

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN CAPE COD

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN A WEEK

POET LAUREATE JOHN DRYDEN



"I read somewhere that everybody on this planet is separated by only six other people. Six degrees of separation. Between us and everybody else on this planet."

– Ouisa, in [John Guare's](#)
["SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION"](#)






JOHN DRYDEN

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



A WEEK: What a contrast between the stern and desolate poetry of Ossian, and that of Chaucer, and even of Shakespeare and Milton, much more of Dryden, and Pope, and Gray. Our summer of English poetry like the Greek and Latin before it, seems well advanced toward its fall, and laden with the fruit and foliage of the season, with bright autumnal tints, but soon the winter will scatter its myriad clustering and shading leaves, and leave only a few desolate and fibrous boughs to sustain the snow and rime, and creak in the blasts of ages. We cannot escape the impression that the Muse has stooped a little in her flight, when we come to the literature of civilized eras. Now first we hear of various ages and styles of poetry; it is pastoral, and lyric, and narrative, and didactic; but the poetry of runic monuments is of one style, and for every age. The bard has in a great measure lost the dignity and sacredness of his office. Formerly he was called a seer, but now it is thought that one man sees as much as another. He has no longer the bardic rage, and only conceives the deed, which he formerly stood ready to perform. Hosts of warriors earnest for battle could not mistake nor dispense with the ancient bard. His lays were heard in the pauses of the fight. There was no danger of his being overlooked by his contemporaries. But now the hero and the bard are of different professions. When we come to the pleasant English verse, the storms have all cleared away and it will never thunder and lighten more. The poet has come within doors, and exchanged the forest and crag for the fireside, the hut of the Gael, and Stonehenge with its circles of stones, for the house of the Englishman. No hero stands at the door prepared to break forth into song or heroic action, but a homely Englishman, who cultivates the art of poetry. We see the comfortable fireside, and hear the crackling fagots in all the verse.

PEOPLE OF
A WEEK

OSSIAN
JOHN DRYDEN

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CAPE COD: When I approached this house the next summer, over the desolate hills between it and the shore, which are worthy to have been the birthplace of Ossian, I saw the wizard in the midst of a cornfield on the hillside, but, as usual, he loomed so strangely, that I mistook him for a scarecrow. This was the merriest old man that we had ever seen, and one of the best preserved. His style of conversation was coarse and plain enough to have suited Rabelais. He would have made a good Panurge. Or rather he was a sober Silenus, and we were the boys Chromis and Mnasilus, who listened to his story.

“Not by Hæmonian hills the Thracian bard,
Nor awful Phœbus was on Pindus heard
With deeper silence or with more regard.”

**PEOPLE OF
CAPE COD****SILENUS
CHROMIS
MNASILUS****OSSIAN
JOHN DRYDEN**



JOHN DRYDEN

JOHN DRYDEN



1631

August 9 (Old Style) or 19 (New Style): [John Dryden](#) was born at Aldwinkle All Saints in Northamptonshire, England.

NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT





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1642

During the English Civil War [Sir John Denham](#), a Royalist, would serve as high sheriff of Surrey and governor of Farnham Castle.

ENGLISH CIVIL WAR

[Sir John](#)'s poem "Cooper's Hill" described the Runnymede scenery in the vicinity of Sir John's home at Egham in Surrey. From atop Cooper's Hill, about 18 miles outside London, we are able to view in one direction the capital city, London, and in the other the magnificent royal digs, Windsor Castle. Sir John would rewrite his



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poem many times during the political and cultural upheavals of civil war.



This seems to have been the initial celebration in English poetry of a particular geographic location. The Runnymede is as we all know writ large in English history. In Greek mythology Mount Parnassus, abode of the gods, was sacred to the muse of poetry while several springs on the slopes of Mount Heicon had shrines to the Muses:



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A WEEK: The murmurs of many a famous river on the other side of the globe reach even to us here, as to more distant dwellers on its banks; many a poet's stream floating the helms and shields of heroes on its bosom. The Xanthus or Scamander is not a mere dry channel and bed of a mountain torrent, but fed by the everflowing springs of fame; —

“And thou Simois, that as an arrowe, clere
Through Troy rennest, aie downward to the sea”; —

and I trust that I may be allowed to associate our muddy but much abused Concord River with the most famous in history.

“Sure there are poets which did never dream
Upon Parnassus, nor did taste the stream
Of Helicon; we therefore may suppose
Those made not poets, but the poets those.”

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SIR JOHN DENHAM

We don't know exactly when or from what source [Henry Thoreau](#) had copied from this “Cooper's Hill” poem into his Literary Notebook, but we presume that it would have been in the period 1841-1844 and that his source would have been [Alexander Chalmers](#)'s THE WORKS OF THE ENGLISH POETS, FROM CHAUCER TO COWPER; INCLUDING THE SERIES EDITED WITH PREFACES, BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL, BY DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON: AND THE MOST APPROVED TRANSLATIONS, since Thoreau was making an attempt to read completely through these 21 volumes “without skipping” and the poem is indeed in Volume VII of that source.

SIR JOHN DENHAM

When civil war broke out in England both the paternal and the maternal sides of the [Dryden](#) family took up the cause of the Parliament rather than of the monarch. Since [John Dryden](#) was but 11 years of age in 1642, he was presumably part of this or presumed to be part of this. John would later be known as a very pronounced supporter of the monarchy — but we have no information as to the point in life at which he effected this change in political allegiance.

JOHN DRYDEN'S POEMS

**LIFE IS LIVED FORWARD BUT UNDERSTOOD BACKWARD?
— NO, THAT'S GIVING TOO MUCH TO THE HISTORIAN'S STORIES.
LIFE ISN'T TO BE UNDERSTOOD EITHER FORWARD OR BACKWARD.**



JOHN DRYDEN

JOHN DRYDEN



1644

[John Dryden](#) was admitted to the Westminster School as a King's Scholar.

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





JOHN DRYDEN

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1646

As a school assignment at the Westminster School, King's Scholar [John Dryden](#) translated the 3d satire of Persius.

THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT



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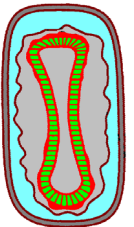
JOHN DRYDEN

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1649

June 24, Sunday (Old Style): During this year in England there would occur a grand sum total of 1,190 deaths due to the [small pox](#), but only one would be memorialized in a lengthy poem (unless the poem in question wasn't actually about death due to smallpox, but actually was about regicide and [the severing of the neck by use of the ax and block](#)). [Johannes Dryden, Scholae Westm. Alumnus](#) contributed UPON THE DEATH OF THE LORD HASTINGS to the LACHRYMÆ MUSARUM / THE TEARS OF THE MUSES: EXPREST IN ELEGIES WRITTEN BY DIVERS PERSONS OF NOBILITY AND WORTH UPON THE DEATH OF THE MOST HOPEFULL, HENRY LORD HASTINGS ... ; COLLECTED AND SET FORTH BY R.B. collection of memorials to the 1st son and heir apparent to [Ferdinando Hastings, 6th Earl of Huntingdon](#) with [Lucy Davies Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon](#), who succumbed during the ongoing epidemic on this day at the age of 19, on the eve of his wedding to Elizabeth de Mayerne (the body would be placed on July 7th in a tomb at Ashby-de-la-Zouch in Leicestershire). Dryden had not known Henry Hastings, giving rise to the above surmise that this had amounted to an opportunity for a royalist to lament surreptitiously the recent execution of King Charles I.



Must noble Hastings immaturely die,
 The honour of his ancient family;
 Beauty and learning thus together meet,
 To bring a winding for a wedding-sheet?
 Must Virtue prove Death's harbinger? must she,
 With him expiring, feel mortality?
 Is death, Sin's wages, Grace's now? shall Art
 Make us more learned, only to depart?
 If merit be disease; if virtue death;
 To be good, not to be; who'd then bequeath
 Himself to discipline? who'd not esteem
 Labour a crime? study, self-murder deem?
 Our noble youth now have pretence to be
 Dunces securely, ignorant healthfully.
 Rare linguist, whose worth speaks itself, whose praise,
 Though not his own, all tongues besides do raise:
 Than whom great Alexander may seem less,
 Who conquer'd men, but not their languages.
 In his mouth nations spake; his tongue might be
 Interpreter to Greece, France, Italy.
 His native soil was the four parts o' the Earth;
 All Europe was too narrow for his birth.
 A young apostle; and, with reverence may
 I speak it, inspired with gift of tongues, as they.
 Nature gave him, a child, what men in vain
 Oft strive, by art though further'd, to obtain.
 His body was an orb, his sublime soul
 Did move on Virtue's and on Learning's pole:
 Whose regular motions better to our view,
 Than Archimedes sphere, the Heavens did show.
 Graces and virtues, languages and arts,
 Beauty and learning, fill'd up all the parts.
 Heaven's gifts, which do like falling stars appear
 Scatter'd in others; all, as in their sphere,
 Were fix'd, conglobate in his soul; and thence
 Shone through his body, with sweet influence;
 Letting their glories so on each limb fall,
 The whole frame render'd was celestial.

