

APPENDIX

THE letters of Thoreau, early or late, which did not reach me in time to be used in the original edition of this book, and have since appeared in print here and there, are included either in order of their date in the preceding pages (in the case of the additional Ricketson letters) or in this Appendix. I owe the right to use the following correspondence to Mr. E. H. Russell of Worcester and to Dr. S. A. Jones of Ann Arbor, Michigan, who first obtained from the family of Calvin H. Greene of Rochester, Michigan, the Greene letters, five in number, all short, but characteristic. Dr. Jones printed these in a small edition at Jamaica, N. Y., and along with them some letters of Miss Sophia Thoreau to Mr. Greene, and portions of Greene's Diary during his two visits to Concord in September, 1863, and August, 1874. In these papers he left initials, or letters commonly used for unknown quantities, to stand for certain names occurring there. "X." and "X. Y. Z." in this Diary, and in Miss Thoreau's letters, signify Ellery Channing, to whom in March, 1863, Mr. Greene had sent the manzanita cane, headed with buffalo-horn and tipped with silver, which he had made with his own hands and intended for Thoreau, and which Mr. Channing gave to me, as the mutual friend of the two Concord poets. In the Diary I am "Mr. S." This Diary and the letters of Miss Thoreau supply some useful facts for a Thoreau biography, which this collection of Familiar Letters was meant to be, — a biography largely in the words of its subject. Notice is taken of such facts in footnotes.

The earlier letters to Isaac Hecker, afterwards known as Father Hecker of New York, grew out of an acquaintance formed with him while he was living at Mrs. Thoreau's, and taking lessons of the late George Bradford, brother of Mrs. Ripley. They were subsequent to Hecker's brief stay at Brook Farm and Fruitlands, and when he was studying to be a Catholic priest. He cherished the vain hope of converting Thoreau to his own newly acquired faith, amid the influences of Catholic Europe. The brief correspondence is printed in the *Atlantic Monthly* for September, 1902.

Isaac Hecker, born in December, 1819, two and a half years after Thoreau, was the son of a German baker in New York city, and of little education until he came to Massachusetts at the age of twenty-three, as the disciple and friend of Dr. Brownson, then a Protestant preacher and social democrat. In January, 1843, he entered the Brook Farm community, not as a member, but as a worker and student, making the bread for the family and taking lessons of George Ripley, George Bradford, Charles Dana, and John S. Dwight, — all friends of the Concord circle of authors. But he was restless, and yearned for a more ascetic life, and before he had been at Brook Farm a month he was writing to Bronson Alcott about entering the as yet unopened Fruitlands convent, between which and Brook Farm Concord was a half-way station, both physically and spiritually. Hecker tried all three: was at Brook Farm, off and on, for six months, at Fruitlands two weeks (from July 11 to July 25, 1843), and at Concord two months (from April 22 to June 20, 1844). Then, August 1, he was baptized in the Catholic faith at New York. The day before this final step, towards which he had been tending for a year, he wrote to Thoreau, proposing a journey through

Europe on foot and without money. During his brief Concord life he had been a lodger at the house of John Thoreau (the Parkman house, where now the Public Library stands), and had seen Henry Thoreau daily. Hecker thus describes his room, his rent, and his landlady, who was Thoreau's mother:

"All that is needed for my comfort is here, — a room of good size, very good people, furnished and to be kept in order for 75 cents a week, including lights, — wood is extra pay; a good straw bed, a large table, carpet, wash-stand, book-case, stove, chairs, looking-glass, — all, all that is needful. The lady of the house, Mrs. Thoreau, is a *woman*. The only fear I have about her is that she is too much like dear mother, — she will take too much care of me. If you were to see her, Mother, you would be perfectly satisfied that I have fallen into good hands, and met a second mother, if that is possible. I have just finished my dinner, — unleavened bread from home, maple-sugar, and apples which I purchased this morning. Previous to taking dinner I said my first lesson to Mr. Bradford in Greek and Latin."

Hecker "boarded himself," but no doubt often partook of Mrs. Thoreau's hospitality, and took long walks with Thoreau. Writing to him three months after the first meeting at Concord, Hecker said: "I have formed a certain project which your influence has no slight share in forming. It is, to work our passage to Europe, and to walk, work, and beg, if need be, as far, when there, as we are inclined to do."

TO ISAAC HECKER (AT NEW YORK).

CONCORD, August 14, 1844.

