THEOPHRASTUS OF ERESUS

“NARRATIVE HISTORY” AMOUNTS TO FABULATION, THE REAL STUFF BEING MERE CHRONOLOGY
After suffering a string of disastrous defeats during which thousands of their soldiers ran away, the Spartans were forced to resort to publicly humiliating their deserters rather than executing them all.

At Eresos on the island of Lesbos in about this year, Theophrastus was born.
Aristotle moved on from Athens to spend several years at Mytilene on the island of Lesbos, where he would meet Theophrastus (his scientific collaborator and later successor at the Lyceum which eventually he would found in Athens).
Here is the island of Lesbos, as seen from the shore of Asia Minor:

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.
Theophrastus (circa 372-287 BCE), the father of Greek Botany, taught about plants from his own working knowledge of them, experience reflected in the “Inquiry” (HISTORIA PLANTARUM) and “Causes.” This text covers 550 kinds of plants, including the strawberry tree (Arbutus unedo), the date palm, figs, and water lilies. During the middle ages, these informative Theophrastan works would be generally unavailable, and 2nd-hand versions would be loaded with misinformation — thus the level of botanical knowledge available in writing actually would decline. The rediscovery and printing of his works beginning in 1483 would replace muddled interpretations of plants and help rekindle an interest in botany. For instance, here are amaranth and mandrake.
as depicted in a 1644 edition of *HISTORIA PLANTARUM*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plant</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cherry</td>
<td><em>Prunus avium</em></td>
<td>Europe and Asia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theophrastus died. 287 BCE
The plant descriptions of Theophrastus, such as his *HISTORIA PLANTARUM*, had during the middle ages been generally unavailable, and 2d-hand versions had been loaded with misinformation, but the rediscovery and printing of his works by Teodoro of Gaza in the Latin language began at this point — and would help to rekindle a Western interest in botany.

Here, for instance, are amaranth and mandrake:
Vespasien Robin’s [botanical] catalog included some new exotics from America.

Gaspard Bauhin’s *Pinax Theatri Botanici Sive Index in Theophrasti, Dioscoridis, Plinii Et ...* accounted for about 6,000 [botanical] species, pulling together uncoordinated plant names and descriptions that had appeared in *Theophrastus* and Dioscorides as well as in later herbals and other plant records. By accepting Bauhin’s compilation, Linnaeus would be able to avoid many of the complications of the ancient literature.

**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.**
The plant descriptions of Theophrastus of Eresus had during the middle ages been generally unavailable, and secondhand versions had been loaded with misinformation, but the rediscovery and printing of his works had begun in 1483 and was helping to rekindle an interest in botany. In this year there was a new edition amounting to 1,187 pages, entitled *THEOPHRASTUS ERESIUS. DE HISTORIA PLANTARUM LIBRI DECEM, GRAECE & LATINE. IN QUIBUS TEXTUM GRAECUM VARIIS LECTIONIBUS, EMENDATIONIBUS, HIULCORUM SUPPLEMENTIS:...*

*(item rariorum plantarum  iconibus illustravit Joannes Bodaeus a Stapel, medicus amstelodamensis, accesserunt Iulii Caesaris Scaligeri, in eosdem libros animadversiones: et Roberti Constantini, annotationes cum indice locupletissimo. Amstelodami) that actually had been begun years earlier, by Johannes Bodaeus van Stapel, one that contained added commentaries and drawings (Johannes himself having died in 1632, this posthumous publication was brought to completion by his father).*
Here are amaranth and mandrake, as depicted in this new edition:
"Wild Apples": There is, first of all, the Wood-Apple (Malus sylvatica); the Blue-Jay Apple; the Apple which grows in Dells in the Woods, (sylvestrivallis); the Apple that grows in an old Cellar-Hole (Malus cellaris); the Meadow-Apple; the Partridge-Apple; the Truant’s Apple, (Cessatoris), which no boy will ever go by without knocking off some, however late it may be; the Saunterer’s Apple, — you must lose yourself before you can find the way to that; the Beauty of the Air (Decus Aëris); December-Eating; the Frozen-Thawed, (gelato-soluta), good only in that state; the Concord Apple, possibly the same with the Musketaquidensis; the Assabet Apple; the Brindled Apple; Wine of New England; the Chickaree Apple; the Green Apple (Malus viridis); — this has many synonyms; in an imperfect state, it is the Choleramorbifera aut dysenterifera, puerulis dilectissima; — the Apple which Atalanta stopped to pick up; the Hedge-Apple (Malus Sepium); the Slug-Apple (limacea); the Railroad-Apple, which perhaps came from a core thrown out of the cars; the Apple whose Fruit we tasted in our Youth; our Particular Apple, not to be found in any catalogue, — Pedestrium Solatium; also the Apple where hangs the Forgotten Scythe; Iduna’s Apples, and the Apples which Loki found in the Wood; and a great many more I have on my list, too numerous to mention, — all of them good. As Bodaeus exclaims, referring to the cultivated kinds, and adapting Virgil to his case, so I, adapting Bodaeus, —

