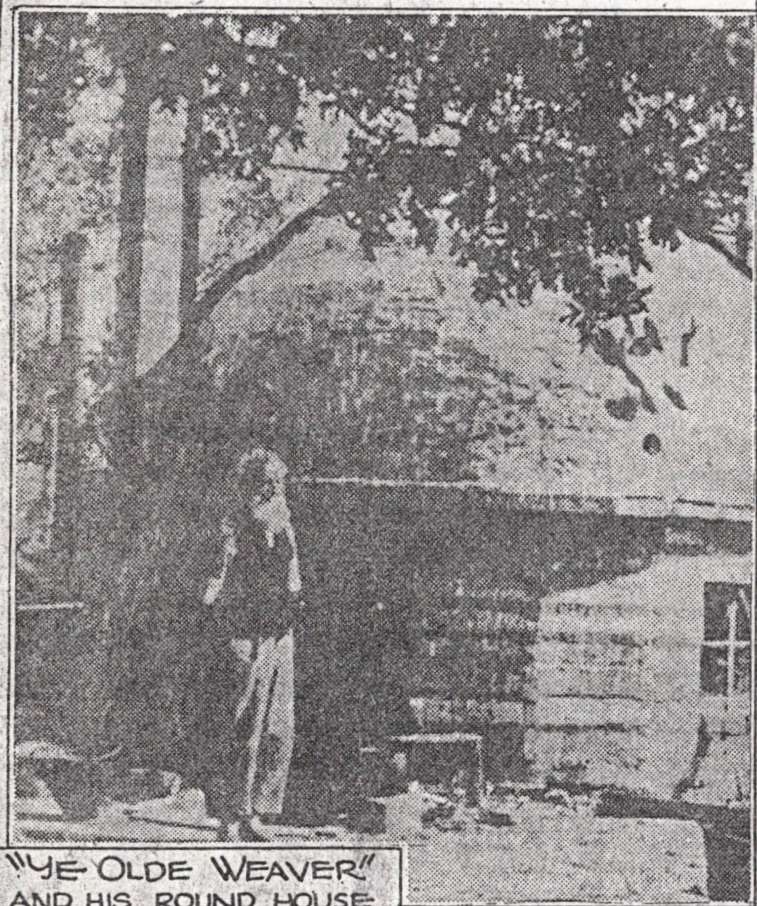
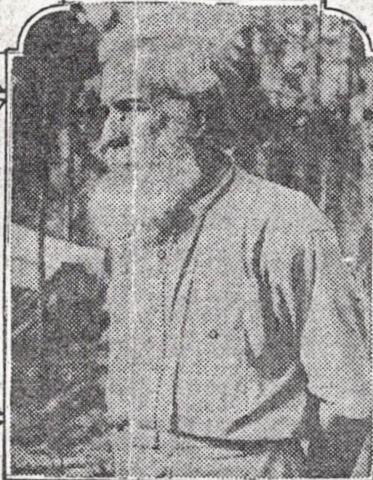


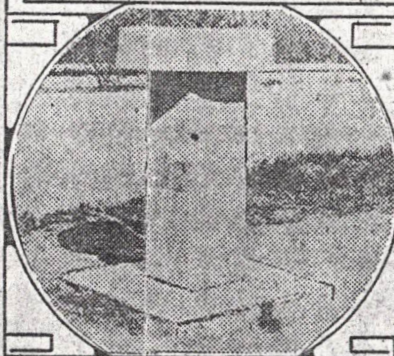
Vagabond Discovers A Modern



"YE OLDE WEAVER"
AND HIS ROUND HOUSE



H. J. STUART



THE SUNDIAL AND
GARDEN

The group of pictures above shows H. J. Stuart, the modern Thoreau whom the Vagabond found living in Baldwin County near Fairhope, his "bee-hive" home and sun dial, made of concrete blocks manufactured by Stuart.

REAL SIMPLE LIFE PUT INTO PRACTICE

Mountain Scribbler Sums Up
The Losses And The Gains
Of Such Existence

BY MILFORD W. HOWARD

A modern Thoreau dwelling in Tolstoy Park, right here in Baldwin County, Alabama! Can you beat it?

