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THE EMERSON-THOREAU CORRESPONDENCE.

THE DIAL PERIOD.

IN reading the invaluable *Memoirs of Emerson* by Mr. Cabot, those who knew how intimate were the relations between the Concord poet-philosopher and his younger neighbor, the poet-naturalist, must have been surprised to see how little Thoreau is mentioned there. Only two pages out of eight hundred treat distinctly of Henry Thoreau and are specified in the index; and though Dr. Emerson's pleasing volume concerning his father and his Concord friends deals more liberally with Thoreau and his brother John, yet no hint is given that a copious and important correspondence went on between Emerson and Thoreau at two different periods, — in the year 1843, when Thoreau assisted in editing the *Dial*, and in 1847-48, when Emerson was in England, and Thoreau, dwelling in the Emerson family at Concord, entertained the traveler with domestic news very dear to the affectionate husband and father. These letters have been in my hands for ten years past, and there seems to be no reason now why they should not be given to the

public. They will, I think, open a new view of Thoreau's character to those readers — perhaps the majority — who fancy him a reserved, stoical, and unsympathetic person. In editing the small collection of Thoreau's letters which he made in 1865, three years after the writer's death, Emerson included only one of the epistles to himself in the year 1843, though several of those addressed to Mrs. Emerson from Staten Island were published. I shall omit this printed letter, while giving Emerson's letter to which it is a reply.¹

In the early part of 1843 Thoreau was still living in Emerson's family, of which he became an inmate in April, 1841, and to which he returned in the autumn of 1847, after closing the chapter of his Walden hermit-life. In the first of the following letters he returns his thanks to Emerson for the hospitality thus afforded; and I have no doubt that a beautiful poem called *The Departure*, which I first printed in the *Boston Commonwealth* in the year following Thoreau's death, was written twenty years before — in 1843 — to commemorate his first separation from that friendly

¹ The earliest note which I find from Emerson to Thoreau bears no date, but was doubtless written in 1840 or 1841, for at no later time could the persons named in it have visited Concord together. Thoreau must have been living with his father and mother in the Parkman house, where the Library now stands.

Wheeler, and Mr. Alcott. Will you not come down and spend an hour?

Yours, R. W. E.

Thursday, P. M.

There is also a brief note asking Thoreau to join the Emersons in a party to the Cliffs (Fairhaven hill), and to bring his flute. Living near each other, the two friends did not often write until 1843.

MY DEAR HENRY, — We have here G. P. Bradford, R. Bartlett, G. W. Lippitt, C. S.

household when he went, in the spring of 1843, to reside as tutor in the family of Mr. William Emerson, at Staten Island, N. Y. The letter numbered I., however, was written by Thoreau in the Emerson household at Concord to Emerson at Staten Island, or perhaps in New York, where he was that winter giving a course of lectures.

In explanation of the passages concerning Bronson Alcott, in this letter, it should be said that he was then living at the Hosmer Cottage, in Concord, with his English friends, Charles Lane and Henry Wright, and that he had refused to pay a tax to support what he considered an unjust government, and was arrested by the deputy sheriff, Sam Staples, in consequence.

I. THOREAU TO EMERSON.

CONCORD, *January 24, 1843.*

DEAR FRIEND, — The best way to correct a mistake is to make it right. I had not spoken of writing to you, but as you say you are about to write to me when you get my letter, I make haste on my part in order to get yours the sooner. I don't well know what to say to earn the forthcoming epistle, unless that Edith takes rapid strides in the arts and sciences — or music and natural history — as well as over the carpet; that she says "papa" less and less abstractedly every day, looking in *my* face, — which may sound like a *Ranz des Vaches* to yourself. And Ellen declares every morning that "papa *may* come home to-night;" and by and by it will have changed to such positive statement as that "papa came home *last* night."

Elizabeth Hoar still flits about these clearings, and I meet her here and there, and in all houses but her own, but as if I were not the less of her family for all that. I have made slight acquaintance also with one Mrs. Lidian Emerson, who almost persuades me to be a Christian, but I fear I as often lapse into heathenism. Mr. O'Sullivan

was here three days. I met him at the Atheneum [Concord], and went to Hawthorne's [at the Old Manse] to tea with him. He expressed a great deal of interest in your poems, and wished me to give him a list of them, which I did: he saying he did not know but he should notice them. He is a rather puny-looking man, and did not strike me. We had nothing to say to one another, and therefore we said a great deal! He, however, made a point of asking me to write for his Review, which I shall be glad to do. He is, at any rate, one of the not-bad, but does not by any means take you by storm, — no, nor by calm, which is the best way. He expects to see you in New York. After tea I carried him and Hawthorne to the Lyceum.

Mr. Alcott has not altered much since you left. I think you will find him much the same sort of person. With Mr. Lane I have had one regular chat *à la* George Minott, which of course was greatly to our mutual gratification; and, as two or three as regular conversations have taken place since, I fear there may have been a precession of the equinoxes. Mr. Wright, according to the last accounts, is in Lynn, with uncertain aims and prospects, — maturing slowly, perhaps, as indeed are all of us. I suppose they have told you how near Mr. Alcott went to the jail, but I can add a good anecdote to the rest. When Staples came to collect Mrs. Ward's taxes, my sister Helen asked him what he thought Mr. Alcott meant, — what his idea was, — and he answered, "I rum, I believe it was nothing but principle, for I never heard a man talk honester."

There was a lecture on Peace by a Mr. Spear (ought he not to be beaten into a ploughshare?), the same evening, and, as the gentlemen, Lane and Alcott, dined at our house while the matter was in suspense, — that is, while the constable was waiting for his receipt from the

jailer, — we there settled it that we, that is, Lane and myself, perhaps, should agitate the State while Winkelried lay in durance. But when, over the audience, I saw our hero's head moving in the free air of the Universalist church, my fire all went out, and the State was safe as far as I was concerned. But Lane, it seems, had cogitated and even written on the matter, in the afternoon, and so, out of courtesy, taking his point of departure from the Spear-man's lecture, he drove gracefully *in medias res*, and gave the affair a very good setting out; but, to spoil all, our martyr very characteristically, but, as artists would say, in bad taste, brought up the rear with a "My Prisons," which made us forget Silvio Pellico himself.

Mr. Lane wishes me to ask you to see if there is anything for him in the New York office, and pay the charges. Will you tell me what to do with Mr. [Theodore] Parker, who was to lecture February 15th? Mrs. Emerson says my letter is written instead of one from her.

At the end of this strange letter I will not write — what alone I had to say — to thank you and Mrs. Emerson for your long kindness to me. It would be more ungrateful than my constant thought. I have been your pensioner for nearly two years, and still left free as under the sky. It has been as free a gift as the sun or the summer, though I have sometimes molested you with my mean acceptance of it, — I who have failed to render even those slight services of the *hand* which would have been for a sign, at least; and, by the fault of my nature, have failed of many better and higher services. But I will not trouble you with this, but for once thank you as well as Heaven.

Your friend, H. D. T.

Mrs. Lidian Emerson, the wife of R. W. Emerson, and her two daughters, Ellen and Edith, are named in this first letter, and will be frequently mentioned

in the correspondence. At this date, Edith, now Mrs. W. H. Forbes, was fourteen months old. Mr. Emerson's mother, Madam Ruth Emerson, was also one of the household, which had for a little more than seven years occupied the well-known house under the trees, east of the village. No reply to this letter is in my hands.

II. THOREAU TO EMERSON.

CONCORD, February 10, 1843.

