

Ann Arbor, 13th of November, 1895.

Dear Mr. Dawes:

The book dropped into my hands on Monday, and I have deferred acknowledging it in expectation that a copy of Mr. Salt's new book - "Poems of Nature" - would have been received so that I could report upon it. It is delayed in the Custom House and I shall wait no longer. The volume is edited jointly by Salt and Sanborn, and will be published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., as well as in the original English edition. I know that it contains a few things that have not been previously published; but I must say they are mere jingles that will do Thoreau no credit.

Only the other day I had in my hands the MS. of one of Thoreau's poems - that which Emerson named "Mountains."

"With frontier strength ye stand your ground."

Somehow, I could'nt enthuse a bit, yet there it was before me. I remembered that Margaret Fuller had refused to publish it in the DIAL, but Thoreau, no wise disconcerted, put it in the "Week." Edward Emerson had the MS., which is evidently one of Thoreau's clean copies, for it was without an erasure, licked into shape as comelily as a bear cub. Emerson, Pere, hit Thoreau's poetry when he said "The thyme and marjoram are not yet honey." "Smoke" is the only piece in which he sounds one full, clear note all through. I do not think Thoreau's ear would have ever enabled him to preserve the rhythm - and he violates this even worse than did Emerson. But there is more than enough of him without the poetry.

I received your letter and Mr. Salt's the same day, and I am glad to inform you that on the 2nd of the month the "copy" for the new edition of Thoreau's life was given to the printers. The book is somewhat shortened, but it is improved, Mr. Salt thinks; many errors have been corrected, and some new material included. I think I told you it was to make one of the "Great Writers" Series. This will give it a wide circulation and will enlarge the list of readers.

Did I tell you that I learned the name of that Canadian wood-chopper whom Thoreau tells of in Walden? I happened to think of it and asked Edward Emerson. He said it was "Therian," and he told me a characteristic thing of Thoreau's last interview with him. The Canadian called to see him and was under the influence of liquor at the time. Thoreau had lost his voice, but he said to him in the hoarse whisper of a consumptive, "You had better go right to the river and drown yourself." And he repeated this when poor Therian attempted to say something. The Canadian felt his earnestness and retired abashed;—but he died of drink just the same.

I have collated the "Ktaadn" papers in the Union Magazine with the chapter on "Ktaadn" in the "Maine Woods," but there is not one word of difference. That volume was compiled after his death by Sophia, and, of course, she made no textual alteration. I feel that I have robbed you of the volume, and should have had a sneaking, half-satisfaction had you allowed me to pay for it. "Thanks!" sounds very inequitate — yet, what else is left me?

Like you, I have reached a sort of Thoreau satiety, so I rest. I read him now and then as a tonic; but he is much more of a rebuke to me. How many there are whom we will not dare approach in the Beyond!

Poor Mr. Blake is working away intermittently at that last volume of recollections, but I am afraid the old chap with the scythe will surprise him at the work.

But Sanborn will glean the last ear, — be sure of that.

Sincerely yours,

*Samuel S. Jones.*