Bartleby, The Scrivener
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A STORY OF WALL-STREET

I am a rather elderly man. The nature of my avocations for the last thirty years has brought me into more than ordinary contact with what would seem an interesting and somewhat singular set of men, of whom as yet nothing that I know of has ever been written:—I mean the law-copyists or scriveners. I have known very many of them, professionally and privately, and if I pleased, could relate divers histories, at which good-natured gentlemen might smile, and sentimental souls might weep. But I waive the biographies of all other scriveners for a few passages in the life of Bartleby, who was a scrivener of the strangest I ever saw or heard of. While of other law-copyists I might write the complete life, of Bartleby nothing of that sort can be done. I believe that no materials exist for a full and satisfactory biography of this man. It is an irreparable loss to literature. Bartleby was one of those beings of whom nothing is ascertainable, except from the original sources, and in his case those are very small. What my own astonished eyes saw of Bartleby, that is all I know of him, except, indeed, one vague report which will appear in the sequel.
Ere introducing the scrivener, as he first appeared to me, it is fit I make some mention of myself, my employees, my business, my chambers, and general surroundings; because some such description is indispensable to an adequate understanding of the chief character about to be presented.
Imprimis: I am a man who, from his youth upwards, has been filled with a profound conviction that the easiest way of life is the best. Hence, though I belong to a profession proverbially energetic and nervous, even to turbulence, at times, yet nothing of that sort have I ever suffered to invade my peace. I am one of those unambitious lawyers who never addresses a jury, or in any way draws down public applause; but in the cool tranquility of a snug retreat, do a snug business among rich men's bonds and mortgages and title-deeds. All who know me, consider me an eminently safe man. The late John Jacob Astor, a personage little given to poetic enthusiasm, had no hesitation in pronouncing my first grand point to be prudence; my next, method. I do not speak it in vanity, but simply record the fact, that I was not

unemployed in my profession by the late John Jacob Astor; a name which, I admit, I love to repeat, for it hath a rounded and orbicular sound to it, and rings like unto bullion. I will freely add, that I was not insensible to the late John Jacob Astor's good opinion.

Some time prior to the period at which this little history begins, my avocations had been largely increased. The good old office, now extinct in the State of New York, of a Master in Chancery, had been conferred upon me. It was not a very arduous office, but very pleasantly remunerative. I seldom lose my temper; much more seldom indulge in dangerous indignation at wrongs and outrages; but I must be permitted to be rash here and declare, that I consider the sudden and violent abrogation of the office of Master in Chancery, by the new Constitution, as a—premature act; inasmuch as I had counted upon a life-lease of the profits, whereas I only received those of a few short years. But this is by the way.

My chambers were up stairs at No.—Wall-street. At one end they looked upon the white wall of the interior of a spacious sky-light shaft, penetrating the building from top to bottom. This view might have been considered rather tame than otherwise, deficient in what landscape painters call "life." But if so, the view from the other end of my chambers offered, at least, a contrast, if nothing more. In that direction my windows commanded an unobstructed view of a lofty brick wall, black by age and everlasting shade; which wall required no spy-glass to bring out its lurking beauties, but for the benefit of all near-sighted spectators, was pushed up to within ten feet of my window panes. Owing to the great height of the surrounding buildings, and my chambers being on the second floor, the interval between this wall and mine not a little resembled a huge square cistern.

At the period just preceding the advent of Bartleby, I had two persons as copyists in my employment, and a promising lad as an office-boy. First, Turkey; second, Nippers; third, Ginger Nut. These may seem names, the like of which are not usually found in the Directory. In truth they were nicknames, mutually conferred upon each other by my three clerks, and were deemed expressive of their respective persons or characters. Turkey was a short, pursy Englishman of about my own age, that is, somewhere not far from sixty. In the morning, one might say,

his face was of a fine florid hue, but after twelve o'clock, meridian—his dinner hour—it blazed like a grate full of Christmas coals; and continued blazing—but, as it were, with a gradual wane—till 6 o'clock, P.M. or thereabouts, after which I saw no more of the proprietor of the face, which gaining its meridian with the sun, seemed to set with it, to rise, culminate, and decline the following day, with the like regularity and undiminished glory. There are many singular coincidences I have known in the course of my life, not the least among which was the fact, that exactly when Turkey displayed his fullest beams from his red and radiant countenance, just then, too, at that critical moment, began the daily period when I considered his business capacities as seriously disturbed for the remainder of the twenty-four hours. Not that he was absolutely idle, or averse to business then; far from it. The difficulty was, he was apt to be altogether too energetic. There was a strange, inflamed, flurried, flighty recklessness of activity about him. He would be incautious in dipping his pen into his inkstand. All his blots upon my documents, were dropped there after twelve o'clock, meridian. Indeed, not only would he be reckless and sadly given to making blots in the afternoon, but some days he went further, and was rather noisy. At such times, too, his face flamed with augmented blazonry, as if cannel coal had been heaped on anthracite. He made an unpleasant racket with his chair; spilled his sand-box; in mending his pens, impatiently split them all to pieces, and threw them on the floor in a sudden passion; stood up and leaned over his table, boxing his papers about in a most indecorous manner, very sad to behold in an elderly man like him. Nevertheless, as he was in many ways a most valuable person to me, and all the time before twelve o'clock, meridian, was the quickest, steadiest creature too, accomplishing a great deal of work in a style not easy to be matched—for these reasons, I was willing to overlook his eccentricities, though indeed, occasionally, I remonstrated with him. I did this very gently, however, because, though the civilest, nay, the blandest and most reverential of men in the morning, yet in the afternoon he was disposed, upon provocation, to be slightly rash with his tongue, in fact, insolent. Now, valuing his morning services as I did, and resolved not to lose them; yet, at the same time made uncomfortable by his inflamed ways after twelve o'clock; and being a man of peace, unwilling by my admonitions to call forth

unseemly retorts from him; I took upon me, one Saturday noon (he was always worse on Saturdays), to hint to him, very kindly, that perhaps now that he was growing old, it might be well to abridge his labors; in short, he need not come to my chambers after twelve o'clock, but, dinner over, had best go home to his lodgings and rest himself till teatime. But no; he insisted upon his afternoon devotions. His countenance became intolerably fervid, as he oratorically assured me—gesticulating with a long ruler at the other end of the room—that if his services in the morning were useful, how indispensable, then, in the afternoon?

"With submission, sir," said Turkey on this occasion, "I consider myself your right-hand man. In the morning I but marshal and deploy my columns; but in the afternoon I put myself at their head, and gallantly charge the foe, thus!"—and he made a violent thrust with the ruler.

"But the blots, Turkey," intimated I.

"True,—but, with submission, sir, behold these hairs! I am getting old. Surely, sir, a blot or two of a warm afternoon is not to be severely urged against gray hairs. Old age—even if it blot the page—is honorable. With submission, sir, we both are getting old."

This appeal to my fellow-feeling was hardly to be resisted. At all events, I saw that go he would not. So I made up my mind to let him stay, resolving, nevertheless, to see to it, that during the afternoon he had to do with my less important papers.

Nippers, the second on my list, was a whiskered, sallow, and, upon the whole, rather piratical-looking young man of about five and twenty. I always deemed him the victim of two evil powers—ambition and indigestion. The ambition was evinced by a certain impatience of the duties of a mere copyist, an unwarrantable usurpation of strictly professional affairs, such as the original drawing up of legal documents. The indigestion seemed betokened in an occasional nervous testiness and grinning irritability, causing the teeth to audibly grind together over mistakes committed in copying; unnecessary maledictions, hissed, rather than spoken, in the heat of business; and especially by a continual discontent with the height of the table where he worked. Though of a very ingenious mechanical turn, Nippers could never get this table to suit him. He put chips under it, blocks of various sorts, bits of pasteboard, and at last went so far as to attempt an exquisite adjustment by final pieces of

folded blotting paper. But no invention would answer. If, for the sake of easing his back, he brought the table lid at a sharp angle well up towards his chin, and wrote there like a man using the steep roof of a Dutch house for his desk:—then he declared that it stopped the circulation in his arms. If now he lowered the table to his waistbands, and stooped over it in writing, then there was a sore aching in his back. In short, the truth of the matter was, Nippers knew not what he wanted. Or, if he wanted any thing, it was to be rid of a scrivener's table altogether. Among the manifestations of his diseased ambition was a fondness he had for receiving visits from certain ambiguous-looking fellows in seedy coats, whom he called his clients. Indeed I was aware that not only was he, at times, considerable of a ward-politician, but he occasionally did a little business at the Justices' courts, and was not unknown on the steps of the Tombs. I have good reason to believe, however, that one individual who called upon him at my chambers, and who, with a grand air, he insisted was his client, was no other than a dun, and the alleged title-deed, a bill. But with all his failings, and the annoyances he caused me, Nippers, like his compatriot Turkey, was a very useful man to me; wrote a neat, swift hand; and, when he chose, was not deficient in a gentlemanly sort of deportment. Added to this, he always dressed in a gentlemanly sort of way; and so, incidentally, reflected credit upon my chambers. Whereas with respect to Turkey, I had much ado to keep him from being a reproach to me. His clothes were apt to look oily and smell of eating-houses. He wore his pantaloons very loose and baggy in summer. His coats were execrable; his hat not to be handled. But while the hat was a thing of indifference to me, inasmuch as his natural civility and deference, as a dependent Englishman, always led him to doff it the moment he entered the room, yet his coat was another matter. Concerning his coats, I reasoned with him; but with no effect. The truth was, I suppose, that a man of so small an income, could not afford to sport such a lustrous face and a lustrous coat at one and the same time. As Nippers once observed, Turkey's money went chiefly for red ink. One winter day I presented Turkey with a highly-respectable looking coat of my own, a padded gray coat, of a most comfortable warmth, and which buttoned straight up from the knee to the neck. I thought Turkey would appreciate the favor, and abate his rashness and

obstreperousness of afternoons. But no. I verily believe that buttoning himself up in so downy and blanket-like a coat had a pernicious effect upon him; upon the same principle that too much oats are bad for horses. In fact, precisely as a rash, restive horse is said to feel his oats, so Turkey felt his coat. It made him insolent. He was a man whom prosperity harmed.

Though concerning the self-indulgent habits of Turkey I had my own private surmises, yet touching Nippers I was well persuaded that whatever might be his faults in other respects, he was, at least, a temperate young man. But indeed, nature herself seemed to have been his vintner, and at his birth charged him so thoroughly with an irritable, brandy-like disposition, that all subsequent potations were needless. When I consider how, amid the stillness of my chambers, Nippers would sometimes impatiently rise from his seat, and stooping over his table, spread his arms wide apart, seize the whole desk, and move it, and jerk it, with a grim, grinding motion on the floor, as if the table were a perverse voluntary agent, intent on thwarting and vexing him; I plainly perceive that for Nippers, brandy and water were altogether superfluous.

It was fortunate for me that, owing to its peculiar cause—indigestion—the irritability and consequent nervousness of Nippers, were mainly observable in the morning, while in the afternoon he was comparatively mild. So that Turkey's paroxysms only coming on about twelve o'clock, I never had to do with their eccentricities at one time. Their fits relieved each other like guards. When Nippers' was on, Turkey's was off; and vice versa. This was a good natural arrangement under the circumstances.

Ginger Nut, the third on my list, was a lad some twelve years old. His father was a carman, ambitious of seeing his son on the bench instead of a cart, before he died. So he sent him to my office as student at law, errand boy, and cleaner and sweeper, at the rate of one dollar a week. He had a little desk to himself, but he did not use it much. Upon inspection, the drawer exhibited a great array of the shells of various sorts of nuts. Indeed, to this quick-witted youth the whole noble science of the law was contained in a nut-shell. Not the least among the employments of Ginger Nut, as well as one which he discharged with the most alacrity, was his duty as cake and apple purveyor for Turkey and Nippers. Copying law papers being proverbially dry, husky sort

of business, my two scriveners were fain to moisten their mouths very often with Spitzenbergs to be had at the numerous stalls nigh the Custom House and Post Office. Also, they sent Ginger Nut very frequently for that peculiar cake—small, flat, round, and very spicy—after which he had been named by them. Of a cold morning when business was but dull, Turkey would gobble up scores of these cakes, as if they were mere wafers—indeed they sell them at the rate of six or eight for a penny—the scrape of his pen blending with the crunching of the crisp particles in his mouth. Of all the fiery afternoon blunders and flurried rashnesses of Turkey, was his once moistening a ginger-cake between his lips, and clapping it on to a mortgage for a seal. I came within an ace of dismissing him then. But he mollified me by making an oriental bow, and saying—"With submission, sir, it was generous of me to find you in stationery on my own account."

Now my original business—that of a conveyancer and title hunter, and drawer-up of recondite documents of all sorts—was considerably increased by receiving the master's office. There was now great work for scriveners. Not only must I push the clerks already with me, but I must have additional help. In answer to my advertisement, a motionless young man one morning, stood upon my office threshold, the door being open, for it was summer. I can see that figure now—pallidly neat, pitiably respectable, incurably forlorn! It was Bartleby.

After a few words touching his qualifications, I engaged him, glad to have among my corps of copyists a man of so singularly sedate an aspect, which I thought might operate beneficially upon the flighty temper of Turkey, and the fiery one of Nippers.

I should have stated before that ground glass folding-doors divided my premises into two parts, one of which was occupied by my scriveners, the other by myself. According to my humor I threw open these doors, or closed them. I resolved to assign Bartleby a corner by the folding-doors, but on my side of them, so as to have this quiet man within easy call, in case any trifling thing was to be done. I placed his desk close up to a small side-window in that part of the room, a window which originally had afforded a lateral view of certain grimy back-yards and bricks, but which, owing to subsequent erections, commanded at present no view at all, though it gave some light. Within three feet of the panes was a wall, and the light came down from far

above, between two lofty buildings, as from a very small opening in a dome. Still further to a satisfactory arrangement, I procured a high green folding screen, which might entirely isolate Bartleby from my sight, though not remove him from my voice. And thus, in a manner, privacy and society were conjoined.

At first Bartleby did an extraordinary quantity of writing. As if long famishing for something to copy, he seemed to gorge himself on my documents. There was no pause for digestion. He ran a day and night line, copying by sun-light and by candle-light. I should have been quite delighted with his application, had he been cheerfully industrious. But he wrote on silently, palely, mechanically.

It is, of course, an indispensable part of a scrivener's business to verify the accuracy of his copy, word by word. Where there are two or more scriveners in an office, they assist each other in this examination, one reading from the copy, the other holding the original. It is a very dull, wearisome, and lethargic affair. I can readily imagine that to some sanguine temperaments it would be altogether intolerable. For example, I cannot credit that the mettlesome poet Byron would have contentedly sat down with Bartleby to examine a law document of, say five hundred pages, closely written in a crimpy hand.

Now and then, in the haste of business, it had been my habit to assist in comparing some brief document myself, calling Turkey or Nippers for this purpose. One object I had in placing Bartleby so handy to me behind the screen, was to avail myself of his services on such trivial occasions. It was on the third day, I think, of his being with me, and before any necessity had arisen for having his own writing examined, that, being much hurried to complete a small affair I had in hand, I abruptly called to Bartleby. In my haste and natural expectancy of instant compliance, I sat with my head bent over the original on my desk, and my right hand sideways, and somewhat nervously extended with the copy, so that immediately upon emerging from his retreat, Bartleby might snatch it and proceed to business without the least delay.