DEAR FRIEND, — I have stolen one of your own sheets to write you a letter upon, and I hope, with two layers of ink, to turn it into a comforter. If you like to receive a letter from me, too, I am glad, for it gives me pleasure to write. But don't let it come amiss; it must fall as harmlessly as leaves settle on the landscape. I will tell you what we are doing this now. Supper is done, and Edith — the dessert, perhaps, more than the desert — is brought in, or even comes in *per se*; and round she goes, now to this altar, and then to that, with her monosyllabic invocation of "oc," "oc." It makes me think of "Langue d'oc." She must belong to that province. And like the gipsies she talks a language of her own while she understands ours. While she jabbers Sanscrit, Parsee, Pehlvi, say "Edith go bah!" and "bah" it is. No intelligence passes between us. She knows. It is a capital joke, — that is the reason she smiles so. How well the secret is kept! she never descends to explanation. It is not buried like a common secret, bolstered up on two sides, but by an eternal silence on the one side, at least. It has been long kept, and comes in from the unexplored horizon, like a blue mountain range, to end abruptly at our door one day. (Don't stumble at this steep simile.) And now she studies the heights and depths of nature

On shoulders whirled in some eccentric orbit
Just by old Pestum's temples and the perch
Where Time doth plume his wings.

And how she runs the race over the carpet, while all Olympia applauds, — mamma, grandma, and uncle, good Grecians all, — and that dark-hued barbarian, Partheanna Parker, whose shafts go through and through, not backward! Grandmamma smiles over all, and mamma is wondering what papa would say, should she descend on Carlton House some day. "Larks night" 's abed, dreaming of "pleased faces" far away. But now the trumpet sounds, the games are over; some Hebe comes, and Edith is translated. I don't know where; it must be to some cloud, for I never was there.

Query: what becomes of the answers Edith thinks, but cannot express? She really gives you glances which are before this world was. You can't feel any difference of age, except that you have longer legs and arms.

Mrs. Emerson said I must tell you about domestic affairs, when I mentioned that I was going to write. Perhaps it will inform you of the state of all if I only say that I am well and happy in your house here in Concord.

Your friend, HENRY.

Don't forget to tell us what to do with Mr. Parker, when you write next. I lectured this week. It was as bright a night as you could wish. I hope there were no stars thrown away on the occasion.

[A part of the same letter, though bearing a date two days later, and written in a wholly different style, as of one sage to another, is the following post-script.]

February 12, 1843.

DEAR FRIEND, — As the packet still tarries, I will send you some thoughts, which I have lately relearned, as the latest public and private news.

How mean are our relations to one another! Let us pause till they are nobler. A little silence, a little rest, is

good. It would be sufficient employment only to cultivate true ones.

The richest gifts we can bestow are the least marketable. We hate the kindness which we understand. A noble person confers no such gift as his whole confidence: none so exalts the giver and the receiver; it produces the truest gratitude. Perhaps it is only essential to friendship that some vital trust should have been reposed by the one in the other. I feel addressed and probed even to the remote parts of my being when one nobly shows, even in trivial things, an implicit faith in me. When such divine commodities are so near and cheap, how strange that it should have to be each day's discovery! A threat or a curse may be forgotten, but this mild trust translates me. I am no more of this earth; it acts dynamically; it changes my very substance. I cannot do what before I did. I cannot be what before I was. Other chains may be broken, but in the darkest night, in the remotest place, I trail this thread. Then things cannot *happen*. What if God were to confide in us for a moment! Should we not then be gods?

How subtle a thing is this confidence! Nothing sensible passes between; never any consequences are to be apprehended should it be misplaced. Yet something has transpired. A new behavior springs; the ship carries new ballast in her hold. A sufficiently great and generous trust could never be abused. It should be cause to lay down one's life, — which would not be to lose it. Can there be any mistake up there? Don't the gods know where to invest their wealth? Such confidence, too, would be reciprocal. When one confides greatly in you, he will feel the roots of an equal trust fastening themselves in him. When such trust has been received or reposed, we dare not speak, hardly to see each other; our voices sound harsh and untrustworthy. We are as instruments which the Powers have dealt with. Through

what straits would we not carry this little burden of a magnanimous trust! Yet no harm could possibly come, but simply faithlessness. Not a feather, not a straw, is entrusted; that packet is empty. It is only *committed* to us, and, as it were, all things are committed to us.

The kindness I have longest remembered has been of this sort, — the sort unsaid; so far behind the speaker's lips that almost it already lay in my heart. It did not have far to go to be communicated. The gods cannot misunderstand, man cannot explain. We communicate like the burrows of foxes, in silence and darkness, under ground. We are undermined by faith and love. How much more full is Nature where we think the empty space is than where we place the solids! — full of fluid influences. Should we ever communicate but by these? The spirit abhors a vacuum more than Nature. There is a tide which pierces the pores of the air. These aerial rivers, let us not pollute their currents. What meadows do they course through? How many fine mails there are which traverse their routes! He is privileged who gets his letter franked by them.

I believe these things.

HENRY D. THOREAU.

And now comes the first Emersonian reply. — hardly a reply to either of these letters, of which only one had been received February 4-11, when Emerson wrote from the Carlton House, a New York hotel.

III. EMERSON TO THOREAU.

NEW YORK, *February, 1843.*

MY DEAR HENRY, — I have yet seen no new men in New York (excepting young Tappan), but only seen again some of my old friends of last year. Mr. [Albert] Brisbane has just given me a faithful hour and a half of what he calls his principles: and he shames truer men by his fidelity and zeal. Already he

begins to hear the reverberation of his single voice from most of the States of the Union. He thinks himself sure of W. H. Channing¹ as a good Fourierist. I laugh incredulous while he recites (for it seems always as if he was repeating paragraphs out of his master's book) descriptions of the self-augmenting potency of the solar system, which is destined to contain one hundred and thirty-two bodies, I believe, and his urgent inculcation of our *stellar duties*. But it has its kernel of sound truth; and its insanity is so wide of New York insanities that it is virtue and honor.

February 10.

I beg you, my dear friend, to say to those faithful lovers of me who have just sent me letters which any man should be happy and proud to receive — I mean my mother and my wife — that I am grieved they should have found my silence so vexatious. I think that some letter must have failed, for I cannot have let ten days go by without writing home. I have kept no account, but am confident that that cannot be. Mr. Mackay has just brought me his good package, and I will not at this hour commence a new letter, but you shall tell Mrs. Emerson that my first steps in New York on this visit seem not to have been prudent, and so I lose several precious days.

February 11.

A society invited me to read my course before them in the Bowery, on certain terms, one of which was that they guaranteed me a thousand auditors. I referred them to my brother William, who covenanted with them. It turned out that their church was in a dark, inaccessible place, a terror to the honest and fair citizens of New York; and our first lecture had a handful of persons, and they all personal friends of mine, from a distant part of the city. But

¹ Nephew and biographer of Dr. Channing, and cousin of Ellery Channing, the poet, soon to be named.

the Bereans felt so sadly about the disappointment that it seemed at last, on much colloquy, not quite good-natured and affectionate to abandon them at once, but to read also a second lecture, and then part. The second was read with faint success, and then we parted. I begin this evening anew in the Society Library, where I was last year. This takes more time than I could wish, a great deal, and I grieve that I cannot come home. I see W. H. Channing and Mr. [Henry] James at leisure, and have had what the Quakers call "a solid season" once or twice; with Tappan a very happy pair of hours, and him I must see again.