“Not if I had a hundred tongues, a hundred mouths,
An iron voice, could I describe all the forms
And reckon up all the names of these wild apples.”

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT
November 2, Monday: The presidential election. We have no record that Henry Thoreau voted in Concord, Massachusetts (but then, we have no record that Abraham Lincoln voted in Lawrenceville, Illinois).

Monday Nov 2nd 1840.
It is well said that the “attitude of inspection is prone.” The soul does not inspect but behold. Like the lily or the crystal in the rock, it looks in the face of the sky.

Francis Howell says that in garrulous persons “The supply of thought seems never to rise much above the level of its exit.” Consequently their thoughts issue in no jets, but incessantly dribble. In those who speak rarely, but to the purpose, the reservoir of thought is many feet higher than its issue. It takes the pressure of a hundred atmospheres to make one jet of eloquence. For the most part the thoughts subside like a sediment, while the words break like a surf on the shore. They are being silently deposited in level strata, or held in suspension for ages, in that deep ocean within — Therein is the ocean’s floor whither all things sink, and it is strewed with wrecks.

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December 16, Friday: Henry Thoreau checked out, from Harvard Library, the 2d volume of a 5-volume set prepared 1818-1821 (Theophrasti Eresii Quae Supersunt Opera: Et Excerpta Librorum) by Theophrastus of Eresus (circa 372-circa 287BCE), Johann Gottlob Schneider, Heinrich Friedrich Link. Lipsiae: Sumtibus
He also checked out the two volumes of Aristotle’s *Histoire des animaux d’Aristote* in Greek and in the
French translation by M. Camus (Paris: Chez la veuve Desaint, 1783).
While at the Harvard Library, Thoreau read from but did not check out John Gerard’s 1597 botanical resource, The Herball or Generall Historie of Plantes:

December 16, 1859: A.M.–To Cambridge, where I read in Gerard’s Herbal. [Vide extracts from preface made in October 1859.] His admirable though quaint descriptions are, to my mind, greatly superior to the modern more scientific ones. He describes not according to rule but to his natural delight in the plants. He brings them vividly before you, as one who has seen and delighted in them. It is almost as good as to see the plants themselves. It suggests that we cannot too often get rid of the barren assumption that is in our science. His leaves are leaves; his flowers, flowers; his fruit, fruit. They are green and colored and fragrant. It is a man’s knowledge added to a child’s delight. Modern botanical descriptions approach ever nearer to the dryness of an algebraic formula, as if c + y were = to a love-letter. It is the keen joy and discrimination of the child who has just seen a flower for the first time and comes running in with it to its friends. How much better to describe your object in fresh English words rather than in these conventional Latinisms! He has really seen, and smelt, and tasted, and reports his sensations.

Bought a book at Little & Brown’s, paying a nine-pence more on a volume than it was offered me for elsewhere. The customer thus pays for the more elegant style of the store.
The Select Committee on the Invasion of Harpers Ferry created by Democratic Senator James Mason of Virginia held its first meeting in regard to the John Brown affair and its Secret “Six” conspiracy. The committee would be in existence for six months before delivering its final report and would summon, in all, 32 witnesses.

Edwin Coppoc and John E. Cook were hanged in Charlestown, Virginia. Edwin’s body would be buried in Winona after a funeral attended by the entire town. Later his body would be reburied in Salem, Ohio.

(Edwin had written from the prison to his adoptive mother, of a nonresistant-abolitionist Quaker farm family, that he was

“sorry to say that I was ever induced to raise a gun.”