In this very attitude did I sit when I called to him, rapidly stating what it was I wanted him to do—namely, to examine a small paper with me. Imagine my surprise, nay, my consternation, when without moving from his privacy, Bartleby in a singularly

mild, firm voice, replied, "I would prefer not to."
I sat awhile in perfect silence, rallying my stunned faculties. Immediately it occurred to me that my ears had deceived me, or Bartleby had entirely misunderstood my meaning. I repeated my request in the clearest tone I could assume. But in quite as clear a one came the previous reply, "I would prefer not to."
"Prefer not to," echoed I, rising in high excitement, and crossing the room with a stride. "What do you mean? Are you moon-struck? I want you to help me compare this sheet here—take it," and I thrust it towards him.
"I would prefer not to," said he.
I looked at him steadfastly. His face was leanly composed; his gray eye dimly calm. Not a wrinkle of agitation rippled him. Had there been the least uneasiness, anger, impatience or impertinence in his manner; in other words, had there been any thing ordinarily human about him, doubtless I should have violently dismissed him from the premises. But as it was, I should have as soon thought of turning my pale plaster-of-paris bust of Cicero out of doors. I stood gazing at him awhile, as he went on with his own writing, and then reseated myself at my desk. This is very strange, thought I. What had one best do? But my business hurried me. I concluded to forget the matter for the present, reserving it for my future leisure. So calling Nippers from the other room, the paper was speedily examined.
A few days after this, Bartleby concluded four lengthy documents, being quadruplicates of a week's testimony taken before me in my High Court of Chancery. It became necessary to examine them. It was an important suit, and great accuracy was imperative. Having all things arranged I called Turkey, Nippers and Ginger Nut from the next room, meaning to place the four copies in the hands of my four clerks, while I should read from the original. Accordingly Turkey, Nippers and Ginger Nut had taken their seats in a row, each with his document in hand, when I called to Bartleby to join this interesting group.
"Bartleby! quick, I am waiting."
I heard a slow scrape of his chair legs on the uncarpeted floor, and soon he appeared standing at the entrance of his hermitage.
"What is wanted?" said he mildly.
"The copies, the copies," said I hurriedly. "We are going to examine them. There"—and I held towards him the fourth quadruplicate.

"I would prefer not to," he said, and gently disappeared behind the screen.

For a few moments I was turned into a pillar of salt, standing at the head of my seated column of clerks. Recovering myself, I advanced towards the screen, and demanded the reason for such extraordinary conduct.

"Why do you refuse?"

"I would prefer not to."

With any other man I should have flown outright into a dreadful passion, scorned all further words, and thrust him ignominiously from my presence. But there was something about Bartleby that not only strangely disarmed me, but in a wonderful manner touched and disconcerted me. I began to reason with him.

"These are your own copies we are about to examine. It is labor saving to you, because one examination will answer for your four papers. It is common usage. Every copyist is bound to help examine his copy. Is it not so? Will you not speak? Answer!"

"I prefer not to," he replied in a flute-like tone. It seemed to me that while I had been addressing him, he carefully revolved every statement that I made; fully comprehended the meaning; could not gainsay the irresistible conclusions; but, at the same time, some paramount consideration prevailed with him to reply as he did.

"You are decided, then, not to comply with my request—a request made according to common usage and common sense?"

He briefly gave me to understand that on that point my judgment was sound. Yes: his decision was irreversible.

It is not seldom the case that when a man is browbeaten in some unprecedented and violently unreasonable way, he begins to stagger in his own plainest faith. He begins, as it were, vaguely to surmise that, wonderful as it may be, all the justice and all the reason is on the other side. Accordingly, if any disinterested persons are present, he turns to them for some reinforcement for his own faltering mind.

"Turkey," said I, "what do you think of this? Am I not right?"

"With submission, sir," said Turkey, with his blandest tone, "I think that you are."

"Nippers," said I, "what do you think of it?"

"I think I should kick him out of the office."

(The reader of nice perceptions will here perceive that, it being morning, Turkey's answer is couched in polite and tranquil

terms, but Nippers replies in ill-tempered ones. Or, to repeat a previous sentence, Nippers' ugly mood was on duty and Turkey's off.)

"Ginger Nut," said I, willing to enlist the smallest suffrage in my behalf, "what do you think of it?"

"I think, sir, he's a little luny," replied Ginger Nut with a grin.

"You hear what they say," said I, turning towards the screen, "come forth and do your duty."

But he vouchsafed no reply. I pondered a moment in sore perplexity. But once more business hurried me. I determined again to postpone the consideration of this dilemma to my future leisure. With a little trouble we made out to examine the papers without Bartleby, though at every page or two, Turkey deferentially dropped his opinion that this proceeding was quite out of the common; while Nippers, twitching in his chair with a dyspeptic nervousness, ground out between his set teeth occasional hissing maledictions against the stubborn oaf behind the screen. And for his (Nippers') part, this was the first and the last time he would do another man's business without pay.

Meanwhile Bartleby sat in his hermitage, oblivious to every thing but his own peculiar business there.

Some days passed, the scrivener being employed upon another lengthy work. His late remarkable conduct led me to regard his ways narrowly. I observed that he never went to dinner; indeed that he never went any where. As yet I had never of my personal knowledge known him to be outside of my office. He was a perpetual sentry in the corner. At about eleven o'clock though, in the morning, I noticed that Ginger Nut would advance toward the opening in Bartleby's screen, as if silently beckoned thither by a gesture invisible to me where I sat. The boy would then leave the office jingling a few pence, and reappear with a handful of ginger-nuts which he delivered in the hermitage, receiving two of the cakes for his trouble.

He lives, then, on ginger-nuts, thought I; never eats a dinner, properly speaking; he must be a vegetarian then; but no; he never eats even vegetables, he eats nothing but ginger-nuts. My mind then ran on in reveries concerning the probable effects upon the human constitution of living entirely on ginger-nuts. Ginger-nuts are so called because they contain ginger as one of their peculiar constituents, and the final flavoring one. Now what was ginger? A hot, spicy thing. Was Bartleby hot and spicy?

Not at all. Ginger, then, had no effect upon Bartleby. Probably he preferred it should have none.

Nothing so aggravates an earnest person as a passive resistance. If the individual so resisted be of a not inhumane temper, and the resisting one perfectly harmless in his passivity; then, in the better moods of the former, he will endeavor charitably to construe to his imagination what proves impossible to be solved by his judgment. Even so, for the most part, I regarded Bartleby and his ways. Poor fellow! thought I, he means no mischief; it is plain he intends no insolence; his aspect sufficiently evinces that his eccentricities are involuntary. He is useful to me. I can get along with him. If I turn him away, the chances are he will fall in with some less indulgent employer, and then he will be rudely treated, and perhaps driven forth miserably to starve. Yes. Here I can cheaply purchase a delicious self-approval. To befriend Bartleby; to humor him in his strange willfulness, will cost me little or nothing, while I lay up in my soul what will eventually prove a sweet morsel for my conscience. But this mood was not invariable with me. The passiveness of Bartleby sometimes irritated me. I felt strangely goaded on to encounter him in new opposition, to elicit some angry spark from him answerable to my own. But indeed I might as well have essayed to strike fire with my knuckles against a bit of Windsor soap. But one afternoon the evil impulse in me mastered me, and the following little scene ensued:

"Bartleby," said I, "when those papers are all copied, I will compare them with you."

"I would prefer not to."

"How? Surely you do not mean to persist in that mulish vagary?"

No answer.

I threw open the folding-doors near by, and turning upon Turkey and Nippers, exclaimed in an excited manner—

"He says, a second time, he won't examine his papers. What do you think of it, Turkey?"

It was afternoon, be it remembered. Turkey sat glowing like a brass boiler, his bald head steaming, his hands reeling among his blotted papers.

"Think of it?" roared Turkey; "I think I'll just step behind his screen, and black his eyes for him!"

So saying, Turkey rose to his feet and threw his arms into a

pugilistic position. He was hurrying away to make good his promise, when I detained him, alarmed at the effect of incautiously rousing Turkey's combativeness after dinner.
"Sit down, Turkey," said I, "and hear what Nippers has to say. What do you think of it, Nippers? Would I not be justified in immediately dismissing Bartleby?"
"Excuse me, that is for you to decide, sir. I think his conduct quite unusual, and indeed unjust, as regards Turkey and myself. But it may only be a passing whim."
"Ah," exclaimed I, "you have strangely changed your mind then—you speak very gently of him now."
"All beer," cried Turkey; "gentleness is effects of beer—Nippers and I dined together to-day. You see how gentle I am, sir. Shall I go and black his eyes?"
"You refer to Bartleby, I suppose. No, not to-day, Turkey," I replied; "pray, put up your fists."
I closed the doors, and again advanced towards Bartleby. I felt additional incentives tempting me to my fate. I burned to be rebelled against again. I remembered that Bartleby never left the office.
"Bartleby," said I, "Ginger Nut is away; just step round to the Post Office, won't you? (it was but a three minute walk,) and see if there is any thing for me."
"I would prefer not to."
"You will not?"
"I prefer not."
I staggered to my desk, and sat there in a deep study. My blind inveteracy returned. Was there any other thing in which I could procure myself to be ignominiously repulsed by this lean, penniless wight?—my hired clerk? What added thing is there, perfectly reasonable, that he will be sure to refuse to do?
"Bartleby!"
No answer.
"Bartleby," in a louder tone.
No answer.
"Bartleby," I roared.
Like a very ghost, agreeably to the laws of magical invocation, at the third summons, he appeared at the entrance of his hermitage.
"Go to the next room, and tell Nippers to come to me."
"I prefer not to," he respectfully and slowly said, and mildly

disappeared.
"Very good, Bartleby," said I, in a quiet sort of serenely severe self-possessed tone, intimating the unalterable purpose of some terrible retribution very close at hand. At the moment I half intended something of the kind. But upon the whole, as it was drawing towards my dinner-hour, I thought it best to put on my hat and walk home for the day, suffering much from perplexity and distress of mind.
Shall I acknowledge it? The conclusion of this whole business was, that it soon became a fixed fact of my chambers, that a pale young scrivener, by the name of Bartleby, and a desk there; that he copied for me at the usual rate of four cents a folio (one hundred words); but he was permanently exempt from examining the work done by him, that duty being transferred to Turkey and Nippers, one of compliment doubtless to their superior acuteness; moreover, said Bartleby was never on any account to be dispatched on the most trivial errand of any sort; and that even if entreated to take upon him such a matter, it was generally understood that he would prefer not to—in other words, that he would refuse pointblank.
As days passed on, I became considerably reconciled to Bartleby. His steadiness, his freedom from all dissipation, his incessant industry (except when he chose to throw himself into a standing revery behind his screen), his great stillness, his unalterableness of demeanor under all circumstances, made him a valuable acquisition. One prime thing was this,—he was always there;—first in the morning, continually through the day, and the last at night. I had a singular confidence in his honesty. I felt my most precious papers perfectly safe in his hands. Sometimes to be sure I could not, for the very soul of me, avoid falling into sudden spasmodic passions with him. For it was exceeding difficult to bear in mind all the time those strange peculiarities, privileges, and unheard of exemptions, forming the tacit stipulations on Bartleby's part under which he remained in my office. Now and then, in the eagerness of dispatching pressing business, I would inadvertently summon Bartleby, in a short, rapid tone, to put his finger, say, on the incipient tie of a bit of red tape with which I was about compressing some papers. Of course, from behind the screen the usual answer, "I prefer not to," was sure to come; and then, how could a human creature with the common infirmities of our nature, refrain from bitterly

exclaiming upon such perverseness—such unreasonableness. However, every added repulse of this sort which I received only tended to lessen the probability of my repeating the inadvertence.

Here it must be said, that according to the custom of most legal gentlemen occupying chambers in densely-populated law buildings, there were several keys to my door. One was kept by a woman residing in the attic, which person weekly scrubbed and daily swept and dusted my apartments. Another was kept by Turkey for convenience sake. The third I sometimes carried in my own pocket. The fourth I knew not who had.

Now, one Sunday morning I happened to go to Trinity Church, to hear a celebrated preacher, and finding myself rather early on the ground, I thought I would walk around to my chambers for a while. Luckily I had my key with me; but upon applying it to the lock, I found it resisted by something inserted from the inside. Quite surprised, I called out; when to my consternation a key was turned from within; and thrusting his lean visage at me, and holding the door ajar, the apparition of Bartleby appeared, in his shirt sleeves, and otherwise in a strangely tattered dishabille, saying quietly that he was sorry, but he was deeply engaged just then, and—preferred not admitting me at present. In a brief word or two, he moreover added, that perhaps I had better walk round the block two or three times, and by that time he would probably have concluded his affairs.

Now, the utterly unsurmised appearance of Bartleby, tenanting my law-chambers of a Sunday morning, with his cadaverously gentlemanly nonchalance, yet withal firm and self-possessed, had such a strange effect upon me, that incontinently I slunk away from my own door, and did as desired. But not without sundry twinges of impotent rebellion against the mild effrontery of this unaccountable scrivener. Indeed, it was his wonderful mildness chiefly, which not only disarmed me, but unmanned me, as it were. For I consider that one, for the time, is a sort of unmanned when he tranquilly permits his hired clerk to dictate to him, and order him away from his own premises. Furthermore, I was full of uneasiness as to what Bartleby could possibly be doing in my office in his shirt sleeves, and in an otherwise dismantled condition of a Sunday morning. Was any thing amiss going on? Nay, that was out of the question. It was not to be thought of for a moment that Bartleby was an immoral

person. But what could he be doing there?—copying? Nay again, whatever might be his eccentricities, Bartleby was an eminently decorous person. He would be the last man to sit down to his desk in any state approaching to nudity. Besides, it was Sunday; and there was something about Bartleby that forbade the supposition that he would by any secular occupation violate the proprieties of the day.

Nevertheless, my mind was not pacified; and full of a restless curiosity, at last I returned to the door. Without hindrance I inserted my key, opened it, and entered. Bartleby was not to be seen. I looked round anxiously, peeped behind his screen; but it was very plain that he was gone. Upon more closely examining the place, I surmised that for an indefinite period Bartleby must have ate, dressed, and slept in my office, and that too without plate, mirror, or bed. The cushioned seat of a rickety old sofa in one corner bore the faint impress of a lean, reclining form. Rolled away under his desk, I found a blanket; under the empty grate, a blacking box and brush; on a chair, a tin basin, with soap and a ragged towel; in a newspaper a few crumbs of ginger-nuts and a morsel of cheese. Yes, thought I, it is evident enough that Bartleby has been making his home here, keeping bachelor's hall all by himself. Immediately then the thought came sweeping across me, What miserable friendlessness and loneliness are here revealed! His poverty is great; but his solitude, how horrible! Think of it. Of a Sunday, Wall-street is deserted as Petra; and every night of every day it is an emptiness. This building too, which of week-days hums with industry and life, at nightfall echoes with sheer vacancy, and all through Sunday is forlorn. And here Bartleby makes his home; sole spectator of a solitude which he has seen all populous—a sort of innocent and transformed Marius brooding among the ruins of Carthage!

For the first time in my life a feeling of overpowering stinging melancholy seized me. Before, I had never experienced aught but a not-unpleasing sadness. The bond of a common humanity now drew me irresistibly to gloom. A fraternal melancholy! For both I and Bartleby were sons of Adam. I remembered the bright silks and sparkling faces I had seen that day, in gala trim, swan-like sailing down the Mississippi of Broadway; and I contrasted them with the pallid copyist, and thought to myself, Ah, happiness courts the light, so we deem the world is gay; but misery hides aloof, so we deem that misery there is none. These

sad fancyings—chimeras, doubtless, of a sick and silly brain—led on to other and more special thoughts, concerning the eccentricities of Bartleby. Presentiments of strange discoveries hovered round me. The scrivener's pale form appeared to me laid out, among uncaring strangers, in its shivering winding sheet.