I am enriched greatly by your letter, and now by the dear letters which Mr. Mackay has brought me from Lidian Emerson and Elizabeth Hoar; and for speed in part, and partly because I like to write so, I make you the organ of communication to the whole household, and must still owe you a special letter. I dare not say when I will come home, as the time so fast approaches when I should speak to the Mercantile Library. Yesterday eve I was at Staten Island, where William had promised me as a lecturer, and made a speech at Tompkinsville. Dear love to my mother. I shall try within twenty-four hours to write to my wife. Thanks, thanks for your love to Edie! Farewell.

R. WALDO E.

The "special letter," if written, has failed to appear, and instead of it I find one devoted chiefly to the next number of the *Dial*, of which Emerson was then the editor, with Thoreau's aid. For the January number of 1843 Thoreau had given his unmetrical translation of the

Prometheus Bound of Æschylus; for the April number he gave translations from the pseudo-Anacreon, and those beautiful Grecian poems of his own on Smoke and Haze.

IV. EMERSON TO THOREAU.

NEW YORK, 12 February, 1843.

MY DEAR HENRY, — I am sorry I have no paper but this unsightly sheet, this Sunday eve, to write you a message which I see must not wait. The *Dial* for April, what elements shall compose it? What have you for me? What has Mr. Lane? Have you any Greek translations in your mind? Have you given shape to the comment on Etzler?¹ (It was about some sentences on this matter that I made, some day, a most rude and snappish speech. I remember, but you will not, and must give the sentences as you first wrote them.) You must go to Mr. [Charles] Lane, with my affectionate respects, and tell him that I depend on his important aid for the new number, and wish him to give us the most recent and stirring matter that he has. If (as he is a ready man) he offers us anything at once, I beg you to read it; and if you see and say decidedly that it is good for us, you need not send it to me; but if it is of such quality that you can less surely pronounce, you must send it to me by Harnden. Have we no more news from Wheeler? Has Bartlett none?²

I find Edward Palmer here, studying medicine and attending medical lectures. He is acquainted with Mr. Porter, whom Lane and Wright know, and values him highly. I am to see Porter. Perhaps I shall have no more time to fill this sheet; if so, farewell.

Yours,

R. WALDO E.

¹ This was the review of Etzler's book which Mr. O'Sullivan, mentioned in Thoreau's first letter, soon printed in his *Democratic Review*, for which Hawthorne was a frequent writer. The *Dial* was a quarterly magazine, published for four years from July, 1840.

² Charles Stearns Wheeler, a college classmate of Thoreau, was then in Germany (where he died the next summer), and was contributing to the *Dial*. Robert Bartlett, of Plymouth, was Wheeler's most intimate friend.

This Edward Palmer appears again in a letter of Thoreau's, and I think he afterwards made one of Alcott's little community at Fruitlands, in Harvard, where Charles Lane owned the property, and resided for a time, with his son William and his friend Wright. To this editorial letter of Emerson, Thoreau, who was punctuality itself, replied at once.

V. THOREAU TO EMERSON.

CONCORD, *February 15*, 1843.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I got your letters, one yesterday and the other to-day, and they have made me quite happy. As a packet is to go in the morning, I will give you a hasty account of the Dial. I called on Mr. Lane this afternoon, and brought away, together with an abundance of good will, first, a bulky catalogue of books without commentary, — some eight hundred, I think he told me, with an introduction filling one sheet, — ten or a dozen pages, say, though I have only glanced at them; second, a review — twenty-five or thirty printed pages — of *Conversations on the Gospels*, *Record of a School*, and *Spiritual Culture*, with rather copious extracts. However, it is a good subject, and Lane says it gives him satisfaction. I will give it a faithful reading directly. [These were Alcott's publications, reviewed by Lane.] And now I come to the little end of the horn; for myself, I have brought along the *Minor Greek Poets*, and will mine there for a scrap or two, at least. As for Etzler, I don't remember any "rude and snappish speech" that you made, and if you did it must have been longer than anything I had written; however, here is the book still, and I will try. Perhaps I have some few scraps in my *Journal* which you may choose to print. The translation of the *Æschylus* I should like very well to continue anon, if it should be worth the while. As for poetry, I have not remembered to write any for some

time; it has quite slipped my mind; but sometimes I think I hear the mutterings of the thunder. Don't you remember that last summer we heard a low, tremulous sound in the woods and over the hills, and thought it was partridges or rocks, and it proved to be thunder gone down the river? But sometimes it was over Wayland way, and at last burst over our heads. So we'll not despair by reason of the drought. You see, it takes a good many words to supply the place of one deed; a hundred lines to a cobweb, and but one cable to a man-of-war. The Dial case needs to be reformed in many particulars. There is no news from Wheeler, none from Bartlett.

They all look well and happy in this house, where it gives me much pleasure to dwell.

Yours in haste, HENRY.

P. S.

Wednesday Evening, *February 16*.

DEAR FRIEND, — I have time to write a few words about the Dial. I have just received the three first signatures, which do not yet complete Lane's piece. He will place five hundred copies for sale at Munroe's bookstore. Wheeler has sent you two full sheets — more about the German Universities — and proper names, which will have to be printed in alphabetical order for convenience; what this one has done, that one is doing, and the other intends to do. Hammer-Purgstall (Von Hammer) may be one, for aught I know. However, there are two or three *things* in it, as well as names. One of the books of Herodotus is discovered to be out of place. He says something about having sent to Lowell, by the last steamer, a budget of literary news, which he will have communicated to you ere this. Mr. Alcott has a letter from Heraud, and a book written by him, — the *Life of Savonarola*, — which he wishes to have republished here. Mr. Lane will write a notice of it. (The latter says that what

is in the New York post office *may* be directed to Mr. Alcott.) Miss [Elizabeth] Peabody has sent a "Notice to the readers of the Dial," which is not good.

Mr. Chapin lectured this evening, and so rhetorically that I forgot my duty and heard very little. I find myself better than I have been, and am meditating some other method of paying debts than by lectures and writing, — which will only do to talk about. If anything of that "other" sort should come to your ears in New York, will you remember it for me?

Excuse this scrawl, which I have written over the embers in the dining-room. I hope that you live on good terms with yourself and the gods.

Yours in haste, HENRY.

Mr. Lane and his lucubrations proved to be tough subjects, and the next letter has more to say about them and the Dial. He had undertaken to do justice to Mr. Alcott and his books, as may still be read in the pages of that April number of the Transcendentalist quarterly.

VI. THOREAU TO EMERSON.

CONCORD, *February 20, 1843.*

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I have read Mr. Lane's review, and *can* say, speaking for this world and for fallen man, that "it is good for us." As they say in geology, time never fails, there is always enough of it, so I may say, criticism never fails; but if I go and read elsewhere, I say it is good, — far better than any notice Mr. Alcott has received, or is likely to receive from another quarter. It is at any rate "the other side," which Boston needs to hear. I do not send it to you, because time is precious, and because I think you would accept it, after all. After speaking briefly of the fate of Goethe and Carlyle in their own countries, he says, "To Emerson in his own circle is but slowly accorded a worthy response; and Alcott, almost utterly

neglected," etc. I will strike out what relates to yourself, and, correcting some verbal faults, send the rest to the printer with Lane's initials.

The catalogue needs amendment, I think. It wants completeness now. It should consist of such books only as they would tell Mr. [F. H.] Hedge and [Theodore] Parker they had got; omitting the Bible, the classics, and much besides, — for there the incompleteness begins. But you will be here in season for this.