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Come, learned Ptolemy and trial make,
If thou this hero's altitude canst take:
But that transcends thy skill; thrice happy all,
Could we but prove thus astronomical.
Lived Tycho now, struck with this ray which shone
More bright i' the morn, than others' beam at noon.
He'd take his astrolabe, and seek out here
What new star 'twas did gild our hemisphere.
Replenish'd then with such rare gifts as these,
Where was room left for such a foul disease?
The nation's sin hath drawn that veil, which shrouds
Our day-spring in so sad benighting clouds:
Heaven would no longer trust its pledge; but thus
Recall'd it; rapt its Ganymede from us.
Was there no milder way but the small-pox,
The very filthiness of Pandora's box?
So many spots, like næves on Venus' soil,
One jewel set off with so many a foil;
Blisters with pride swell'd, which through's flesh did sprout
Like rose-buds, stuck i' th' lily-skin about.
Each little pimple had a tear in it,
To wail the fault its rising did commit:
Which, rebel-like, with its own lord at strife,
Thus made an insurrection 'gainst his life.
Or were these gems sent to adorn his skin,
The cabinet of a richer soul within?
No comet need foretell his change drew on,
Whose corpse might seem a constellation.
Oh! had he died of old, how great a strife
Had been, who from his death should draw their life!
Who should, by one rich draught, become whate'er
Seneca, Cato, Numa, Cæsar, were,—
Learn'd, virtuous, pious, great; and have by this
An universal metempsychosis!
Must all these aged sires in one funeral
Expire? all die in one so young, so small?
Who, had he lived his life out, his great fame
Had swoln 'bove any Greek or Roman name.
But hasty Winter, with one blast, hath brought
The hopes of Autumn, Summer, Spring, to nought.
Thus fades the oak i' the sprig, i' the blade the corn;
Thus without young, this Phoenix dies, new born:
Must then old three-legg'd graybeards, with their gout,
Catarrhs, rheums, aches, live three long ages out?
Time's offals, only fit for the hospital!
Or to hang antiquaries' rooms withal!
Must drunkards, lechers, spent with sinning, live
With such helps as broths, possets, physic give?
None live, but such as should die? shall we meet
With none but ghostly fathers in the street?
Grief makes me rail; sorrow will force its way;
And showers of tears, tempestuous sighs best lay.
The tongue may fail; but overflowing eyes
Will weep out lasting streams of elegies.

But thou, O virgin-widow, left alone,
Now thy beloved, heaven-ravish'd spouse is gone,
Whose skilful sire in vain strove to apply
Medicines, when thy balm was no remedy,—
With greater than Platonic love, O wed
His soul, though not his body, to thy bed:



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Let that make thee a mother; bring thou forth
The ideas of his virtue, knowledge, worth;
Transcribe the original in new copies, give
Hastings o' the better part: so shall he live
In's nobler half; and the great grandsire be
Of an heroic divine progeny:
An issue, which to eternity shall last,
Yet but the irradiations which he cast.
Erect no mausoleums: for his best
Monument is his spouse's marble breast.



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1650

May 18, Wednesday: [John Dryden](#) passed from the Westminster School to [Trinity College of Cambridge University](#).

I read Plutarch in the Library of Trinity College in Cambridge, (to which foundation I gratefully acknowledge a great part of my Education;) ...



TRINITY COLLEGE →

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.

October 2, Sunday: [John Dryden](#) was elected to a scholarship at [Trinity College of Cambridge University](#).



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1654

January: [John Dryden](#) received his Bachelor of Arts degree from [Trinity College of Cambridge University](#). His father died and he came into a small estate giving him an annual income of £60.

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT



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1657

[John Dryden](#), who had been living on his small inherited income in Cambridge, went to London and initiated a career as a professional writer.





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1658

September 3, Friday (Old Style): [Oliver Cromwell](#) died of [malaria](#) because he had refused to use the only known treatment (quinine from cinchona).

PLANTS

He had rejected this treatment simply because the cure had been introduced by Jesuits. Amsterdam “was lighted up as for a great deliverance and children ran along the canals, shouting for joy that the Devil was dead.” By 1681 cinchona would be universally accepted as antimalarial. The great commoner’s shrouded corpse would be interred with great fanfare at the east end of Henry VII’s chapel in Westminster Abbey (only to be dug up at the Restoration and ritually hanged and decapitated at Tyburn, and then thrown into an anonymous pit that is now somewhere beneath the Marble Arch).



[John Dryden](#) would author “Heroic Stanzas” on the death of Cromwell.

His son [Richard Cromwell](#) would become Lord Protector and conflict would renew. [John Evelyn](#)’s diary entry for this day was in part as follows:

John Evelyn’s Diary

Died that archrebell Oliver Cromwell, cal’d Protector.



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Friend [George Fox](#) also commented in his [JOURNAL](#), of the events surrounding the death:

Now was there a great pother made about the image or effigy of Oliver Cromwell lying in state; men standing and sounding with trumpets over his image, after he was dead. At this my spirit was greatly grieved, and the Lord, I found, was highly offended.

[Major-General William Goffe](#), whom some had been considering as a possible successor to [Oliver Cromwell](#), instead witnessed the Protector's appointment of his son Richard as his successor. He would support the son during his brief tenure of power and would advise him to use military force to resist Fleetwood and Desborough.

REGICIDE



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1660

April: Exiled Prince of Wales [Charles](#) issued the Declaration of Breda, promising a general amnesty and freedom of conscience. The restoration of the English monarchy, with the court of [King Charles II](#) returning to [London](#) from exile in Paris, would bring with it French court practices: the [snuff](#) of pulverized [tobacco](#) was on its way to becoming the predominant aristocratic form of use. The West Indies colonies would be granted a virtual monopoly upon England's production of [cane sugar](#).

SWEETS
WITHOUT
SLAVERY

[John Dryden](#)'s "Astraea Redux" and "To his Sacred Majesty" were designed to strengthen the monarchy — the monarch would grant patents for two theaters (one hand washes the other).

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



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1663

[John Dryden](#)'s play *The Wild Gallant* failed. He got married with Lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of Thomas Howard, First Earl of Berkshire.



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1664

[John Dryden](#)'s and Sir Robert Howard's heroic tragedy *The Indian Queen*.



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December 5, Monday (Old Style): A [comet](#) was dominating the skies above New England, one which some would associate with the great plague and fire in [London](#).

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A

Chronological TABLE

*Of the most remarkable passages in that part of
America, known to us by the name of NEW-
ENGLAND.*

Anno Dom.

1664. The whole *Bible* Printed in the *Indian* Language finished.

The *Manadaes*, called *New Amsterdam*, now called *New York*; surrendered up to His Majesties Commissioners (for the settling of the respective Colonies in *New-England*, viz. Sir *Robert Carr*, Collonel *Nicols*, Collonel *Cartwright*, and Mr. *Samuel Mavericke*;) in *September*, after thirteen Dayes the Fort of *Arania*, now *Albania*; twelve Dayes after that, the Fort *Awsapha*; then *de la Ware* Castle Man'd with *Dutch* and *Sweeds*; the Three first Forts and Towns being Built upon the great River *Mohegan*, otherwise called *Hudsons* River.

In *September* appeared a great Comet for the space of three Months.¹

¹ 1664, "December, a great and dreadful comet, or blazing star, appeared in the south-east in New England for the space of three moneths; which was accompanied with many sad effects, — great mildews blasting in the countrey the next summer." — *Josselyn's Voyages, Chronol. Obs.*, p. 273; and see p. 245 of the same for a fuller account. — Compare Morton's Memorial, by Davis, p. 304. As to the blasting and mildew of 1665, see the same, p. 317; and that of 1664, p. 309.



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This comet seems to have begun to begun to become visible at least to the more attentive of the skywatchers as early as September, and would be apparent to the naked eye for about 75 days. On this day it completed its dive and began its outward journey:

AN ACCOUNT OF TWO VOYAGES TO NEW-ENGLAND.

From the year of the World

In the year 1664, a Star or Comet appeared in *New-England* in *December* in the *South-East*, rising constantly about one of the clock in the morning, carrying the tail lower and lower till it came into the *West*, and then bare it directly before it; the Star it self was of a duskish red, the tail the colour of *via lactea*, or the milkie way. A fortnight after it appeared again rising higher near the *Nadir* or point over our heads, of the same form and colour, of which heard the former Scholar.

to the year of CHRIST 1673.