We might expect something like this in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, the far away Rockies, the Alps in Switzerland, or just any old "far away" place, but never so near our own doorstep.

I am all the while trying to learn the lesson for myself that we do not have to trot all over the globe to find romance, beauty, thrills, adventure and unusual people. Alabama is full of all these things if we can just get our perspective right, our vision properly focused.

One of these days I am going vagabonding on Lookout Mountain and see what I can discover, and report the result of my findings to my readers. I wonder how many persons who call themselves vagabonds, or who feel the spirit of the vagabond, would like to join me in this adventure?

The requirements are the spirit of true adventurer, and the equipment a pair of blankets, or a sleeping bag, a frying pan, a comb and tooth brush, a quart tin can for making coffee, and a few, very few, simple things to eat.

I am contemplating such an excursion in the early Spring, and this is a challenge to all vagabonds who feel they can qualify to join me.

From The Birmingham News-Age-Herald

March 3, 1929

Written by Milford W. Howard

Thoreau Living In Baldwin County

If you are a true vagabond and desire to go with me on such an adventure for a week, write me in care of The Birmingham News, stating your desires and qualifications, and if I think you are fitted for such an undertaking, I will enter you as an applicant, and write you personally.

It takes a rare spirit to qualify for vagabonding and this adventure is not to be entered upon lightly. You must have a philosophy of life which you are willing to share with others, but without any dogmatic purpose of enforcing it. You must be a seeker for the real things of life, the unfoldment of your higher-self. You must also be a devotee of the simple life, and willing to pay the price, no matter how great, to attain unto self-mastery.

These are some of the fundamental qualifications for my vagabond excursion, and unless I can find kindred spirits I would rather go alone.

My only reason for inviting others is that they may share some of the joys I expect to find on this adventure. I can go alone, and not get lonesome. I have with me, and within me, the finest companions in the world. They do not bore me. They don't get on my nerves, and they do not disturb my meditation, but abide in the silence with me, and bring me peace and wisdom.

What a queer beginning for the vagabond sketch I had in mind to write when I began. I was going to write about H. J. Stuart, who has found a retreat in a pine forest five miles from Fairhope in Baldwin County.

He calls himself the modern Thoreau and I don't think he is over egotistical in doing so after visiting his "bee-hive" home and learning a few of the precepts of his simple life and homely philosophy.

Lady Vivian first made his acquaintance on the streets of Fairhope. He was bare-headed and bare-footed, with patriarchal gray beard, and she reported to me that she had discovered a great mystic, perhaps a man of Armenia, or Arabia, or maybe the Himalayas.

Lady Vivian, herself highly imaginative and romantic, sees in such personages the colorful and unusual, so I, knowing this, took her enthusiasm with a grain of salt, and was not at all disillusioned when I found that our "mystic" was just a plain Englishman, whose life had been outwardly, at least, exceedingly prosaic. What the inward emotions, upheavals and reactions had been I could only surmise as I talked to him in his quaint surroundings and learned his philosophy of the simple life.

Stuart, the "modern Thoreau," was born in England and came with his parents to the United States while he was still in that stage of his development when he had no choice in the matter. The intervening years of his life until he journeyed to the pine forest near Fairhope about six years ago seemed commonplace and uneventful enough, as I questioned him trying to find out some big, startling, outstanding event that had uprooted him from the beaten path, from the humdrum, drab and colorless to become the man of the out-of-doors who has gone bare-footed and bare-headed for several years, lived alone in a "bee-hive" house in a primeval forest off the beaten track, to which the world is making a trail over which increasing throngs are coming each year.

Such a man must have a worth while story for the busy, hurrying world, and I believe my readers will be glad to pause long enough to hear it.

The story is simple, so simple, in fact, that were I a real writer I would not be telling it. In the first place, I would never have discovered it, for I would have been looking for something "big" measured by the yardstick of dollars and cents.