It is frequently easy to make Mr. Lane more universal and attractive; to write, for instance, "universal ends" instead of "the universal end," just as we pull open the petals of a flower with our fingers where they are confined by its own sweets. Also he had better not say "books designed for the nucleus of a *Home University*," until he makes that word "home" ring solid and universal too. This is that abominable dialect. He has just given me a notice of George Bradford's Fénélon for the Record of the Months, and speaks of extras of the Review and Catalogue, if they are printed, — even a hundred, or thereabouts. How shall this be arranged? Also he wishes to use some manuscripts of his which are in your possession, if you do not. Can I get them?

I think of no news to tell you. It is a serene summer day here, all above the snow. The hens steal their nests, and I steal their eggs still, as formerly. This is what I do with the hands. Ah, labor, — it is a divine institution, and conversation with many men and hens.

Do not think that my letters require as many special answers. I get one as often as you write to Concord. Concord inquires for you daily, as do all the members of this house. You must make haste home before we have settled all the great questions, for they are fast being disposed of. But I must leave room for Mrs. Emerson.

Yours, HENRY.

P. S. BY MRS. EMERSON.

MY DEAR HUSBAND, — Thinking that Henry had decided to send Mr. Lane's manuscript to you by Harnden to-morrow, I wrote you a sheet of gossip which you will not ultimately escape. Now I will use up Henry's vacant spaces with a story or two. G. P. Bradford has sent you a copy of his Fénelon, with a freezing note to me, which made me declare I would never speak to him again; but Mother says, "Never till next time!" William B. Greene has sent me a volume of tales translated by his father. Ought there to be any note of acknowledgment? I wish you may find time to fill all your paper when you write; you must have millions of things to say that we would all be glad to read.

Last evening we had the "Conversation," though, owing to the bad weather, but few attended. The subjects were: What is Prophecy? Who is a Prophet? and The Love of Nature. Mr. Lane decided, as for all time and the race, that this same love of nature — of which Henry [Thoreau] was the champion, and Elizabeth Hoar and Lidian (though L. disclaimed possessing it herself) his faithful squires — that this love was the most subtle and dangerous of sins; a refined idolatry, much more to be dreaded than gross wickednesses, because the gross sinner would be alarmed by the depth of his degradation, and come up from it in terror, but the unhappy idolaters of Nature were deceived by the refined quality of their sin, and would be the last to enter the kingdom. Henry frankly affirmed to both the wise men that they were wholly deficient in the faculty in question, and therefore could not judge of it. And Mr. Alcott as frankly answered that it was because they went beyond the mere material objects, and were filled with spiritual love and perception (as Mr. T. was not),

that they seemed to Mr. Thoreau not to appreciate outward nature. I am very heavy, and have spoiled a most excellent story. I have given you no idea of the scene, which was ineffably comic, though it made no laugh at the time; I scarcely laughed at it myself, — too deeply amused to give the usual sign. Henry was brave and noble; well as I have always liked him, he still grows upon me. Elizabeth sends her love, and says she shall not go to Boston till your return, and you must make the 8th of March come quickly.

And now the localities of the two friends are reversed in the letters which follow. Mr. Emerson had returned to Concord in March, and in May Mr. Thoreau had gone to Staten Island, into the family of Emerson's elder brother, William, where he was teaching the eldest son, William, and studying New York, at long range or at close quarters. The first letter in the series comes from Emerson.

VII. EMERSON TO THOREAU.

CONCORD, Sunday Eve, 21 May, 1843.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — Our Dial is already printing, and you must, if you can, send me something good by the 10th of June, certainly, if not before. If William E. can send by a private opportunity, you shall address it to "Care of Miss Peabody, 13 West Street," or, to be left at Concord Stage Office.¹ Otherwise send by Harnden. — W. E. paying to Boston and charging to me. Let the packet bring letters also from you, and from [Giles] Waldo and Tappan, I entreat.

You will not doubt that you are well remembered here, by young, older, and old people; and your letter to your mother was borrowed and read with great interest, pending the arrival of direct

¹ There was yet no railroad from Boston to Concord, but the Fitchburg road was building, as will be seen in another of these letters. The

stagecoach ran once a day, seldom carrying a dozen passengers. Now fifty or a hundred make the journey daily.

accounts and of later experiences, especially in the city. I am sure that you are under sacred protection, if I should not hear from you for years. Yet I shall wish to know what befalls you on your way.

Ellery Channing is well settled in his house, and works very steadily thus far, and our intercourse is very agreeable to me. Young [B. W.] Ball has been to see me, and is a prodigious reader and a youth of great promise. — born, too, in the good town. Mr. Hawthorne is well, and Mr. Alcott and Mr. Lane are revolving a purchase in Harvard of ninety acres.

Yours affectionately,

R. W. EMERSON.

My wife will reopen my sealed letter, but a remembrance from her shall be inserted.

This letter is addressed to "Henry D. Thoreau, care of Mr. Emerson, Esq., 64 Wall Street, New York;" but Thoreau himself was living on Staten Island, at a town called Castleton, whence he made excursions across the bay to the city, and up and down the two islands, Staten and Manhattan. The sea greatly attracted him, for he had seen little, till then, of the great ocean; but the city was an affliction to him.

VIII. THOREAU TO EMERSON.

CASTLETON, STATEN ISLAND. *May 23.*

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I was just going to write to you when I received your letter. I was waiting till I had got away from Concord. I should have sent you something for the *Dial* before, but I have been sick ever since I came here, rather unaccountably, — what with a cold, bronchitis, acclimation, etc., still unaccountably. I send you some verses from my journal which will help make a packet. I have not time to correct them, if this goes by Rockwood Hoar. If I can finish an account of a winter's walk in Concord, in the midst of a

Staten Island summer. — not so wise as true, I trust, — I will send it to you soon.

I have had no later experiences yet. You must not count much upon what I can do or learn in New York. I feel a good way off here; and it is not to be visited, but seen and dwelt in. I have been there but once, and have been confined to the house since. Everything there disappoints me but the crowd; rather, I was disappointed with the rest before I came. I have no eyes for their churches, and what else they find to brag of. Though I know but little about Boston, yet what attracts me, in a quiet way, seems much meaner and more pretending than there. — libraries, pictures, and faces in the street. You don't know where any respectability inhabits. It is in the crowd in Chatham Street. The crowd is something new, and to be attended to. It is worth a thousand Trinity Churches and Exchanges while it is looking at them, and will run over them and trample them under foot one day. There are two things I hear and am aware I live in the neighborhood of, — the roar of the sea and the hum of the city. I have just come from the beach (to find your letter), and I like it much. Everything there is on a grand and generous scale, — seaweed, water, and sand; and even the dead fishes, horses, and hogs have a rank, luxuriant odor; great shad-nets spread to dry; crabs and horseshoes crawling over the sand; clumsy boats, only for service, dancing like sea-fowl over the surf, and ships afar off going about their business.

Waldo and Tappan carried me to their English alehouse the first Saturday, and Waldo spent two hours here the next day. But Tappan I have only seen. I like his looks and the sound of his silence. They are confined every day but Sunday, and then Tappan is obliged to observe the demeanor of a church-goer to prevent open war with his father.

I am glad that Channing has got settled, and that, too, before the inroad of the Irish. I have read his poems two or three times over, and partially through and under, with new and increased interest and appreciation. Tell him I saw a man buy a copy at Little & Brown's. He may have been a virtuoso, but we will give him the credit. What with Alcott and Lane and Hawthorne, too, you look strong enough to take New York by storm. Will you tell L., if he asks, that I have been able to do nothing about the books yet?