BY *John Josselyn Gent.*



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AN ACCOUNT OF TWO VOYAGES TO NEW-ENGLAND.

From the year of the World

A friend of mine shewed me a small Treatise written and printed in the *Massachusetts-Bay* by *B.D.* intituled *An Astronomical description of the late Comet, or Blazing-Star, as it appeared in New-England in the Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh, and the beginning of the Twelfth moneth, 1664. printed at Cambridge by Samuel Green 1665.* An ingenious piece, but because I could not perswade my friend to part with it, I took out some short notes being straitned in time, which are as followes.... Some took note of it in the beginning of *November.*

to the year of Christ 1673.

BY John Josselyn Gent.

ASTRONOMY



JOHN DRYDEN

JOHN DRYDEN

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"Nothing was more common, in those days, than to interpret all meteoric appearances, and other natural phenomena that occurred with less regularity than the rise and set of sun and moon, as so many revelations from a supernatural source. Thus, a blazing spear, a sword of flame, a bow, or a sheaf of arrows seen in the midnight sky, prefigured Indian warfare. Pestilence was known to have been foreboded by a shower of crimson light. We doubt whether any marked event, for good or evil, ever befell New England, from its settlement down to revolutionary times, of which the inhabitants had not been previously warned by some spectacle of its nature. Not seldom, it had been seen by multitudes. Oftener, however, its credibility rested on the faith of some lonely eye-witness, who beheld the wonder through the coloured, magnifying, and distorted medium of his imagination, and shaped it more distinctly in his after-thought. It was, indeed, a majestic idea that the destiny of nations should be revealed, in these awful hieroglyphics, on the cope of heaven. A scroll so wide might not be deemed too expensive for Providence to write a people's doom upon. The belief was a favourite one with our forefathers, as betokening that their infant commonwealth was under a celestial guardianship of peculiar intimacy and strictness."

— [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#), THE SCARLET LETTER





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1665

[John Dryden](#)'s heroic tragedy *The Indian Emperor*. The playwright took refuge from the plague at Charlton in Wiltshire, employing his country leisure to write OF DRAMATIC POESIE laying out principles of dramatic criticism.



Spring: When the Great Plague broke out in [London](#), Dr. Thomas Sydenham abandoned its sufferers to their fate, seeking relative personal safety in the English countryside. In Europe during the Great Plague, the clouds of [tobacco](#) smoke would be hoped to be having some protective effect. In a Royal Society experiment, [Samuel Pepys](#) noted, a cat had quickly died upon being fed a single “drop of distilled oil of tobacco.”

Villages such as Cheam on the far west side of Runnymede from London were being overrun with children of wealthy families, being rusticated there in an attempt to safeguard them from the mysterious and fatal epidemic.

Of course, people were suspicious that this disaster had been brought by the great [comet](#) that had just recently passed through their skies. Even as late as 1722, [Daniel Defoe](#) would be referring to this suspicion in his A JOURNAL OF THE PLAGUE YEAR.

ASTRONOMY



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1666

Birth of [John Dryden](#)'s and Lady Elizabeth Howard's 1st son, Charles Dryden.

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September 2, Sunday (Old Style): The great [London](#) fire began on Pudding Lane, in the house of the king's baker.

- 1660 Episcopacy restored in England and Scotland.
The people of Denmark, being oppressed by the nobles, surrender their privileges to Frederick III. who becomes absolute,
- 1662 The Royal Society established at London by Charles II.
- 1663 Carolina planted; 1728, divided into two separate governments.
- 1664 The New Netherlands, in North America, conquered from the Swedes and Dutch, by the English.
- 1665 The plague rages in London, and carries off 68,000 persons.
- 1666 The great fire of London began September 2, and continued three days, in which were destroyed 13,000 houses, and 400 streets.
Tea first used in England.
- 1667 The peace of Breda, which confirms to the English the New Netherlands, now known by the names of Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey.
St. James's Park planted, and made a thoroughfare for public use, by Charles II.
- 1670 The English Hudson's Bay company incorporated.
- 1672 Louis XIV. over-runs great part of Holland, when the Dutch open their sluices, being determined to drown their country, and retire to their settlements in the East Indies.
African company established.
- 1678 The peace of Nimeguen.
The habeas corpus act passed.
- 1680 A great comet appeared, and from its nearness to our earth, alarmed the inhabitants. It continued visible from November 3 to March 9.
William Penn, a Quaker, receives a charter for planting Pennsylvania.
- 1683 India stock sold from 360 to 500 per cent.
- 1685 Charles II. dies, aged 55, and is succeeded by his brother James II.
The duke of Monmouth, natural son to Charles II. raises a rebellion, but is defeated at the battle of Sedgmoor, and beheaded.
The edict of Nantes infamously revoked by Louis XIV. and the Protestants

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[John Evelyn](#)'s diary entries for this day were in part as follows:

John Evelyn's Diary

This fatal night about ten, began that deplorable fire, neere Fish-streete in Lond[on]



John Evelyn's Diary

I had pub: prayers at home: after dinner the fire continuing, with my Wife & Sonn took Coach & went to the bank side in Southwark, where we beheld that dismal spectacple, the whole City in dreadfull flames neere the Water side, & had now consumed all the houses from the bridge all Thames Streete & up-wards towards Cheape side, downe to the three Cranes, & so returned exceedingly astonishd, what would become of the rest:

By September the 5th, this great fire would have reduced $\frac{4}{5}$ ths of the city to ashes. Only the northeast corner, and the extreme west end, of the city would remain intact. This was, however, a property fire with ample warning: there would be relatively little loss of life. Instead of horror the fire would inspire humor, as for instance in 1693 when a joke book would point out that Cannon Street had roared, Wood Street had burnt to Ashes, Bread Street had burnt to a Coal, Pie Corner had over bak'd, and Snow Hill had melted down.



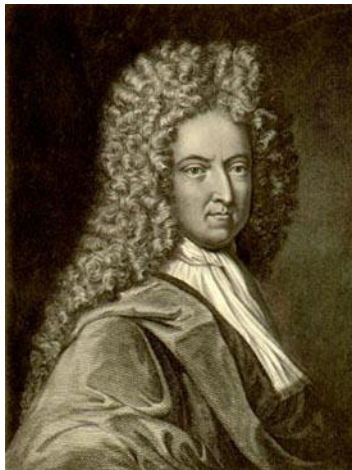
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There had just been a great [comet](#), and so there was a widespread belief that the great comet had brought the great conflagration. Even as late as 1722, [Daniel Defoe](#) would be referring to this suspicion in his *A JOURNAL OF THE PLAGUE YEAR*.

SKY EVENT



THIS DAY IN PEPYS'S DIARY



JOHN DRYDEN

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1667

[John Dryden](#)'s heroic/comic tragedy *Secret Love*, and his poem *annus mirabilis*, a nationalistic and royalist effort celebrating victories over the Dutch and the survival of the city of [London](#). Meanwhile the Triple Alliance was getting underway and King Charles II was entering into a secret alliance with the French.



JOHN DRYDEN

JOHN DRYDEN

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN CAPE COD

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1668

[John Dryden](#) agreed to write exclusively for Thomas Killigrew's theatrical company and became a shareholder. The Archbishop of Canterbury granted him the degree of Master of Arts. He was appointed to become, at the death of Sir William Davenant, the next Poet Laureate of England (but when William and Mary would come to power, he would be stripped of this title due to religious differences).

Posthumous printing of [Abraham Cowley](#)'s essays, including "Of Liberty" and "Of Avarice."

COWLEY'S FINAL ESSAYS



JOHN DRYDEN

JOHN DRYDEN

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN CAPE COD

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1669

[John Dryden](#)'s heroic tragedy *Tyrannick Love*.

A servant named Hartman and his son John prepared, from his master's notes, THE CLOSET OF THE EMINENTLY LEARNED [SIR KENELME DIGBIE KT.](#) OPENED: WHEREBY IS DISCOVERED SEVERAL WAYS FOR MAKING OF METHEGLIN, SIDER, CHERRY-WINE, &C. TOGETHER WITH EXCELLENT DIRECTIONS FOR COOKERY: AS ALSO FOR PRESERVING, CONSERVING, CANDYING, &C. / PUBLISHED BY HIS SON'S CONSENT. (London, Printed by E.C. for H. Browne, at the Star in Little Britain.)



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1670

[John Dryden](#)'s heroic tragedy *The Conquest of Granada by the Spaniards*. (George Villiers's satire of the "heroic tragedy" form of play *The Rehearsal* would be so vicious and so effective that it that it would bring this style of writing abruptly to an end.)