Suddenly I was attracted by Bartleby's closed desk, the key in open sight left in the lock.

I mean no mischief, seek the gratification of no heartless curiosity, thought I; besides, the desk is mine, and its contents too, so I will make bold to look within. Every thing was methodically arranged, the papers smoothly placed. The pigeon holes were deep, and removing the files of documents, I groped into their recesses. Presently I felt something there, and dragged it out. It was an old bandanna handkerchief, heavy and knotted. I opened it, and saw it was a savings' bank.

I now recalled all the quiet mysteries which I had noted in the man. I remembered that he never spoke but to answer; that though at intervals he had considerable time to himself, yet I had never seen him reading—no, not even a newspaper; that for long periods he would stand looking out, at his pale window behind the screen, upon the dead brick wall; I was quite sure he never visited any refectory or eating house; while his pale face clearly indicated that he never drank beer like Turkey, or tea and coffee even, like other men; that he never went any where in particular that I could learn; never went out for a walk, unless indeed that was the case at present; that he had declined telling who he was, or whence he came, or whether he had any relatives in the world; that though so thin and pale, he never complained of ill health. And more than all, I remembered a certain unconscious air of pallid—how shall I call it?—of pallid haughtiness, say, or rather an austere reserve about him, which had positively awed me into my tame compliance with his eccentricities, when I had feared to ask him to do the slightest incidental thing for me, even though I might know, from his long-continued motionlessness, that behind his screen he must be standing in one of those dead-wall reveries of his.

Revolving all these things, and coupling them with the recently discovered fact that he made my office his constant abiding place and home, and not forgetful of his morbid moodiness; revolving all these things, a prudential feeling began to steal over

me. My first emotions had been those of pure melancholy and sincerest pity; but just in proportion as the forlornness of Bartleby grew and grew to my imagination, did that same melancholy merge into fear, that pity into repulsion. So true it is, and so terrible too, that up to a certain point the thought or sight of misery enlists our best affections; but, in certain special cases, beyond that point it does not. They err who would assert that invariably this is owing to the inherent selfishness of the human heart. It rather proceeds from a certain hopelessness of remedying excessive and organic ill. To a sensitive being, pity is not seldom pain. And when at last it is perceived that such pity cannot lead to effectual succor, common sense bids the soul rid of it. What I saw that morning persuaded me that the scrivener was the victim of innate and incurable disorder. I might give alms to his body; but his body did not pain him; it was his soul that suffered, and his soul I could not reach.

I did not accomplish the purpose of going to Trinity Church that morning. Somehow, the things I had seen disqualified me for the time from church-going. I walked homeward, thinking what I would do with Bartleby. Finally, I resolved upon this;—I would put certain calm questions to him the next morning, touching his history, etc., and if he declined to answer them openly and unreservedly (and I supposed he would prefer not), then to give him a twenty dollar bill over and above whatever I might owe him, and tell him his services were no longer required; but that if in any other way I could assist him, I would be happy to do so, especially if he desired to return to his native place, wherever that might be, I would willingly help to defray the expenses. Moreover, if, after reaching home, he found himself at any time in want of aid, a letter from him would be sure of a reply.

The next morning came.

"Bartleby," said I, gently calling to him behind his screen.

No reply.

"Bartleby," said I, in a still gentler tone, "come here; I am not going to ask you to do any thing you would prefer not to do—I simply wish to speak to you."

Upon this he noiselessly slid into view.

"Will you tell me, Bartleby, where you were born?"

"I would prefer not to."

"Will you tell me any thing about yourself?"

"I would prefer not to."
"But what reasonable objection can you have to speak to me? I feel friendly towards you."
He did not look at me while I spoke, but kept his glance fixed upon my bust of Cicero, which as I then sat, was directly behind me, some six inches above my head.
"What is your answer, Bartleby?" said I, after waiting a considerable time for a reply, during which his countenance remained immovable, only there was the faintest conceivable tremor of the white attenuated mouth.
"At present I prefer to give no answer," he said, and retired into his hermitage.
It was rather weak in me I confess, but his manner on this occasion nettled me. Not only did there seem to lurk in it a certain calm disdain, but his perverseness seemed ungrateful, considering the undeniable good usage and indulgence he had received from me.
Again I sat ruminating what I should do. Mortified as I was at his behavior, and resolved as I had been to dismiss him when I entered my offices, nevertheless I strangely felt something superstitious knocking at my heart, and forbidding me to carry out my purpose, and denouncing me for a villain if I dared to breathe one bitter word against this forlornest of mankind. At last, familiarly drawing my chair behind his screen, I sat down and said: "Bartleby, never mind then about revealing your history; but let me entreat you, as a friend, to comply as far as may be with the usages of this office. Say now you will help to examine papers to-morrow or next day: in short, say now that in a day or two you will begin to be a little reasonable:—say so, Bartleby."
"At present I would prefer not to be a little reasonable," was his mildly cadaverous reply.
Just then the folding-doors opened, and Nippers approached. He seemed suffering from an unusually bad night's rest, induced by severer indigestion than common. He overheard those final words of Bartleby.
"Prefer not, eh?" gritted Nippers—"I'd prefer him, if I were you, sir," addressing me—"I'd prefer him; I'd give him preferences, the stubborn mule! What is it, sir, pray, that he prefers not to do now?"
Bartleby moved not a limb.

"Mr. Nippers," said I, "I'd prefer that you would withdraw for the present."
Somehow, of late I had got into the way of involuntarily using this word "prefer" upon all sorts of not exactly suitable occasions. And I trembled to think that my contact with the scrivener had already and seriously affected me in a mental way. And what further and deeper aberration might it not yet produce? This apprehension had not been without efficacy in determining me to summary means.
As Nippers, looking very sour and sulky, was departing, Turkey blandly and deferentially approached.
"With submission, sir," said he, "yesterday I was thinking about Bartleby here, and I think that if he would but prefer to take a quart of good ale every day, it would do much towards mending him, and enabling him to assist in examining his papers."
"So you have got the word too," said I, slightly excited.
"With submission, what word, sir," asked Turkey, respectfully crowding himself into the contracted space behind the screen, and by so doing, making me jostle the scrivener. "What word, sir?"
"I would prefer to be left alone here," said Bartleby, as if offended at being mobbed in his privacy.
"That's the word, Turkey," said I—"that's it."
"Oh, prefer? oh yes—queer word. I never use it myself. But, sir, as
I was saying, if he would but prefer—"
"Turkey," interrupted I, "you will please withdraw."
"Oh certainly, sir, if you prefer that I should."
As he opened the folding-door to retire, Nippers at his desk caught a glimpse of me, and asked whether I would prefer to have a certain paper copied on blue paper or white. He did not in the least roguishly accent the word prefer. It was plain that it involuntarily rolled from his tongue. I thought to myself, surely I must get rid of a demented man, who already has in some degree turned the tongues, if not the heads of myself and clerks. But I thought it prudent not to break the dismission at once.
The next day I noticed that Bartleby did nothing but stand at his window in his dead-wall revery. Upon asking him why he did not write, he said that he had decided upon doing no more writing.
"Why, how now? what next?" exclaimed I, "do no more

writing?"
"No more."
"And what is the reason?"
"Do you not see the reason for yourself," he indifferently replied.
I looked steadfastly at him, and perceived that his eyes looked dull and glazed. Instantly it occurred to me, that his unexampled diligence in copying by his dim window for the first few weeks of his stay with me might have temporarily impaired his vision.
I was touched. I said something in condolence with him. I hinted that of course he did wisely in abstaining from writing for a while; and urged him to embrace that opportunity of taking wholesome exercise in the open air. This, however, he did not do. A few days after this, my other clerks being absent, and being in a great hurry to dispatch certain letters by the mail, I thought that, having nothing else earthly to do, Bartleby would surely be less inflexible than usual, and carry these letters to the post-office. But he blankly declined. So, much to my inconvenience, I went myself.
Still added days went by. Whether Bartleby's eyes improved or not, I could not say. To all appearance, I thought they did. But when I asked him if they did, he vouchsafed no answer. At all events, he would do no copying. At last, in reply to my urgings, he informed me that he had permanently given up copying.
"What!" exclaimed I; "suppose your eyes should get entirely well—better than ever before—would you not copy then?"
"I have given up copying," he answered, and slid aside.
He remained as ever, a fixture in my chamber. Nay—if that were possible—he became still more of a fixture than before. What was to be done? He would do nothing in the office: why should he stay there? In plain fact, he had now become a millstone to me, not only useless as a necklace, but afflictive to bear. Yet I was sorry for him. I speak less than truth when I say that, on his own account, he occasioned me uneasiness. If he would but have named a single relative or friend, I would instantly have written, and urged their taking the poor fellow away to some convenient retreat. But he seemed alone, absolutely alone in the universe. A bit of wreck in the mid Atlantic. At length, necessities connected with my business tyrannized over all other considerations. Decently as I could, I told Bartleby that in six days' time he must unconditionally leave the office. I warned

him to take measures, in the interval, for procuring some other abode. I offered to assist him in this endeavor, if he himself would but take the first step towards a removal. "And when you finally quit me, Bartleby," added I, "I shall see that you go not away entirely unprovided. Six days from this hour, remember."
At the expiration of that period, I peeped behind the screen, and lo!
Bartleby was there.
I buttoned up my coat, balanced myself; advanced slowly towards him, touched his shoulder, and said, "The time has come; you must quit this place; I am sorry for you; here is money; but you must go."
"I would prefer not," he replied, with his back still towards me.
"You must."
He remained silent.
Now I had an unbounded confidence in this man's common honesty. He had frequently restored to me sixpences and shillings carelessly dropped upon the floor, for I am apt to be very reckless in such shirt-button affairs. The proceeding then which followed will not be deemed extraordinary.
"Bartleby," said I, "I owe you twelve dollars on account; here are thirty-two; the odd twenty are yours.—Will you take it?" and I handed the bills towards him.
But he made no motion.
"I will leave them here then," putting them under a weight on the table. Then taking my hat and cane and going to the door I tranquilly turned and added—"After you have removed your things from these offices, Bartleby, you will of course lock the door—since every one is now gone for the day but you—and if you please, slip your key underneath the mat, so that I may have it in the morning. I shall not see you again; so good-bye to you. If hereafter in your new place of abode I can be of any service to you, do not fail to advise me by letter. Good-bye, Bartleby, and fare you well."
But he answered not a word; like the last column of some ruined temple, he remained standing mute and solitary in the middle of the otherwise deserted room.
As I walked home in a pensive mood, my vanity got the better of my pity. I could not but highly plume myself on my masterly management in getting rid of Bartleby. Masterly I call it, and such it must appear to any dispassionate thinker. The beauty of

my procedure seemed to consist in its perfect quietness. There was no vulgar bullying, no bravado of any sort, no choleric hectoring, and striding to and fro across the apartment, jerking out vehement commands for Bartleby to bundle himself off with his beggarly traps. Nothing of the kind. Without loudly bidding Bartleby depart—as an inferior genius might have done—I assumed the ground that depart he must; and upon that assumption built all I had to say. The more I thought over my procedure, the more I was charmed with it. Nevertheless, next morning, upon awakening, I had my doubts,—I had somehow slept off the fumes of vanity. One of the coolest and wisest hours a man has, is just after he awakes in the morning. My procedure seemed as sagacious as ever.—but only in theory. How it would prove in practice—there was the rub. It was truly a beautiful thought to have assumed Bartleby's departure; but, after all, that assumption was simply my own, and none of Bartleby's. The great point was, not whether I had assumed that he would quit me, but whether he would prefer so to do. He was more a man of preferences than assumptions.

After breakfast, I walked down town, arguing the probabilities pro and con. One moment I thought it would prove a miserable failure, and Bartleby would be found all alive at my office as usual; the next moment it seemed certain that I should see his chair empty. And so I kept veering about. At the corner of Broadway and Canal-street, I saw quite an excited group of people standing in earnest conversation.

"I'll take odds he doesn't," said a voice as I passed.

"Doesn't go?—done!" said I, "put up your money."

I was instinctively putting my hand in my pocket to produce my own, when I remembered that this was an election day. The words I had overheard bore no reference to Bartleby, but to the success or non-success of some candidate for the mayoralty. In my intent frame of mind, I had, as it were, imagined that all Broadway shared in my excitement, and were debating the same question with me. I passed on, very thankful that the uproar of the street screened my momentary absent-mindedness.

As I had intended, I was earlier than usual at my office door. I stood listening for a moment. All was still. He must be gone. I tried the knob. The door was locked. Yes, my procedure had worked to a charm; he indeed must be vanished. Yet a certain melancholy mixed with this: I was almost sorry for my brilliant

success. I was fumbling under the door mat for the key, which Bartleby was to have left there for me, when accidentally my knee knocked against a panel, producing a summoning sound, and in response a voice came to me from within—"Not yet; I am occupied."

It was Bartleby.

I was thunderstruck. For an instant I stood like the man who, pipe in mouth, was killed one cloudless afternoon long ago in Virginia, by a summer lightning; at his own warm open window he was killed, and remained leaning out there upon the dreamy afternoon, till some one touched him, when he fell.

"Not gone!" I murmured at last. But again obeying that wondrous ascendancy which the inscrutable scrivener had over me, and from which ascendancy, for all my chafing, I could not completely escape, I slowly went down stairs and out into the street, and while walking round the block, considered what I should next do in this unheard-of perplexity. Turn the man out by an actual thrusting I could not; to drive him away by calling him hard names would not do; calling in the police was an unpleasant idea; and yet, permit him to enjoy his cadaverous triumph over me,—this too I could not think of. What was to be done? or, if nothing could be done, was there any thing further that I could assume in the matter? Yes, as before I had prospectively assumed that Bartleby would depart, so now I might retrospectively assume that departed he was. In the legitimate carrying out of this assumption, I might enter my office in a great hurry, and pretending not to see Bartleby at all, walk straight against him as if he were air. Such a proceeding would in a singular degree have the appearance of a home-thrust. It was hardly possible that Bartleby could withstand such an application of the doctrine of assumptions. But upon second thoughts the success of the plan seemed rather dubious. I resolved to argue the matter over with him again.

"Bartleby," said I, entering the office, with a quietly severe expression, "I am seriously displeased. I am pained, Bartleby. I had thought better of you. I had imagined you of such a gentlemanly organization, that in any delicate dilemma a slight hint would have suffice—in short, an assumption. But it appears I am deceived. Why," I added, unaffectedly starting, "you have not even touched that money yet," pointing to it, just where I had left it the evening previous.