Believe that I have something better to write you than this. It would be unkind to thank you for particular deeds.

Your friend,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

IX. THOREAU TO EMERSON.

STATEN ISLAND, *June 8, 1843.*

DEAR FRIEND. — I have been to see Henry James, and like him very much. It was a great pleasure to meet him. It makes humanity seem more erect and respectable. I never was more kindly and faithfully catechised. It made me respect myself more to be thought worthy of such wise questions. He is a man, and takes his own way, or stands still in his own place. I know of no one so patient and determined to have the good of you. It is almost friendship, such plain and human dealing. I think that he will not write or speak inspiringly; but he is a refreshing forward-looking and forward-moving man, and he has naturalized and humanized New York for me. He actually reproaches you by his respect for your poor words. I had three hours' solid talk with him, and he asks me to make free use of his house. He wants an expression of your faith, or to be sure that it is faith, and confesses that his own treads fast upon the neck of his understanding. He exclaimed, at some careless answer of mine, "Well, you Transcendentalists are wonderfully consistent. I must get hold of this some-

how!" He likes Carlyle's book,¹ but says that it leaves him in an excited and unprofitable state, and that Carlyle is so ready to obey his humor that he makes the least vestige of truth the foundation of any superstructure, not keeping faith with his better genius nor truest readers.

I met Wright on the stairs of the Society Library, and W. H. Channing and Brisbane on the steps. The former (Channing) is a concave man, and you see by his attitude and the lines of his face that he is retreating from himself and from yourself, with sad doubts. It is like a fair mask swaying from the drooping boughs of some tree whose stem is not seen. He would break with a conchoidal fracture. You feel as if you would like to see him when he has made up his mind to run all the risks. To be sure, he doubts because he has a great hope to be disappointed, but he makes the possible disappointment of too much consequence. Brisbane, with whom I did not converse, did not impress me favorably. He looks like a man who has lived in a cellar, far gone in consumption. I barely saw him, but he did not look as if he could let Fourier go, in any case, and throw up his hat. But I need not have come to New York to write this.

I have seen Tappan for two or three hours, and like both him and Waldo; but I always see those of whom I have heard well with a slight disappointment. They are so much better than the great herd, and yet the heavens are not shivered into diamonds over their heads. Persons and things flit so rapidly through my brain, nowadays, that I can hardly remember them. They seem to be lying in the stream, stemming the tide, ready to go to sea, as steamboats when they leave the dock go off in the opposite direction first, until they are headed right, and then begins the steady revolution of the paddle-wheels; and *they* are not quite cheerily headed anywhither

¹ Past and Present.

yet, nor singing amid the shrouds as they bound over the billows. There is a certain youthfulness and generosity about them, very attractive; and Tappan's more reserved and solitary thought commands respect.

After some ado, I discovered the residence of Mrs. Black, but there was palmed off on me, in her stead, a Mrs. Grey (quite an inferior color), who told me at last that she was not Mrs. Black, but her mother, and was just as glad to see me as Mrs. Black would have been, and so, forsooth, would answer just as well. Mrs. Black had gone with Edward Palmer to New Jersey, and would return on the morrow.

I don't like the city better, the more I see it, but worse. I am ashamed of my eyes that behold it. It is a thousand times meaner than I could have imagined. It will be something to hate, — that's the advantage it will be to me; and even the best people in it are a part of it, and talk coolly about it. The pigs in the street are the most respectable part of the population. When will the world learn that a million men are of no importance compared with *one* man? But I must wait for a shower of shillings, or at least a slight dew or mizzling of sixpences, before I explore New York very far.

The sea-beach is the best thing I have seen. It is very solitary and remote, and you only remember New York occasionally. The distances, too, along the shore, and inland in sight of it, are unaccountably great and startling. The sea seems very near from the hills, but it proves a long way over the plain, and yet you may be wet with the spray before you can believe that you are there. The far seems near, and the near far. Many rods from the beach, I step aside for the Atlantic, and I see men drag up their boats on to the sand, with oxen, stepping about amid the surf, as if it were possible they might draw up Sandy Hook.

I do not feel myself especially serviceable to the good people with whom I live, except as inflections are sanctified to the righteous. And so, too, must I serve the boy. I can look to the Latin and mathematics sharply, and for the rest behave myself. But I cannot be in his neighborhood hereafter as his Educator, of course, but as the hawks fly over my own head. I am not attracted toward him but as to youth generally. He shall frequent me, however, as much as he can, and I'll be I.

Bradbury told me, when I passed through Boston, that he was coming to New York the following Saturday, and would then settle with me, but he has not made his appearance yet. Will you, the next time you go to Boston, present that order for me which I left with you?

If I say less about Waldo and Tappan now, it is, perhaps, because I may have more to say by and by. Remember me to your mother and Mrs. Emerson, who, I hope, is quite well. I shall be very glad to hear from her, as well as from you. I have very hastily written out something for the Dial, and send it only because you are expecting something, — though something better. It seems idle and Howittish, but it may be of more worth in Concord, where it belongs. In great haste. Farewell.

HENRY D. THOREAU.

The Bradbury mentioned was of the publishing house of Bradbury & Soden, in Boston, which had taken Nathan Hale's Boston Miscellany off his hands, and had published in it, with promise of payment, Thoreau's *Walk to Wachusett*. But much time had passed, and the debt was not paid: hence the lack of a "shower of shillings" which the letter laments. Emerson's reply gives the first news of the actual beginning of Alcott's short-lived paradise at Fruitlands, and dwells with interest on the affairs of the rural and lettered circle at Concord, from which Alcott and his

English friends were just departing, only to return sadder and wiser the next year.

X. EMERSON TO THOREAU.

CONCORD, June 10, 1843.

DEAR HENRY, — It is high time that you had some token from us in acknowledgment of the parcel of kind and helpful things you sent us, as well as of your permanent right in us all. The cold weather saddened our landscape and our gardens here almost until now; but to-day's sunshine is obliterating the memory of such things. I have just been visiting my petty plantations, and find that all your grafts live except a single scion; and all my new trees, including twenty pines to fill up interstices in my "curtain,"¹ are well alive. The town is full of Irish, and the woods of engineers with theodolite and red flag, singing out their feet and inches to each other from station to station. Near Mr. Alcott's [the Hosmer Cottage] the road is already begun. [This was the Fitchburg railroad, which crosses the highway not far from where the Alcotts had been living.]

From Mr. Alcott and Mr. Lane, at Harvard, we have yet heard nothing. They went away in good spirits, having sent "Wood Abram" and Larned and William Lane before them, with horse and plough, a few days in advance, to begin the spring work. Mr. Lane paid me a long visit, in which he was more than I had ever known him gentle and open; and it was impossible not to sympathize with and honor projects that so often seem without feet or hands. They have near a hundred acres of land which they do not want, and no house, which they want first of all. But they count this an advantage, as it gives them the occasion they so much desire, of building after

their own idea. In the event of their attracting to their company a carpenter or two, which is not impossible, it would be a great pleasure to see their building, which could hardly fail to be new and beautiful. They have fifteen acres of woodland, with good timber.

Ellery Channing is excellent company, and we walk in all directions. He remembers you with great faith and hope; thinks you ought not to see Concord again these ten years — that you ought to grind up fifty Concords in your mill — and much other opinion and counsel he holds in store on this topic. Hawthorne walked with me yesterday afternoon, and not until after our return did I read his *Celestial Railroad*, which has a serene strength which we cannot afford not to praise, in this low life.