When Elisha told Naaman to go and dip himself in the muddy waters of the Jordan in order that he might be healed of his loathsome leprosy, he was offended, because the prophet did not require of him some great or difficult thing. So it is I often think with writers who overlook the humble, self-sacrificing lives to write about those who have accumulated earth's filthy gold, or attained to so-called honors, that are as evanescent as the morning dew.

I think I must have a penchant for the simple things, a "nose" for finding out the life stories of those who are dumb and voiceless and have no prestige as press agents to herald their achievements to the world. Perhaps that is why I am now writing this sketch about a true vagabond, who has discovered the "philosopher's stone" and is wearing it next to his heart, calm and serene, at threescore and 10 as the world rushes madly by.

By a strange sort of coincidence this modern Thoreau was assistant engineer at the La Normandie Hotel in Washington, D. C., during the period of my term in Congress and read my iconoclastic, sensational book, "If Christ Came to Congress." So I needed no introduction to him, for the book was in line with his radical thinking, and no, doubt, he thought it a great piece of destructive literature.

I am always interested when I meet a man who thinks at all, and am ready to listen to him by the hour, although I may disagree with every view he holds, just so long as he doesn't try to convert me to his views. There are but a small percentage of people who think at all, who are capable of thinking, so that a real thinker is always interesting, and usually he is a broadminded philosopher who does not seek to proselyte. On the other hand, the people who simply think they think

who have absorbed the thoughts of others and have poorly digested them, are the fanatical propagandists who fondly believe they are the original discoverers of great truths destined to revolutionize the world, if—and that is such a little thing to ask—if, the world will accept their panaceas.

This is said just by-the-way, and is not an attempt to classify the modern Thoreau, but is a generalization that will cover many cases. In the present instance it pleases me to say that H. J. Stuart is no longer a propagandist, if he was ever one, but is now what Thoreau was, an exponent of the simple life, and a living example of what the simple life and a sane philosophy will do for a man physically, mentally and spiritually.

How he came to choose the "bee-hive" as an architectural model for his house in the forest, I do not know. Perhaps he has made a study of bee lore. If so, he has learned lessons about these useful servants and friends of man—that are as amazing as any of the inventions and discoveries of modern science. However, it happened it is fitting that he should dwell in such a hive of industry and activity.

The "hive" home is built of concrete blocks which he fashioned with his own hands, and after they had hardened he built the house a picture of which I hope to use in illustrating this sketch.

Through his garden run long terraces built up high with concrete blocks, the intervening spaces between the walls filled with soil. On these terraces he grows delicious strawberries and leafy vegetables on which he feasts in season.

I asked him why he built these terraces. Lady Vivian insisted that it was so he would not have to stoop to cultivate his berries and vegetables, but he rather shattered that fancy when he told us he experimented with his concrete block making before beginning his "bee-hive" and, having a lot of blocks on hand, he constructed the walled terraces. Later he put in concrete tanks into which he can pump water from his well, the pump being operated by a windmill. From these tanks he has a system of pipes that he can use in irrigating the terraces during the dry season.

Once inside the "bee-hive" you begin to sense the activity of the "busy-bee," and recall the poem of your childhood about how the "busy little bee doth improve each shining hour." The first thing to attract the visitor's attention will, perhaps, be the loom on which this modern Thoreau weaves the most beautiful rugs I ever saw. He had about 50 on hand and when he displayed them for Lady Vivian's rapturous gaze she exhausted her vocabulary. The Vagabond would have bought at least a dozen but for his chronic financial state. There was one I could not resist, and it now adorns my cabin, and is a constant reminder of my visit to this remarkable man who has found what all the world is vainly seeking.

A small cooking stove and utensils were to be expected, but not a modern typewriter. Later I learned that the owner is an expert in its use, as is shown by a long, well written letter I have just received from him, written at 4 o'clock in the morning, long before the "bee is on the wing."

* * *

I saved the thing I was most interested in for the last. A glance out of the corner of my eyes from time to time revealed rows and rows of books ranged around the concave walls of this queer bee-hive house, and I had been impatient for half an hour to begin browsing. Finally I could wait no longer, and while Lady Vivian was still exclaiming "Beautiful," "gorgeous," "glorious," "precious," "divine" and all the rest of her amazing vocabulary, I began to read the titles of his books.