2. I have been advised that according to THE QUAKERS OF IOWA by Louis Thomas Jones, a scholarly work published under the auspices of the State Historical Iowa at Iowa City, Iowa in 1914 (I haven’t myself actually seen this book), prior to their deaths the Coppoc brothers were disowned by the Red Cedar Monthly Meeting of Friends in the West Branch/Springdale area.
Edwin’s brother Barclay Coppoc was still eluding capture.

John E. Cook had made a full confession of his activities with the raiders and at the last moment had sought to save his neck by representing that he had been deceived through false promises, but this had not saved him, nor had the fact that his brother-in-law A.P. Willard was Governor of Indiana.

When it came the turn of John Anderson Copeland, Jr, to be hanged, too short a drop was used. He strangled slowly.

Just before being taken from his cell to the execution field that morning, he had completed a last letter to his family:

Charlestown Jail, Va.,
Dec. 16, ‘59

Dear Father, Mother, Brothers Henry, William and Freddy, and Sisters Sarah and Mary:
The last Sabbath with me on earth has passed away. The last Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday that I shall ever see on this earth have now passed by God’s glorious sun, which he has placed in the heavens to illuminate this earth—whose refulgent beams are watched for by this poor invalid, to enter & make as it were in heaven of the room in which he is confined—
I have seen declining behind the western mountains for the last time. Last night for the last time, I beheld the soft bright moon as it rose, casting its mellow light into my felons cell, dissipating the darkness and filling it with that soft pleasant light which causes such thrills of joy to all those in like circumstance with myself. This morning for the last time, I beheld the glorious sun of yesterday rising in the far-off East, away off in the country where our Lord Jesus Christ first proclaimed salvation to man, and now as he rises higher and his bright light takes the place of the pale, soft moonlight, I will
take my pen, for the last time, to write you who are bound to me by those strong ties (yea, the strongest that God ever instituted,) the ties of blood and relationship. I am well, both in body and in mind. And now, dear ones, if it were not that I know your hearts will be filled with sorrow at my fate, I could pass from this earth without a regret. Why should you sorrow? Why should your hearts be racked with grief? Have I not everything to gain and nothing to lose by the change? I fully believe that not only myself but also all three of my poor comrades who are to ascend the same scaffold—(a scaffold already made sacred to the cause of freedom, by the death of that great champion of human freedom, Capt. JOHN BROWN) are prepared to meet our God. I am only leaving a world filled with sorrow and woe to enter one in which there is but one lasting day of happiness and bliss. I feel that God in his mercy has spoken peace to my soul, and that all my numerous sins are now forgiven me. Dear parents, brothers and sisters, it is true that I am now in a few hours to start on a journey from which no traveler returns. Yes, long before this reaches you, I shall as I sincerely hope, have met our brother and sister who have for years been worshiping God around his throne—singing praises to him, and thanking him that he gave his Son to die that they might have eternal life. I pray daily and hourly that I may be fitted to have my home with them, and that you, one and all, may prepare your souls to meet your God, that so, in the end, though we meet no more on earth, we shall meet in Heaven, where we shall not be parted by the demands of the cruel and unjust monster Slavery. But think not that I am complaining, for I feel reconciled to meet my fate. I pray God that his will be done; not mine. Let me tell you that it is not the mere act of having to meet death, which I should regret, (if I should express regret I mean,) but that such an unjust institution should exist as the one which demands my life; and not my life only, but the lives of those to whom my life bears but the relative value of zero to the infinite. I beg of you one and all that you will not grieve about me, but that you will thank God that he spared me time to make my peace with Him. And now, dear ones, attach no blame to anyone for my coming here for not any person but myself is to blame. I have no antipathy against anyone, I have freed my mind of all hard feelings against every living being, and I ask all who have any thing against me to do the same. And now dear parents, Brothers and sisters, I must bid you to serve your God and meet me in heaven. I must with a few words, close my correspondence with those who are the most near and dear to me: but I hope, in the end, we may again commune, never to cease. Dear ones, he who writes this will, in a few hours, be in this world no longer. Yes, these fingers which hold the pen with which this is written will, before to-day’s sun has reached his meridian have laid it aside forever, and this poor soul have taken its flight to meet its God. And now dear ones I must bid you that last, long, sad farewell. Good-day, Father, Mother, Henry, William, and Freddy, Sarah and Mary, serve your God and
meet me in heaven.
Your Son and Brother to eternity,
John A. Copeland.