Our *Dial* thrives well enough in these weeks. I print W. E. Channing's Letters, or the first ones,² but he does not care to have them named as his for a while. They are very agreeable reading, and their wisdom lightened by a vivacity very rare in the *Dial*. [S. G.] Ward, too, has sent me some sheets on architecture, whose good sense is eminent. I have a valuable manuscript — a sea-voyage — from a new hand, which is all clear good sense, and I may make some of Mr. Lane's graver sheets give way for this honest story; otherwise I shall print it in October. I have transferred the publishing of the *Dial* to James Munroe & Co.

Do not, I entreat you, let me be in ignorance of anything good which you know of my fine friends, Waldo and Tappan. T. writes me never a word. I had a letter from H. James, promising to see you, and you must not fail to visit him. I must soon write to him, though my debts of this nature are, perhaps, too

¹ This was a shelter of pine-trees planted in the angle of the roads east of Emerson's house, to break the east wind and screen the inmates.

² In that charming but unfinished *Youth of the Poet and Painter*, which described so well

the scenery of the Merrimac and the Artichoke rivers, near Newbury, and gently satirized Cambridge and Boston. Mr. Ward was at that time a Boston banker.

many. To him I much prefer to talk than to write. Let me know well how you prosper and what you meditate. And all good abide with you.

R. W. E.

June 15.

Whilst my letter has lain on the table waiting for a traveler, your letter and parcel have safely arrived. I may not have place now for the Winter's Walk in the July Dial, which is just making up its last sheets, and somehow I must end it to-morrow, when I go to Boston. I shall then keep it for October, subject, however, to your order, if you find a better disposition for it. I will carry the order to the faithless booksellers.¹ Thanks for all these tidings of my friends at New York and at the Island, and love to the last. I have letters from Lane at Fruitlands, and from Miss Fuller at Niagara; she found it sadly cold and rainy at the Falls.

XI. THOREAU TO EMERSON.

STATEN ISLAND, *July 8, 1843.*

DEAR FRIENDS, — I was very glad to hear your voices from so far. I do not believe there are eight hundred human beings on the globe. It is all a fable, and I cannot but think that you speak with a slight outrage and disrespect of Concord when you talk of fifty of them. There are not so many. Yet think not that I have left all behind, for already I begin to track my way over the earth, and find the cope of heaven extending beyond its horizon, — forsooth, like the roofs of these Dutch houses. My thoughts revert to those dear hills and that *river* which so fills up the world to its brim. — worthy to be named with Mincius and Alpheus, — still drinking its meadows while I am far away. How can it run heedless to the sea, as if I were there to countenance it? George Minott, too, looms up considerably, — and many another old familiar face. These things

¹ Bradbury & Soden.

all look sober and respectable. They are better than the environs of New York, I assure you.

I am pleased to think of Channing as an inhabitant of the grey town. Seven cities contended for Homer dead. Tell him to remain at least long enough to establish Concord's right and interest in him. I was beginning to know the man. In imagination I see you pilgrims taking your way by the red lodge and the cabin of the brave farmer man, so youthful and hale, to the still cheerful woods. And Hawthorne, too, I remember as one with whom I sauntered, in old heroic times, along the banks of the Scamander, amid the ruins of chariots and heroes. Tell him not to desert, even after the tenth year. Others may say, "Are there not the cities of Asia?" But what are they? Staying at home is the heavenly way.

And Elizabeth Hoar, my brave townswoman, to be sung of poets, — if I may speak of her whom I do not know. Tell Mrs. Brown¹ that I do not forget her, going her way under the stars through this chilly world, — I did *not* think of the wind, — and that I went a little way with her. Tell her not to despair. Concord's little arch does not span all our fate, nor is what transpires under it law for the universe.

And least of all are forgotten those walks in the woods in ancient days, — too sacred to be idly remembered, — when their aisles were pervaded as by a fragrant atmosphere. They still seem youthful and cheery to my imagination as Sherwood and Barnsdale, — and of far purer fame. Those afternoons when we wandered o'er Olympus. — and those hills, from which the sun was seen to set, while still our day held on its way.

"At last he rose and twitched his mantle blue;
To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new."

I remember these things at midnight, at rare intervals. But know, my friends, that I a good deal hate you all in my

¹ A sister of Mrs. Emerson.

most private thoughts, as the substratum of the little love I bear you. Though you are a rare band, and do not make half use enough of one another.

I think this is a noble number of the Dial. It perspires thought and feeling. I can speak of it now a little like a foreigner. Be assured that it is not written in vain, — it is not for me. I hear its prose and its verse. They provoke and inspire me, and they have my sympathy. I hear the sober and the earnest, the sad and the cheery voices of my friends, and to me it is a long letter of encouragement and reproof; and no doubt so it is to many another in the land. So don't give up the ship. Methinks the verse is hardly enough better than the prose. I give my vote for the Notes from the Journal of a Scholar, and wonder you don't print them faster. I want, too, to read the rest of the Poet and the Painter. Miss Fuller's is a noble piece, — rich, extempore writing, talking with pen in hand. It is too good not to be better, even. In writing, conversation should be folded many times thick. It is the height of art that, on the first perusal, plain common sense should appear; on the second, severe truth; and on a third, beauty; and, having these warrants for its depth and reality, we may then enjoy the beauty for evermore. The sea-piece is of the best that is going, if not of the best that is staying. You have spoken a good word for Carlyle. As for the Winter's Walk, I should be glad to have it printed in the Dial if you think it good enough, and will criticise it; otherwise send it to me, and I will dispose of it.

I have not been to New York for a month, and so have not seen Waldo and Tappan. James has been at Albany meanwhile. You will know that I only describe my personal adventures with people; but I hope to see more of them, and *judge* them too. I am sorry to learn that Mrs. E. is no better. But let her know that the Fates pay a compliment

to those whom they make sick, and they have not to ask, "What have I done?"

Remember me to your mother, and remember me yourself as you are remembered by
H. D. T.

I had a friendly and cheery letter from Lane a month ago.

XII. EMERSON TO THOREAU.

CONCORD, July 20, 1843.

DEAR HENRY. — Giles Waldo shall not go back without a line to you, if only to pay a part of my debt in that kind long due. I am sorry to say that when I called on Bradbury & Soden, nearly a month ago, their partner, in their absence, informed me that they could not pay you, at present, any part of their debt on account of the Boston Miscellany. After much talking, all the promise he could offer was "that within a year it would probably be paid," — a probability which certainly looks very slender. The very worst thing he said was the proposition that you should take your payment in the form of Boston Miscellanies! I shall not fail to refresh their memory at intervals.

We were all very glad to have such cordial greetings from you as in your last letter, on the Dial's and on all personal accounts. Hawthorne and Channing are both in good health and spirits, and the last always a good companion for me, who am hard to suit, I suppose. Giles Waldo has established himself with me by his good sense. I fancy from your notices that he is more than you have seen. I think that neither he nor W. A. Tappan will be exhausted in one interview. My wife is at Plymouth to recruit her wasted strength, but left word with me to acknowledge and heartily thank you for your last letter to her. Edith and Ellen are in high health; and, as pussy has this afternoon nearly killed a young oriole, Edie tells all comers, with great energy, her one story, "Birdy — *sick*." Mrs. Brown, who just left the house, desires kindest remem-

branches to you, whom "she misses" and whom "she thinks of."

In this fine weather we look very bright and green in yard and garden, though this sun, without showers, will perchance spoil our potatoes. Our clover grew well on your patch between the dikes; and Reuben Brown adjudged that Cyrus Warren should pay fourteen dollars this year for my grass. Last year he paid eight dollars. All your grafts of this year have lived and done well. The apple-trees and plums speak of you in every wind.