Tolstoy's works, with Thoreau's, of course, occupied the places of honor, for he has named his place in the woods "Tolstoy Park," as well as taking upon himself the mantle of Thoreau.

Hard by was Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass," Oscar Wilde's "De Profundis," David Grayson's "Adventures in Contentment" and the "Friendly Road." Of course there were the poets, also Dickens, Hugo, Balzac and most of the classics. I readily picked these out, but I was searching for something out of the ordinary and soon I found it—it was not Tom Paine, for of course he was there, but even broad-minded preachers read the great patriot philosopher now. It was a book by Emma Goldman, entitled "Anarchy and Other Essays."

Nearly hung a fine picture of the noted anarchist, and when my "Thoreau" told me he wove a rug for her cell while she was in the federal prison I pricked up my ears for the real story.

"I am an anarchist," he boldly declared, and he did not look around furtively as though he feared secret spies peering through his keyholes.

"How long have you been an anarchist?" I asked, "and what made you one?"

From what he told me I infer that it was the reading of anarchistic literature, and particularly that of Emma Goldman. This, and the sympathetic nature of the man that rebels at "man's inhumanity to man." Perhaps some of us are just born that way—rebels, anarchists, non-conformists.

I soon learned that his is a mild, harmless form of anarchy, all in the abstract, and very beautiful if—just the same little if—we could change human nature.

Strange how all reformers, from prohibitionists to anarchists, seem to leave this out of the equation.

I confessed to our host that I, too, am a sort of intellectual-anarchist,

a rebel against the dogmas and precedents, and ipse dixits of other ages and other men. But I am an anarchist and rebel within—and not outside—the law, for I recognize a law that is eternal, unchangeable, immutable, and he who goes against this law will be broken, ground to powder, and nothing can save him from paying the penalty of broken law.

If my "Thoreau" would call himself a "rebel" instead of an "anarchist" he would come much nearer the truth.

All he has written, the poems he loves, the literature he cherishes, make of him a charming old rebel. The very life he leads is that of the rebel, and not the anarchist. He dwells in the heart of the forest, he consorts with the birds and other creatures of the woods, he grows his food from mother earth, he owns his land—10 acres, I believe.

Who ever heard of an anarchist owning land and living thus? The real anarchist is a product of the cities. He flourishes in the dark, ill-smelling places. The pure air and golden sunshine of Tolstoy Park would be obnoxious to him.

Here is one of the modern Thoreau's favorite poems.

THE STRANGER

A stranger passed along the street
Upon his buoyant way,
Amid the crowds of weary feet,
Where walls rose cold and gray.
Upon his features shone a light,
Seldom seen by land or sea,
With purest love his face was bright,
His smile was filled with sympathy.

Then suddenly the world grew warm,
And all the radiant throngs,
Were thrilled as by the subtle charm
Of softly murmured songs.
For everywhere there shone a light,
Seldom seen by land or sea,
With purest love all eyes were bright,
All smiles were filled with sympathy.

* * *

Here is another poem this self-confessed anarchist loves. I think the mildest-mannered and meekest of my readers will appreciate it:

OVER AND OVER AGAIN

Over and over again, no matter which way I turn,
I always find in the book of life some lesson I have to learn.
I must take my turn at the mill, I must grind out the golden grain,
I must work at my task with a resolute will, over and over again.

We cannot measure the need of even the tiniest flower,
Nor check the flow of the golden sands that run through a single hour.
But the morning dew must fall, the sun and summer rain
Must do their part, and perform it all over and over again.

Over and over again the brook through the meadow flows,
And over and over again the ponderous mill-wheel goes.
Once doing will not suffice, though doing be not in vain,
And a blessing falling us once or twice may come if we try again.

The path that has once been trod is never so rough to the feet,
And the lesson we once have learned is never so hard to repeat.
Though sorrowful tears may fall, and the heart to its depths be riven
By the storm and tempest, we need them all to render us mete for heaven.

On his letter-head I find this quotation, from Heber Newton, D. D.: "Anarchism is the ideal to which Christ looked forward. Christ founded no church, established no state, gave practically no laws, organized no government; but He did seek to write on the hearts of men God's laws and make them self-legislating."