[Dryden](#) was appointed as royal historiographer at an annual salary of £200.

[Sir William Davenant](#) having deceased, [Dryden](#) was appointed as [Poet Laureate](#) of England.

The Poets Laureate of England

1591-1599	Edmund Spenser
1599-1619	Samuel Daniel
1619-1637	Ben Jonson
1638-1668	William Davenant
1670-1689	John Dryden
1689-1692	Thomas Shadwell
1692-1715	Nahum Tate
1715-1718	Nicholas Rowe
1718-1730	Laurence Eusden
1730-1757	Colley Cibber
1758-1785	William Whitehead
1785-1790	Thomas Warton
1790-1813	Henry James Pye
1813-1843	Robert Southey
1843-1850	William Wordsworth
1850-1892	Alfred Lord Tennyson
1896-1913	Alfred Austin
1913-1930	Robert Bridges
1930-1967	John Masefield
1967-1972	Cecil Day-Lewis
1972-1984	Sir John Betjeman
1984-1998	Ted Hughes
1999-	Andrew Motion

JOHN DRYDEN'S POEMS



JOHN DRYDEN

JOHN DRYDEN

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1672

[Sir William Davenant](#) writings were collected in folio. His final effort had been to travesty [William Shakespeare](#)'s *Tempest* in company with [John Dryden](#).



[Dryden](#)'s comedy *Marriage A-la-Mode*.



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1677

[John Dryden](#) adapted [William Shakespeare](#)'s *All for Love*, a retelling of Antony and Cleopatra.
He wrote the libretto for an opera *The State of Innocence*, an adaptation of [John Milton](#)'s PARADISE LOST.



JOHN DRYDEN

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1678

Thomas Killigrew's theatrical company was so deep in debt that [John Dryden](#) and Nathaniel Lee offered their play *Oedipus* to another company.



JOHN DRYDEN

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1679

A gang of hired thugs intercepted [John Dryden](#) in Rose Alley in [London](#), and beat him up.





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May 22, Thursday-July 9, Wednesday (Old Style): [Samuel Pepys](#) guessed wrong for once in his opportunistic life, and wound up spending 6 weeks in the [Tower of London](#) after having been accused of having taken part in “the Popish Plot.” He was suspected of having engaged in treasonable correspondence with France, but no charges



were brought and he was released. The suspicions had been brought against him by John Scott and supported by the Exclusionists in Parliament, as also a minor and equally unjust charge of popery had been brought against him by a dismissed butler whom he had caught in bed with his favorite maid. Had not King [Charles II](#) almost immediately dissolved Parliament and prevented a new one from meeting for a further year and a half, Pepys would have paid the penalty for his loyalty, efficiency, and incorruptibility with his life. He employed his respite with such energy that by the time Parliament met again he had completely blasted the reputation of his accuser John Scott by collecting circumstantial details of his infamies from almost every country.

LONDON

His friend [John Evelyn](#) would of course visit him during his confinement (yes, even more than once):



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June 4, Wednesday (Old Style): *To Lond[on] Din'd with Mr. Pepys at the Tower, whither he was committed by the house of Commons, for misdemeanors in the Admiralty, where he was Secretary; but I believe unjustly: Here I saluted my Lord Stafford & Peters who were also committed for the Popish Plot:*



June 7, Saturday (Old Style): *I saw the magnificent Cavalcade and Entery of the Portugal Ambassador: din'd at L[ord] Chamberlaines:*

June 17, Tuesday (Old Style): *I was Godfather to a Sonn of Sir Chr: Wren Surveyor of his Majesties building[s], that most learned & excellent person; with Sir William Fermor & my Lady Vicountesse Newport wife of the Treasurer of the household: Thence to Chelsey with Sir Steph: Fox and my Lady, in order to his purchas of the Co: of Bristols house ther, which she desired me to procure a Chapman for:*



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1689

[John Dryden](#)'s play *Don Sebastian*. [King James II](#) having fled to France after the landing of [William, Prince of Orange](#) at Brighthelmston in southwestern England backed up by a Dutch army, suddenly William and his wife Mary were [William III and Mary II](#), King and Queen of England — and Johnny-boy was no longer England's [Poet Laureate](#).

The Poets Laureate of England

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- 1687 The palace of Versailles, near Paris, finished by Louis XIV.
- 1688 The Revolution in Great Britain begins; November 5, King James abdicates; and retires to France, December 3.
- 1689 King William and Queen Mary, daughter and son-in-law to James, are proclaimed, February 16.
- Viscount Dundee stands out for James in Scotland, but is killed by general Mackey, at the battle of Killycrankie; upon which the Highlanders, wearied with repeated misfortunes, disperse.
- The land-tax passed in England.
- The toleration act passed in ditto.
- Several bishops are deprived for not taking the oath to king William.
- William Fuller, who pretended to prove the prince of Wales spurious, was voted by the commons to be a notorious cheat, impostor, and false accuser.
- 1690 The battle of the Boyne gained by William against James in Ireland.
- 1691 The war in Ireland finished by the surrender of Limerick to William.
- 1692 The English and Dutch fleets, commanded by admiral Russel, defeat the French fleet off La Hogue.
- 1693 Bayonets at the end of loaded muskets first used by the French against the Confederates in the battle of Turin.
- The duchy of Hanover made the ninth electorate.
- Bank of England established by king William.
- The first public lottery was drawn this year.
- Massacre of Highlanders at Glenco, by king William's troops.
- 1694 Queen Mary dies at the age of 33, and William reigns alone.
- Stamp duties instituted in England.
- 1696 The peace of Ryswick.
- 1699 The Scots settled a colony at the isthmus of Darien, in America, and called it Caledonia.
- 1700 Charles XII. of Sweden begins his reign.



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1690

[John Dryden](#)'s play *Amphitryon*.



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1691

[John Dryden](#)'s libretto for the opera *King Arthur* with music by Purcell.



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1691

“King Arthur,” an opera written by [John Dryden](#) with music by Henry Purcell, told the tale of Arthur’s battles with the (fictitious) Saxon leader, Oswald.



JOHN DRYDEN’S POEMS



JOHN DRYDEN

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1693

[Joseph Addison](#) addressed a poem to [John Dryden](#), former Poet Laureate.





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1695

November 21, Thursday (Old Style): We might be able to offer of [Henry Thoreau](#)'s death in 1862 at the age of 44 what [John Dryden](#) wrote about the death on this day of Henry Purcell at the age of 36: "He long ere this had tuned the jarring spheres and left no hell below."



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1700

May 1, Wednesday (Old Style) or May 12, Thursday (New Style): [John Dryden](#) died in London of inflammation caused by gout. The body would be placed next to that of [Geoffrey Chaucer](#) at Westminster Abbey.



JOHN DRYDEN'S POEMS



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1725

Joseph Ward, a footpad, was [hanged](#) on the Tyburn gallows outside London.¹

There are some persons who are unhappy, even from their cradles, and though every man is said to be born to a mixture of good and evil fortune, yet these seem to reap nothing from their birth but an entry into woe, and a passage to misery.

This unhappy man we are now speaking of, Joseph Ward, is a strong instance of this, for being the son of travelling people, he scarce knew either the persons to whom he owed his birth, or the place where he was born. However, they found a way to instruct him well enough to read, and that so well that it was afterwards of great use to him, in the most miserable state of his life.

He rambled about with his father and mother until the age of fourteen, when they dying, he was left to the wide world, with nothing to provide for himself but his wits; so that he was almost under necessity of going into a gang of gipsies that passed by that part of the country where he was. These gipsies taught him all their arts of living, and it happened that the crew he got into were not of the worst sort either, for they maintained themselves rather by the credulity of the country folks, than by the ordinary practices of those sort of people, stealing of poultry and robbing hedges of what linen people are careless enough to leave there. I shall have another and more proper occasion to give my readers the history of this sort of people, who were anciently formidable enough to deserve an especial Act of Parliament² altered and amended in several reigns for banishing them from the Kingdom.

But to go on with the story of Ward; disliking this employment, he took occasion, when they came into Buckinghamshire, to leave them at a common by Gerrard's Cross, and come up to London. When he came here, he was still in the same state, not knowing what to do to get bread. At last he bethought himself of the sea, and prevailed on a captain to take with him a pretty long voyage. He behaved himself so well in his passage, that his master took him with him again, and used him very kindly; but he dying, Ward was again put to his shifts, though on his arrival in England he brought with him near 30 guineas to London.