He answered nothing.
"Will you, or will you not, quit me?" I now demanded in a sudden passion, advancing close to him.
"I would prefer not to quit you," he replied, gently emphasizing the not.
"What earthly right have you to stay here? Do you pay any rent? Do you pay my taxes? Or is this property yours?"
He answered nothing.
"Are you ready to go on and write now? Are your eyes recovered? Could you copy a small paper for me this morning? or help examine a few lines? or step round to the post-office? In a word, will you do any thing at all, to give a coloring to your refusal to depart the premises?"
He silently retired into his hermitage.
I was now in such a state of nervous resentment that I thought it but prudent to check myself at present from further demonstrations. Bartleby and I were alone. I remembered the tragedy of the unfortunate Adams and the still more unfortunate Colt in the solitary office of the latter; and how poor Colt, being dreadfully incensed by Adams, and imprudently permitting himself to get wildly excited, was at unawares hurried into his fatal act—an act which certainly no man could possibly deplore more than the actor himself. Often it had occurred to me in my ponderings upon the subject, that had that altercation taken place in the public street, or at a private residence, it would not have terminated as it did. It was the circumstance of being alone in a solitary office, up stairs, of a building entirely unhallowed by humanizing domestic associations—an uncarpeted office, doubtless, of a dusty, haggard sort of appearance;—this it must have been, which greatly helped to enhance the irritable desperation of the hapless Colt.
But when this old Adam of resentment rose in me and tempted me concerning Bartleby, I grappled him and threw him. How? Why, simply by recalling the divine injunction: "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another." Yes, this it was that saved me. Aside from higher considerations, charity often operates as a vastly wise and prudent principle—a great safeguard to its possessor. Men have committed murder for jealousy's sake, and anger's sake, and hatred's sake, and selfishness' sake, and spiritual pride's sake; but no man that ever I heard of, ever committed a diabolical murder for sweet

charity's sake. Mere self-interest, then, if no better motive can be enlisted, should, especially with high-tempered men, prompt all beings to charity and philanthropy. At any rate, upon the occasion in question, I strove to drown my exasperated feelings towards the scrivener by benevolently construing his conduct. Poor fellow, poor fellow! thought I, he don't mean any thing; and besides, he has seen hard times, and ought to be indulged.

I endeavored also immediately to occupy myself, and at the same time to comfort my despondency. I tried to fancy that in the course of the morning, at such time as might prove agreeable to him, Bartleby, of his own free accord, would emerge from his hermitage, and take up some decided line of march in the direction of the door. But no. Half-past twelve o'clock came; Turkey began to glow in the face, overturn his inkstand, and become generally obstreperous; Nippers abated down into quietude and courtesy; Ginger Nut munched his noon apple; and Bartleby remained standing at his window in one of his profoundest dead-wall reveries. Will it be credited? Ought I to acknowledge it? That afternoon I left the office without saying one further word to him.

Some days now passed, during which, at leisure intervals I looked a little into "Edwards on the Will," and "Priestly on Necessity." Under the circumstances, those books induced a salutary feeling. Gradually I slid into the persuasion that these troubles of mine touching the scrivener, had been all predestinated from eternity, and Bartleby was billeted upon me for some mysterious purpose of an all-wise Providence, which it was not for a mere mortal like me to fathom. Yes, Bartleby, stay there behind your screen, thought I; I shall persecute you no more; you are harmless and noiseless as any of these old chairs; in short, I never feel so private as when I know you are here. At last I see it, I feel it; I penetrate to the predestinated purpose of my life. I am content. Others may have loftier parts to enact; but my mission in this world, Bartleby, is to furnish you with office-room for such period as you may see fit to remain.

I believe that this wise and blessed frame of mind would have continued with me, had it not been for the unsolicited and uncharitable remarks obtruded upon me by my professional friends who visited the rooms. But thus it often is, that the constant friction of illiberal minds wears out at last the best resolves of the more generous. Though to be sure, when I

reflected upon it, it was not strange that people entering my office should be struck by the peculiar aspect of the unaccountable Bartleby, and so be tempted to throw out some sinister observations concerning him. Sometimes an attorney having business with me, and calling at my office and finding no one but the scrivener there, would undertake to obtain some sort of precise information from him touching my whereabouts; but without heeding his idle talk, Bartleby would remain standing immovable in the middle of the room. So after contemplating him in that position for a time, the attorney would depart, no wiser than he came.

Also, when a Reference was going on, and the room full of lawyers and witnesses and business was driving fast; some deeply occupied legal gentleman present, seeing Bartleby wholly unemployed, would request him to run round to his (the legal gentleman's) office and fetch some papers for him. Thereupon, Bartleby would tranquilly decline, and yet remain idle as before. Then the lawyer would give a great stare, and turn to me. And what could I say? At last I was made aware that all through the circle of my professional acquaintance, a whisper of wonder was running round, having reference to the strange creature I kept at my office. This worried me very much. And as the idea came upon me of his possibly turning out a long-lived man, and keep occupying my chambers, and denying my authority; and perplexing my visitors; and scandalizing my professional reputation; and casting a general gloom over the premises; keeping soul and body together to the last upon his savings (for doubtless he spent but half a dime a day), and in the end perhaps outlive me, and claim possession of my office by right of his perpetual occupancy: as all these dark anticipations crowded upon me more and more, and my friends continually intruded their relentless remarks upon the apparition in my room; a great change was wrought in me. I resolved to gather all my faculties together, and for ever rid me of this intolerable incubus.

Ere revolving any complicated project, however, adapted to this end, I first simply suggested to Bartleby the propriety of his permanent departure. In a calm and serious tone, I commended the idea to his careful and mature consideration. But having taken three days to meditate upon it, he apprised me that his original determination remained the same; in short, that he still

preferred to abide with me.
What shall I do? I now said to myself, buttoning up my coat to the last button. What shall I do? what ought I to do? what does conscience say I should do with this man, or rather ghost. Rid myself of him, I must; go, he shall. But how? You will not thrust him, the poor, pale, passive mortal,—you will not thrust such a helpless creature out of your door? you will not dishonor yourself by such cruelty? No, I will not, I cannot do that. Rather would I let him live and die here, and then mason up his remains in the wall. What then will you do? For all your coaxing, he will not budge. Bribes he leaves under your own paperweight on your table; in short, it is quite plain that he prefers to cling to you.
Then something severe, something unusual must be done. What! surely you will not have him collared by a constable, and commit his innocent pallor to the common jail? And upon what ground could you procure such a thing to be done?—a vagrant, is he? What! he a vagrant, a wanderer, who refuses to budge? It is because he will not be a vagrant, then, that you seek to count him as a vagrant. That is too absurd. No visible means of support: there I have him. Wrong again: for indubitably he does support himself, and that is the only unanswerable proof that any man can show of his possessing the means so to do. No more then. Since he will not quit me, I must quit him. I will change my offices; I will move elsewhere; and give him fair notice, that if I find him on my new premises I will then proceed against him as a common trespasser.
Acting accordingly, next day I thus addressed him: "I find these chambers too far from the City Hall; the air is unwholesome. In a word, I propose to remove my offices next week, and shall no longer require your services. I tell you this now, in order that you may seek another place."
He made no reply, and nothing more was said.
On the appointed day I engaged carts and men, proceeded to my chambers, and having but little furniture, every thing was removed in a few hours. Throughout, the scrivener remained standing behind the screen, which I directed to be removed the last thing. It was withdrawn; and being folded up like a huge folio, left him the motionless occupant of a naked room. I stood in the entry watching him a moment, while something from within me upbraided me.

I re-entered, with my hand in my pocket—and—and my heart in my mouth.
"Good-bye, Bartleby; I am going—good-bye, and God some way bless you; and take that," slipping something in his hand. But it dropped upon the floor, and then,—strange to say—I tore myself from him whom I had so longed to be rid of.
Established in my new quarters, for a day or two I kept the door locked, and started at every footfall in the passages. When I returned to my rooms after any little absence, I would pause at the threshold for an instant, and attentively listen, ere applying my key. But these fears were needless. Bartleby never came nigh me.
I thought all was going well, when a perturbed looking stranger visited me, inquiring whether I was the person who had recently occupied rooms at No.—Wall-street.
Full of forebodings, I replied that I was.
"Then sir," said the stranger, who proved a lawyer, "you are responsible for the man you left there. He refuses to do any copying; he refuses to do any thing; he says he prefers not to; and he refuses to quit the premises."
"I am very sorry, sir," said I, with assumed tranquility, but an inward tremor, "but, really, the man you allude to is nothing to me—he is no relation or apprentice of mine, that you should hold me responsible for him."
"In mercy's name, who is he?"
"I certainly cannot inform you. I know nothing about him. Formerly I employed him as a copyist; but he has done nothing for me now for some time past."
"I shall settle him then,—good morning, sir."
Several days passed, and I heard nothing more; and though I often felt a charitable prompting to call at the place and see poor Bartleby, yet a certain squeamishness of I know not what withheld me.
All is over with him, by this time, thought I at last, when through another week no further intelligence reached me. But coming to my room the day after, I found several persons waiting at my door in a high state of nervous excitement.
"That's the man—here he comes," cried the foremost one, whom I recognized as the lawyer who had previously called upon me alone.
"You must take him away, sir, at once," cried a portly person

among them, advancing upon me, and whom I knew to be the landlord of No.—Wall-street. "These gentlemen, my tenants, cannot stand it any longer; Mr. B—" pointing to the lawyer, "has turned him out of his room, and he now persists in haunting the building generally, sitting upon the banisters of the stairs by day, and sleeping in the entry by night. Every body is concerned; clients are leaving the offices; some fears are entertained of a mob; something you must do, and that without delay."

Aghast at this torrent, I fell back before it, and would fain have locked myself in my new quarters. In vain I persisted that Bartleby was nothing to me—no more than to any one else. In vain:—I was the last person known to have any thing to do with him, and they held me to the terrible account. Fearful then of being exposed in the papers (as one person present obscurely threatened) I considered the matter, and at length said, that if the lawyer would give me a confidential interview with the scrivener, in his (the lawyer's) own room, I would that afternoon strive my best to rid them of the nuisance they complained of.

Going up stairs to my old haunt, there was Bartleby silently sitting upon the banister at the landing.

"What are you doing here, Bartleby?" said I.

"Sitting upon the banister," he mildly replied.

I motioned him into the lawyer's room, who then left us.

"Bartleby," said I, "are you aware that you are the cause of great tribulation to me, by persisting in occupying the entry after being dismissed from the office?"

No answer.

"Now one of two things must take place. Either you must do something, or something must be done to you. Now what sort of business would you like to engage in? Would you like to re-engage in copying for some one?"

"No; I would prefer not to make any change."

"Would you like a clerkship in a dry-goods store?"

"There is too much confinement about that. No, I would not like a clerkship; but I am not particular."

"Too much confinement," I cried, "why you keep yourself confined all the time!"

"I would prefer not to take a clerkship," he rejoined, as if to settle that little item at once.

"How would a bar-tender's business suit you? There is no trying of the eyesight in that."

"I would not like it at all; though, as I said before, I am not particular."
His unwonted wordiness inspirited me. I returned to the charge.
"Well then, would you like to travel through the country collecting bills for the merchants? That would improve your health."
"No, I would prefer to be doing something else."
"How then would going as a companion to Europe, to entertain some young gentleman with your conversation,—how would that suit you?"
"Not at all. It does not strike me that there is any thing definite about that. I like to be stationary. But I am not particular."
"Stationary you shall be then," I cried, now losing all patience, and for the first time in all my exasperating connection with him fairly flying into a passion. "If you do not go away from these premises before night, I shall feel bound—indeed I am bound—to—to—to quit the premises myself!" I rather absurdly concluded, knowing not with what possible threat to try to frighten his immobility into compliance. Despairing of all further efforts, I was precipitately leaving him, when a final thought occurred to me—one which had not been wholly unindulged before.
"Bartleby," said I, in the kindest tone I could assume under such exciting circumstances, "will you go home with me now—not to my office, but my dwelling—and remain there till we can conclude upon some convenient arrangement for you at our leisure? Come, let us start now, right away."
"No: at present I would prefer not to make any change at all."
I answered nothing; but effectually dodging every one by the suddenness and rapidity of my flight, rushed from the building, ran up Wall-street towards Broadway, and jumping into the first omnibus was soon removed from pursuit. As soon as tranquility returned I distinctly perceived that I had now done all that I possibly could, both in respect to the demands of the landlord and his tenants, and with regard to my own desire and sense of duty, to benefit Bartleby, and shield him from rude persecution. I now strove to be entirely care-free and quiescent; and my conscience justified me in the attempt; though indeed it was not so successful as I could have wished. So fearful was I of being again hunted out by the incensed landlord and his exasperated tenants, that, surrendering my business to Nippers, for a few

days I drove about the upper part of the town and through the suburbs, in my rockaway; crossed over to Jersey City and Hoboken, and paid fugitive visits to Manhattanville and Astoria. In fact I almost lived in my rockaway for the time.

When again I entered my office, lo, a note from the landlord lay upon the desk. I opened it with trembling hands. It informed me that the writer had sent to the police, and had Bartleby removed to the Tombs as a vagrant. Moreover, since I knew more about him than any one else, he wished me to appear at that place, and make a suitable statement of the facts. These tidings had a conflicting effect upon me. At first I was indignant; but at last almost approved. The landlord's energetic, summary disposition had led him to adopt a procedure which I do not think I would have decided upon myself; and yet as a last resort, under such peculiar circumstances, it seemed the only plan.

As I afterwards learned, the poor scrivener, when told that he must be conducted to the Tombs, offered not the slightest obstacle, but in his pale unmoving way, silently acquiesced.

Some of the compassionate and curious bystanders joined the party; and headed by one of the constables arm in arm with Bartleby, the silent procession filed its way through all the noise, and heat, and joy of the roaring thoroughfares at noon.

The same day I received the note I went to the Tombs, or to speak more properly, the Halls of Justice. Seeking the right officer, I stated the purpose of my call, and was informed that the individual I described was indeed within. I then assured the functionary that Bartleby was a perfectly honest man, and greatly to be compassionated, however unaccountably eccentric. I narrated all I knew, and closed by suggesting the idea of letting him remain in as indulgent confinement as possible till something less harsh might be done—though indeed I hardly knew what. At all events, if nothing else could be decided upon, the alms-house must receive him. I then begged to have an interview.

Being under no disgraceful charge, and quite serene and harmless in all his ways, they had permitted him freely to wander about the prison, and especially in the inclosed grass-platted yard thereof. And so I found him there, standing all alone in the quietest of the yards, his face towards a high wall, while all around, from the narrow slits of the jail windows, I thought I saw peering out upon him the eyes of murderers and thieves.