FRIEND HECKER, — I am glad to hear your voice from that populous city, and the more so for the tenor of its dis-

course. I have but just returned from a pedestrian excursion somewhat similar to that you propose. *parvis componere magna*, to the Catskill Mountains, over the principal mountains of this State, subsisting mainly on bread and berries, and slumbering on the mountain-tops. As usually happens, I now feel a slight sense of dissipation. Still, I am strongly tempted by your proposal, and experience a decided schism between my outward and inward tendencies. Your method of traveling, especially, — to live along the road, citizens of the world, without haste or petty plans, — I have often proposed this to my dreams, and still do. But the fact is, I cannot so decidedly postpone exploring the *Farther Indies*, which are to be reached, you know, by other routes and other methods of travel. I mean that I constantly return from every external enterprise with disgust, to fresh faith in a kind of Brahminical, Artesian, Inner Temple life. All my experience, as yours probably, proves only this reality. Channing wonders how I can resist your invitation, I, a single man — unfettered — and so do I. Why, there are Roncesvalles, the Cape de Finisterre, and the Three Kings of Cologne; Rome, Athens, and the rest, to be visited in serene, untemporal hours, and all history to revive in one's memory, as he went by the way, with splendors too bright for this world, — I know how it is. But is not here, too, Roncesvalles with greater lustre? Unfortunately, it may prove dull and desultory weather enough here, but better trivial days with faith than the fairest ones lighted by sunshine alone. Perchance, my *Wanderjahr* has not arrived, but you cannot wait for that. I hope you will find a companion who will enter as heartily into your schemes as I should have done.

I remember you, as it were, with the whole Catholic Church at your skirts. And the other day, for a moment, I think I

understood your relation to that body; but the thought was gone again in a twinkling, as when a dry leaf falls from its stem over our heads, but is instantly lost in the rustling mass at our feet.

I am really sorry that the Genius will not let me go with you, but I trust that it will conduct to other adventures, and so, if nothing prevents, we will compare notes at last.

When this invitation reached Concord, Thoreau was absent on a tour with Channing to the Berkshire Mountains and the Catskills, — Channing coming up the Hudson from New York (where he then lived, aiding Horace Greeley in the *Tribune* office), and meeting his friend at the foot of the Hoosac Mountain. On its summit Thoreau had spent the night, sleeping under a board near the observatory tower built by the Williams College students, as related by him in the *Week*. They then crossed the Hudson and journeyed on to the Catskills, returning together to Concord.¹ Meantime Hecker had got impatient, and wrote again, to which Thoreau replied, August 17, thus briefly: —

TO ISAAC HECKER (AT NEW YORK).

I improve the occasion of my mother's sending to acknowledge the receipt of your stirring letter. You have probably

¹ Channing more than once described to me Thoreau's disheveled appearance as he came down the mountain the next morning, after rather a comfortless night. He was carrying for valise a green leather satchel that had been Charles Emerson's, having but recently been the guest of both William and Waldo Emerson. In depicting the scene from the Berkshire mountain, he recurred (in the *Week*) to the homesteads of the Huguenots on Staten Island, where he had rambled the year before this Berkshire experience, while living at William Emerson's and giving lessons to his sons.

received mine by this time. I thank you for not anticipating any vulgar objections on my part. *Far* travel, very *far* travel, or travail, comes near to the worth of staying at home. Who knows whence his education is to come! Perhaps I may drag my anchor at length, or rather, when the *winds* which blow *over* the deep fill my sails, may stand away for distant parts, — for now I seem to have a firm *ground* anchorage, though the harbor is low-shored enough, and the traffic with the natives inconsiderable. I may be away to Singapore by the next tide.

I like well the ring of your last maxim, "It is only the fear of death makes us reason of impossibilities." And but for fear, death itself is an impossibility.

Believe me, I can hardly let it end so. If you do not go soon, let me hear from you again.

Yrs. in great haste,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

Hecker did not in fact go to Europe till a year later, and when he walked over a part of central Europe, it was in company with one or two young Catholic priests, — men very unlike Thoreau.

The short correspondence with Calvin Greene (longer than that with Hecker) occurred at intervals, a dozen years and more after the Fruitlands period, when the Walden experience had been lived through and recorded, and the friendship with the Ricketson family was in its earlier stages. Mr. Greene, when he called on me at his first visit to the Thoreau family in 1863, mentioned that he had just read Thoreau's poem, "The Departure," which at Sophia's request I had lately printed in the Boston *Commonwealth*, a weekly that I had

been editing since Moncure Conway had left Concord for London, in the winter of 1862–63. Greene was a plain, sincere man, never in New England before, who amused Channing by saying he had "taken a boat-ride on the Atlantic." He came once more in 1874, and spent an evening with me in the house where Thoreau lived and died, — Mrs. Thoreau then being dead, and Sophia at Bangor, where she died in 1876.

TO CALVIN H. GREENE (AT ROCHESTER, MICH.).

CONCORD, January 18, 1856.

DEAR SIR, — I am glad to hear that my "Walden" has interested you, — that perchance it holds some truth still as far off as Michigan. I thank you for your note.

