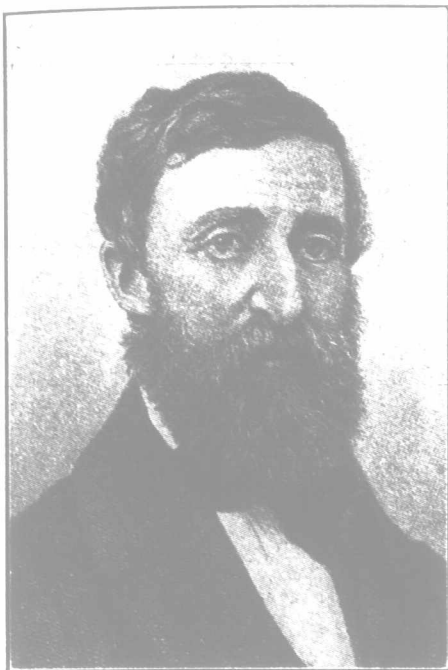


Thoreau.



Thoreau.

[In 1855, one who met Thoreau, then 38 years of age, for the first time, wrote: "Thoreau looks eminently sagacious, like a sort of wise wild beast. He dresses plainly, wears a beard, and has a brown complexion.]

[A few issues ago there appeared in these pages a sketch of the life of "the New England Sage," Emerson. To-day is begun some account of another one of that remarkable coterie which hovered at that time about the little village of Concord, Mass. Acknowledgments are chiefly due to Salt's very excellent biography, "Henry David Thoreau."]

The little Village of Concord, Mass., has changed, as all things change, with the lapse of time, yet in its main essentials it is to-day very much what it was upwards of a hundred years ago. At that time, Hawthorne, one of the clique of remarkable men who lived then within its precincts, and whose graves in "Sleepy Hollow" are to-day pointed out to tourists—pilgrims—innumerable, wrote: "The scenery of Concord has no very marked characteristics, but has a great deal of quiet beauty in keeping with the river. There are broad and peaceful meadows, which, I think, are among the most satisfying objects in natural scenery. The hills which border these meadows are wide swells of land, or long and gradual ridges, some of them densely covered with wood. The white village appears to be embosomed among wooded hills.

More recently, another writer—Canadian-born, by the way—Grant Allen, wrote of the same spot thus: "Thoreau's country has the broad effects and simple elements that 'compose' well in the best landscape art. It is a quiet bit of country, that under the seeing eye can be made to yield a store of happiness. Its resources for the naturalist, at first scarcely suspected, are practically inexhaustible. It is not tame, as English landscape is tame. It keeps its memories and traditions of the red man, along with his flint-flakes and arrow-heads, and its birds and wild-flowers are varied and abundant. A country of noble trees, wide meadow expanses—and the little river, quiet almost to stagnation, with just current enough to keep it pure, in places much grown up to water-wood, in other places thick-

strewn with lily-pads, the banks umbrageous and grassy, fringed with ferns and wild-flowers, and here and there putting into a point of rocks, or expanding into placid, lake-like stretches—these are the main elements of Thoreau's country."

"Thoreau's country? Why not 'Thoreau's' country? Why not 'Emerson's' country, 'Hawthorne's' country, 'Alcott's,' 'Channing's'? Yet who that has read the life and studied the works of this man, Thoreau, can doubt that the name has been well chosen? Emerson might have been a product of any place, almost of any time; so might Hawthorne, but Thoreau interprets, as has never been interpreted any local place, the environment of Concord. He seems, in truth, the very spirit of the hills and woods of Massachusetts, its own philosopher, who from it draws lessons that may touch the lives of all mankind.

HIS EARLY LIFE.

Briefly, Thoreau was born on the 12th of July, 1817, in Concord, the son of one John Thoreau, a lead-pencil maker, of Jersey-French extraction, and a quite remarkable man in his way. There were three other children—John, Helen and Sophia—all of whom seem to have been not altogether ordinary. "To meet one of the Thoreaus," wrote one who knew them well, "was not the same as to encounter any other person who might happen to cross your path." The family, in short, was strongly intellectual, and, although in straitened-enough circumstances in these early days, lived very happily together.

At public school, Henry, the illustrious one in days to come, was known among his schoolmates, by reason of his seriousness, as "the judge." Indeed, even at this time, it appears that his interests were elsewhere. He never played with other boys, but was much given to rambling off through fields and woods, or paddling in his boat "up the sluggish Muskettaquid or the more swiftly-flowing Assabet," finding companions among birds and little wild animals and plants of wood or water-side. One might have fancied a streak of the red man in him, for he was from infancy fascinated with anything that pertained to these vanishing races. The Indian names of the neighborhood were as incense to him, and the lure of the river, and the hills Anursack, Wachusett, Monadnock, running off to the White Mountains of New Hampshire, was none the less strong because of their suggestion of the shy, wild men who once inhabited them. He could pick up Indian relics where no one else seemed able to find them, and a story told of him at a later date is characteristic. A friend who was walking with him one day, asked him how he managed to find so many arrow-heads. "Here is one," said Thoreau, stooping to pick one up from the furrow at his feet.