You will have read and heard the sad news to the little village of Lincoln of Stearns Wheeler's death. Such an overthrow to the hopes of his parents made me think more of them than of the loss the community will suffer in his kindness, diligence, and ingenuous mind. The papers have contained ample notices of his life and death. I saw Charles Newcomb the other day at Brook Farm, and he expressed his great gratification in your translations, and said that he had been minded to write you and ask of you to translate in like manner — Pindar. I advised him by all means to do so. But he seemed to think he had discharged his conscience. But it was a very good request. It would be a fine thing to be done, since Pindar has no adequate translation, — no English equal to his fame. Do look at the book with that in your mind, while Charles is mending his pen. I will soon send you word respecting the Winter Walk.

Farewell.

R. W. EMERSON.

The reply to this letter, dated August 7, is printed in the volume of Letters and Poems edited by Emerson in 1865. To that letter of Thoreau's Emerson responded, and enlarged upon its themes as follows.

XIII. EMERSON TO THOREAU.

CONCORD, *September 8, 1843.*

DEAR HENRY, — We were all surprised to hear, one day lately, from G.

Waldo, that you were forsaking the deep quiet of the Clove for the limbo of the false booksellers, and were soon relieved by hearing that you were safe again in the cottage at Staten Island. I could heartily wish that this country, which seems all opportunity, did actually offer more distinct and just rewards of labor to that unhappy class of men who have more reason and conscience than strength of back and of arm; but the experience of a few cases that I have lately seen looks, I confess, more like crowded England and indigent Germany than like rich and roomy Nature. But the few cases are deceptive; and though Homer should starve in the highway, Homer will know and proclaim that bounteous Nature has bread for all her boys. To-morrow our arms will be stronger; to-morrow the wall before which we sat will open of itself and show the new way.

Ellery Channing works and writes as usual at his cottage, to which Captain Moore has added a neat slat fence and gate. His wife as yet has no more than five scholars, but will have more presently. Hawthorne has returned from a visit to the seashore in good spirits. Elizabeth Hoar is still absent since Evarts's¹ marriage. You will have heard of our Wyman Trial and the stir it made in the village. But the Cliff and Walden, which know something of the railroad, knew nothing of that; not a leaf nodded; not a pebble fell. Why should I speak of it to you? Now the humanity of the town suffers with the poor Irish, who receives but sixty, or even fifty cents, for working from dark till dark, with a strain and a following up that reminds one of negro-driving. Peter Hutchinson told me he had never seen men perform so much; he should never think it hard again if an employer should keep him at work till after sundown. But what can be done for their relief as long as new applicants for the same

¹ The present W. M. Evarts, lately Senator from New York, a cousin of Miss Hoar.

labor are coming in every day? These of course reduce the wages to the sum that will suffice a bachelor to live, and must drive out the men with families. The work goes on very fast. The mole which crosses the land of Jonas Potter and Mr. Stow, from Ephraim Wheeler's high land to the depot, is eighteen feet high, and goes on two rods every day. A few days ago a new contract was completed, — from the terminus of the old contract to Fitchburg, — the whole to be built before October, 1844; so that you see our fate is sealed. I have not yet advertised my house for sale, nor engaged my passage to Berkshire; have even suffered George Bradford to plan a residence with me next spring, and at this very day am talking with Mr. Britton of building a cottage in my triangle for Mrs. Brown; but I can easily foresee that some inconveniences may arise from the road, when open, that shall drive me from my rest.

I mean to send the Winter's Walk to the printer to-morrow for the Dial. I had some hesitation about it, notwithstanding its faithful observation and its fine sketches of the pickerel-fisher and of the woodchopper, on account of *mannerism*, an old charge of mine, — as if, by attention, one could get the trick of the rhetoric; for example, to call a cold place sultry, a solitude public, a wilderness *domestic* (a favorite word), and in the woods to insult over cities, whilst the woods, again, are dignified by comparing them to cities, armies, etc. By pretty free omissions, however, I have removed my principal objections. I ought to say that Ellery Channing admired the piece loudly and long, and only stipulated for the omission of Douglas and one copy of verses on the Smoke. For the rest, we go on with the Youth of the Poet and Painter and with extracts from the Jamaica Voyage, and Lane has sent me A Day with the Shakers. Poetry have I very little. Have you no Greek translations ready for me?

I beg you to tell my brother William that the review of Channing's poems, in the Democratic Review, has been interpolated with sentences and extracts, to make it long, by the editor, and I acknowledge, as far as I remember, little beyond the first page. And now that I have departed so far from my indolence as to write this letter, I have yet to add to mine the affectionate greetings of my wife and my mother.

Yours,

R. W. EMERSON.

Emerson did, in fact, throw out from the Winter Walk two pages or so, besides making changes here and there; all which the young author took in good part. I have the rejected pages, which perhaps, in after years, the editor would have accepted, finding that Thoreau's mannerism, like his punning, was part of the man, and must be humored.

XIV. THOREAU TO EMERSON.

STATEN ISLAND, September 14, 1843.

DEAR FRIEND, — Miss Fuller will tell you the news from these parts, so I will only devote these few moments to what she does not know as well. I was absent only one day and night from the Island, the family expecting me back immediately. I was to earn a certain sum before winter, and thought it worth the while to try various experiments. I carried the Agriculturist about the city, and up as far as Manhattanville, and called at the Croton Reservoir, where indeed they did not want any Agriculturist, but paid well enough in their way. Literature comes to a poor market here, and even the little that I write is more than will sell. I have tried the Democratic Review, the New Mirror, and Brother Jonathan. The last two, as well as the New World, are overwhelmed with contributions which cost nothing, and are worth no more. The Knickerbocker is too poor, and only the Ladies' Companion pays. O'Sullivan is printing the manuscript I sent him some

time ago, having objected only to my want of sympathy with the Communities.

I doubt if you have made more corrections in my manuscript than I should have done ere this, though they may be better; but I am glad you have taken any pains with it. I have not prepared any translations for the *Dial*, supposing there would be no room, though it is the only place for them.

I have been seeing men during these days, and trying experiments upon trees; have inserted three or four hundred buds (quite a Buddhist, one might say). Books I have access to through your brother and Mr. Mackean, and have read a good deal. Quarles's *Divine Poems* as well as *Emblems* are quite a discovery.

I am very sorry Mrs. Emerson is so sick. Remember me to her and to your mother. I like to think of your living on the banks of the Mill-brook, in the midst of the garden with all its weeds; for what are botanical distinctions at this distance? Your friend,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

XV. THOREAU TO EMERSON.

STATEN ISLAND, *October 17, 1843.*

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I went with my pupil to the Fair of the American Institute, and so lost a visit from Tappan, whom I met returning from the Island. I should have liked to hear more news from his lips, though he had left me a letter and the *Dial*, which is a sort of circular letter itself. I find Channing's letters full of life, and I enjoy their wit highly. Lane writes straight and solid, like a guideboard, but I find that I put off the "social tendencies" to a future day, which may never come. He is always Shaker fare, quite as luxurious as his principles will allow. I feel as if I were ready to be appointed a committee on poetry, I have got my eyes so whetted and proved of late, like the knife-sharpener I saw at the Fair, certified to have been "in constant use in a gentleman's family for more than two years."