Is it that Aaron D. Stevens, and ten of Captain Brown’s black supporters, having been duly found guilty of treason and murder by a jury of their white male peers, were hanged on this date?

Or is it that the other surrendered survivors of the raid on Harpers Ferry, John Anderson Copeland, Jr., Shields Green, and Aaron D. Stevens, having been duly found guilty of treason and murder by a jury of their white male peers, were hanged on this date?

A monument would be erected by the citizens of Oberlin, Ohio in honor of their three free citizens of color who had died in the raid or been hanged, Shields Green, John Anderson Copeland, Jr., and Lewis Sheridan Leary (the 8-foot marble monument would be moved to Vine Street Park in 1971).

3. In THE CAPTURE AND EXECUTION OF JOHN BROWN: A TALE OF MARTYRDOM, BY ELIJAH AVEY, EYE WITNESS, WITH THIRTY ILLUSTRATIONS, dated 1906, we have on page 45 an assertion that the white men John E. Cook and Edwin Coppoc, and then the black men John Anderson Copeland, Jr. and Shields Green, were hanged on December 16th, 1859. The reference says that, the gallows being not large enough, the two black men Copeland and Green were forced to stand and watch the two white men Cook and Coppoc being hanged before themselves ascending the scaffold. But I have from another reference this assertion that it was one surrendered surviving white man, Aaron D. Stevens, who was hanged on the 16th along with ten black supporters of Captain John Brown, and that Cook actually would be among the last hanged. Which account would be correct — and why is there such a glaring discrepancy between the various accounts?

The book SECRET SIX treats each retreating admission of each of the co-conspirators in treason as if it were holy writ. No attempt is made to discern, behind this haze of post-facto explanations and justifications, what the brags of these participants might have had their plot been successful in initiating the race war they contemplated and had this race war been completed, as it would certainly have been completed, by a historic genocide against black Americans. (Joel Silbey has contended, in “The Civil War Synthesis in American History,” that postbellum American historians have been misconstruing antebellum American politics by viewing them in conjunction with our knowledge of the bloodbath that followed. It is only after the fact that we can “know” that the US Civil War amounted to a sectional dispute, North versus South. We avoid learning that before the fact, it was undecided whether this conflict was going to shape up as a race conflict, a class conflict, or a sectional conflict. We avoid knowing that the raid on Harpers Ferry might have resulted in a race war, in which peoples of color would be exterminated in order to create an all-white America, or might have resulted in a class war, in which the laboring classes might have first destroyed the plantation owners’ equity by killing his slaves, and then gone on to purge the nation of the white plantation owners themselves, with their privileged-class endowments.) Also, according to the endmatter, the SECRET SIX study had obtained its material on Frederick Douglass basically from McFeely’s FREDERICK DOUGLASS of 1991, and its material on Thoreau from Sanborn’s Henry David Thoreau of 1917, neither of which were the last word on the subject when the book was prepared. In addition, this work provides no reference whatever for the Emerson life: evidently he was simply presumed not to be of even marginal pertinence. There is no consideration to be found anywhere in this volume of the comparison event, the other American struggle for freedom, the one which had taken place in Haiti under General Toussaint Louverture.

For these reasons, the study is, fundamentally, incompetent. It is as if O.J. Simpson and his dream team had been allowed to control what would appear in our social history texts. Or, as if the White House staff had been allowed to define once and for all the extent of President Richard Milhouse Nixon’s involvement in the Watergate break-in, with, after their initial defensive testimony, after their establishment of the official consensus “truth,” all explanations accepted at their putative face value — and no further questioning tolerated.
THEOPHRASTUS

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

THEOPHRASTUS OF EREUS
February 8, Wednesday: Henry Thoreau went up the river to Fair Haven Hill in the afternoon. In the evening, for the last time, he lectured at the Concord Lyceum. He read “WILD APPLES” and the records of the lyceum indicate “long, continued applause” at the end.