* * *

Here is a charming sketch of the simple life this modern Thoreau is leading. At my request he sent me this, and it is so characteristic of the man, as I get him, that I am pleased to introduce it here:

"Two or three times lately I have gone barefooted to Montrose, and brought home a barrow of rock, and hereafter I expect to go in the same manner many times.

"On the 9th I went barefooted to Rock Creek and took a dip in that clear, swift water. First plunge was followed by a thorough cleansing with soap, then three more plunges beneath the water before coming out. Delightful? I'll tell the world it was. Again I felt like a boy of 60 years ago at the little brook in Ohio where we used to build a dam for the very purpose of enjoying life in its simplicity far from town or city.

"Here at Rock Creek is privacy, even greater than in my home, for the pool in the trail through thick woods is seldom traveled by other than myself as I go for our mail. One margin of the pool is formed by the intertwined roots of a tall pine and gum tree. Other is formed by thick matted vines green all the winter long. A beautiful tall holly is but a few feet distant and there is sweet bay and maple and oak and poplar close by, forming a delightful shade in the hottest days. Who would give this for anything the city can offer? Not I, I'm sure.

"Often I think of the pastry-fed dwellers of city and town—you who must have ice cream and soda water. And you who must go to the movies and then take more of the very things that make you sick! How foolish—how crazy.

"Something of my simple life may be of interest in my preparation of use of plain food. Almost invariably for years I have had a breakfast, fresh mush made of nearly equal parts of choice corn and wheat ground in my own hand mill each day as I need it. It is made in the morning as soon as breakfast is over and steamed for two or three hours

at least, then put away until the next morning. Not more than a teaspoon of corn oil is used in the fryingpan and it is just browned to a turn on one side. Some very sweet tea poured over the mush and it is eaten as soon as cool enough. The remaining tea is sipped with bread or toast and completes my breakfast which is ample and costs less than three cents! On this I can work all day if necessary.

"Dinner usually consists of some vegetable—dashens or sweet potatoes which I grow myself. Some bread or toast is eaten with a little honey. Cost less than five cents. Supper for quite a while has been sweetened clabber and bread. Some graham crackers are eaten, too, and these are my nearest approach to pastry. Cost of a frugal supper within five cents.

"I have plenty of canned sap pears and often these with bread or toast make a supper. Dry old bread is bought in Fairhope at six cents per loaf instead of 10 cents. If I fail

to get this, I bake my own bread from my own meal. By keeping a good supply of toast made when the bread is abundant I seldom have to bake. Graham bread is usually to be obtained and if not rye, so I seldom buy white bread.

"The high cost of living does not worry me at all, at all—not am I ever sick. Appetite is sharp and keen when mealtime comes, but I can postpone the dinner or supper indefinitely—I pass it up.

"Thoreau's friends accused him of living upon buttermilk and green but I have not quite reached that point, but my simple life proves right through my ability do what to man are none other than wonders."

* * *

And what has this modern Thoreau gained, if anything, for all he has given up. For one thing, he gets along without hat or shoes, a very considerable savings. He lives on a little less than 15 cents a day, when he buys his food. If he raised it, had a good milk cow, a small flock of hens he could live like a Nabob for ever less.

A small cooking stove and utensils were to be expected, but not a modern typewriter. Later I learned that the owner is an expert in its use, as is shown by a long, well written letter I have just received from him, written at 4 o'clock in the morning, long before the "bee is on the wing."

* * *

I saved the thing I was most interested in for the last. A glance out of the corner of my eyes from time to time revealed rows and rows of books ranged around the concave walls of this queer bee-hive house, and I had been impatient for half an hour to begin browsing. Finally I could wait no longer, and while Lady Vivian was still exclaiming "Beautiful," "gorgeous," "glorious," "precious," "divine" and all the rest of her amazing vocabulary, I began to read the titles of his books.

Tolstoy's works, with Thoreau's, of course, occupied the places of honor, for he has named his place in the woods "Tolstoy Park" as well as taking upon himself the mantle of Thoreau.