Yes, I ride along the ranks of the English poets, casting terrible glances, and some I blot out, and some I spare. Maclean has imported, within the year, several new editions and collections of old poetry, of which I have the reading, but there is a good deal of chaff to a little meal. — hardly worth bolting. I have just opened Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* for the first time, which I read with great delight. It is more like what Scott's novels *were* than anything.

I see that I was very blind to send you my manuscript in such a state; but I have a good *second* sight, at least. I could still shake it in the wind to some advantage, if it would hold together. There are some sad mistakes in the printing. It is a little unfortunate that the *Ethical Scriptures* should hold out so well, though it does really hold out. The Bible ought not to be very large. Is it not singular that, while the religious world is gradually picking to pieces its old testaments, here are some coming slowly after, on the seashore, picking up the durable relics of perhaps older books, and putting them together again?

Your Letter to Contributors is excellent, and hits the nail on the head. It will taste sour to their palates at first, no doubt, but it will bear a sweet fruit at last. I like the poetry, especially the Autumn verses. They ring true. Though I am quite weather-beaten with poetry, having weathered so many epics of late. The Sweep Ho! sounds well this way. But I have a good deal of fault to find with your Ode to Beauty. The tune is altogether unworthy of the thoughts. You slope too quickly to the rhyme, as if that trick had better be performed as soon as possible, or as if you stood over the line with a hatchet, and chopped off the verses as they came out, some short and some long. But give us a long reel, and we'll cut it up to suit ourselves. It sounds like parody. "Thee knew I of old," "Remediless thirst," are some of those stereotyped lines. I am frequently

reminded, I believe, of Jane Taylor's *Philosopher's Scales*, and how the world

"Flew out with a bounce,"

which

"Yerked the philosopher out of his cell ; "

or else of

"From the climes of the sun all war-worn and weary."

I had rather have the thought come ushered with a flourish of oaths and curses. Yet I love your poetry as I do little else that is near and recent, especially when you get fairly round the end of the line, and are not thrown back upon the rocks. To read the lecture on *The Comic* is as good as to be in our town meeting or Lyceum once more.

I am glad that the Concord farmers ploughed well this year ; it promises that something will be done these summers. But I am suspicious of that *Brittonner*, who advertises so many cords of *good* oak, chestnut, and maple wood for sale. *Good!* ay, good for what? And there shall not be left a stone upon a stone. But no matter, — let them hack away. The sturdy Irish arms that do the work are of more worth than oak or maple. Methinks I could look with equanimity upon a long street of Irish cabins, and pigs and children reveling in the genial Concord dirt ; and I should still find my Walden wood and Fair Haven in their tanned and happy faces.

I write this in the cornfield — it being washing-day — with the inkstand Elizabeth Hoar gave me ; ¹ though it is not

¹ This inkstand was presented by Miss Hoar, with a note dated "Boston, May 2, 1843," which deserves to be copied.

DEAR HENRY. — The rain prevented me from seeing you the night before I came away, to leave with you a parting assurance of good will and good hope. We have become better acquainted within the two past years than in our whole life as schoolmates and neighbors before ; and I am unwilling to let you go away without telling you that I, among your other friends, shall miss you much, and follow you with remembrance and all best wishes and con-

redolent of cornstalks, I fear. Let me not be forgotten by Channing and Hawthorne, nor our grey-suited neighbor under the hill [Edmund Hosmer].

Your friend, H. D. THOREAU.

This letter and that of Emerson preceding it (No. XIII.) will be best explained by a reference to the *Dial* for October, 1843. The *Ethnical Scriptures* were selections from the *Brahminical* books, from Confucius, etc., such as we have since seen in great abundance. The *Autumn* verses are by Channing ; *Sweep Ho!* by Ellen Sturgis, afterwards Mrs. Hooper ; the *Youth of the Poet and Painter* also by Channing. The *Letter to Contributors*, which is headed simply *A Letter*, is by Emerson, and has been much overlooked by his later readers ; his *Ode to Beauty* is very well known, and does not deserve the slashing censure of Thoreau, though, as it now stands, it is better than first printed. Instead of

"Love drinks at thy banquet
Remediless thirst,"

we now have the perfect phrase,

"Love drinks at thy *fountain*
False waters of thirst."

The *Comic* is also Emerson's. There is a poem, *The Sail*, by William Tappan, so often named in these letters, and a sonnet by Charles A. Dana, now of the New York Sun.

XVI. EMERSON TO THOREAU.

CONCORD, October 25, 1843.

DEAR HENRY. — I have your letter fidence. Will you take this little inkstand and try if it will carry ink safely from Concord to Staten Island ? and the pen, which, if you can write with steel, may be made sometimes the interpreter of friendly thoughts to those whom you leave beyond the reach of your voice, — or record the inspirations of Nature, who, I doubt not, will be as faithful to you who trust her in the sea-girt Staten Island as in Concord woods and meadows. Good-by, and εὖ πράττειν, which, a wise man says, is the only salutation fit for the wise.

Truly your friend,

E. HOAR.

this evening by the advent of Mrs. Fuller to Ellery Channing's, and am heartily glad of the robust greeting. Ellery brought it to me, and, as it was opened, wondered whether he had not some right to expect a letter. So I read him what belonged to him. He is usually in good spirits, and always in good wit, forms stricter ties with George Minott, and is always merry with the dullness of a world which will not support him. I am sorry you will dodge my hunters, T. and W. William Tappan is a very satisfactory person, only I could be very willing he should read a little more; he speaks seldom, but easily and strongly, and moves like a deer. H. James, too, has gone to England. I am the more sorry because you liked him so well.

In Concord no events. We have had the new Hazlitt's Montaigne, which contained the *Journey into Italy*, — new to me, — and the narrative of the death of the renowned friend Étienne de la Boétie. Then I have had Saadi's *Gulistân*, Ross's translation, and Marot, and Roman de la Rose, and Robert of Gloucester's rhymed Chronicle.

Where are my translations of Pindar for the *Dial*? Fail not to send me something good and strong. They send us the *Rivista Ligure*, a respectable magazine, from Genoa; *La Démocratie Pacifique*, a bright daily paper, from Paris; the *Deutsche Schnellpost*, the German New York paper; and *Phalanx* from London; the *New Englander* from New Haven, which angrily affirms that the *Dial* is not as good as the Bible. By all these signs we infer that we make some figure in the literary world, though

we are not yet encouraged by a swollen subscription list. Lidian says she will write you a note herself. If, as we have heard, you will come home to Thanksgiving, you must bring something that will serve for Lyceum lecture, — the craving, thankless town!

Yours affectionately,

WALDO EMERSON.

Soon after this letter was received by Thoreau at Staten Island he returned to Concord, and there lived with his father, mother, and two sisters, Helen and Sophia, until he went, in March, 1845, to live in the Walden woods. He was so near his friend Emerson in 1844–47 that few or no letters passed between them. The *Dial* perished in the mean time, — the number for April, 1844, being the last of the sixteen, and containing a few of Thoreau's promised translations from Pindar. From that time until 1849 he was at work on his first book, *The Week*. Ellery Channing, in 1844–45, had gone to New York to help Horace Greeley edit the *Tribune*, and had afterwards sailed up the Mediterranean and made his short visit to Rome; Hawthorne had left the Old Manse and entered the Salem custom house; and Alcott had bought the Wayside estate (which Hawthorne afterwards occupied), and was gardening there in 1846–47. Finally, after many invitations, Emerson decided to visit England, and in the autumn of 1847 Thoreau left his Walden hut to reside in Emerson's house at the village, and to renew the correspondence of four years earlier. This will make another chapter.

F. B. Sanborn.