He look up lodgings near the Iron Gate at St. Catherine's, and taking a walk one evening on Tower Wharf, he there met with a young woman, who after much shyness suffered him to talk to her. They met there a second and a third time. She said she was niece

1. LIVES OF THE MOST REMARKABLE CRIMINALS WHO HAVE BEEN CONDEMNED AND EXECUTED FOR MURDER, THE HIGHWAY, HOUSEBREAKING, STREET ROBBERIES, COINING OR OTHER OFFENCES / COLLECTED FROM ORIGINAL PAPERS AND AUTHENTIC MEMOIRS, AND PUBLISHED IN 1735 / Edited by Arthur L. Hayward

2. This was the statute of 1530 (22 Hen. VIII, c. 10) directed against "outlandish people calling themselves Egyptians." It was amended 1 & 2 Ph. & Mary, c. 4 and 5 Eliz., c. 10 and sundry other legislation was of a similar tenour.



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to a pewterer of considerable circumstances, not far from Tower Hill, who had promised, and was able to give her five hundred pounds; but the fear of disobliging him by marriage, hindered her from thinking of becoming a wife without his approbation of her spouse.

These difficulties made poor Ward imagine that if he could once persuade the woman to marriage, he should soon mollify the heart of her relation, and so become happy at once. With a great deal to do, Madam was prevailed upon to consent, and going to the Fleet they were there married, and soon returned to St. Catherine's, to new lodgings which Ward had taken, where he had proposed to continue a day or two and then wait upon the uncle. Never man was in his own opinion more happy than Joseph Ward in his new wife, but alas! all human happiness is fleeting and uncertain, especially when it depends in any degree upon a woman. The very next morning after their wedding, Madam prevailed on him to slip on an old coat and take a walk by the house which she had shown him for her uncle's. He was no sooner out of doors, but she gave the sign to some of her accomplices, who in a quarter of an hour's time helped her to strip the lodging not only of all which belonged to Ward, but of some things of value that belonged to the people of the house. They were scarce out of doors before Ward returned, who finding his wife gone and the room stripped, set up such an outcry as alarmed all the people in the house.

Instead of being concerned at Joseph's loss they clamoured at their own, and told him in so many words that if he did not find the woman, or make them reparation for their goods, they would send him to Newgate. But alas! it was neither in Ward's power to do one, nor the other. Upon which the people were as good as their word, for they sent for a constable and had him before a Justice. There the whole act appearing, the justice discharged him and told them they must take their remedy against him at the Common Law. Upon this Ward took the advantage and made off, but taking to drinking to drive away the sorrows that encompassed him, he at last fell into ill-company, and by them was prevailed on to join in doing evil actions to get money. He had been but a short time at this trade, before he committed the fact for which he died.

Islington was the road where he generally took a purse, and therefore endeavoured to make himself perfectly acquainted with many ways that lead to that little town, which he effected so well, that he escaped several times from the strictest pursuits. At last it came into his head that the safest way would be to rob women, which accordingly he put into practice, and committed abundance of thefts that way for the space of six weeks, particularly on one Mrs. Jane Vickary, of a gold ring value twenty shillings, and soon after of Mrs. Elizabeth Barker, of a gold ring set with garnets. Being apprehended for these two facts, he was committed to New Prison, where either refusing or



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not being able to make discoveries, he remained in custody till the sessions at the Old Bailey. There the persons swearing positively to his face, he was after a trivial defence convicted, and received sentence of death accordingly.

As he had no relations that he knew of, nor so much as one friend in the world, the thoughts of a pardon never distracted his mind a moment. He applied himself from the day of his sentence to a new preparation for death, and having in the midst of all his troubles accustomed himself to reading, he was of great use to his unhappy companions in reading the Scripture, and assisting them in their private devotions. He made a just use of that space which the mercy of the English Law allows to persons who are to suffer death for their crimes to make their peace with their Creator.

There was but one person who visited this offender while under the sentence of the Law, and he, thinking that the only method by which he could do him service was to save his life, proposed to him a very probable method of escaping, which for reasons not hard to be guessed at, I shall forbear describing. He pressed him so often and made the practicability of the thing so plain that the criminal at last condescended to make the experiment, and his friend promised the next day to bring him the materials for his escape.

That night Ward, who began then to be weak in his limbs with the sickness which had lain upon him ever since he had been in the prison, fell into a deep sleep, a comfort he had not felt since the coming on of his misfortunes. In this space he dreamed that he was in a very barren, sandy place, which was bounded before him by a large deep river, which in the middle of the plain parted itself into two streams that, after having run a considerable space, united again, having formed an island within the branches. On the other side of the main river, there appeared one of the most beautiful countries that could be thought of, covered with trees, full of ripe fruit, and adorned with flowers. On the other side, in the island which was enclosed, having a large arm of water running behind it and another smaller before, the soil appeared sandy and barren, like that whereon he stood.

While he was musing at this sight, he beheld a person of a grave and venerable aspect, in garb and appearance like a shepherd, who asked him twice or thrice, if he knew the meaning of what he there saw, to which he answered, *No. Well, then, says the stranger, I will inform you. This sight which you see is just your present case. You have nothing to resolve with yourself but whether you will prepare by swimming across this river immediately, forever to possess that beautiful country that lies before you; or by attempting the passage over the narrow board which crosses the first arm of the river and leads into the island, where you will be again amidst briars and thorns, and must at last pass that deep water, before you can enter the pleasant country you behold on the other side.*

This vision made so strong an impression on the poor man's spirits that when his friend came he refused absolutely to make



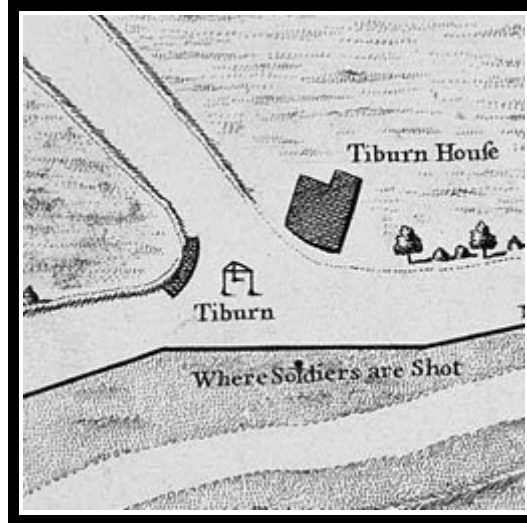
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his escape, but suffered with great marks of calmness and true repentance, at Tyburn, in the twenty-seventh year of his age.





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While in England, Benjamin Franklin was publishing at his own expense a little tract he titled “Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain.” The burden of the piece was that since human behavior must be entirely within the sphere of the possible, the appearance of choice is a mere appearance, and therefore there really cannot be any such thing as our being morally responsible for our behavior. The young man’s free-thinking philosophy was: Anything goes, and one can do shamelessly anything one can get away with. Even when he began to doubt this philosophy, he doubted it for the wrong reasons, which is to say, he doubted it because it was not producing very many good times, in fact was proving useless for anything other than getting him into trouble:

Ben Franklin’s “Autobiography”

I began to suspect that this doctrine, tho’ it might be true, was not very useful. My London pamphlet, which had for its motto these lines of Dryden:

Whatever is, is right. Though purblind man
Sees but a part o’ the chain, the nearest link:
His eyes not carrying to the equal beam,
That poises all above;

and from the attributes of God, his infinite wisdom, goodness and power, concluded that nothing could possibly be wrong in the world, and that vice and virtue were empty distinctions, no such things existing, appear’d now not so clever a performance as I once thought it; and I doubted whether some error had not insinuated itself unperceiv’d into my argument, so as to infect all that follow’d, as is common in metaphysical reasonings.

JOHN DRYDEN

(We can see now, with the benefit of hindsight, that “Time’s noblest offspring” was on its civilizing way, the US of A was on its way aborning, on its way toward becoming what it would become, “the most lawless country in the civilized world,” the land where anything goes.)

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1808

 [Walter Scott](#)'s MARMION. He also prepared an edition of [John Dryden](#) in 18 volumes.





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1810



[Alexander Chalmers](#)'s THE WORKS OF THE ENGLISH POETS, FROM [CHAUCER](#) TO [COWPER](#); INCLUDING THE SERIES EDITED WITH PREFACES, BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL, BY DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON; AND THE MOST APPROVED TRANSLATIONS, a revised and expanded version of Dr. Johnson's 1779-1781 LIVES OF THE POETS, began to come across the London presses of C. Wittingham. It would amount to 21 volumes and the printing would require until 1814 to be complete. According to the Preface, this massive thingie was "a work professing to be a Body of the Standard English Poets"³.

3. When the massive collection would come finally to be reviewed in July 1814, the reviewer would, on the basis of Chalmers's selection of poems and poets, broadly denounce this editor as incompetent.