Hard by was Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass," Oscar Wilde's "De Profundis," David Grayson's "Adventures in Contentment" and the "Friendly Road." Of course there were the poets, also Dickens, Hugo, Balzac and most of the classics. I readily picked these out, but I was searching for something out of the ordinary and soon I found it—it was not Tom Paine, for of course he was there, but even broad-minded preachers read the great patriot philosopher now. It was a book by Emma Goldman, entitled "Anarchy and Other Essays."

Nearby hung a fine picture of the noted anarchist, and when my "Thoreau" told me he wove a rug for her cell while she was in the federal prison I pricked up my ears for the real story.

"I am an anarchist," he boldly declared, and he did not look around furtively as though he feared secret spies peering through his keyholes.

"How long have you been an anarchist?" I asked, "and what made you one?"

From what he told me I infer that it was the reading of anarchistic literature, and particularly that of Emma Goldman. This, and the sympathetic nature of the man that rebels at "man's inhumanity to man." Perhaps some of us are just born that way—rebels, anarchists, non-conformists.

I soon learned that his is a mild, harmless form of anarchy, all in the abstract, and very beautiful if—just the same little it—if we could change human nature.

Strange how all reformers, from prohibitionists to anarchists, seem to leave this out of the equation.

I confessed to our host that I, too, am a sort of intellectual-anarchist,

a rebel against the dogmas and precedents, and ipse dixits of other ages and other men. But I am an anarchist and rebel within—and not outside—the law, for I recognize a law that is eternal, unchangeable, immutable, and he who goes against this law will be broken, ground to powder, and nothing can save him from paying the penalty of broken law.

If my "Thoreau" would call himself a "rebel" instead of an "anarchist" he would come much nearer the truth.

All he has written, the poems he loves, the literature he cherishes, make of him a charming old rebel. The very life he leads is that of the rebel, and not the anarchist. He dwells in the heart of the forest, he consorts with the birds and other creatures of the woods, he grows his food from mother earth, he owns his land—10 acres, I believe.

Who ever heard of an anarchist owning land and living thus? The real anarchist is a product of the cities. He flourishes in the dark, ill-smelling places. The pure air and golden sunshine of Tolstoy Park would be obnoxious to him.

Here is one of the modern Thoreau's favorite poems.

THE STRANGER

A stranger passed along the street
Upon his buoyant way,

Amid the crowds of weary feet,
Where walls rose cold and gray.
Upon his features shone a light,
Seldom seen by land or sea.

With purest love his face was bright,
His smile was filled with sympathy.

Then suddenly the world grew warm,
And all the radiant throngs.

Were thrilled as by the subtle charm
Of softly murmured songs.

For everywhere there shone a light,
Seldom seen by land or sea.

With purest love all eyes were bright,
All smiles were filled with sympathy.

* * *

Here is another poem this self-confessed anarchist loves. I think the mildest-mannered and meekest of my readers will appreciate it:

OVER AND OVER AGAIN

Over and over again, no matter which way I turn,

I always find in the book of life some lesson I have to learn.

I must take my turn at the mill, I must grind out the golden grain.

I must work at my task with a resolute will, over and over again.

We cannot measure the need of even the tiniest flower,

Nor check the flow of the golden sands that run through a single hour.

But the morning dew must fall, the sun and summer rain

Must do their part, and perform it, all over and over again.

Over and over again the brook through the meadow flows,
And over and over again the ponderous mill-wheel goes.
Once doing will not suffice, though doing be not in vain,
And a blessing falling us once or twice may come if we try again.

The path that has once been trod is never so rough to the feet.

And the lesson we once have learned is never so hard to repeat.

Though sorrowful tears may fall, and the heart to its depths be riven
By the storm and tempest, we need them all to render us mete for heaven.

On his letter-head I find this quotation, from Heber Newton, D. D.:

"Anarchism is the ideal to which Christ looked forward. Christ founded no church, established no state, gave practically no laws, organized no government; but He did seek to write on the hearts of men God's laws and make them self-legislating."

* * *

Here is a charming sketch of the simple life this modern Thoreau is leading. At my request he sent me this, and it is so characteristic of the man, as I get him, that I am pleased to introduce it here:

"Two or three times lately I have gone barefooted to Montrose, and brought home a barrow of rock, and hereafter I expect to go in the same manner many times.

"On the 9th I went barefooted to Rock Creek and took a dip in that clear, swift water. First plunge was followed by a thorough cleansing with soap, then three more plunges beneath the water before coming out. Delightful? I'll tell the world it was. Again I felt like a boy of 60 years ago at the little brook in Ohio where we used to build a dam for the very purpose of enjoying life in its simplicity far from town or city.

"Here at Rock Creek is privacy, even greater than in my home, for the pool in the trail through thick woods is seldom traveled by other than myself as I go for our mail. One margin of the pool is formed by the intertwined roots of a tall pine and gum tree. Other is formed by thick matted vines green all the winter long. A beautiful, tall holly is but a few feet distant and there is sweet bay and maple and oak and poplar close by, forming a delightful shade in the hottest days. Who would give this for anything the city can offer? Not I, I'm sure.

"Often I think of the pastry-fed dwellers of city and town—you who must have ice cream and soda water. And you who must go to the movies and then take more of the very things that make you sick! How foolish—how crazy!"

"Something of my simple life may be of interest in my preparation of use of plain food. Almost invariably for years I have had a breakfast of fresh mush made of nearly equal parts of choice corn and wheat ground in my own hand mill every day as I need it. It is made in the morning as soon as breakfast is over and steamed for two or three hours

at least, then put away until the next morning. Not more than a teaspoon of corn oil is used in the fryingpan and it is just browned to a turn on one side. Some very sweet tea is poured over the mush and it is eaten as soon as cool enough. The remaining tea is sipped with bread or toast and completes my breakfast which is ample and costs less than three cents! On this I can work all day if necessary.

"Dinner usually consists of some vegetable—dasheens or sweet potatoes which I grow myself. Some bread or toast is eaten with a little honey. Cost less than five cents. Supper for quite a while has been sweetened clabber and bread. Some Graham crackers are eaten, too, and these are my nearest approach to pastry. Cost of a frugal supper within five cents.

"I have plenty of canned san pears and often these with bread or toast make a supper. Dry-old bread is bought in Fairhope at six cents per loaf instead of 10 cents. If I fail

to get this, I bake my own bread from my own meal. By keeping a good supply of toast made when the bread is abundant I seldom have to bake. Graham bread is usually to be obtained and if not rye, so I seldom buy white bread.

"The high cost of living does not worry me at all, at all—not am I ever sick. Appetite is sharp and keen when mealtime comes, but I can postpone the dinner or supper indefinitely—pass it up.

"Thoreau's friends accused him of living upon buttermilk and green but I have not quite reached that point, but my simple life proves right through my ability to do what to man are none other than wonders."

* * *

And what has this modern Thoreau gained, if anything, for all he has given up. For one thing, he gets along without hat or shoes, a very considerable savings. He lives on a little less than 15 cents a day, when he buys his food. If he raised it, had a good milk cow, a small flock of hens he could live like a Nabob for ever less.

Thoreau said he could produce enough food with six weeks labor to live on the entire year. If he had our marvelous Lookout Mountain he could have done better than

on the material side, then, our modern Thoreau has demonstrated there is such a thing as the good life where men do not have to enslave themselves just for food and clothing. But what else has he freed of the "intangibles?" For one, freedom from colds and similitudinally ailments, including immunity from the "flu" that periodically sweeps over the country. He also gained leisure to read and rely on an extensive correspondence of unusual people in all parts of the world.

His greatest gain I think is time for meditation—time to get acquainted with himself, to learn something of his own soul, to hold communion with his spirit. Will some of you please figure that out and tell me in dollars and cents just what it is worth?

Our Master placed a very high value on the very thing I am now writing about and he placed its value on the ken of a mathematician. He said:

What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul?

Our modern Thoreau is finding his soul and if this were all, who is it that we would call him a fool?