“WILD APPLES”: Pliny, adopting the distinction of Theophrastus, says, — “Of trees there are some which are altogether wild (sylvestres), some more civilized (urbaniores).” Theophrastus includes the apple among the last; and, indeed, it is in this sense the most civilized of all trees. It is as harmless as a dove, as beautiful as a rose, and as valuable as flocks and herds. It has been longer cultivated than any other, and so is more humanized; and who knows but, like the dog, it will at length be no longer traceable to its wild original? It migrates with man, like the dog and horse and cow: first, perchance, from Greece to Italy, thence to England, thence to America; and our Western emigrant is still marching steadily toward the setting sun with the seeds of the apple in his pocket, or perhaps a few young trees strapped to his load. At least a million apple-trees are thus set farther westward this year than any cultivated ones grew last year. Consider how the Blossom-Week, like the Sabbath, is thus annually spreading over the prairies; for when man migrates, he carries with him not only his birds, quadrupeds, insects, vegetables, and his very sward, but his orchard also.

Later that night Bronson Alcott wrote about his reaction, and the audience’s, in his journal (JOURNALS. Boston MA: Little, Brown, 1938, page 326):

Thoreau and his lecture on “Wild Apples” before the Lyceum.
It is a piece of exquisite sense, a celebrating of the infinity of Nature, exemplified with much learning and original
“WILD APPLES”: It would be well, if we accepted these gifts with more joy and gratitude, and did not think it enough simply to put a fresh load of compost about the tree. Some old English customs are suggestive at least. I find them described chiefly in Brand’s “Popular Antiquities.” It appears that “on Christmas eve the farmers and their men in Devonshire take a large bowl of cider, with a toast in it, and carrying it in state to the orchard, they salute the apple-trees with much ceremony, in order to make them bear well the next season.” This salutation consists in “throwing some of the cider about the roots of the tree, placing bits of the toast on the branches,” and then, “encircling one of the best bearing trees in the orchard, they drink the following toast three several times:—

‘Here’s to thee, old apple-tree,
Whence thou mayst bud, and whence thou mayst blow,
And whence thou mayst bear apples enow!
Hats-full! caps-full!
Bushel, bushel, sacks-full!
And my pockets full, too!  Huzza!’

Also what was called “apple-howling” used to be practised in various counties of England on New-Year’s eve. A troop of boys visited the different orchards, and, encircling the apple-trees, repeated the following words:—

“Stand fast, root! bear well, top!
Pray God send us a good howling crop:
Every twig, apples big;
Every bough, apples enow!”

“They then shout in chorus, one of the boys accompanying them on a cow’s horn. During this ceremony they rap the trees with their sticks.” This is called “wassailing” the trees, and is thought by some to be “a relic of the heathen sacrifice to Pomona.”

Observation, beginning with the apple in Eden and down to the wildings in our woods. I listened with uninterrupted interest and delight, and it told on the good company present.

Feb. 8. 2 P. M. — Up river to Fair Haven Hill. Thermometer 43. 40° and upward may be called a warm day in the winter. We have had much of this weather for a month past, reminding us of spring. February may be called earine (springlike). There is a peculiarity in the air when the temperature is thus high and the weather fair, at this season, which makes sounds more clear and pervading, as if they trusted themselves abroad further in this genial state of the air. A different sound comes to my ear now from iron rails which are struck, as from the cawing crows, etc. Sound is not abrupt, piercing, or rending, but softly sweet and musical. It will take a yet more genial and milder air before the bluebird’s warble can be heard.

Walking over Hubbard’s broad meadow on the softened ice, I admire the markings in it. The more interesting and prevailing ones now appearing ingrained and giving it a more or less marbled look,—one, what you may call checkered marbling (?), consisting of small polygonal figures three quarters [of an inch in] diameter, bounded by whitish lines more or less curved within the ice, and apparently covered with an entire thin surface
(Pomona with her shape-shifting lover, and –fancy that– the Cupid has gotten a hard on)
ice, and so on for rods (these when five or six inches wide make a mackerel-sky ice);

the other apparently passing from this into a sort of fibrous structure of waving lines, hair-like or rather flame-like, — call it *phlogistic*: —

only far more regular and beautiful than I can draw. Sometimes like perhaps a cassowary’s feathers, the branches being very long and fine.

This fibrous or phlogistic structure is evidently connected with the flow of the surface water, for I see some old holes, now smoothly frozen over, where these rays have flowed from all sides into the hole in the midst of the checked ice, making a circular figure which reminded me of a jellyfish:

only far more beautiful than this. The whitish lines which bound these figures and form the parallel fibres are apparently lines of fine bubbles more dense than elsewhere. I am not sure that these markings always imply a double or triple ice, *i.e.* a thinner surface ice, which contains them.

The ice is thus marked under my feet somewhat as the heavens overhead; there is both the mackerel sky and the fibrous flame or asbestos-like form in both. The mackerel spotted or marked ice is very common, and also
I see some quite thin ice which had formed on puddles on the ice, now soaked through, and in these are very interesting figures bounded by straight and crinkled particularly white lines.

I find, on turning the ice over, that these lines correspond to the raised edges of and between bubbles which have occupied a place in the ice, i.e. upward (?) in it.

Then there is occasionally, where puddles on the ice have frozen, that triangular rib-work of crystals, — a beautiful casting in alto-relievo [sic] of low crystal prisms with one edge up, — so meeting and crossing as to form triangular and other figures. Shining splinters in the sun. Giving a rough hold to the feet.

One would think that the forms of ice-crystals must include all others.

I see hundreds of oak leaves which have sunk deep into the ice. Here is a scarlet oak leaf which has sunk one inch into the ice, and the leaf still rests at the bottom of this mould. Its stem and lobes and all their bristly points are just as sharply cut there as is the leaf itself, fitting the mould closely and tightly, and, there being a small hole or two in the leaf, the ice stands up through them half an inch high, like so many sharp tacks. Indeed, the leaf is sculptured thus in bas-relief [sic], as it were, as sharply and exactly as it could be done by the most perfect tools in any material. But as time has elapsed since it first began to sink into the ice, the upper part of this mould is enlarged by melting more or less, and often shows the outline of the leaf exaggerated and less sharp and perfect. You see these leaves at various depths in the ice, — many quite concealed by new ice formed over them, for water flows into the mould and thus a cast of it is made in ice. So fragments of rushes and sedge and cranberry leaves have on all sides sunk into the ice in like manner. The smallest and lightest-colored object that falls on the ice begins thus at once to sink through it, the sun as it were driving it; and a great many, no doubt, go quite through. This is especially common after a long warm spell like this. I see, even, that those colored ridges of froth which have bounded the water that overflowed the ice, since they contain most of the impurities or coloring matter, sink into the ice accordingly, making rough furrows an inch or more deep often.

The proper color of water is perhaps best seen when it overflows white ice.

Pliny could express a natural wonder.

About an old boat frozen in, I see a great many little gyrinus-shaped bugs swimming about in the water above the ice.
February 10, Friday: The Boston Liberator reported on page 23 that at the trial of Aaron D. Stevens in Charlestown, Virginia on February 4th, when the jury had come back at 4PM from 15 minutes of deliberation to announce a verdict of guilty on all counts, “The prisoner received the verdict with most perfect indifference, and smiled at the announcement.”

Feb. 10. A very strong and a cold northwest wind to-day, shaking the house, — thermometer at 11 A.M., 14°, — consumes wood and yet we are cold, and drives the smoke down the chimney. I see that Wheildon’s pines are rocking and showing their silvery under sides as last spring, — their first awakening, as it were.

P.M.—The river, where open, is very black, as usual when the waves run high, for each wave casts a shadow. Theophrastus notices that the roughened water is black, and says that it is because fewer rays fall on it and the light is dissipated. It is a day for those rake and horn icicles; the water, dashing against the southeast shores where they chance to be open, i.e. free of ice, and blown a rod inland, freezes to the bushes, forming rakes and oftener horns. If twigs project above the ice-belt thus:

the water freezes over them thus:

The very grass stubble is completely encased for a rod in width along the shore, and the trunks of trees for two or three feet up. Any sprig lying on the edge of the ice is completely crusted. Sometimes the low button-bush twigs with their few remaining small dark balls, and also the drooping corymbs of the late rose hips, are completely encased in an icicle, and you see their bright scarlet reflected through the ice in an exaggerated manner. If a hair is held up above the ice where this spray is blowing, it is sufficient to start a thick icicle rake or horn, for the ice forming around it becomes at once its own support, and gets to be two or three inches thick, where the open water comes within half a dozen feet of the shore, the spray has blown over the intervening ice and covered the grass and stubble, looking like a glaze, — countless loby fingers and horns over some fine stubble core, — and when the grass or stem is horizontal you have a rake.