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PERUSE VOLUME III

PERUSE VOLUME IV

PERUSE VOLUME V

PERUSE VOLUME VI

PERUSE VOLUME VII

PERUSE VOLUME VIII

PERUSE VOLUME IX

PERUSE VOLUME X

PERUSE VOLUME XI

PERUSE VOLUME XII

PERUSE VOLUME XIII

PERUSE VOLUME XIV

PERUSE VOLUME XV

PERUSE VOLUME XVI

PERUSE VOLUME XVII

PERUSE VOLUME XVIII

PERUSE VOLUME XIX

PERUSE VOLUME XX

PERUSE VOLUME XXI



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WALDEN: Breed's hut was standing only a dozen years ago, though it had long been unoccupied. It was about the size of mine. It was set on fire by mischievous boys, one Election night, if I do not mistake. I lived on the edge of the village then, and had just lost myself over Davenant's Gondibert, that winter that I labored with a lethargy, -which, by the way, I never knew whether to regard as a family complaint, having an uncle who goes to sleep shaving himself, and is obliged to sprout potatoes in a cellar Sundays, in order to keep awake and keep the Sabbath, or as the consequence of my attempt to read Chalmers' collection of English poetry without skipping. It fairly overcame my Nervii. I had just sunk my head on this when the bells rung fire, and in hot haste the engines rolled that way, led by a straggling troop of men and boys, and I among the foremost, for I had leaped the brook. We thought it was far south over the woods, -we who had run to fires before,- barn, shop, or dwelling-house, or all together. "It's Baker's barn," cried one. "It is the Codman Place," affirmed another. And then fresh sparks went up above the wood, as if the roof fell in, and we all shouted "Concord to the rescue!" Wagons shot past with furious speed and crushing loads, bearing, perchance, among the rest, the agent of the Insurance Company, who was bound to go however far; and ever and anon the engine bell tinkled behind, more slow and sure, and rearmost of all, as it was afterward whispered, came they who set the fire and gave the alarm. Thus we kept on like true idealists, rejecting the evidence of our senses, until at a turn in the road we heard crackling and actually felt the heat of the fire from over the wall, and realized, alas! that we were there. The very nearness of the fire but cooled our ardor. At first we thought to throw a frog-pond on to it; but concluded to let it burn, it was so far gone and so worthless. So we stood round our engine, jostled one another, expressed our sentiments through speaking trumpets, or in lower tone referred to the great conflagrations which the world has witness, including Bascom's shop, and, between ourselves we thought that, were we there in season with our "tub", and a full frog-pond by, we could turn that threatened last and universal one into another flood. We finally retreated without doing any mischief, -returned to sleep and Gondibert. But as for Gondibert, I would except that passage in the preface about wit being the soul's powder, -"but most of mankind are strangers to wit, as Indians are to powder."



FIRE

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

INSURANCE

NARCOLEPSY

ALEXANDER CHALMERS

BASCOM & COLE



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THE ENGLISH POETS:

[Joseph Addison](#), Akenside; Armstrong; Beattie; [Francis Beaumont](#); Sir J. Beaumont; Blacklock; Blackmore; [Robert Blair](#); Boyse; Brome; Brooke; Broome; Sir [Thomas Browne](#); [Charles Butler](#); [George Gordon, Lord Byron](#); Cambridge; [Thomas Carew](#); Cartwright; Cawthorne; Chatterton; [Geoffrey Chaucer](#); Churchill; [William Collins](#); [William Congreve](#); Cooper; Corbett; [Charles Cotton](#); Dr. Cotton; [Abraham Cowley](#); [William Cowper](#); Crashaw; Cunningham; [Daniel](#); [William Davenant](#); Davies; [Sir John Denham](#); Dodsley; [John Donne](#); Dorset; [Michael Drayton](#); Sir [William Drummond](#); [John Dryden](#); Duke; Dyer; Falconer; Fawkes; Fenton; [Giles Fletcher](#); [John Fletcher](#); Garth; [Gascoigne](#); Gay; Glover; Goldsmith; [Gower](#); Grainger; [Thomas Gray](#); Green; [William Habington](#); Halifax; [William Hall](#); Hammond; Harte; Hughes; Jago; Jenyns; Dr. [Samuel Johnson](#); Jones; [Ben Jonson](#); King; Langhorne; Lansdowne; Lloyd; Logan; Lovibond; Lyttelton; Mallett; Mason; William Julias Mickle; [John Milton](#); [Thomas Moore](#); Otway; Parnell; A. Phillips; J. Phillips; Pitt; Pomfret; [Alexander Pope](#); Prior; Rochester; Roscommon; Rowe; Savage; Sir [Walter Scott](#); [William Shakespeare](#); Sheffield; Shenstone; Sherburne; [Skelton](#); Smart; Smith; Somerville; [Edmund Spenser](#); Sprat; Stepney; Stirling; Suckling; Surrey; [Jonathan Swift](#); [James Thomson](#); W. Thomson; Tickell; [Turberville](#); Waller; Walsh; Warner; J. Warton; T. Warton; Watts; West; P. Whitehead; W. Whitehead; Wilkie; Wyatt; Yalden; [Arthur Young](#).

TRANSLATIONS:

[Alexander Pope](#)'s Iliad & Odyssey; [John Dryden](#)'s Virgil & [Juvenal](#); Pitt's Aeneid & Vida; Francis' Horace; Rowe's Lucan; Grainger's [Albius Tibullus](#); Fawkes' Theocritus, Apollonius Rhodius, Coluthus, [Anacreon](#), Sappho, Bion and Moschus, Museus; Garth's Ovid; Lewis' Statius; Cooke's [Hesiod](#); Hoole's Ariosto & Tasso; William Julias Mickle's Lusiad.

COMMENTARY:

William Julias Mickle's "Inquiry into the Religion Tenets and Philosophy of the Bramins," which Thoreau encountered in 1841 in Volume 21 (pages 713-33).



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1836

→ Henry Thoreau copied snippets from various poems by John Dryden such as “Palamon and Arcite” into his college “Index Rerum.”

PALAMON AND ARCITE

Some of this material would find its way into CAPE COD:

CAPE COD: When I approached this house the next summer, over the desolate hills between it and the shore, which are worthy to have been the birthplace of Ossian, I saw the wizard in the midst of a cornfield on the hillside, but, as usual, he loomed so strangely, that I mistook him for a scarecrow. This was the merriest old man that we had ever seen, and one of the best preserved. His style of conversation was coarse and plain enough to have suited Rabelais. He would have made a good Panurge. Or rather he was a sober Silenus, and we were the boys Chromis and Mnasilus, who listened to his story.

“Not by Hæmonian hills the Thracian bard,
Nor awful Phœbus was on Pindus heard
With deeper silence or with more regard.”

PEOPLE OF CAPE COD

SILENUS
CHROMIS
MNASILUS

OSSIAN
JOHN DRYDEN

Other Dryden materials such as “A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire” would find their way into “Homer Ossian Chaucer,” “Aulus Persius Flaccus,” and A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS:



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A WEEK: What a contrast between the stern and desolate poetry of Ossian, and that of Chaucer, and even of Shakespeare and Milton, much more of Dryden, and Pope, and Gray. Our summer of English poetry like the Greek and Latin before it, seems well advanced toward its fall, and laden with the fruit and foliage of the season, with bright autumnal tints, but soon the winter will scatter its myriad clustering and shading leaves, and leave only a few desolate and fibrous boughs to sustain the snow and rime, and creak in the blasts of ages. We cannot escape the impression that the Muse has stooped a little in her flight, when we come to the literature of civilized eras. Now first we hear of various ages and styles of poetry; it is pastoral, and lyric, and narrative, and didactic; but the poetry of runic monuments is of one style, and for every age. The bard has in a great measure lost the dignity and sacredness of his office. Formerly he was called a seer, but now it is thought that one man sees as much as another. He has no longer the bardic rage, and only conceives the deed, which he formerly stood ready to perform. Hosts of warriors earnest for battle could not mistake nor dispense with the ancient bard. His lays were heard in the pauses of the fight. There was no danger of his being overlooked by his contemporaries. But now the hero and the bard are of different professions. When we come to the pleasant English verse, the storms have all cleared away and it will never thunder and lighten more. The poet has come within doors, and exchanged the forest and crag for the fireside, the hut of the Gael, and Stonehenge with its circles of stones, for the house of the Englishman. No hero stands at the door prepared to break forth into song or heroic action, but a homely Englishman, who cultivates the art of poetry. We see the comfortable fireside, and hear the crackling fagots in all the verse.