It is a fine business, I think, for a man past three score and 10 to be engaged in. I only wish I had taken up more seriously in my younger years, for I might have been much further along the path now.

Well, what has H. J. Stuart given me? I am going to answer this question by quoting a letter from one of our correspondents, a dweller in one of our great American cities:

The book was very soothing to

It got me back to earth and gave me a better grip on the fundamentals of nature, the soil, and the fragrance and peace of the open. Yes, the philosophy of life is the ideal, for we are in the big cities, jostled and shoved along—the din of everything smashing against our nerves—100 pushing devils, seen and unseen, forcing us along at a headlong pace until Monday morning and Tuesday night seem to come within the self-same hour. And for what? The privilege of getting and keeping debt, and lock-stepping with a multitude of other monkeys just like me.

My, what a life! Beauty all around, not a second allowed us to savor it in—a living death in abundant

"It's a mighty challenge though, and a wonderful life, to the man of steel, and especially to us rugged workers in the Lord's vineyard, but the conflict is terrible. Am getting to believe that these certainly must be the last times in which the devil has been turned loose to do his worst—yet I see plainly that the moral forces, religion and the state itself, are only cowed and sold out and defeated before the onward march of the intense materialism of the age.

"Unquestionably we are living in a dangerous and awful time in this swirl of inventions and modern marvels turned upon the world in this era.

"Keep on sending me a whiff of clover, a breeze out of the woods, and the smell of the garden—it's intoxicating to me as camp to my puss—and don't ever stop congratulating yourself that your day opens with tranquility, and that twilight settles down upon you in the real King's Highway."

Perhaps the picture drawn by his correspondent may be a little highly colored, but some of our greatest thinkers see ahead of us the crash of our civilization because of its great over-burden. It is not my purpose to discuss that question here. Whatever our fate, we are being irresistibly swept on toward it, and no man can stay the tide. What each man can do, however, is to "work out his own salvation" and become a servant of the light, and a torch-bearer for others who are seeking the way.

I think it refreshing to find one man in Alabama who has deliberately turned his back upon the gewgaws of commercialism to seek the things of the spirit. I am glad to record his experiences, but in doing so I am not advising anyone to follow his example. Nor do I think there is the slightest danger that there will be an overflow of modern Thoreaus among my readers.

We are too much enmeshed in materialism. It has become the major expression of our lives. We cannot exist without mills, factories, skyscrapers, automobiles, motion pictures, and the ever-increasing necessities of modern life. We are not

going to give these things up even to find our souls.

So we must take time to find our souls in the midst of all our boasted PROGRESS. Time to listen to the still small voice.

John Wanamaker, the great merchant prince, used to take one hour from business each day, retire to his silence room, where no one dared disturb him, and spend the time in meditation.

I am going back to my Greek philosophy this morning for my formula for living in this modern, industrial world. The heart of that philosophy is "Excess in nothing" which means conversely "Moderation in all things."

This thought elaborated and lived up to would solve all our problems of living. I have not the time or space to make the elaboration or application—each must do that for himself. I lay down the broad generalization that is just as true to-

day as when the first illumined Greek seer uttered it.

I think my modern Thoreau has gone just a little too far in one direction. While he has done so, millions have rushed madly to the opposite extreme. Our daily press tells the tragic story of these extremists. Daily, hourly, they are dropping dead at their desks, on the streets, or in their sleep. The poor, tired, overburdened heart ceases to function, and life's fitful fever is over. The tragedy is that this usually happens just about the period in a man's life where by reason of his ripened experience he is prepared to do his best work.

With this philosophizing I leave the modern Thoreau alone in Tolstoy Park, weaving his rugs, reading his books, writing his letters, dreaming his dreams, and as I think of him now as I saw him standing as we left him at twilight I recall Whit-tier's poem "Maud Muller."

I think I must have felt something like the judge did as he rode down the lane and turned back to see Maud Muller standing in the midst of the hayfield, barefoot, looking in his direction.

I love the closing lines. I have used them before now, but they are worth repeating:

"Ah, well for us all some sweet hope lies,

Deeply buried from human eyes,
But in the hereafter angels may
Roll the stone from its grave away."