Just as those great organ-pipe icicles that drip from rocks have an annular structure growing downward, so these on the horizontal stubble and weeds, when directed to the point toward which the wind was blowing; i.e., they grow thus southeast.

4. Call it Black Water.
Then there is the thickened edge of the ice, like a cliff, on the southeast sides of openings against which the wind
has dashed the waves, especially on the southeast side of broad meadows.

No finer walking in any respect than on our broad meadow highway in the winter, when covered with bare ice.
If the ice is wet, you slip in rubbers; but when it is dry and cold, rubbers give you a firm hold, and you walk
with a firm and elastic step. I do not know of any more exhilarating walking than up or down a broad field of
smooth ice like this in a cold, glittering winter day when your rubbers give you a firm hold on the ice.
I see that the open places froze last night only on the windward side, where they were less agitated, the waves
not yet running so high there.
A little snow, however, even the mere shavings or dust of ice made by skaters, hinders walking in rubbers very
much, for though the rubber may give a good hold on clear ice, when you step on a little of the ice dust or snow
you slide on that.
Those little gyrinus-shaped bugs of the 8th, that had come out through a crevice in the ice about a boat frozen
in, and were swimming about in the shallow water above the ice, I see are all gone now that that water is frozen,
— have not been frozen in; so they must have returned back under the ice when it became cold, and this shows
that they were not forced up accidentally in the first place, but attracted by the light and warmth, probably as
those minnows were some time ago. That is, in a thaw in the winter some water-insects — beetles, etc. — will
come up through holes in the ice and swim about in the sun.

April 2, Monday: Secretary Joseph Henry of the Smithsonian Institution published a plan for a North American insect
(entomological) collection in Washington DC. Meanwhile, Charles S. Stratton began to place himself on
display as “General Tom Thumb, Jr.,” in the Hope Chapel at 720 Broadway, Manhattan, at 25¢ per ticket, or
15¢ for the evening performance.

John Willis Menard, a free person of African extraction, made application to be furnished by the US federal
government with a passport (the record does not show whether he was at this time furnished with such a
document; however, since in 1863 the government would dispatch him to British Honduras to investigate a
proposed colony for newly freed slaves, by that year at least he would have been issued such a document).

April 2. Cold and windy.
2 P.M.—Thermometer 31°, or fallen 40° since yesterday, and the ground slightly whitened by a flurry of snow.
I had expected rain to succeed the thick haze. It was cloudy behind the haze and rained a little about 9 P.M., but,
the wind having gone northwest (from southwest), it turned to snow.
The shrubs whose buds had begun to unfold yesterday are the spiraea, gooseberry, lilac, and Missouri currant,
— the first much the most forward and green, the rest in the order named.
Walked to the Mayflower Path and to see the great burning of the 31st.
I smelled the burnt ground a quarter of a mile off. It was a very severe burn, the ground as black as a chimney-
back. The fire is said to have begun by an Irishman burning brush near Wild’s house in the south part of Acton,
and ran north and northeast some two miles before the southwest wind, crossing Fort Pond Brook. I walked
more than a mile along it and could not see to either end, and crossed it in two places. A thousand acres must
have been burned. The leaves being thus cleanly burned, you see amid their cinders countless mouse-galleries,
where they have run all over the wood, especially in shrub oak land, these lines crossing each other every
foot and at every angle. You are surprised to see by these traces how many of these creatures live and run under
the leaves in the woods, out of the way of cold and of hawks. The fire has burned off the top and half-way down
their galleries. Every now and then we saw an oblong square mark of pale-brown or fawn-colored ashes amid
the black cinders, where corded wood had been burned.
In one place, though at the north edge of a wood, I saw white birch and amelanchier buds (the base of whose
stems had been burned or scorched) just bursting into leaf, — evidently the effect of the fire, for none of their
kind is so forward elsewhere.
This fire ran before the wind, which was southwest, and, as nearly as I remember, the fires generally at this season begin on that side, and you need to be well protected there by a plowing or raking away the leaves. Also the men should run ahead of the fire before the wind, most of them, and stop it at some cross-road, by raking away the leaves and setting back fires.

