

antique spirit than any of our native poets, and touched the fields and groves and streams of his native town, with a classic interest that shall not fade." And again, says the same writer: "His presence was tonic, like ice water in dog days to the parched citizen pent in chambers and under brazen ceilings. Welcome as the gurgle of brooks and dipping of pitchers,—then drink and be cool! There was in him sod and shade, wilds and waters manifold,—the mould and mist of earth and sky. Self-poised and sagacious as any denizens of the elements, he had the key to every animal's brain, every plant; and were an Indian to flower forth and reveal the scents hidden in his cranium, it would not be more surprising than the speech of Sylvanus." William Ellery Channing thus describes his personal appearance: "In height he was about the average; in his build, spare with limbs that were rather larger than usual, or of which he made a longer use. His face, once seen, could not be forgotten: the features quite marked, the nose aquiline, or very Roman, like one of the portraits of Caesar (more like a beak, as was said), large overhanging brows above the deepest set blue eyes that could be seen—blue in certain lights, and in others, grey—eyes expressing all shades of feeling, but never weak or near-sighted; the forehead not unusually broad or high, full of concentrated energy and purpose; the mouth, with prominent lips, pursed up with meaning and thought when shut, and giving out when open a stream of the most varied and unusual and instructive sayings. His hair was a dark brown, exceedingly abundant, fine and soft, and for several years he wore a comely beard. His whole figure had an active earnestness, as if he had not a moment to waste. The clenched hand betokened purpose. In walking, he made a short cut if he could, and when sitting in the shade or by the wall-side, seemed merely the clearer to look forward into the next piece of

activity. Even in the boat he had a wary, transitory air, his eyes on the look-out: perhaps there might be ducks, or the Blondin turtle, or an otter, or sparrow. He was a plain man in his features and dress,—one who could not be mistaken, and this kind of plainness is not out of keeping with beauty. He sometimes went as far as homeliness, which, again, even if there be a prejudice against it, shines out at times beyond a vulgar beauty."

Thoreau quitted his hut in two years' time. He exhausted its special advantages, and then abandoned it to its fate. By living as he did, he proved certain things, made discoveries, and studied fresh subjects. These aims accomplished, he turned his back on the hermitage, and went home to civilization and taxes. He went to Walden Pond because he was ready to go. He left it for the same reason. The little odd house can no longer be seen. It has disappeared entirely, and the site is now occupied by the sumac and the pine. Of course, the locality remains historic, and the Concord people still love to escort visitors to Thoreau's old haunt, and tell the quaint story of his wilderness life at "blue-eyed Walden."

He returned to town in 1847. One day he received a tax-bill. He did not like it. He found fault with the way in which the public funds were being administered and expended, and he told the tax-gatherer that he could not conscientiously pay a tax which was obnoxious to him. Emerson hastened to the prison as soon as he heard of the arrest of his friend, and called to him from the cell-door: "Henry, Henry, why are you here?" And from the darkness issued the response: "Why are you *not* here?" John Burroughs, who finds much in Thoreau's character to admire, thought poorly of this episode in his career, and called his conduct "grotesque and melodramatic." But the hermit was in real earnest, and believed firmly in the position which he had taken. A