"Bartleby!"
"I know you," he said, without looking round,—"and I want nothing to say to you."
"It was not I that brought you here, Bartleby," said I, keenly pained at his implied suspicion. "And to you, this should not be so vile a place. Nothing reproachful attaches to you by being here. And see, it is not so sad a place as one might think. Look, there is the sky, and here is the grass."
"I know where I am," he replied, but would say nothing more, and so I left him.
As I entered the corridor again, a broad meat-like man, in an apron, accosted me, and jerking his thumb over his shoulder said—"Is that your friend?"
"Yes."
"Does he want to starve? If he does, let him live on the prison fare, that's all."
"Who are you?" asked I, not knowing what to make of such an unofficially speaking person in such a place.
"I am the grub-man. Such gentlemen as have friends here, hire me to provide them with something good to eat."
"Is this so?" said I, turning to the turnkey.
He said it was.
"Well then," said I, slipping some silver into the grub-man's hands (for so they called him). "I want you to give particular attention to my friend there; let him have the best dinner you can get. And you must be as polite to him as possible."
"Introduce me, will you?" said the grub-man, looking at me with an expression which seem to say he was all impatience for an opportunity to give a specimen of his breeding.
Thinking it would prove of benefit to the scrivener, I acquiesced; and asking the grub-man his name, went up with him to Bartleby.
"Bartleby, this is Mr. Cutlets; you will find him very useful to you."
"Your sarvant, sir, your sarvant," said the grub-man, making a low salutation behind his apron. "Hope you find it pleasant here, sir;—spacious grounds—cool apartments, sir—hope you'll stay with us some time—try to make it agreeable. May Mrs. Cutlets and I have the pleasure of your company to dinner, sir, in Mrs. Cutlets' private room?"
"I prefer not to dine to-day," said Bartleby, turning away. "It

would disagree with me; I am unused to dinners." So saying he slowly moved to the other side of the inclosure, and took up a position fronting the dead-wall.
"How's this?" said the grub-man, addressing me with a stare of astonishment. "He's odd, aint he?"
"I think he is a little deranged," said I, sadly.
"Deranged? deranged is it? Well now, upon my word, I thought that friend of yourn was a gentleman forger; they are always pale and genteel-like, them forgers. I can't pity'em—can't help it, sir. Did you know Monroe Edwards?" he added touchingly, and paused. Then, laying his hand pityingly on my shoulder, sighed, "he died of consumption at Sing-Sing. So you weren't acquainted with Monroe?"
"No, I was never socially acquainted with any forgers. But I cannot stop longer. Look to my friend yonder. You will not lose by it. I will see you again."
Some few days after this, I again obtained admission to the Tombs, and went through the corridors in quest of Bartleby; but without finding him.
"I saw him coming from his cell not long ago," said a turnkey, "may be he's gone to loiter in the yards."
So I went in that direction.
"Are you looking for the silent man?" said another turnkey passing me. "Yonder he lies—sleeping in the yard there. 'Tis not twenty minutes since I saw him lie down."
The yard was entirely quiet. It was not accessible to the common prisoners. The surrounding walls, of amazing thickness, kept off all sounds behind them. The Egyptian character of the masonry weighed upon me with its gloom. But a soft imprisoned turf grew under foot. The heart of the eternal pyramids, it seemed, wherein, by some strange magic, through the clefts, grass-seed, dropped by birds, had sprung.
Strangely huddled at the base of the wall, his knees drawn up, and lying on his side, his head touching the cold stones, I saw the wasted Bartleby. But nothing stirred. I paused; then went close up to him; stooped over, and saw that his dim eyes were open; otherwise he seemed profoundly sleeping. Something prompted me to touch him. I felt his hand, when a tingling shiver ran up my arm and down my spine to my feet.
The round face of the grub-man peered upon me now. "His dinner is ready. Won't he dine to-day, either? Or does he live

without dining?"
"Lives without dining," said I, and closed his eyes.
"Eh!—He's asleep, aint he?"
"With kings and counselors," murmured I.
There would seem little need for proceeding further in this history. Imagination will readily supply the meager recital of poor Bartleby's interment. But ere parting with the reader, let me say, that if this little narrative has sufficiently interested him, to awaken curiosity as to who Bartleby was, and what manner of life he led prior to the present narrator's making his acquaintance, I can only reply, that in such curiosity I fully share, but am wholly unable to gratify it. Yet here I hardly know whether I should divulge one little item of rumor, which came to my ear a few months after the scrivener's decease. Upon what basis it rested, I could never ascertain; and hence, how true it is I cannot now tell. But inasmuch as this vague report has not been without certain strange suggestive interest to me, however sad, it may prove the same with some others; and so I will briefly mention it. The report was this: that Bartleby had been a subordinate clerk in the Dead Letter Office at Washington, from which he had been suddenly removed by a change in the administration. When I think over this rumor, I cannot adequately express the emotions which seize me. Dead letters! does it not sound like dead men? Conceive a man by nature and misfortune prone to a pallid hopelessness, can any business seem more fitted to heighten it than that of continually handling these dead letters, and assorting them for the flames? For by the cart-load they are annually burned. Sometimes from out the folded paper the pale clerk takes a ring:—the finger it was meant for, perhaps, moulders in the grave; a bank-note sent in swiftest charity:—he whom it would relieve, nor eats nor hungers any more; pardon for those who died despairing; hope for those who died unhoping; good tidings for those who died stifled by unrelieved calamities. On errands of life, these letters speed to death.
Ah Bartleby! Ah humanity!

The END.

Author/Historical Context

During the time this book was originally written, the world was a very different place. The happenings of the time as well as the personal and professional life of the author produced an effect on how this book was written, worded and the content of the manuscript The following is intended to help the reader better connect with these writings.

Herman Melville (August 1, 1819 – September 28, 1891) was an American novelist, short story writer, and poet of the American Renaissance period. Among his best-known works are Moby-Dick (1851); Typee (1846), a romanticized account of his experiences in Polynesia; and Billy Budd, Sailor, a posthumously published novella. Although his reputation was not high at the time of his death, the centennial of his birth in 1919 was the starting point of a Melville revival, and Moby-Dick grew to be considered one of the great American novels.

Melville was born in New York City, the third child of a prosperous merchant whose death in 1832 left the family in financial straits. He took to sea in 1839 as a common sailor on a merchant ship and then on the whaler Acushnet, but he jumped ship in the Marquesas Islands. Typee, his first book, and its sequel, Omoo (1847), were travel-adventures based on his encounters with the peoples of the island. Their success gave him the financial security to marry Elizabeth Shaw, the daughter of the Boston jurist Lemuel Shaw. Mardi (1849), a romance-adventure and his first book not based on his own experience, was not well received. Redburn (1849) and White-Jacket (1850), both tales based on his experience as a well-born young man at sea, were given respectable reviews, but did not sell well enough to support his expanding family.

Melville's growing literary ambition showed in Moby-Dick (1851), which took nearly a year and a half to write, but it did not find an audience and critics scorned his psychological novel Pierre: or, The Ambiguities (1852). From 1853 to 1856, Melville published short fiction in magazines, including "Benito Cereno" and "Bartleby, the Scrivener". In 1857, he traveled to

England, toured the Near East, and published his last work of prose, The Confidence-Man (1857). He moved to New York in 1863 to take a position as customs inspector.
From that point, Melville focused his creative powers on poetry. Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War (1866) was his poetic reflection on the moral questions of the American Civil War. In 1867, his eldest child Malcolm died at home from a self-inflicted gunshot. Melville's metaphysical epic Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage in the Holy Land was published in 1876. In 1886, his other son Stanwix died of apparent tuberculosis, and Melville retired. During his last years, he privately published two volumes of poetry, and left one volume unpublished. The novella Billy Budd was left unfinished at his death, but was published posthumously in 1924. Melville died from cardiovascular disease in 1891.

Biography

Family and Early Life

Herman Melville was born in New York City on August 1, 1819, to Allan Melvill (1782–1832) and Maria (Gansevoort) Melvill (1791–1872). Herman was the third of eight children in a family of Scottish and Dutch heredity and background. His siblings, who played important roles in his career as well as in his emotional life, were Gansevoort (1815–1846); Helen Maria (1817–1888); Augusta (1821–1876); Allan (1823–1872); Catherine (1825–1905); Frances Priscilla (1827–1885); and Thomas (1830–1884), who eventually became a governor of Sailors' Snug Harbor. Part of a well-established and colorful Boston family, Allan Melvill spent much time out of New York and in Europe as a commission merchant and an importer of French dry goods.
Both of Melville's grandfathers were heroes of the Revolutionary War, and Melville found satisfaction in his "double revolutionary descent". Major Thomas Melvill (1751–1832) had taken part in the Boston Tea Party, and his maternal grandfather, General Peter Gansevoort (1749–1812), was famous for having commanded the defense of Fort Stanwix in New York in 1777. Major Melvill sent his son Allan (Herman's father) to France instead of college at the turn of the 19th century, where he spent two years in Paris and learned to speak and write

French fluently. In 1814, Allan, who subscribed to his father's Unitarianism, married Maria Gansevoort, who was committed to the more strict and biblically oriented Dutch Reformed version of the Calvinist creed of her family. This more severe Protestantism of the Gansevoorts' tradition ensured she was well versed in the Bible, both in English as well as in Dutch, the language she had grown up speaking with her parents.

On August 19, almost three weeks after his birth, Herman Melville was baptized at home by a minister of the South Reformed Dutch Church. During the 1820s, Melville lived a privileged, opulent life in a household with three or more servants at a time. At four-year intervals, the family would move to more spacious and elegant quarters, finally settling on Broadway in 1828. Allan Melvill lived beyond his means and on large sums he borrowed from both his father and his wife's widowed mother. Although his wife's opinion of his financial conduct is unknown, biographer Hershel Parker suggests Maria "thought her mother's money was infinite and that she was entitled to much of her portion" while her children were young. How well the parents managed to hide the truth from their children is "impossible to know", according to biographer Andrew Delbanco.

In 1830, Maria's family finally lost patience and their support came to a halt, at which point Allan's total debt to both families exceeded $20,000 (equivalent to $486,000 in 2020), showing his lack of financial responsibility. The relative happiness and comfort of Melville's early childhood, biographer Newton Arvin writes, depended not so much on Allan's wealth, or his lack of fiscal prudence, as on the "exceptionally tender and affectionate spirit in all the family relationships, especially in the immediate circle". Arvin describes Allan as "a man of real sensibility and a particularly warm and loving father," while Maria was "warmly maternal, simple, robust, and affectionately devoted to her husband and her brood".

Education and Father's Death

Herman Melville's schooling began when he was five and was interrupted at age 12 by the death of his father. Around the time the Melvills moved to a newly built house at 33 Bleecker Street in Manhattan in 1824, Herman and his older brother

Gansevoort were sent to the New York Male High School. In 1826, the year that Herman contracted scarlet fever, Allan Melvill described him as "very backwards in speech & somewhat slow in comprehension" at first, but his development increased its pace and Allan was surprised "that Herman proved the best Speaker in the introductory Department". In 1829, both Gansevoort and Herman were transferred to Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School, and Herman enrolled in the English Department on September 28. "Herman I think is making more progress than formerly," Allan wrote in May 1830 to Major Melvill, "and without being a bright Scholar, he maintains a respectable standing, and would proceed further, if he could only be induced to study more—being a most amiable and innocent child, I cannot find it in my heart to coerce him".

Emotionally unstable and behind on paying the rent for the house on Broadway, Herman's father tried to recover by moving his family to Albany, New York, in 1830 and going into the fur business. Herman attended the Albany Academy from October 1830 to October 1831, where he took the standard preparatory course, studying reading and spelling; penmanship; arithmetic; English grammar; geography; natural history; universal, Greek, Roman and English history; classical biography; and Jewish antiquities. In early August of 1831, Herman marched in the Albany□ city government procession of the year'□s "finest scholars" and was presented with a copy of The London Carcanet, a collection of poems and prose, inscribed to him as □"first best□ in ciphering books" "The ubiquitous classical references in Melville's published writings," as Melville scholar Merton Sealts observed "suggest that his study of ancient history, biography, and literature during his school days left a lasting impression on both his thought and his art, as did his almost encyclopedic knowledge of both the Old and the New Testaments". Nonetheless, Melville's time there was soon interrupted. Parker speculates that he left the Academy in October 1831 because "even the tiny tuition fee seemed too much to pay".

In December, Allan Melvill returned from New York City by steamboat, but had to travel the last seventy miles in an open carriage for two days and two nights at sub-freezing temperatures. In early January, he began to show "signs of delirium", and his situation grew worse until his wife felt his

suffering deprived him of his intellect. He died on January 28, 1832, two months before reaching fifty. As Herman was no longer attending school, he likely witnessed these scenes. Twenty years later he described a similar death in Pierre.

Work as A Clerk

The death of Allan caused many major shifts in the family's material and spiritual circumstances. One result was the greater influence of his mother's religious beliefs. Maria sought consolation in her faith and in April was admitted as a member of the First Reformed Dutch Church. Herman's saturation in orthodox Calvinism was surely the most decisive intellectual and spiritual influence of his early life. Two months after his father's death, Gansevoort entered the cap and fur business. Uncle Peter Gansevoort, a director of the New York State Bank, got Herman a job as clerk for $150 a year (equivalent to $3,900 in 2020). Biographers cite a passage from Redburn when trying to answer what Herman must have felt then: "I had learned to think much and bitterly before my time," the narrator remarks, adding, "I must not think of those delightful days, before my father became a bankrupt ... and we removed from the city; for when I think of those days, something rises up in my throat and almost strangles me". With Melville, Arvin argues, one has to reckon with "psychology, the tormented psychology, of the decayed patrician".

When Melville's paternal grandfather died on September 16, 1832, Maria and her children discovered Allan, somewhat unscrupulously, had borrowed more than his share of his inheritance, meaning Maria received only $20 (equivalent to $500 in 2020). His paternal grandmother died almost exactly seven months later. Melville did his job well at the bank; although he was only 14 in 1834, the bank considered him competent enough to be sent to Schenectady, New York on an errand. Not much else is known from this period except that he was very fond of drawing. The visual arts became a lifelong interest. Around May 1834, the Melvilles moved to another house in Albany, a three-story brick house. That same month a fire destroyed Gansevoort's skin-preparing factory, which left him with personnel he could neither employ nor afford. Instead he pulled Melville out of the bank to man the cap and fur store.

Intermittent Work and Studies

In 1835, while still working in the store, Melville enrolled in Albany Classical School, perhaps using Maria's part of the proceeds from the sale of the estate of his maternal grandmother in March 1835. In September of the following year, Herman was back in Albany Academy in the Latin course. He also participated in debating societies, in an apparent effort to make up as much as he could for his missed years of schooling. In this period he read Shakespeare—at least Macbeth, whose witch scenes gave him the chance to teasingly scare his sisters. By March 1837, he was again withdrawn from Albany Academy.

Gansevoort served as a role model and support for Melville throughout his life, particularly during this time trying to cobble together an education. In early 1834 Gansevoort had become a member of Albany's Young Men's Association for Mutual Improvement, and in January 1835 Melville joined him there. Gansevoort also had copies of John Todd's Index Rerum, a blank register for indexing remarkable passages from books one had read for easy retrieval. Among the sample entries which Gansevoort made showing his academic scrupulousness was "Pequot, beautiful description of the war with," with a short title reference to the place in Benjamin Trumbull's A Complete History of Connecticut (Volume I in 1797, and Volume II in 1898) where the description could be found. The two surviving volumes of Gansevoort's are the best evidence for Melville's reading in this period. Gansevoort's entries include books Melville used for Moby-Dick and Clarel, such as "Parsees—of India—an excellent description of their character, and religion and an account of their descent—East India Sketch Book p. 21". Other entries are on Panther, the pirate's cabin, and storm at sea from James Fenimore Cooper's The Red Rover, Saint-Saba.

Work as A School Teacher

The Panic of 1837 forced Gansevoort to file for bankruptcy in April. In June, Maria told the younger children they needed to leave Albany for somewhere cheaper. Gansevoort began studying law in New York City while Herman managed the farm before getting a teaching position at Sikes District School near

Lenox, Massachusetts. He taught about 30 students of various ages, including some his own age.
The semester over, he returned to his mother in 1838. In February he was elected president of the Philo Logos Society, which Peter Gansevoort invited to move into Stanwix Hall for no rent. In the Albany Microscope in March, Melville published two polemical letters about issues in vogue in the debating societies. Historians Leon Howard and Hershel Parker suggest the motive behind the letters was a youthful desire to have his rhetorical skills publicly recognized. In May, the Melvilles moved to a rented house in Lansingburgh, almost 12 miles north of Albany. Nothing is known about what Melville did or where he went for several months after he finished teaching at Sikes. On November 12, five days after arriving in Lansingburgh, Melville paid for a term at Lansingburgh Academy to study surveying and engineering. In an April 1839 letter recommending Herman for a job in the Engineer Department of the Erie Canal, Peter Gansevoort says his nephew "possesses the ambition to make himself useful in a business which he desires to make his profession," but no job resulted.
Just weeks after this failure, Melville's first known published essay appeared. Using the initials "L.A.V"., Herman contributed "Fragments from a Writing Desk" to the weekly newspaper Democratic Press and Lansingburgh Advertiser, which printed it in two installments, the first on May 4. According to Merton Sealts, his use of heavy-handed allusions reveals familiarity with the work of William Shakespeare, John Milton, Walter Scott, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Edmund Burke, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron, and Thomas Moore. Parker calls the piece "characteristic Melvillean mood-stuff" and considers its style "excessive enough [...] to indulge his extravagances and just enough overdone to allow him to deny that he was taking his style seriously". For Delbanco, the style is "overheated in the manner of Poe, with sexually charged echoes of Byron and The Arabian Nights".