PEOPLE OF
A WEEK

OSSIAN
JOHN DRYDEN



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1840

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

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

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

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



ZOROASTER



JOHN DRYDEN

JOHN DRYDEN

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THE DIAL, JULY 1840

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

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

ZOROASTER

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

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





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

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

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

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

EZRA POUND

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



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

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

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

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

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



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(Well, first we have Thoreau being like a later poet who was renowned for his personal as well as his political craziness, and then we have Thoreau being an [Emerson](#) impersonator, interpreting things through the lens of the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson. That's about par for the course, on the Richardson agenda.)

This initial issue also contained some material from Charles Emerson:

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

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

This initial issue also contained on page 123 the poem by [Ellen Sturgis Hooper](#) “I slept and dreamed that life was Beauty” from which [Thoreau](#) would quote a large part as the conclusion of his “House-Warming” chapter:⁵

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

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

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

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

Mrs. Hooper



ELLEN STURGIS HOOPER



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

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

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



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

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

DIAL ON TIME THINE OWN ETERNITY

and the "dial" in question was a garden sundial.⁶ For purposes of this publication Bronson strove to emulate the selections from his writings that [Waldo Emerson](#) had excerpted at the end of the small volume NATURE, attempted, that is, to cast his wisdom in the form of epigrams or "Orphic Sayings" which, even if they were unchewable, at least could be fitted into one's mouth. In the timeframe in which these were being created, Alcott was reading [Hesiod](#) (he had in his personal library HESIOD'S WORKS, TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK, BY MR. T[HOMAS] COOKE, SECOND EDITION, 1740), Dr. Henry More, the Reverend Professor Ralph Cudworth,



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

Prudence is the footprint of Wisdom.

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

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

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

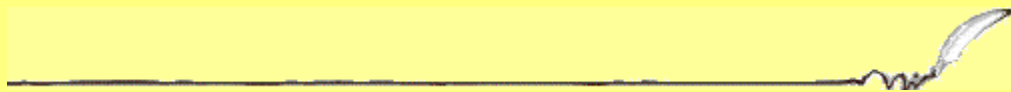
6. The name, of course, carried metaphysical freight. For instance, in his 1836 essay NATURE [Emerson](#) had quoted the following from Emmanuel Swedenborg — the Swedish religious mentor whom he would later characterize, in REPRESENTATIVE MEN, as the type of "the mystic":

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



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

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



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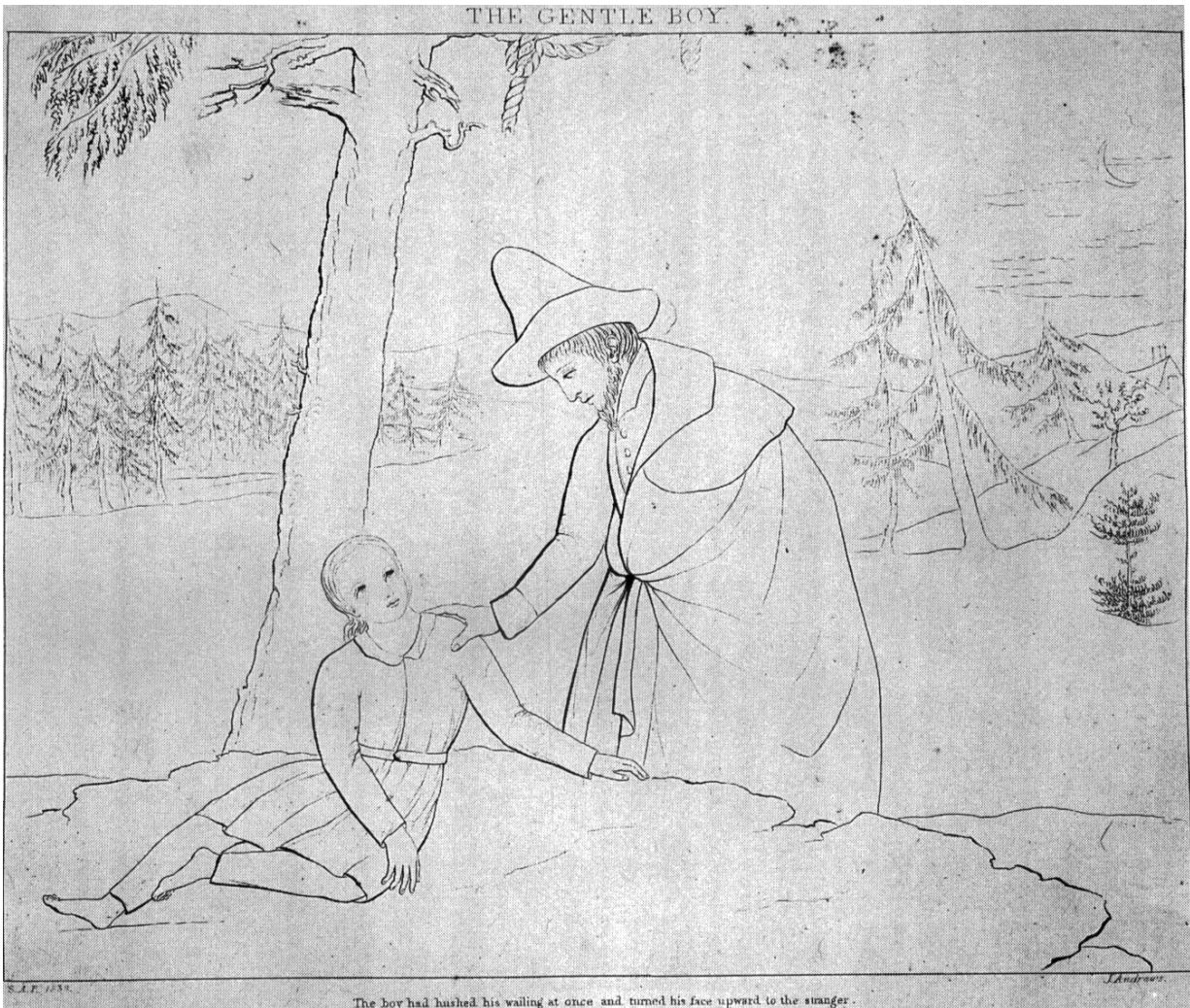
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**Sophia Peabody (Hawthorne)'s Illustration for the 1st Edition of
"To a Gentle Boy" in TWICE-TOLD TALES**



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Wouldn't this be a better world if [G.W.F. Hegel](#) also had been ignored? Go figure.⁷The initial issue included



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

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

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

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

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

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

Who can name thy wondrous essence,
Thou electric phosphorescence?
Lonely apparition fire!

7. July 1840, [The Dial](#), "Orphic Sayings," xvii.



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Seeker of the starry choir!
Restless roamer of the sky,
Who hath won thy mystery?
Mortal science hath not ran
With thee through the Empyrean,
Where the constellations cluster
Flower-like on thy branching lustre.

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

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

Aulus Persius Flaccus

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

“Ipse semipaganus
Ad sacra Vatum carmen affero nostrum.”

Here is none of the interior dignity of Virgil, nor the elegance and fire of Horace, nor will any Sibyl be needed to remind you, that from those older Greek poets, there is a sad descent to Persius. Scarcely can you distinguish one harmonious sound, amid this unmusical bickering with the follies of men.

One sees how music has its place in thought, but hardly as yet in language. When the Muse arrives, we wait for her to remould language, and impart to it her own rhythm. Hitherto the verse groans and labors with its load, but goes not forward blithely, singing by the way. The best ode may be parodied, indeed is itself a parody, and has a poor and trivial sound, like a man stepping on the rounds of a ladder. Homer, and Shakspeare, and Milton, and Marvel, and Wordsworth, are but the rustling of leaves and crackling of twigs in the forest, and not yet the sound of any bird. The Muse has never lifted up her voice to sing. Most of all satire will not be sung. A Juvenal or Persius



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do not marry music to their verse, but are measured faultfinders at best; stand but just outside the faults they condemn, and so are concerned rather about the monster they have escaped, than the fair prospect before them. Let them live on an age, not a secular one, and they will have travelled out of his shadow and harm's way, and found other objects to ponder.

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

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

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

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

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

[“nature” should read “satire”]



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commerce with the gods, he says, –

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

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

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

In the third satire he asks,

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

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

“Securus quò pes ferat, atque ex tempore vivit,

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

The life of a wise man is most of all extemporaneous, for he lives out of an eternity that includes all time. He is a child each moment and reflects wisdom. The far darting thought of the child's mind tarries not for the development of manhood; it lightens itself, and needs not draw down lightning from the clouds. When we bask in a single ray from the mind of Zoroaster,



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we see how all subsequent time has been an idler, and has no apology for itself. But the cunning mind travels farther back than Zoroaster each instant, and comes quite down to the present with its revelation. All the thrift and industry of thinking give no man any stock in life; his credit with the inner world is no better, his capital no larger. He must try his fortune again today as yesterday. All questions rely on the present for their solution. Time measures nothing but itself: The word that is written may be postponed, but not that on the life. If this is what the occasion says, let the occasion say it. From a real sympathy, all the world is forward to prompt him who gets up to live without his creed in his pocket.

