she promised to marry the man who could win a footrace with her and finally lost to Hippomenes, who distracted her with three golden apples given to him by Aphrodite.

309 **Bodæus:** Thoreau's edition of Theophrastus contained commentary in Latin by Johannes Bodaeus, which includes the poem that Thoreau "adapts" below. Bodaeus's poem is itself adapted from Virgil's *Georgics* (II.42–44), and the final word in Bodaeus's version is *pomorum* (fruits), which Thoreau changes to "wild apples."

309 **Blue Pearmain:** a variety of apple.

309 **Curzon:** Robert Curzon (1810–1873), who tells of finding such manuscripts in *Visits to Monasteries in the Levant* (New York: George P. Putnam, 1849).

310 **Topsell's Gesner:** Edward Topsell (1572–1625) and Konrad Gesner (1516–1565). Gesner was a Swiss naturalist whose *Historiae animalium* (1551–1587) attempted to describe and systematize all known animals. Topsell's *The Historie of Foure-Footed Beasts and Serpents* . . . (London: W. Iagard, 1607) was translated from Gesner's work. Thoreau read Topsell in February 1860.

310 **Albertus:** Albertus Magnus (1193–1280), German theologian known for his wide interest in natural science.

311 **lappets:** parts of a garment that hang loose; flaps.

311 **temperance reform:** Because fermented cider was the wine of the day, both it and the planting of apple trees were targets of the temperance movement.

312 **pomace-heap:** the pulp discarded after making cider.

312 **plat:** piece of land set off.

312 **"The word of the Lord":** Joel 1:1–12. A prophet of the fourth century B.C., Joel had witnessed a ravishing locust plague and called on the people to repent.

312 **"palmerworm":** a hairy caterpillar injurious to vegetation. In this case the word translates the Hebrew *gazam*, the root of which means "to cut off." The Revised Standard Bible renders these lines as: "What the cutting locust left, / the swarming locust has eaten. / What the swarming locust left, / the hopping locust has eaten, / and what the hopping locust left, / the destroying locust has eaten."