1839–1844: Years at Sea

On May 31, 1839, Gansevoort, then living in New York City, wrote that he was sure Herman could get a job on a whaler or merchant vessel. The next day, he signed aboard the merchant ship St. Lawrence as a "boy" (a green hand), which cruised from

New York to Liverpool. Redburn: His First Voyage (1849) draws on his experiences in this journey; at least two of the nine guide-books listed in chapter 30 of the book had been part of Allan Melville's library. He arrived back in New York October 1, 1839 and resumed teaching, now at Greenbush, New York, but left after one term because he had not been paid. In the summer of 1840 he and his friend James Murdock Fly went to Galena, Illinois to see if his Uncle Thomas could help them find work. Unsuccessful, he and his friend returned home in autumn, likely by way of St. Louis and up the Ohio River.

Inspired by contemporaneous popular cultural reading, including Richard Henry Dana Jr.'s new book Two Years Before the Mast and Jeremiah N. Reynolds's account in the May 1839 issue of The Knickerbocker magazine of the hunt for a great white sperm whale named Mocha Dick, Herman and Gansevoort traveled to New Bedford, where Herman signed up for a whaling voyage aboard a new ship, the Acushnet. Built in 1840, the ship measured some 104 feet in length, almost 28 feet in breadth, and almost 14 feet in depth. She measured slightly less than 360 tons and had two decks and three masts, but no quarter galleries. The Acushnet was owned by Melvin O. Bradford and Philemon Fuller of Fairhaven, Massachusetts and was berthed near their office at the foot of Center Street in that town. Herman signed a contract on Christmas Day with the ship's agent as a "green hand" for 1/175th of whatever profits the voyage would yield. On Sunday the 27th, the brothers heard Reverend Enoch Mudge preach at the Seamen's Bethel on Johnny-Cake Hill, where white marble cenotaphs on the walls memorialized local sailors who had died at sea, often in battle with whales. When he signed the crew list the next day, Herman was advanced $84.

On January 3, 1841, the Acushnet set sail. Melville slept with some twenty others in the forecastle; Captain Valentine Pease, the mates, and the skilled men slept aft. Whales were found near The Bahamas, and in March 150 barrels of oil were sent home from Rio de Janeiro. Cutting in and trying-out (boiling) a single whale took about three days, and a whale yielded approximately one barrel of oil per foot of length and per ton of weight (the average whale weighed 40 to 60 tons). The oil was kept on deck for a day to cool off, and was then stowed down; scrubbing the

deck completed the labor. An average voyage meant that some forty whales were killed to yield some 1600 barrels of oil.

On April 15, the Acushnet sailed around Cape Horn and traveled to the South Pacific, where the crew sighted whales without catching any. She then went up the coast of Chile to the region of Selkirk Island, and on May 7, near Juan Fernández Islands, she had 160 barrels. On June 23, the ship anchored for the first time since Rio, in Santa Harbor. The cruising grounds the Acushnet was sailing attracted much traffic, and Captain Pease not only paused to visit other whalers, but at times hunted in company with them. From July 23 into August, the Acushnet regularly gammed with the Lima from Nantucket, and Melville met William Henry Chase, the son of Owen Chase, who gave him a copy of his father's account of his adventures aboard the Essex. Ten years later, Melville wrote in his other copy of the book: "The reading of this wondrous story upon the landless sea, & close to the very latitude of the shipwreck had a surprising effect upon me".

On September 25, the ship reported having 600 barrels of oil to another whaler, and in October 700 barrels. On October 24, the Acushnet crossed the equator to the north, and six or seven days later arrived at the Galápagos Islands. This short visit would be the basis for "The Encantadas". On November 2, the Acushnet and three other American whalers were hunting together near the Galápagos Islands; Melville later exaggerated that number in Sketch Fourth of "The Encantadas". From November 19 to 25, the ship anchored at Chatham's Isle, and on December 2 reached the coast of Peru and anchored at Tombez near Paita, with 570 barrels of oil on board. On December 27, the Acushnet sighted Cape Blanco, off Ecuador. Point St. Elena was sighted the next day, and on January 6, 1842, the ship approached the Galápagos Islands from the southeast. From February May 13 to 7, seven sightings of sperm whales were recorded, but none was killed. From early May to early June, the Acushnet cooperatively set about its whaling endeavors several times with the Columbus of New Bedford, which also took letters from Melville's ship; the two ships were in the same area just south of the Equator. On June 16, the Acushnet carried 750 barrels of oil and sent home 200 on the Herald the Second, and, on June 23, she reached the Marquesas Islands and anchored at Nuku Hiva.

In the summer of 1842, Melville and his shipmate Richard Tobias Greene ("Toby") jumped ship at Nuku Hiva Bay. Melville's first book, Typee (1846), is based on his stay in or near the Taipi Valley. By around mid-August, Melville had left the island aboard the Australian whaler Lucy Ann, bound for Tahiti, where he took part in a mutiny and was briefly jailed in the native Calabooza Beretanee. In October, he and crew mate John B. Troy escaped Tahiti for Eimeo. He then spent a month as beachcomber and island rover ("omoo" in Tahitian), eventually crossing over to Moorea. He drew on these experiences for Omoo, the sequel to Typee. In November, he contracted to be a seaman on the Nantucket whaler Charles & Henry for a six-month cruise (November 1842–April 1843), and was discharged at Lahaina, Maui, in the Hawaiian Islands, in May 1843.

After four months of working several jobs in Hawaii, including as a clerk, Melville joined the US Navy on August 20, as an ordinary seaman on the frigate USS United States. During the next year, the homeward bound ship visited the Marquesas Islands, Tahiti, and Valparaiso, and then, from summer to fall 1844, Mazatlan, Lima, and Rio de Janeiro, before reaching Boston on October 3. Melville was discharged on October 14. This Navy experience is used in White-Jacket (1850), Melville's fifth book.

Melville's wander-years created what biographer Arvin calls "a settled hatred of external authority, a lust for personal freedom", and a "growing and intensifying sense of his own exceptionalism as a person", along with "the resentful sense that circumstance and mankind together had already imposed their will upon him in a series of injurious ways". Scholar Robert Milder believes the encounter with the wide ocean, where he was seemingly abandoned by God, led Melville to experience a "metaphysical estrangement" and influenced his social views in two ways: first, that he belonged to the genteel classes, but sympathized with the "disinherited commons" he had been placed among and, second, that experiencing the cultures of Polynesia let him view the West from an outsider's perspective.

1845–1850: Successful Writer

Upon his return, Melville regaled his family and friends with his adventurous tales and romantic experiences, and they urged him

to put them into writing. Melville completed Typee, his first book, in the summer of 1845 while living in Troy, New York. His brother Gansevoort found a publisher for it in London, where it was published in February 1846 by John Murray in his travel adventure series. It became an overnight bestseller in England, then in New York, when it was published on March 17 by Wiley & Putnam.

In the narrative, Melville likely extended the period of time he had spent on the island and also incorporated material from source books he had assembled. Milder calls Typee "an appealing mixture of adventure, anecdote, ethnography, and social criticism presented with a genial latitudinarianism that gave novelty to a South Sea idyll at once erotically suggestive and romantically chaste".

An unsigned review in the Salem Advertiser written by Nathaniel Hawthorne called the book a "skilfully managed" narrative by an author with "that freedom of view ... which renders him tolerant of codes of morals that may be little in accordance with our own". Hawthorne continued:

This book is lightly but vigorously written; and we are acquainted with no work that gives a freer and more effective picture of barbarian life, in that unadulterated state of which there are now so few specimens remaining. The gentleness of disposition that seems akin to the delicious climate, is shown in contrast with the traits of savage fierceness...He has that freedom of view—it would be too harsh to call it laxity of principle—which renders him tolerant of codes of morals that may be little in accordance with our own, a spirit proper enough to a young and adventurous sailor, and which makes his book the more wholesome to our staid landsmen.

Pleased but not overwhelmed by the adulation of his new public, Melville later expressed concern that he would "go down to posterity ... as a 'man who lived among the cannibals'!" The writing of Typee brought Melville back into contact with his friend Greene—Toby in the book—who wrote confirming Melville's account in newspapers. The two corresponded until 1863, and in his final years Melville "traced and successfully located his old friend" for a further meeting of the two. In March 1847, Omoo, a sequel to Typee, was published by Murray in London, and in May by Harper in New York. Omoo is "a slighter but more professional book," according to

Milder. Typee and Omoo gave Melville overnight renown as a writer and adventurer, and he often entertained by telling stories to his admirers. As the writer and editor Nathaniel Parker Willis wrote, "With his cigar and his Spanish eyes, he talks Typee and Omoo, just as you find the flow of his delightful mind on paper". In 1847 Melville tried unsuccessfully to find a "government job" in Washington.

In June 1847, Melville and Elizabeth "Lizzie" Knapp Shaw were engaged, after knowing each other for approximately three months. Melville had first asked her father, Lemuel Shaw, for her hand in March, but was turned down at the time. Shaw, Chief Justice of Massachusetts, had been a close friend of Melville's father, and his marriage with Melville's aunt Nancy was prevented only by her death. His warmth and financial support for the family continued after Allan's death. Melville dedicated his first book, Typee, to him. Lizzie was raised by her grandmother and an Irish nurse. Arvin suggests that Melville's interest in Lizzie may have been stimulated by "his need of Judge Shaw's paternal presence". They were married on August 4, 1847. Lizzie described their marriage as "very unexpected, and scarcely thought of until about two months before it actually took place". She wanted to be married in church, but they had a private wedding ceremony at home to avoid possible crowds hoping to see the celebrity. The couple honeymooned in the then-British Province of Canada, and traveled to Montreal. They settled in a house on Fourth Avenue in New York City (now called Park Avenue).

According to scholars Joyce Deveau Kennedy and Frederick James Kennedy, Lizzie brought to their marriage a sense of religious obligation, an intent to make a home with Melville regardless of place, a willingness to please her husband by performing such "tasks of drudgery" as mending stockings, an ability to hide her agitation, and a desire "to shield Melville from unpleasantness". The Kennedys conclude their assessment with:

If the ensuing years did bring regrets to Melville's life, it is impossible to believe he would have regretted marrying Elizabeth. In fact, he must have realized that he could not have borne the weight of those years unaided—that without her loyalty, intelligence, and affection, his own wild imagination would have had no "port or haven".

— Kennedy & Kennedy (1978b), 7

Biographer Robertson-Lorant cites "Lizzie's adventurous spirit and abundant energy," and she suggests that "her pluck and good humor might have been what attracted Melville to her, and vice versa". An example of such good humor appears in a letter about her not yet used to being married: "It seems sometimes exactly as if I were here for a visit. The illusion is quite dispelled however when Herman stalks into my room without even the ceremony of knocking, bringing me perhaps a button to sew on, or some equally romantic occupation". On February 16, 1849, the Melvilles' first child, Malcolm, was born.

In March 1848, Mardi was published by Richard Bentley in London, and in April by Harper in New York. Nathaniel Hawthorne thought it a rich book "with depths here and there that compel a man to swim for his life". According to Milder, the book began as another South Sea story but, as he wrote, Melville left that genre behind, first in favor of "a romance of the narrator Taji and the lost maiden Yillah," and then "to an allegorical voyage of the philosopher Babbalanja and his companions through the imaginary archipelago of Mardi".

In October 1849, Redburn was published by Bentley in London, and in November by Harper in New York. The bankruptcy and death of Allan Melvill, and Melville's own youthful humiliations surface in this "story of outward adaptation and inner impairment". Biographer Robertson-Lorant regards the work as a deliberate attempt for popular appeal: "Melville modeled each episode almost systematically on every genre that was popular with some group of antebellum readers," combining elements of "the picaresque novel, the travelogue, the nautical adventure, the sentimental novel, the sensational French romance, the gothic thriller, temperance tracts, urban reform literature, and the English pastoral". His next novel, White-Jacket, was published by Bentley in London in January 1850, and in March by Harper in New York.

1850–1851: Hawthorne and Moby-Dick

The earliest surviving mention of Moby-Dick is from a May 1, 1850 letter in which Melville told fellow sea author Richard Henry Dana Jr. "I am half way in the work." In June, he described the book to his English publisher as "a romance of

adventure, founded upon certain wild legends in the Southern Sperm Whale Fisheries," and promised it would be done by the fall. The original manuscript has not survived, but over the next several months Melville radically transformed his initial plan, conceiving what Delbanco described in 2005 as "the most ambitious book ever conceived by an American writer".

From August 4 to 12, 1850, the Melvilles, Sarah Morewood, Evert Duyckinck, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and other literary figures from New York and Boston came to Pittsfield to enjoy a period of parties, picnics, dinners, and the like. Nathaniel Hawthorne and his publisher James T. Fields joined the group while Hawthorne's wife stayed at home to look after the children. On one picnic outing organized by Duyckinck, Hawthorne and Melville sought shelter from the rain together and had a deep, private conversation. Melville had been given a copy of Hawthorne's short story collection Mosses from an Old Manse, though he had not yet read it Melville then avidly read it and wrote a review, "Hawthorne and His Mosses," which appeared in two installments, on August 17 and 24, in The Literary World. Melville wrote that these stories revealed a dark side to Hawthorne, "shrouded in blackness, ten times black". He repeatedly compared Hawthorne to Shakespeare, and urged that "men not very much inferior to Shakespeare are this day being born on the banks of the Ohio." The critic Walter Bezanson finds the essay "so deeply related to Melville's imaginative and intellectual world while writing Moby-Dick" that it could be regarded as a virtual preface and should be "everybody's prime piece of contextual reading". Later that summer, Duyckinck sent Hawthorne copies of Melville's three most recent books. Hawthorne read them, as he wrote to Duyckinck on August 29 that Melville in Redburn and White-Jacket put the reality "more unflinchingly" before his reader than any writer, and he thought Mardi was "a rich book, with depths here and there that compel a man to swim for his life". But he cautioned, "It is so good that one scarcely pardons the writer for not having brooded long over it, so as to make it a great deal better".

In September 1850, Melville borrowed three thousand dollars from his father-in-law Lemuel Shaw to buy a 160-acre farm in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Melville called his new home Arrowhead because of the arrowheads that were dug up

around the property during planting season. That winter, Melville paid Hawthorne an unexpected visit, only to discover he was working and "not in the mood for company". Hawthorne's wife Sophia gave him copies of Twice-Told Tales and, for Malcolm, The Grandfather's Chair. Melville invited them to visit Arrowhead soon, hoping to "[discuss] the Universe with a bottle of brandy & cigars" with Hawthorne, but Hawthorne would not stop working on his new book for more than one day and they did not come. After a second visit from Melville, Hawthorne surprised him by arriving at Arrowhead with his daughter Una. According to Robertson-Lorant, "The handsome Hawthorne made quite an impression on the Melville women, especially Augusta, who was a great fan of his books". They spent the day mostly "smoking and talking metaphysics".

Robertson-Lorant writes that Melville was "infatuated with Hawthorne's intellect, captivated by his artistry, and charmed by his elusive personality," but "the friendship meant something different to each of them," with Hawthorne offering Melville "the kind of intellectual stimulation he needed". They may have been "natural allies and friends," yet they were also "fifteen years apart in age and temperamentally quite different" and Hawthorne "found Melville's manic intensity exhausting at times". Bezanson identifies "sexual excitement" in all the ten letters Melville wrote to the older man. In the essay on Hawthorne's Mosses, Melville wrote: "I feel that this Hawthorne has dropped germinous seeds into my soul. He expands and deepens down, the more I contemplate him; and further, and further, shoots his strong New-England roots into the hot soil of my Southern soul." Melville dedicated his book to Hawthorne: "In token of my admiration for his genius, this book is inscribed to Nathaniel Hawthorne".

On October 18, 1851, The Whale was published in Britain in three volumes, and on November 14 Moby-Dick appeared in the United States as a single volume. In between these dates, on October 22, 1851, the Melvilles' second child, Stanwix, was born. In December, Hawthorne told Duyckinck, "What a book Melville has written! It gives me an idea of much greater power than his preceding ones." Unlike other contemporaneous reviewers of Melville, Hawthorne had seen the uniqueness of Melville's new novel and acknowledged it. In early December 1852, Melville visited the Hawthornes in Concord and discussed

the idea of the "Agatha" story he had pitched to Hawthorne. This was the last known contact between the two writers before Melville visited Hawthorne in Liverpool four years later when Hawthorne had relocated to England.

1852–1857: Unsuccessful Writer

After having borrowed three thousand dollars from his father-in-law in September 1850 to buy a 160-acre farm in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, Melville had high hopes that his next book would please the public and restore his finances. In April 1851 he told his British publisher, Richard Bentley, that his new book had "unquestionable novelty" and was calculated to have wide appeal with elements of romance and mystery. In fact, Pierre: or, The Ambiguities was heavily psychological, though drawing on the conventions of the romance, and difficult in style. It was not well received. The New York Day Book published a venomous attack on September 8, 1852, headlined "HERMAN MELVILLE CRAZY". The item, offered as a news story, reported,

A critical friend, who read Melville's last book, Ambiguities, between two steamboat accidents, told us that it appeared to be composed of the ravings and reveries of a madman. We were somewhat startled at the remark, but still more at learning, a few days after, that Melville was really supposed to be deranged, and that his friends were taking measures to place him under treatment. We hope one of the earliest precautions will be to keep him stringently secluded from pen and ink.

On May 22, 1853, Melville's third child and first daughter Elizabeth (Bessie) was born, and on or about that day Herman finished work on the Agatha story, Isle of the Cross. Melville traveled to New York to discuss a book, presumably Isle of the Cross, with his publisher, but later wrote that Harper & Brothers was "prevented" from publishing his manuscript because it was lost.

After the commercial and critical failure of Pierre, Melville had difficulty finding a publisher for his follow-up novel Israel Potter. Instead, this narrative of a Revolutionary War veteran was serialized in Putnam's Monthly Magazine in 1853. From November 1853 to 1856, Melville published fourteen tales and

sketches in Putnam's and Harper's magazines. In December 1855 he proposed to Dix & Edwards, the new owners of Putnam's, that they publish a selective collection of the short fiction. The collection, titled The Piazza Tales, was named after a new introductory story Melville wrote for it, "The Piazza". It also contained five previously published stories, including "Bartleby, the Scrivener" and "Benito Cereno". On March 2, 1855, the Melvilles' fourth child, Frances (Fanny), was born. In this period, his book Israel Potter was published.

The writing of The Confidence-Man put great strain on Melville, leading Sam Shaw, a nephew of Lizzie, to write to his uncle Lemuel Shaw: "Herman I hope has had no more of those ugly attacks"—a reference to what Robertson-Lorant calls "the bouts of rheumatism and sciatica that plagued Melville". Melville's father-in-law apparently shared his daughter's "great anxiety about him" when he wrote a letter to a cousin, in which he described Melville's working habits: "When he is deeply engaged in one of his literary works, he confines him[self] to hard study many hours in the day, with little or no exercise, and this specially in winter for a great many days together. He probably thus overworks himself and brings on severe nervous affections". Shaw advanced Melville $1,500 from Lizzie's inheritance to travel four or five months in Europe and the Holy Land.

From October 11, 1856, to May 20, 1857, Melville made a six-month Grand Tour of Europe and the Mediterranean. While in England, in November 1856, he briefly reunited for three days with Hawthorne, who had taken the position of United States Consul at Liverpool, at that time the hub of Britain's Atlantic trade. At the nearby coast resort of Southport, amid the sand dunes where they had stopped to smoke cigars, they had a conversation which Hawthorne later described in his journal: "Melville, as he always does, began to reason of Providence and futurity, and of everything that lies beyond human ken, and informed me that he 'pretty much made up his mind to be annihilated' [...] If he were a religious man, he would be one of the most truly religious and reverential; he has a very high and noble nature, and better worth immortality than most of us."

The Mediterranean part of the tour took in the Holy Land, which inspired his epic poem Clarel. On April 1, 1857, Melville published his last full-length novel The Confidence-Man. This

novel, subtitled His Masquerade, has won general acclaim in modern times as a complex and mysterious exploration of issues of fraud and honesty, identity and masquerade. However, when it was published, it received reviews ranging from the bewildered to the denunciatory.

1857–1876: Poet

To repair his faltering finances, Melville took up public lecturing from late 1857 to 1860. He embarked upon three lecture tours and spoke at lyceums, chiefly on Roman statuary and sightseeing in Rome. Melville's lectures, which mocked the pseudo-intellectualism of lyceum culture, were panned by contemporary audiences. On May 30, 1860, Melville boarded the clipper Meteor for California, with his brother Thomas at the helm. After a shaky trip around Cape Horn, Melville returned to New York alone via Panama in November. Later that year, he submitted a poetry collection to a publisher but it was not accepted, and is now lost. In 1863, he bought his brother's house at 104 East 26th Street in New York City and moved there.

In 1864, Melville visited the Virginia battlefields of the American Civil War. After the war, he published Battle Pieces and Aspects of the War (1866), a collection of 72 poems that has been described as "a polyphonic verse journal of the conflict". The work did not do well commercially—of the print run of 1,260 copies, 300 were sent as review copies, and 551 copies were sold—and reviewers did not realize that Melville had purposely avoided the ostentatious diction and fine writing that were in fashion, choosing to be concise and spare.

In 1866, Melville became a customs inspector for New York City. He held the post for 19 years and had a reputation for honesty in a notoriously corrupt institution. (Unbeknownst to Melville, his position was sometimes protected by future American president Chester A. Arthur, then a customs official who admired Melville's writing but never spoke to him.) During these years, Melville suffered from nervous exhaustion, physical pain, and frustration, and would sometimes, in the words of Robertson-Lorant, behave like the "tyrannical captains he had portrayed in his novels", perhaps even beating his wife Lizzie when he came home after drinking. In 1867, Malcolm, the Melvilles' oldest son died in his bedroom at home at the age of

18 from a self-inflicted gun shot, perhaps intentional, perhaps accidental. In May 1867, Lizzie's brother Sam, who shared his family's fear for Melville's sanity, tried to arrange for her leave Melville. Lizzie was to visit her family Boston and assert to a court that her husband was insane. But Lizzie, whether to avoid the social shame divorce carried at the time or because she still loved her husband, refused to go along with the plan.

Though Melville's professional writing career had ended, he remained dedicated to his writing. He spent years on what Milder called "his autumnal masterpiece" Clarel: A Poem and a Pilgrimage (1876), an 18,000-line epic poem inspired by his 1856 trip to the Holy Land. It is among the longest single poems in American literature. The title character is a young American student of divinity who travels to Jerusalem to renew his faith. One of the central characters, Rolfe, is similar to Melville in his younger days, a seeker and adventurer, while the reclusive Vine is loosely based on Hawthorne, who had died twelve years before. Publication of 350 copies was funded with a bequest from his uncle in 1876, but sales failed miserably and the unsold copies were burned when Melville was unable to buy them at cost. Critic Lewis Mumford found an unread copy in the New York Public Library in 1925 "with its pages uncut".

1877–1891: Final Years

Although Melville's own income remained limited, in 1884, Lizzie received a legacy that enabled him to buy a steady stream of books and prints each month. Melville retired on December 31, 1885, after several of his wife's relatives further supported the couple with supplementary legacies and inheritances. On February 22, 1886, Stanwix, their younger son, died in San Francisco at age 36, from tuberculosis. In 1889, Melville became a member of the New York Society Library.

Melville had a modest revival of popularity in England when readers rediscovered his novels. He published two collections of poems inspired by his early experiences at sea, with prose head notes. Intended for his relatives and friends, each had a print run of 25 copies. The first, John Marr and Other Sailors, was published in 1888, followed by Timoleon in 1891.

He died the morning of September 28, 1891. His death certificate shows "cardiac dilation" as the cause. He was interred

in the Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, New York City. There were few obituaries.
The New York Times's initial death notice called his masterpiece "Mobie Dick", which later was erroneously taken to mean that he was unappreciated at his time of death. But there were some appreciations. The Times, for instance, published a substantial article of appreciation on October 2. The author said that thinking back to Melville's books that were so much read forty years earlier, there is "no difficulty determining why they were then read and talked about," but the difficulty is "to discover why they are read and talked about no longer."
Melville left a volume of poetry, Weeds and Wildings, and a sketch, "Daniel Orme", unpublished at the time of his death. His wife also found pages for an unfinished novella, titled Billy Budd. Melville had revised and rearranged the manuscript in several stages, leaving the pages in disarray. Lizzie could not decide her husband's intentions (or even read his handwriting in some places) and abandoned attempts to edit the manuscript for publication. The pages were stored in a family breadbox until 1919 when Melville's granddaughter gave them to Raymond Weaver. Weaver, who initially dismissed the work's importance, published a quick transcription in 1924. This version, however, contained many misreadings, some of which affected interpretation. It was an immediate critical success in England, then in the United States. In 1962, the Melville scholars Harrison Hayford and Merton M. Sealts published a critical reading text that was widely accepted. It was adapted as a stage play on Broadway in 1951, then an opera, and in 1961 as a film.

Writing style

General Narrative Style
Melville's writing style shows both consistencies and enormous changes throughout the years. His development "had been abnormally postponed, and when it came, it came with a rush and a force that had the menace of quick exhaustion in it". As early as "Fragments from a Writing Desk", written when Melville was 20, scholar Sealts sees "a number of elements that anticipate Melville's later writing, especially his characteristic habit of abundant literary allusion". Typee and Omoo were

documentary adventures that called for a division of the narrative in short chapters. Such compact organization bears the risk of fragmentation when applied to a lengthy work such as Mardi, but with Redburn and White Jacket, Melville turned the short chapter into a concentrated narrative.

Some chapters of Moby-Dick are no more than two pages in standard editions, and an extreme example is Chapter 122, consisting of a single paragraph of 36 words. The skillful handling of chapters in Moby-Dick is one of the most fully developed Melvillean signatures, and is a measure of his masterly writing style. Individual chapters have become "a touchstone for appreciation of Melville's art and for explanation" of his themes. In contrast, the chapters in Pierre, called Books, are divided into short-numbered sections, seemingly an "odd formal compromise" between Melville's natural length and his purpose to write a regular romance that called for longer chapters. As satirical elements were introduced, the chapter arrangement restores "some degree of organization and pace from the chaos". The usual chapter unit then reappears for Israel Potter, The Confidence-Man and even Clarel, but only becomes "a vital part in the whole creative achievement" again in the juxtaposition of accents and of topics in Billy Budd.

Newton Arvin points out that only superficially the books after Mardi seem as if Melville's writing went back to the vein of his first two books. In reality, his movement "was not a retrograde but a spiral one", and while Redburn and White Jacket may lack the spontaneous, youthful charm of his first two books, they are "denser in substance, richer in feeling, tauter, more complex, more connotative in texture and imagery". The rhythm of the prose in Omoo "achieves little more than easiness; the language is almost neutral and without idiosyncrasy", while Redburn shows an improved ability in narrative which fuses imagery and emotion.

Melville's early works were "increasingly baroque" in style, and with Moby-Dick Melville's vocabulary had grown superabundant. Walter Bezanson calls it an "immensely varied style". According to critic Warner Berthoff, three characteristic uses of language can be recognized. First, the exaggerated repetition of words, as in the series "pitiable", "pity", "pitied", and "piteous" (Ch. 81, "The Pequod Meets the Virgin"). A second typical device is the use of unusual adjective-noun

combinations, as in "concentrating brow" and "immaculate manliness" (Ch. 26, "Knights and Squires"). A third characteristic is the presence of a participial modifier to emphasize and to reinforce the already established expectations of the reader, as the words "preluding" and "foreshadowing" ("so still and subdued and yet somehow preluding was all the scene ..." "In this foreshadowing interval ...").

After his use of hyphenated compounds in Pierre, Melville's writing gives Berthoff the impression of becoming less exploratory and less provocative in his choices of words and phrases. Instead of providing a lead "into possible meanings and openings-out of the material in hand," the vocabulary now served "to crystallize governing impressions," the diction no longer attracted attention to itself, except as an effort at exact definition. The language, Berthoff continues, reflects a "controlling intelligence, of right judgment and completed understanding". The sense of free inquiry and exploration which infused his earlier writing and accounted for its "rare force and expansiveness," tended to give way to "static enumeration". By comparison to the verbal music and kinetic energy of Moby-Dick, Melville's subsequent writings seem "relatively muted, even withheld" in his later works.

Melville's paragraphing in his best work Berthoff considers to be the virtuous result of "compactness of form and free assembling of unanticipated further data", such as when the mysterious sperm whale is compared with Exodus's invisibility of God's face in the final paragraph of Chapter 86 ("The Tail"). Over time Melville's paragraphs became shorter as his sentences grew longer, until he arrived at the "one-sentence paragraphing characteristic of his later prose". Berthoff points to the opening chapter of The Confidence-Man for an example, as it counts fifteen paragraphs, seven of which consist of only one elaborate sentence, and four that have only two sentences. The use of similar technique in Billy Budd contributes in large part, Berthoff says, to its "remarkable narrative economy".

Style and Literary Allusion

In Nathalia Wright's view, Melville's sentences generally have a looseness of structure, easy to use for devices as catalogue and allusion, parallel and refrain, proverb and allegory. The length of his clauses may vary greatly, but the narrative style of writing

in Pierre and The Confidence-Man is there to convey feeling, not thought. Unlike Henry James, who was an innovator of sentence ordering to render the subtlest nuances in thought, Melville made few such innovations. His domain is the mainstream of English prose, with its rhythm and simplicity influenced by the King James Bible. Another important characteristic of Melville's writing style is in its echoes and overtones. Melville's imitation of certain distinct styles is responsible for this. His three most important sources, in order, are the Bible, Shakespeare, and Milton. Direct quotation from any of the sources is slight; only one sixth of his Biblical allusions can be qualified as such because Melville adapts Biblical usage to his own narrated textual requirements of clarifying his plot.