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

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

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

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

T.



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PEOPLE MENTIONED IN CAPE COD
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1862

May 6, Tuesday: [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#) had been helping her brother revise his [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#). In the early morning, about eight o'clock, she was completing the reading of the manuscript to Henry. When she read the sentence

[A WEEK](#): We glided past the mouth of the Nashua, and not long after, of Salmon Brook, without more pause than the wind.

he commented

TB

Now comes good sailing.





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Something about the manner in which [Henry David Thoreau](#) died indicates to me that his attitude toward eternity was what he was keeping before him at the end. It is, Thoreau noted in [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#), through silence that all revelations have been made. And, in a letter to Isaiah T. Williams on October 8, 1841, he suggested that to stop up our ears against the “immediate” voice of God and prefer to know him by report is “the only sin.” Since the Indian, for Thoreau, is the type case of the human being who understands how to live spontaneously, without mediation, in the presented eternal instant,

THE MAINE WOODS: He does not carry things in his head, nor remember the route exactly, like a white man, but relies on himself at the moment.

and since the Indian, like the moose and other animals, relies upon all his senses and “does not give a distinct, conscious attention to any one” and since the Indian finds his way in the wilderness “very much as an animal does,” when those attending Thoreau at the end detected him breathing the identifiable words

moose

and

Indian

then something occurs to me. It has done us no detectable harm to speculate about this thing that we cannot know, speculate for instance that what Thoreau was attempting to do was, in delirium, continue the job he had assumed of editing his manuscripts so as to be able to leave a greater estate for his survivors, but it would also do us no harm, I offer, to hypothecate that Thoreau was in uttering these words emphasizing to himself this similarity between animals and Indians in regard to immediacy and in regard to spontaneity, which he had so often urged us all to emulate, and which he had so often urged upon himself. It seems to me, at the very least, that this is the sort of appropriate thing of which one might need to remind oneself, as one is enduring the difficulties of lying somewhere dying.

We might be able to offer of [Henry David Thoreau](#)’s death in 1862 at the age of 44 what [John Dryden](#) wrote about the death on November 21, 1695 of Henry Purcell at the age of 36: “He long ere this had tuned the jarring spheres and left no hell below.”

On the day of [Henry](#)’s death, [Waldo Emerson](#) was visiting Bronson Alcott (Waldo seems to have fancifully associated the timing of his death with the breaking up of the ice on Walden Pond).



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Hearing of Thoreau's death, Mrs. Sarah Alden Bradford Ripley would write her daughter Sophia Bradford Thayer:

This fine morning is sad for those of us who sympathise with the friends of Henry Thoreau the phylosopher and the woodman. He had his reason to the last and talked with his friends pleasantly and arranged his affairs; and at last passed in quiet sleep from this state of duty and responsibility to that which is behind the veil. His funeral service is to be at the church, and Mr. Emerson is to make an address. I hope Uncle George will get home in season to be there, he will regret it so if he does not.

Joan W. Goodwin, in *THE REMARKABLE MRS. RIPLEY: THE LIFE OF SARAH ALDEN BRADFORD RIPLEY* (Boston: Northeastern UP, 1998), supplements that letter as follows:⁸

By May he was gone.... She hoped her brother [George P. Bradford] would get to Concord in time for the funeral, knowing "he will regret it so much if he does not," having been a close walking and botanizing companion of Thoreau's over the years.

[Waldo Emerson](#) wrote immediately to H.G.O. Blake ("My Dear Blake") informing him of Thoreau's death and of arrangements for the pending funeral. (This letter has recently been recovered from between the pages of Herbert W. Gleason's *THROUGH THE YEAR WITH THOREAU*, a volume which has been published in 1917.)

The widowed [Mrs. Mary Peabody Mann](#) would write to [Sophia Peabody Hawthorne](#):

I was made very happy to-day by seeing Miss Thoreau, whose brother died such a happy, peaceful death,—leaving them all so

8. To give this statement about trusting to one's life according to the natural laws some context, let us consider the manner in which the people of that era had accepted the normalness of the wasting fever which preceded deaths due to "consumption" or "phthisis," in an era in which there was no hint of any effective treatment. I will quote from a report which appeared in an 1894 medical journal, as this report was seconded in the [Scientific American](#) magazine of the period:

The [Medical Record](#) tells of a woman in Ohio who utilized the high temperature of her phthysical husband for eight weeks before his death, by using him as an incubator for hens' eggs. She took 50 eggs, and wrapping each one in cotton batting, laid them alongside the body of her husband in the bed, he being unable to resist or move a limb. After three weeks she was rewarded with forty-six lively young chickens.



One may fantasize the wisecracks a Thoreau would have been able to summon, had his sister and mother needed to use his hot, thinning body to hatch chicks during this April/May period. His would surely have been as excellent as the Vonnegut jests!

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fully possessed of his faith in the Immortal Life that they seem almost to have entered it with him. They said they never could be sad in his presence for a moment; he had been the happiest person they had ever known, all through his life, and was just as happy in the presence of death. This is the more remarkable as he was still in the prime of life, with a vivid sense of its enjoyments. But he was nearer to the heart of Nature than most men. Sophia said to-day that he once told her when looking at a pressed flower that he had walked 10,000 miles to verify the day on which that flower bloomed. It grew four miles from his home, and he walked there every day in the season of it for many years.... He seemed to walk straight into Heaven. It is animating and inspiring to see a great or a good man take that last step with his thoughts about him, and intent upon the two worlds whose connection he sees with the clairvoyance that death gives. I know it well, and I could fully sympathize in her sense of her brother's continued presence. Death is not the word to use for such a transit, -but more life, -for which we as yet have no word.



[Sophia Peabody Hawthorne](#) would write to [Mr. and Mrs. James Thomas Fields](#):

On Friday ... Mr. Thoreau's funeral is to take place. He was Concord itself in one man - and his death makes a very large vacuum. I ought to be at his funeral for the sake of strewing [sic] my deep respect and value for him to others, though I could much better mourn him at home.... I suppose he believed that beasts and reptiles, birds and fishes fulfilled their ends, and that man generally came short. So he respected the one and avoided the other. His Alpine purity, his diamond truth, his stainless sincerity, his closeness to nature and faithful rendering - these are immortal beauties in him. He has now stepped out of his French body - and his soul has taken up its fitting celestial manifestation. And he has doubtless found the Victoria Regia, which would not grow wild



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*in Concord, even though it were the birthplace of Henry Thoreau!
and though he declared he should one day find it here.*



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1869

March 4, Thursday: [Thomas Carlyle](#) visited the Queen of England in her castle home. At one point this confirmed explainer became so intense in informing her about the beauties of his Galloway that he pinned her dress to the floor with the leg of his chair.⁹



Ulysses S. Grant was inaugurated as President of the United States of America.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

[James Russell Lowell](#) would become so alarmed with the political corruption that would be so obvious in this president's administrations that he would attempt to manufacture models of heroism and idealism in literature. As co-editor, with Charles Eliot Norton, of the [North American Review](#) there would appear a series of critical essays on such major literary figures as [Dante Alighieri](#), [Geoffrey Chaucer](#), [Edmund Spenser](#), [John Milton](#), [William Shakespeare](#), [John Dryden](#), [William Wordsworth](#), and [John Keats](#). These and other critical essays would be collected in the two versions of AMONG MY BOOKS, the version of 1870 and the version of 1876.

“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING: HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY

9. Talk about captivating one's audience! We were not amused. To her journal, [Victoria](#) would describe this man as “a strange-looking eccentric old Scotchman, who holds forth, in a drawling melancholy voice, with a broad Scotch accent, upon Scotland and upon the utter degeneration of everything.”



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"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

- Remark by character "Garin Stevens"
in William Faulkner's INTRUDER IN THE DUST



Prepared: November 8, 2014



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ARRGH AUTOMATED RESEARCH REPORT

GENERATION HOTLINE



This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, someone has requested that we pull it out of the hat of a pirate who has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (as above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of modules which we term the



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Kouroo Contexture (this is data mining). To respond to such a request for information we merely push a button.

Commonly, the first output of the algorithm has obvious deficiencies and we need to go back into the modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and recompile the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.

Place requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>. Arrgh.