The "Week" had so poor a publisher that it is quite uncertain whether you will find it in any shop. I am not sure but authors must turn booksellers themselves. The price is \$1.25. If you care enough for it to send me that sum by mail (stamps will do for change), I will forward you a copy by the same conveyance.

As for the "more" that is to come, I cannot speak definitely at present, but I trust that the mine — be it silver or lead — is not yet exhausted. At any rate, I shall be encouraged by the fact that you are interested in its yield.

Yours respectfully,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

CONCORD, February 10, 1856.

DEAR SIR, — I forwarded to you by mail on the 31st of January a copy of my "Week," post paid, which I trust that you have received. I thank you heartily for the expression

of your interest in "Walden" and hope that you will not be disappointed by the "Week." You ask how the former has been received. It has found an audience of excellent character, and quite numerous, some 2000 copies having been dispersed.¹ I should consider it a greater success to interest one wise and earnest soul, than a million unwise and frivolous.

You may rely on it that you have the best of me in my books, and that I am not worth seeing personally, the stuttering, blundering clod-hopper that I am. Even poetry, you know, is in one sense an infinite brag and exaggeration. Not that I do not stand on all that I have written, — but what am I to the truth I feebly utter?

I like the name of your county.² May it grow men as sturdy as its trees! Methinks I hear your flute echo amid the oaks. Is not yours, too, a good place to study theology? I hope that you will ere long recover your turtle-dove, and that it may bring you glad tidings out of that heaven in which it disappeared.

Yours sincerely,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

CONCORD, May 31, 1856.

DEAR SIR, — I forwarded by mail a copy of my "Week," post paid to James Newberry, Merchant, Rochester, Oakland Co., Mich., according to your order, about ten days ago, or on the receipt of your note.

I will obtain and forward a copy of "Walden" and also of the "Week" to California, to your order, post paid, for \$2.60. The postage will be between 60 and 70 cents.

¹ This was ten times as many in eighteen months as the *Week* sold in five years.

² Mr. Greene lived in Oakland County.

I thank you heartily for your kind intentions respecting me. The West has many attractions for me, particularly the lake country and the Indians, yet I do [not] foresee what my engagements may be in the fall. I have once or twice come near going West a-lecturing, and perhaps some winter may bring me into your neighborhood, in which case I should probably see you. Yet lecturing has commonly proved so foreign and irksome to me, that I think I could only use it to acquire the means with which to make an independent tour another time.

As for my pen, I can say that it is not altogether idle, though I have finished nothing new in the book form. I am drawing a rather long bow, though it may be a feeble one, but I pray that the archer may receive new strength before the arrow is shot.

With many thanks, yours truly,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

CONCORD, Saturday, June 21, 1856.

DEAR SIR, — On the 12th I forwarded the two books to California, observing your directions in every particular, and I trust that Uncle Sam will discharge his duty faithfully. While in Worcester this week I obtained the accompanying daguerreotype,¹ which my friends think is pretty good, though better-looking than I.

Books and postage	\$2.64
Daguerreotype50
Postage16
	<hr/>
	3.30

¹ This fixes the date of the Worcester portrait, — June, 1856, two years after the Rowse crayon.

5.00 You will accordingly
 3.30
 find 1.70 enclosed with my shadow.
 Yrs.,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

CONCORD, July 8, 1857.

DEAR SIR, — You are right in supposing that I have not been Westward. I am very little of a traveler. I am gratified to hear of the interest you take in my books; it is additional encouragement to write more of them. Though my pen is not idle, I have not published anything for a couple of years at least. I like a private life, and cannot bear to have the public in my mind.

You will excuse me for not responding more heartily to your notes, since I realize what an interval there always is between the actual and imagined author and feel that it would not be just for *me* to appropriate the sympathy and good will of my unseen readers.

Nevertheless, I should like to meet you, and if I ever come into your neighborhood shall endeavor to do so. Can't you tell the world of your life also? Then I shall know you, at least as well as you me.

Yours truly,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

CONCORD, November 24, 1859.

DEAR SIR, — The lectures which you refer to were reported in the newspapers, *after a fashion*, — the last one in some half-dozen of them, — and if I possessed one, or all,

I would send them to you, bad as they are. The best, or at least longest one of the Boston lectures was in the *Boston Atlas and Bee* of November 2d, — maybe half the whole. There were others in the *Traveller*, the *Journal*, etc., of the same date.

I am glad to know that you are interested to see my things, and I wish I had them in printed form to send to you. I exerted myself considerably to get the last discourse printed and sold for the benefit of Brown's family, but the publishers are afraid of pamphlets, and it is now too late.¹

I return the stamps which I have not used.

I shall be glad to see you if I ever come your way.

Yours truly,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

¹ This "last discourse" was the long one on John Brown, now included in Thoreau's *Miscellanies*, and formerly in the volume beginning with "A Yankee in Canada."