The Biblical elements in Melville's style can be divided into three categories. In the first, allusion is more within the narrative rather than formal quotation. Several preferred Biblical allusions appear repeatedly throughout his body of work, taking on the nature of refrains. Examples are the injunctions to be 'as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves,' 'death on a pale horse,' 'the man of sorrows', the 'many mansions of heaven;' proverbs 'as the hairs on our heads are numbered,' 'pride goes before a fall,' 'the wages of sin is death;' adverbs and pronouns as 'verily, whoso, forasmuch as; phrases as come to pass, children's children, the fat of the land, vanity of vanities, outer darkness, the apple of his eye, Ancient of Days, the rose of Sharon.' Second, there are paraphrases of individual and combined verses. Redburn's "Thou shalt not lay stripes upon these Roman citizens" makes use of language of the Ten Commandments in Ex.20 and Pierre's inquiry of Lucy: "Loveth she me with the love past all understanding?" combines John 21:15–17, and Philippians 4:7. Third, certain Hebraisms are used, such as a succession of genitives ("all the waves of the billows of the seas of the boisterous mob"), the cognate accusative ("I dreamed a dream", "Liverpool was created with the Creation"), and the parallel ("Closer home does it go than a rammer; and fighting with steel is a play without ever an interlude"). This passage from Redburn shows how these ways of alluding interlock and result in a texture of Biblical language though there is very little direct quotation:

The other world beyond this, which was longed for by the devout before Columbus' time, was found in the New; and the deep-sea land, that first struck these soundings, brought up the soil of Earth's Paradise. Not a Paradise then, or now; but to be made so at God's good pleasure, and in the fulness and mellowness of time. The seed is sown, and the harvest must come; and our children's children, on the world's jubilee morning, shall all go with their sickles to the reaping. Then shall the curse of Babel be revoked, a new Pentecost come, and the language they shall speak shall be the language of Britain. Frenchmen, and Danes, and Scots; and the dwellers on the shores of the Mediterranean, and in the regions round about; Italians, and Indians, and Moors; there shall appear unto them cloven tongues as of fire.

— *The American melting pot described in Redburn's Biblical language, with Nathalia Wright's glosses.*

In addition to this, Melville successfully imitates three Biblical strains: the apocalyptic, the prophetic and the sermonic narrative tone of writing. Melville sustains the apocalyptic tone of anxiety and foreboding for a whole chapter of Mardi. The prophetic strain is expressed by Melville in Moby-Dick, most notably in Father Mapple's sermon. The tradition of the Psalms is imitated at length by Melville in The Confidence-Man.

In 1849, Melville acquired an edition of Shakespeare's works printed in a font large enough for his tired eyes, which led to a deeper study of Shakespeare that greatly influenced the style of his next book, Moby-Dick (1851). The critic F. O. Matthiessen found that the language of Shakespeare far surpasses other influences upon the book, in that it inspired Melville to discover his own full strength. On almost every page, debts to Shakespeare can be discovered. The "mere sounds, full of Leviathanism, but signifying nothing" at the end of "Cetology" (Ch. 32) echo the famous phrase in Macbeth: "Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury/ Signifying nothing". Ahab's first extended speech to the crew, in the "Quarter-Deck" (Ch. 36) is practically blank verse and so is Ahab's soliloquy at the beginning of "Sunset" (Ch. 37):'I leave a white and turbid wake;/ Pale waters, paler cheeks, where'er I sail./ The envious billows sidelong swell to whelm/ My track; let them; but first I pass.' Through Shakespeare, Melville infused Moby-Dick with a

power of expression he had not previously expressed. Reading Shakespeare had been "a catalytic agent" for Melville, one that transformed his writing from merely reporting to "the expression of profound natural forces". The extent to which Melville assimilated Shakespeare is evident in the description of Ahab, Matthiessen continues, which ends in language that seems Shakespearean yet is no imitation: 'Oh, Ahab! what shall be grand in thee, it must needs be plucked from the skies and dived for in the deep, and featured in the unbodied air!' The imaginative richness of the final phrase seems particularly Shakespearean, "but its two key words appear only once each in the plays...and to neither of these usages is Melville indebted for his fresh combination". Melville's diction depended upon no source, and his prose is not based on anybody else's verse but on an awareness of "speech rhythm".

Melville's mastering of Shakespeare, Matthiessen finds, supplied him with verbal resources that enabled him to create dramatic language through three essential techniques. First, the use of verbs of action creates a sense of movement and meaning. The effective tension caused by the contrast of "thou launchest navies of full-freighted worlds" and "there's that in here that still remains indifferent" in "The Candles" (Ch. 119) makes the last clause lead to a "compulsion to strike the breast," which suggests "how thoroughly the drama has come to inhere in the words;" Second, Melville took advantage of the Shakespearean energy of verbal compounds, as in "full-freighted". Third, Melville employed the device of making one part of speech act as another, for example, 'earthquake' as an adjective, or turning an adjective into a noun, as in "placeless".

Melville's style, in Nathalia Wright's analysis, seamlessly flows over into theme, because all these borrowings have an artistic purpose, which is to suggest an appearance "larger and more significant than life" for characters and themes that are in fact unremarkable. The allusions suggest that beyond the world of appearances another world exists, one that influences this world, and where ultimate truth can be found. Moreover, the ancient background thus suggested for Melville's narratives – ancient allusions being next in number to the Biblical ones – invests them with a sense of timelessness.

Critical Reception

Melville was not financially successful as a writer; over his entire lifetime Melville's writings earned him just over $10,000 (equivalent to $243,031 in 2020). Melville's travelogues based on voyages to the South Seas and stories based on his time in the merchant marine and navy led to some initial success, but his popularity declined dramatically afterwards. By 1876, all of his books were out of print. He was viewed as a minor figure in American literature in the later years of his life and during the years immediately after his death.

Poetry

Melville did not publish poetry until his late thirties, with Battle-Pieces (1866), and did not receive recognition as a poet until well into the 20th century. But he wrote predominantly poetry for about 25 years, twice as long as his prose career. The three novels of the 1850s that Melville worked on most seriously to present his philosophical explorations, Moby-Dick, Pierre, and The Confidence Man, seem to make the step to philosophical poetry a natural one rather than simply a consequence of commercial failure. Since he turned to poetry as a meditative practice, his poetic style, even more than most Victorian poets, was not marked by linguistic play or melodic considerations.

Early critics were not sympathetic. Henry Chapin, in his introduction to John Marr and Other Poems (1922), one of the earlier selections of Melville's poetry, said Melville's verse is "of an amateurish and uneven quality" but in it "that loveable freshness of personality, which his philosophical dejection never quenched, is everywhere in evidence," in "the voice of a true poet". The poet and novelist Robert Penn Warren became a champion of Melville as a great American poet and issued a selection of Melville's poetry in 1971 prefaced by an admiring critical essay. In the 1990s critic Lawrence Buell argued that Melville "is justly said to be nineteenth-century America's leading poet after Whitman and Dickinson." and Helen Vendler remarked of Clarel: "What it cost Melville to write this poem makes us pause, reading it. Alone, it is enough to win him, as a poet, what he called 'the belated funeral flower of fame'." Some critics now place him as the first modernist poet in the United States while others assert that his work more strongly suggests what today would be a postmodern view.

Melville Revival and Melville Studies

The centennial of Melville's birth in 1919 coincided with a renewed interest in his writings known as the Melville revival where his work experienced a significant critical reassessment. The renewed appreciation began in 1917 with Carl Van Doren's article on Melville in a standard history of American literature. Van Doren also encouraged Raymond Weaver, who wrote the author's first full-length biography, Herman Melville: Mariner and Mystic (1921). Discovering the unfinished manuscript of Billy Budd, among papers shown to him by Melville's granddaughter, Weaver edited it and published it in a new collected edition of Melville's works. Other works that helped fan the flames for Melville were Carl Van Doren's The American Novel (1921), D. H. Lawrence's Studies in Classic American Literature (1923), Carl Van Vechten's essay in The Double Dealer (1922), and Lewis Mumford's biography Herman Melville (1929).

Starting in the mid-1930s, the Yale University scholar Stanley Thomas Williams supervised more than a dozen dissertations on Melville that were eventually published as books. Where the first wave of Melville scholars focused on psychology, Williams' students were prominent in establishing Melville Studies as an academic field concerned with texts and manuscripts, tracing Melville's influences and borrowings (even plagiarism), and exploring archives and local publications. To provide historical evidence, the independent scholar Jay Leyda searched libraries, family papers, local archives and newspapers across New England and New York to document Melville's life day by day for his two-volume The Melville Log (1951). Sparked by Leyda and post-war scholars, the second phase of the Melville Revival emphasized research into the biography of Melville rather than accepting Melville's early books as reliable accounts.

In 1945, The Melville Society was founded, a non-profit organisation dedicated to the study of Melville's life and works. Between 1969 and 2003 it published 125 issues of Melville Society Extracts, which are now freely available on the society's website. Since 1999 it has published Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies, currently three issues a year, published by Johns Hopkins University Press.

The postwar scholars tended to think that Weaver, Harvard psychologist Henry Murray, and Mumford favored Freudian interpretations which read Melville's fiction as autobiography; exaggerated his suffering in the family; and inferred a homosexual attachment to Hawthorne. They saw a different arc to Melville's writing career. The first biographers saw a tragic withdrawal after the cold critical reception for his prose works and largely dismissed his poetry. A new view emerged of Melville's turn to poetry as a conscious choice that placed him among the most important American poets. Other post-war studies, however, continued the broad imaginative and interpretive style; Charles Olson's Call Me Ishmael (1947) presented Ahab as a Shakespearean tragic hero, and Newton Arvin's critical biography, Herman Melville (1950), won the National Book Award for non-fiction in 1951.

In the 1960s, Harrison Hayford organized an alliance between Northwestern University Press and the Newberry Library, with backing from the Modern Language Association and funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, to edit and publish reliable critical texts of Melville's complete works, including unpublished poems, journals, and correspondence. The first volume of the Northwestern-Newberry Edition of the Writings of Herman Melville was published in 1968 and the last in the fall of 2017. The aim of the editors was to present a text "as close as possible to the author's intention as surviving evidence permits". The volumes have extensive appendices, including textual variants from each of the editions published in Melville's lifetime, an historical note on the publishing history and critical reception, and related documents. Because the texts were prepared with financial support from the United States Department of Education, no royalties are charged, and they have been widely reprinted. Hershel Parker published his two-volume Herman Melville: A Biography, in 1996 and 2002, based on extensive original research and his involvement as editor of the Northwestern-Newberry Melville edition.

Gender Studies

Melville's writings did not attract the attention of women's studies scholars of the 1970s and 1980s, though his preference for sea-going tales that involved almost only males has been of

interest to scholars in men's studies and especially gay and queer studies. Melville was remarkably open in his exploration of sexuality of all sorts. For example, Alvin Sandberg claimed that the short story "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" offers "an exploration of impotency, a portrayal of a man retreating to an all-male childhood to avoid confrontation with sexual manhood," from which the narrator engages in "congenial" digressions in heterogeneity. In line with this view, Warren Rosenberg argues the homosocial "Paradise of Bachelors" is "blind to what is real and painful in the world, and thus are superficial and sterile".

David Harley Serlin observes in the second half of Melville's diptych, "The Tartarus of Maids", the narrator gives voice to the oppressed women he observes:

As other scholars have noted, the "slave" image here has two clear connotations. One describes the exploitation of the women's physical labor, and the other describes the exploitation of the women's reproductive organs. Of course, as models of women's oppression, the two are clearly intertwined.

— Serlin (1995)

In the end Serlin says that the narrator is never fully able to come to terms with the contrasting masculine and feminine modalities.

Issues of sexuality have been observed in other works as well. Rosenberg notes Taji, in Mardi, and the protagonist in Pierre "think they are saving young 'maidens in distress' (Yillah and Isabel) out of the purest of reasons but both are also conscious of a lurking sexual motive". When Taji kills the old priest holding Yillah captive, he says,

Remorse smote me hard; and like lightning I asked myself whether the death deed I had done was sprung of virtuous motive, the rescuing of a captive from thrall, or whether beneath the pretense I had engaged in this fatal affray for some other selfish purpose, the companionship of a beautiful maid.

In Pierre, the motive of the protagonist's sacrifice for Isabel is admitted: "womanly beauty and not womanly ugliness invited him to champion the right". Rosenberg argues,

This awareness of a double motive haunts both books and ultimately destroys their protagonists who would not fully acknowledge the dark underside of their idealism. The

epistemological quest and the transcendental quest for love and belief are consequently sullied by the erotic.

Rosenberg says that Melville fully explores the theme of sexuality in his major epic poem, Clarel. When the narrator is separated from Ruth, with whom he has fallen in love, he is free to explore other sexual (and religious) possibilities before deciding at the end of the poem to participate in the ritualistic order represented by marriage. In the course of the poem, "he considers every form of sexual orientation – celibacy, homosexuality, hedonism, and heterosexuality – raising the same kinds of questions as when he considers Islam or Democracy".

Some passages and sections of Melville's works demonstrate his willingness to address all forms of sexuality, including the homoerotic, in his works. Commonly noted examples from Moby-Dick are the "marriage bed" episode involving Ishmael and Queequeg, who sleep with their arms wrapped around each other (Chapter 4, "The Counterpane" and Chapter 10, "A Bosom Friend"); and the "Squeeze of the Hand" (Chapter 94) describing the camaraderie of sailors' extracting spermaceti from a dead whale. The Clarel recognizes the homoerotic potential of its eponymous protagonist, including, in a fairly explicit passage, an erection provoked to him by the figure of a male interlocutor, Lyonesse. In addition, he notes that Billy Budd's physical attractiveness is described in quasi-feminine terms: "As the Handsome Sailor, Billy Budd's position aboard the seventy-four was something analogous to that of a rustic beauty transplanted from the provinces and brought into competition with the highborn dames of the court".

Law and Literature

Melville has been useful in the field of law and literature. The chapter Fast-Fish and Loose-Fish in Moby-Dick, for instance, challenges concepts of property rights. In Billy Budd, a handsome and popular young sailor strikes and inadvertently kills the ship's master-at-arms. The ship's captain immediately convenes a court-martial at which he urges the court to convict and sentence Billy to death. Critics debate Melville's intention. Some see the contradiction between unbending legalism and malleable moral principles. Other critics have argued that the captain manipulated and misrepresented the applicable laws.

Themes

Melville's work often touched on themes of communicative expression and the pursuit of the absolute among illusions. As early as 1839, in the juvenile sketch "Fragments from a Writing Desk", Melville explores a problem which would reappear in the short stories "Bartleby" (1853) and "Benito Cereno" (1855): the impossibility to find common ground for mutual communication. The sketch centers on the protagonist and a mute lady, leading scholar Sealts to observe: "Melville's deep concern with expression and communication evidently began early in his career".

According to scholar Nathalia Wright, Melville's characters are all preoccupied by the same intense, superhuman and eternal quest for "the absolute amidst its relative manifestations," an enterprise central to the Melville canon: "All Melville's plots describe this pursuit, and all his themes represent the delicate and shifting relationship between its truth and its illusion". It is not clear, however, what the moral and metaphysical implications of this quest are, because Melville did not distinguish between these two aspects. Throughout his life Melville struggled with and gave shape to the same set of epistemological doubts and the metaphysical issues these doubts engendered. An obsession for the limits of knowledge led to the question of God's existence and nature, the indifference of the universe, and the problem of evil.

Legacy and Honors

In 1982, the Library of America (LOA) began publication. In honor of Melville's central place in American culture, the very first volume contained Typee, Omoo, and Mardi. The first volumes published in 1983 and 1985 also contained Melville's work, in 1983 Redburn, White-Jacket, and Moby-Dick and in 1985 Pierre, Israel Potter, The Confidence-Man, Tales, and Billy Budd. LOA did not publish his complete poetry until 2019.

On August 1, 1984, as part of the Literary Arts Series of stamps, the United States Postal Service issued a 20-cent commemorative stamp to honor Melville. The setting for the first day of issue was the Whaling Museum in New Bedford, Massachusetts.

In 1985, the New York City Herman Melville Society gathered at 104 East 26th Street to dedicate the intersection of Park Avenue South and 26th Street as Herman Melville Square. This is the street where Melville lived from 1863 to 1891 and where, among other works, he wrote Billy Budd. Melville's house in Lansingburgh, New York, houses the Lansingburgh Historical Society.

In 2010, a species of extinct giant sperm whale, Livyatan melvillei, was named in honor of Melville. The paleontologists who discovered the fossil were fans of Moby-Dick and dedicated their discovery to the author.