Look out for your wood-lots between the time when the dust first begins to blow in the streets and the leaves are partly grown.

The earliest willows are apparently in prime. [Vide forward.]

I find that the signs of the weather in Theophrastus are repeated by many more recent writers without being referred to him or through him; e.g., by an authority quoted by Brand in his “Popular Antiquities,” who evidently does not know that they are in Theophrastus.

Talking with a farmer who was milking sixteen cows in a row the other evening, an ox near which we stood, at the end of the row, suddenly half lay, half fell, down on the hard and filthy floor, extending its legs helplessly to one side in a mechanical manner while its head was uncomfortably held between the stanchions as in a pillory. Thus man’s fellow-laborer the ox, tired with his day’s work, is compelled to take his rest, like the most wretched slave or culprit. It was evidently a difficult experiment each time to lie down at all without dislocating his neck, and his neighbors had not room to try the same at the same time.

June-September: Henry Thoreau worked on his 3d draft of WILD FRUITS.

October: Until early May of the following year, Henry Thoreau would be working on both his manuscript for WILD FRUITS and his manuscript for THE DISPERSION OF SEEDS.

Faith in a Seed: So with the fruit of the burdock, with which children are wont to build houses and barns without any mortar: both men and animals, apparently such as have shaggy coats, are employed in transporting them. I have even relieved a cat with a large mass of them which she could not get rid of, and I frequently see a cow with a bunch in the end of her whisking tail, with which, perhaps, she stings herself in her vain efforts to brush off imagined flies.

The Future is Most Readily Predicted in Retrospect
April 2, Wednesday: Henry Thoreau was being written to by Benjamin Marston Watson in Plymouth.

Cover letter to Ticknor & Fields from “Henry D. Thoreau” by “S.E. Thoreau,” in regard to enclosed manuscript “Wild Apples” (culled from WILD FRUITS) for The Atlantic Monthly, reminding them that they had as yet made no offer for A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS:

Concord Apr. 2nd ’62  
Messrs Ticknor & Fields,  
I send you herewith the paper on Wild Apples.  
You have made me no offer for The “Week.” Do not suppose that I rate it too high. I shall be glad to dispose of it; & it will be an advantage to advertize it with Walden.  
Yours truly,  
Henry D. Thoreau  
by S.E. Thoreau.

“Wild Apples”: There is, first of all, the Wood-Apple (Malus sylvatica); the Blue-Jay Apple; the Apple which grows in Dells in the Woods, (sylvestrivallis), also in Hollows in Pastures (campestrivallis); the Apple that grows in an old Cellar-Hole (Malus cellaris); the Meadow-Apple; the Partridge-Apple; the Truant’s Apple, (Cessatoris), which no boy will ever go by without knocking off some, however late it may be; the Saunterer’s Apple,— you must lose yourself before you can find the way to that; the Beauty of the Air (Decus Aëris); December-Eating; the Frozen-Thawed, (gelato-soluta), good only in that state; the Concord Apple, possibly the same with the Musketaquidensis; the Assabet Apple; the Brindled Apple; Wine of New England; the Chickaree Apple; the Green Apple (Malus viridis); — this has many synonyms; in an imperfect state, it is the Choleramorbifera aut dysenterifera, puerulis dilectissima; — the Apple which Atalanta stopped to pick up; the Hedge-Apple (Malus Sepium); the Slug-Apple (limacea); the Railroad-Apple, which perhaps came from a core thrown out of the cars; the Apple whose Fruit we tasted in our Youth; our Particular Apple, not to be found in any catalogue,— Pedestrium Solatium; also the Apple where hangs the Forgotten Scythe; Iduna’s Apples, and the Apples which Loki found in the Wood; and a great many more I have on my list, too numerous to mention,— all of them good. As Bodaeus exclaims, referring to the cultivated kinds, and adapting Virgil to his case, so I, adapting Bodaeus,—

“Not if I had a hundred tongues, a hundred mouths,  
An iron voice, could I describe all the forms  
And reckon up all the names of these wild apples.”
“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING, HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY

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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: August 8, 2014
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 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.
THEOPHRASTUS OF ERESUS