At the age of sixteen, by dint of much saving and scraping on the part of the family, Henry was sent to Harvard University. Being Thoreaus, the home folk possibly were not disappointed with the lad's career here. Had they been of more usual quality, they might have been. During his whole term at Harvard, he distinguished himself in no way, took no honors, won no scholarships, took no part in clubs, nor even contributed to the College paper, Harvardiana. The experience, no doubt, was but little pleasant for him. The dash-

ing young men from New York and Boston who attended were little likely to take much note of this shy, rather awkward boy from a country village, with his out-of-date clothes and unapproachable manners. Indeed, he appears only to have won their dislike, also that of the ambitious professors, who preferred that he should study as students were required to study, instead of interminably ranging the woods, and that he should be less given to thinking things out in his own unconventional way. He himself confesses that he got but little good out of his four years' residence, except that he had "learned to express himself." As a matter of fact, however, he had become a good classical scholar, and had come into touch with numbers of books with which, otherwise, he might have made no acquaintance.

When he passed from the university, then, in 1837, he was a nobody, and how was it then possible for the showy, honor-winning graduates to surmise that, when the great majority of them should be long dead and forgotten, this shy, reserved, coarsely-clothed youth should be quietly stepping to his own pedestal in the Hall of Great Men? Among all who had to do with him at this time, there was but one whose vision seems to have been keen enough to see the mettle of the boy ever so dimly. This was none other than Emerson himself, to whose good offices was due the fact that the lad received some assistance from the funds of the University.

Thoreau's first meeting with the Sage had come about as follows: Not long after the removal of Emerson to the village, a Mrs. Brown, a friend of Thoreau's, and a relative of the Emersons, was told by Helen Thoreau that there was a passage in her brother's diary which contained some ideas similar to those expressed by Emerson in a recent lecture. Mrs. Brown spoke of the coincidence to Emerson, and, at his request, subsequently brought the youth to his house. Emerson was at once impressed. "I delight much in my young friend," he wrote, "who seems to have as free and erect a mind as any I have ever met." And so began a friendship which was destined to mean much to Thoreau, not only that it was the means of bringing him more closely into touch with the friends who gathered round the Sage—Alcott, Ellery Channing, the Ripleys, Theodore Parker, the Peabodys, G. W. Curtis, and others—but because of the strong personal element in it, which was destined to bring these two great Americans more closely together than either at this time dreamed.

(To be continued.)

The Windrow.

The Bishop of London (Eng.) is at present visiting his brother, Mr. Ingram, of Aylmer, Ont.

A new Canadian magazine, entitled "Ourselves," under the editorship of Mr. Peter McArthur, has been established at St. Thomas, Ont.

A woman, Fraulein Schwenke, has won the Kaiser's Prize at the University of Berlin, which was but recently opened to women students.

German newspapers representative of the commercial and industrial classes are declaring that the German people would be glad to discuss plans leading to a limitation-of-armaments compact with England.

The new castle, built by the Kaiser for Prince Eitel Friedrich, cost \$1,338,000, covers nearly an acre and a half, and contains more than 600 rooms.

Dry in perpetuity is the restriction placed by the Santa Fe Railroad in all deeds to property in the new town of River Bank, which is to be a mid-valley division point on that line. District Agent Hobart says it is the first town laid out by a railroad to exclude saloons for all time.

Another honor has been conferred upon Mme. Curie, wife of Prof. Curie, of Paris, who died in 1906, they having been the joint discoverers of radium. In 1903 they were awarded a medal for their researches by the Royal Society of Arts of England. Upon the death of her husband, Mme. Curie was offered the Chair of Physics in the Sorbonne, Paris, which she accepted. Since then she carried on her work, her most recent research being into the nature of the ultimate product of the uranium-radium series, which, she believes, is very probably lead. The Royal Society of Arts has just conferred another medal on this famous woman for her discoveries in radium, which is a very high honor, the only other woman to whom it was given having been Queen Victoria.

Current Events.

The Orion, Great Britain's newest and greatest battleship, was launched at Portsmouth on August 20th.

A young Welshman named Willows has made a night flight from Cardiff to the vicinity of London, a distance of 160 miles, in a dirigible of his own invention.

The Quadrennial Conference, the supreme legislative body of the Methodist Church of Canada, meeting at Victoria, B. C., has elected the following general officers: Rev. Dr. A. Carman, General Superintendent, for eight years; Rev. Dr. S. D. Chown, General Superintendent for four years; Rev. T. S. Moore, D. D., Secretary Temperance and Moral Reform; Rev. T. E. E. Shore, Secretary of Foreign Missions; Rev. Jas. Allen, Secretary Home Missions; Rev. Dr. J. W. Graham, Secretary of Education; Rev. Dr. Wm. Briggs, Book Steward; Rev. Dr. W. B. Creighton, Editor Christian Guardian; Rev. Dr. A. C. Crews, Editor S. S. Publications; Rev. S. T. Bartlett, General Secretary Sabbath School; Rev. Dr. F. C. Stevenson, Secretary Missionary Forward Movement; H. H. Fudger, Lay Treasurer of Missions; Rev. Dr. Burwash and N. W. Rowell, K. C., delegates to British Conference.

Action was taken on the church discipline, the famous interpretive "foot-note," with specific restrictions regarding the moral conduct of members being removed, and in its place was substituted a general admonition as to good conduct consistent with a Christian life. The new paragraph leaves to the enlightened conscience of the people to guard against amusements or practices of doubtful tendency.

By a vote of 220 to 35, the Conference approved the Basis of Union with the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches.