

1843

In January Francis Scott Key died. The House of Representatives rejected the resolution offered by J. M. Botts to impeach President Tyler. In the spring Daniel Webster, Secretary of State, retired majestically from the Cabinet. The Bunker Hill Monument was dedicated. The John Fremont expedition sighted Pike's Peak. A Mormon revelation of July 12 sanctioned plural marriage. The National Liberty Party of abolitionists, assembled in convention at Buffalo, nominated James G. Birney for president of the United States and Thomas Morris for vice-president. Congress voted \$30,000 to help Morse establish the first telegraph line between Washington and Baltimore.

The beginning of this year found Thoreau at a low point. He had exhausted his possibilities in the Emerson household, he believed that his poetry was drying up, and he recognized that he needed to earn a living—preferably with his pen. Since mid-nineteenth-century America allowed no really good writer to do that, the best that could be arranged was a compromise. Emerson got Thoreau a job as tutor in William Emerson's family on Staten Island. This was not to be hard work, and it was to give Thoreau a chance to test the New York literary market. The test did not turn out too well. It was not that he had no success at all—actually he managed to publish three pieces, two in the *Democratic Review* and one in the *Boston Miscellany*—but he was not nearly successful enough. The *Journal* for 1843 is not in print, but we can get a good notion of Thoreau's aims and attitudes from the many letters that survive. The typical letter of this year shows both Thoreau's liveliness and his frustration.

TO RICHARD FULLER

Concord Jan 16 1843

Dear Richard

I need not thank you for your present for I hear its music, which seems to be playing just for us two pilgrims marching over hill and dale of a summer afternoon—up those long Bolton hills and by those bright Harvard lakes, such as I see in the placid Lucerne on the lid—and whenever I hear it, it will recall happy hours passed with its donor.

When did mankind make that foray into nature and bring off this booty—? For certainly it is but history that some rare virtue in remote times plundered these strains from above, and communicated them to men. Whatever we may think of it, it is a part of the harmony of the spheres you have sent me, which has condescended to serve us Admetuses—and I hope I may so behave that this may always be the tenor of your thought for me.

If you have any strains, the conquest of your own spear or quill to accompany these, let the winds waft them also to me.

I write this with one of the “primaries” of my osprey’s wings, which I have preserved over my glass for some state occasion—and now it affords.

Mrs. Emerson sends her love—

Yr friend,  
Henry D. Thoreau

*Richard Fuller was a younger brother of Margaret Fuller and of Ellen, the wife of Thoreau’s friend Ellery Channing. It seems probable that the gift of the music box was made in return for Thoreau’s tutoring to help young Fuller enter Harvard, where he was now a junior sophister.*

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*Apollo forced to serve King Admetus was one of Thoreau’s favorite symbols; here he gives it an unusual turn. MS., John Cooley (typescript).*

TO MRS. LUCY BROWN

Concord Jan 24th 1843

Dear Friend,

The other day I wrote you a letter to go in Mrs Emerson’s bundle but as it seemed unworthy I did not send it, and now to atone for that I am agoing to send this whether it be worthy or not—I will not venture upon news for as all the household are gone to bed—I cannot learn what has been told you. Do you read any noble verses now a days—or do not verses still seem noble? —For my own part they have been the only things I remembered—or that which occasioned them—when all things else were blurred and defaced. All things have put on mourning but they—for the elegy itself is some victorious melody and joy escaping from the wreck.

It is a relief to read some true book wherein all are equally dead—equally alive. I think the best parts of Shakspeare would only be enhanced by the most thrilling and affecting events. I have found it so. And so much the more as they are not intended for consolation.

Do you think of coming to Concord again?—I shall be glad to see you—I should be glad to know that I could see you when I would.

We always seem to be living just on the brink of a pure and lofty intercourse which would make the ills and trivialness of life ridiculous. After each little interval, though it be but for the night, we are prepared to meet each other as gods and goddesses.—I seem to have lodged all my days with one or two persons, and lived upon expectation—as if the bud would surely blossom—and so I am content to live.

What means the fact—which is so common—so universal—that some soul that has lost all hope for itself can inspire in another listening soul an infinite confidence in it, even while it is expressing its despair—?

I am very happy in my present environment—though actually mean

enough myself and so of course all around me—Yet I am sure we for the most part are transfigured to one another and are that to the other which we aspire to be ourselves. The longest course of mean and trivial intercourse may not prevent my practising this divine courtesy to my companion. Notwithstanding all I hear about brooms and scouring and taxes and house keeping—I am constrained to live a strangely mixed life—As if even Valhalla might have its kitchen. We are all of us Apollo's serving some Admetus.

I think I must have some muses in my pay that I know not of—for certain musical wishes of mine are answered as soon as entertained—Last summer I went to Hawthorne's suddenly for the express purpose of borrowing his music box, and almost immediately Mrs. H proposed to lend it to me. The other day I said I must go to Mrs. Barrett's to hear hers—and lo straightway Richard Fuller sent me one for a present from Cambridge. It is a very good one. I should like to have you hear it. I shall not have to employ you to borrow for me now. Good night.

from your affectionate friend

H. D. T.

MS., Folger Shakespeare Library.

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

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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 larks 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 grati- and edification; 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 vum, 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.

*Emerson was in Philadelphia delivering lectures and visiting his friend W. H. Furness. Incidentally, he had Furness try to find a publisher for the Week. Edith was Emerson's daughter; O'Sullivan was editor of the Democratic Review (see letter from O'Sullivan of July 28, 1843); and Charles Lane and Henry C. Wright were English friends of Alcott who later joined in his experiment at Fruitlands. (It is possible, however, that Thoreau is referring to Henry C. Wright, the American reformer.) Alcott's refusal to pay taxes was similar in purpose to Thoreau's refusal during the war with Mexico. Thoreau refers to My Prisons in his essay "Civil Disobedience," too. Pellico was a noted Italian dramatist jailed*

*for revolutionary activities in his homeland; one of the American translations of My Prisons was printed in Cambridge in 1836. Text, Emerson-Thoreau, pp. 578-79; the bracketed additions are Sanborn's.*

TO MRS. LUCY BROWN

Concord, Friday evening, January 25, 1843.

Dear Friend,—

Mrs. Emerson asks me to write you a letter, which she will put into her bundle to-morrow along with the "Tribunes" and "Standards," and miscellanies, and what not, to make an assortment. But what shall I write? You live a good way off, and I don't know that I have anything which will bear sending so far. But I am mistaken, or rather impatient when I say this,—for we all have a gift to send, not only when the year begins, but as long as interest and memory last. I don't know whether you have got the many I have sent you, or rather whether you were quite sure where they came from. I mean the letters I have sometimes launched off eastward in my thought; but if you have been happier at one time than another, think that then you received them. But this that I now send you is of another sort. It will go slowly, drawn by horses over muddy roads, and lose much of its little value by the way. You may have to pay for it, and it may not make you happy after all. But what shall be my new-year's gift, then? Why, I will send you my still fresh remembrance of the hours I have passed with you here, for I find in the remembrance of them the best gift you have left to me. We are poor and sick creatures at best; but we can have well memories, and sound and healthy thoughts of one another still, and an intercourse may be remembered which was without blur, and above us both.

Perhaps you may like to know of my estate nowadays. As usual, I find it harder to account for the happiness I enjoy, than for the sadness which instructs me occasionally. If the little of this last which visits me would only be sadder, it would be happier. One while I am vexed by a sense of meanness; one while I simply wonder at the mystery of life; and at another, and at another, seem to rest on my oars, as if propelled

by propitious breezes from I know not what quarter. But for the most part I am an idle, inefficient, lingering (one term will do as well as another, where all are true and none true enough) member of the great commonwealth, who have most need of my own charity,—if I could not be charitable and indulgent to myself, perhaps as good a subject for my own satire as any. You see how when I come to talk of myself, I soon run dry, for I would fain make that a subject which can be no subject for me, at least not till I have the grace to rule myself.

I do not venture to say anything about your griefs, for it would be unnatural for me to speak as if I grieved with you, when I think I do not. If I were to see you, it might be otherwise. But I know you will pardon the trivialness of this letter; and I only hope—as I know that you have reason to be so—that you are still happier than you are sad, and that you remember that the smallest seed of faith is of more worth than the largest fruit of happiness. I have no doubt that out of S—'s death you sometimes draw sweet consolation, not only for that, but for long-standing griefs, and may find some things made smooth by it, which before were rough.

I wish you would communicate with me, and not think me unworthy to know any of your thoughts. Don't think me unkind because I have not written to you. I confess it was for so poor a reason as that you almost made a principle of not answering. I could not speak truly with this ugly fact in the way; and perhaps I wished to be assured, by such evidence as you could not voluntarily give, that it was a kindness. For every glance at the moon, does she not send me an answering ray? Noah would hardly have done himself the pleasure to release his dove, if she had not been about to come back to him with tidings of green islands amid the waste.

But these are far-fetched reasons. I am not speaking directly enough to yourself now; so let me say *directly*

From your friend,  
Henry D. Thoreau.

*Lacking the manuscripts, we cannot check Sanborn's dating of this letter to Mrs. Brown or of the one dated January 24; however, the two letters largely parallel each other in contents and give a reader the feeling that they are almost two drafts of the same letter. Or it may be,*

*if we judge from the opening sentence, that the letter Sanborn dated the 25th was actually the one that Thoreau wrote first and then said he did not mail. The 25th was not a Friday, but a Wednesday; Friday the 20th and Friday the 27th are two possibilities. Text, Familiar Letters of Thoreau, pp. 53–56.*

From EMERSON

Carlton House: New York Feb 1843

My dear Henry,

I have yet seen no new men in N. Y. (excepting young Tappan) but only seen again some of my old friends of last year. Mr. Brisbane has just given me a faithful hour & a half of what he calls his principles, and he shames truer men by his fidelity & zeal, and already begins to hear the reverberations of his single voice from most of the States of the Union. He thinks himself five of W. H. Channing here, as a good Fourierist. I laugh incredulous whilst 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 132 bodies, I believe and his urgent inculcation of our Stellar duties. But it has its kernal of sound truth and its insanity is so wide of New York insanities that it is virtue and honor.

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 & proud to receive—I mean my mother & my wife that I am grieved that 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 & I will not at this hour commence a new letter but you shall tell Mrs. E. that my first steps in N. Y. in this visit seem not to have been prudent & so I lose several precious days. 11 Feb. 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 convened with them. It turned out that their Church was a dark inaccessible place a terror to the honest & fair citizens of N. Y. & our first lecture had a handful of persons & they all personal friends of mine from a different part of the city.

But the Bereans felt so sadly about the disappointment that it seemed at last on much colloquy not quite good-natured & affectionate to abandon them at once but to read also a second lecture & then part. The second was read with faint success & 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—I grieve that I cannot come home. I see W. H. Channing & Mr James at leisure & have had what the Quakers call “a solid season,” once or twice. With Tappan a very happy pair of hours & him I must see again. I am enriched greatly by your letter & now by the dear letters which Mr Mackay had bro’t me from Lidian Emerson & Elizabeth Hoar and for speed in part & partly because I like to write so I make you the organ of communication to the whole household & 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 & made a speech at Tompkinsville. Dear love to My Mother I shall try within 24 hours to write to my wife.

Thanks thanks for your love to Edie. Farewell!

R Waldo E

*From Philadelphia Emerson had traveled as far back as New York on his way to Concord. Among the persons he reports seeing are William Tappan, a youthful admirer; Albert Brisbane, father of the Hearst columnist and the leading American exponent of a kind of streamlined Fourierist communism; W. H. Channing, a Christian Socialist, minister, and the nephew of the great Unitarian William Ellery Channing; and Henry James, the father of the novelist and the psychologist. The Mr. Mackay that Emerson mentions is identified by Rusk (Emerson Letters, III, 24 n.) as Tristram Barnard Mackay. There are reports on the Berean course of lectures in the New-York Daily Tribune of February 7–10, 1843 and on the New York Society Library course in the issues of February 11–22. Emerson started his brief Mercantile Library course Febru-*

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*ary 28. Photostat of MS., Columbia University Library. Sanborn says (Familiar Letters of Thoreau, p. 67) that the beginning date for this letter is February 4 and that this and one other have the terminal date February 12. Since we have the letter for the 12th and our text agrees with Sanborn's description, we conjecture that the terminal date for the letter begun on the 4th is February 11. Lest we rely too heavily on Sanborn, however, we should note that he inserts "February 10" between the first and second paragraphs of the present letter, though it is lacking in the manuscript.*

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 jabbars Sanscrit, Parsec, Pehlvi, say “Edith go bahl!” 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. [Theodore] 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.

*Thoreau's lecture dealt with Sir Walter Raleigh; it was delivered to the Concord Lyceum on February 8. This letter, not mailed for a few days, was finally enclosed with that of February 12. Text, Emerson-Thoreau, pp. 579-80.*

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From EMERSON

New York 12 Feby

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 any shape to the comment on Etzler? (It was about some sentences on this matter that I made someday a most rude & snappish speech, I remember, but you will not, & must give the sentences as you first wrote them.) You must go to Mr Lane with my affectionate respects & tell him that I depend on his most important aid for the new number, and wish him to give us the most recent & stirring matter he has. If (as he is a ready man) he offers us anything at once, I beg you to read it, & if you see & 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?

I find Edw. Palmer here studying medicine & attending medical lectures. He is acquainted with Mr. Porter whom Lane & Wright know & 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.

*It was the April 1843 number of the Dial that Thoreau edited for Emerson. The leading article was one on Bronson Alcott's works by Charles Lane. None of Thoreau's translations from the Greek was included, and his review of Etzler was submitted instead to the Democratic Review. Charles Stearns Wheeler was a classmate of Thoreau at Harvard, Robert Bartlett one of Wheeler's close friends. Edward Palmer was a one-time Boston clergyman; Sanborn evidently confuses him with the Joseph Palmer of Fruitlands. Harnden & Co. ran an express service between Boston and New York and also connected with the Concord stage at the Earl Tavern in Boston. MS., Hosmer.*

TO EMERSON

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

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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.

Text, Emerson-Thoreau, pp. 580–81.

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. [Charles] 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. 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 [Charles Stearns] Wheeler, none from [Robert] Bartlett.

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

Yours in haste,  
Henry

Text, Emerson-Thoreau, pp. 581-84 (*where Sanborn adds the letter of February 16 as a postscript*).

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TO EMERSON

Wednesday Evening

Dear Friend

I have time to write a few words about the Dial. I have just received the first 3 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 works of Herodotus is discovered to be out of place. He says something about having sent to [James Russell?] 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 [John] 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 N. Y. 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 [E. H.] Chapin lectured this evening—but 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 N. Y. will you remember it for me?

Excuse this scrawl which I am writing over the embers in the dining room. I hope that you live on good terms with yourself and the gods—

Yrs in haste  
Henry.

MS., Berg. *Although no date other than "Wednesday Evening" appears on the manuscript, Sanborn has assigned the letter to February 16, 1843.*

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 Fénelon for the Record of the Month, 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.

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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.

*A new name in this correspondence is Hedge's. He was a Unitarian minister and one-time Harvard professor who became a leader in the movement to spread German culture and idealistic philosophy throughout New England. Although never really a Transcendentalist himself, he remained a close friend of the most notable Transcendentalists and met with them whenever he could; indeed, they called their first Transcendental group Hedge's Club because it gathered when he came to town from Maine. Text, Emerson-Thoreau, pp. 584-85. Mrs. Emerson added a lively postscript, worth reprinting for its story about Thoreau:*

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 was the champion, and Elizabeth Hoar and Lidian (though L. disclaimed possessing it herself) his faithful squires—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.

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From ELIZABETH PEABODY

Boston, Feb. 26, 1843.

My Dear Sir:

I understand you have begun to print the *Dial*, and I am very glad of it on one account, viz., that if it gets out early enough to go to England by the steamer of the first of the month (April) it does not have to wait another month, as was the case with the last number. But I meant to have had as a first article a letter to the "Friends of the *Dial*," somewhat like the rough draft I enclose, and was waiting Mr. Emerson's arrival to consult him about the name of it. I have now written to him at New York on the subject and told him my whys and wherefores. The regular income of the *Dial* does not pay the cost of its printing and paper; there are readers enough to support it if they would only subscribe; and they will subscribe if they are convinced that only by doing so can they secure its continuance. He will probably write you on the subject.

I want to ask a favor of you. It is to forward me a small phial of that black-lead dust which is to be found, as Dr. C. T. Jackson tells me, at a

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certain lead-pencil manufactory in Concord; and to send it to me by the first opportunity. I want lead in this fine dust to use in a chemical experiment.

Respectfully yours,  
E. P. Peabody.

P. S. I hope you have got your money from Bradbury & Soden. I have done all I could about it. Will you drop the enclosed letter for Mrs. Hawthorne into the post-office?

Mr. Henry D. Thoreau, Concord.

*Since Thoreau speaks of Miss Peabody's letter to the "Friends of the Dial" in his letter to Emerson of February 16, 1843, it is quite possible that Sanborn has misdated this letter to Thoreau by several weeks. Thoreau did not include her paper in the April issue. The lead pencil manufactory was certainly that of Thoreau's father. Text, Sanborn, "A Concord Note-Book," The Critic, XLVIII (April 1906), 346.*

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TO RICHARD FULLER

Concord, April 2, 1843.

Dear Richard,—

I was glad to receive a letter from you so bright and cheery. You speak of not having made any conquests with your own spear or quill as yet; but if you are tempering your spear-head during these days, and fitting a straight and tough shaft thereto, will not that suffice? We are more pleased to consider the hero in the forest cutting cornel or ash for his spear, than marching in triumph with his trophies. The present hour is always wealthiest when it is poorer than the future ones, as that is the pleasantest site which affords the pleasantest prospects.

What you say about your studies furnishing you with a "mimic

idiom" only, reminds me that we shall all do well if we learn so much as to talk,—to speak truth. The only fruit which even much living yields seems to be often only some trivial success,—the ability to do some slight thing better. We make conquest only of husks and shells for the most part,—at least apparently,—but sometimes these are cinnamon and spices, you know. Even the grown hunter you speak of slays a thousand buffaloes, and brings off only their hides and tongues. What immense sacrifices, what hecatombs and holocausts, the gods exact for very slight favors! How much sincere life before we can even utter one sincere word.

What I was learning in college was chiefly, I think, to express myself, and I see now, that as the old orator prescribed, 1st, action; 2d, action; 3d, action; my teachers should have prescribed to me, 1st, sincerity; 2d, sincerity; 3d, sincerity. The old mythology is incomplete without a god or goddess of sincerity, on whose altars we might offer up all the products of our farms, our workshops, and our studies. It should be our Lar when we sit on the hearth, and our Tutelar Genius when we walk abroad. This is the only panacea. I mean sincerity in our dealings with ourselves mainly; any other is comparatively easy. But I must stop before I get to 17thly. I believe I have but one text and one sermon.

Your rural adventures beyond the West Cambridge hills have probably lost nothing by distance of time or space. I used to hear only the sigh of the wind in the woods of Concord, when I was striving to give my attention to a page of Calculus. But, depend upon it, you will love your native hills the better for being separated from them.

I expect to leave Concord, which is my Rome, and its people, who are my Romans, in May, and go to New York, to be a tutor in Mr. William Emerson's family. So I will bid you good by till I see you or hear from you again.

*Margaret Fuller's brother, attending Harvard, according to Sanborn "desired to know something of Thoreau's pursuits there." Text, Familiar Letters of Thoreau, pp. 77-79.*

To HENRY VOSE

Concord April 11th 1843

Friend Vose,

Vague rumors of your success as a lawyer in Springfield have reached our ears in Concord from time to time, and lately I have heard other news of interest regarding you from our mutual acquaintance Mrs. Jackson of Boston—All which concerns an old school—and classmate. [William?] Davis too is with you seeking his fortune also—please give my respects to him.

The last time you wrote to me in days gone by, I think you asked me to write you some political news, to enliven your residence in that drear Chenango country—but alas I could hardly be sure who was President already—still less who was about to be— And now I have to trouble you with matters of far different tenor.—To be short—my sisters—whom perhaps you remember—who for the last three or four years have been teaching a young-ladies school in Roxbury—with some *eclat* and satisfaction, and latterly have passed a long vacation here, are desirous to establish themselves in one of those pleasant Connecticut river towns—if possible, in Springfield. They would like, either to take charge of some young-ladies school already established, or else, commencing with the few scholars that might be secured, to build up such an institution by their own efforts—Teaching, besides the common English branches, French, Music, Drawing, and Painting.

And now I wish to ask if you will take the trouble to ascertain if there is any opening of the kind in your town, or if a few scholars can be had which will warrant making a beginning.

Perhaps Davis' profession acquaints him with this portion of the statistics of Springfield—and he will assist us with his advice.

Mr [Samuel] Hoar, Mr Emerson and other good men will stand as referees.

I hear of no news of importance to write you—unless it may be news to you that the Boston and Fitchburg railroad passing through this town, is to be contracted for directly—I am going to reside in Staten-Island this summer. If you will answer this as soon as convenient you will oblige

Your Classmate and well-wisher  
Henry D. Thoreau.

*Thoreau's Harvard classmate was now beginning his profitable legal career. MS., Lownes; previously unpublished.*

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From ELLERY CHANNING

My Dear Thoreau

I leave with you a schedule of repairs & improvements, to be made on the Red Lodge before I move into it, & upon the place generally.

*Cellar*, sand put in enough to make it dry—under-pinned with stone, pointed inside & out. New cellar stairs to be put.

*Bank* to be made round the house, round well, & in woodshed. (This is to [be] sodded after planting.)

*House interior.* Kitchen-floor painted, & the woodwork of the kitchen. All the plastering white-washed. Lock to be put on front-door. Glass reset where broken. New sill put to front-door & back-door, & steps if necessary. Leaky place about chimney, caused by pinning up the house, to be made tight.—A new entry laid at front door.

*Washroom*—to be white-washed—& a spout made from sink long enough to carry off dirty water, so as to keep it from running into well.

*Well.* To be cleaned out, inner stones reset (as I understand the Captain told you originally)—an outside wall to be built up, high enough to keep out all wash; this outside wall to be filled round. A new pump to be put in & to pump up good, clean, fresh water.

*The Acre* to be measured, & fenced around with a *new* four rail fence. The acre to be less wide than long.

*Privy.*—To be moved from where it is now, behind the end of the barn, the filth carried off, & hole filled in. The privy to be whitewashed & have a new door, & the floor either renewed or cleaned up.—

*Barn.* (not done at once as I understood) New sill, & pinned up, so as to make it dry.

*In May 1843 Ellery Channing, nephew of the great Unitarian divine and later to become Thoreau's most intimate friend, moved with his*

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*family to the little Red Lodge on the Cambridge Turnpike beyond Emerson's house. While the lodge was being repaired Channing wanted to stay with his family in Cambridge; and he already felt close enough to Thoreau to ask him to supervise the repair work. This letter contains the general list of repairs. The one from Channing to Thoreau of May 1, 1843 seems to be something of a supplement, including much additional personal material and (at least in the partial text we have) only a reminder that the banks around the lodge should be sodded. Of the two letters, the present one is probably the earlier. MS., Abernethy (typescript); previously unpublished.*

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From ELLERY CHANNING

An autograph letter from Channing to Thoreau dated from Cambridge May 1, 1843 is described in the *Stephen H. Wakeman Collection* sale catalogue under Item 997 as being "3 pp. 4to" and addressed to Thoreau in care of Emerson. The catalogue notes that "he addresses Thoreau in one of the sentences as 'O my beloved Thoreau.'" Channing is said in this letter to have asked Thoreau to have the banks around the house Channing had just bought (in Concord) sodded to keep the sand from blowing into the rooms. He adds: "See them [then?], O beloved Thoreau, how greatly convenient a house of one's own will be!" He also writes to Thoreau that he is sending him what the catalogue calls a "Greek book," which will keep him reading Greek half a year. In his last sentence Channing writes: "So many have been your benevolences that my wish is too shallow to know how to bring you into my debt. Only so much, as offering you a shelter under my roof, when I may have one, can show effect." The letter is described as accompanying a copy of the *Week* that Thoreau presented to Channing.

From ELIZABETH HOAR

Boston, May 2, 1843

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 confidence. 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-bye, and εὖ 'πράττειν [fare well], which, a wise man says, is the only salutation fit for the wise.

Truly your friend,  
E. Hoar.

*Elizabeth Hoar, daughter of Concord's most prominent family, had long been an intimate friend of the Emersons, through whom she became more familiar with her old schoolmate Thoreau. Text, Familiar Letters of Thoreau, pp. 138-39n.*

To MRS. JOHN THOREAU

Castleton, Staten Island, May 11, 1843.

Dear Mother and Friends at Home, —

We arrived here safely at ten o'clock on Sunday morning, having had as good a passage as usual, though we ran aground and were de-

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tained a couple of hours in the Thames River, till the tide came to our relief. At length we cutseyed up to a wharf just the other side of their Castle Garden,—very incurious about them and their city. I believe my vacant looks, absolutely inaccessible to questions, did at length satisfy an army of starving cabmen that I did not want a hack, cab, or anything of that sort as yet. It was the only demand the city made on us; as if a wheeled vehicle of some sort were the sum and summit of a reasonable man's wants. "Having tried the water," they seemed to say, "will you not return to the pleasant securities of land carriage? Else why your boat's prow turned toward the shore at last?" They are a sad-looking set of fellows, not permitted to come on board, and I pitied them. They had been expecting me, it would seem, and did really wish that I should take a cab; though they did not seem rich enough to supply me with one.

It was a confused jumble of heads and soiled coats, dangling from flesh-colored faces,—all swaying to and fro, as by a sort of undertow, while each whipstick, true as the needle to the pole, still preserved that level and direction in which its proprietor had dismissed his forlorn interrogatory. They took sight from them,—the lash being wound up thereon, to prevent your attention from wandering, or to make it concentrate upon its object by the spiral line. They began at first, perhaps, with the modest, but rather confident inquiry, "Want a cab, sir?" but as their despair increased, it took the affirmative tone, as the disheartened and irresolute are apt to do: "You want a cab, sir," or even, "You want a nice cab, sir, to take you to Fourth Street." The question which one had bravely and hopefully begun to put, another had the tact to take up and conclude with fresh emphasis,—twirling it from his particular whipstick as if it had emanated from his lips—as the sentiment did from his heart. Each one could truly say, "Them's my sentiments." But it was a sad sight.

I am seven and a half miles from New York, and, as it would take half a day at least, have not been there yet. I have already run over no small part of the island, to the highest hill, and some way along the shore. From the hill directly behind the house I can see New York, Brooklyn, Long Island, the Narrows, through which vessels bound to and from all parts of the world chiefly pass,—Sandy Hook and the Highlands of Neversink (part of the coast of New Jersey)—and, by going still farther up the hill, the Kill van Kull, and Newark Bay. From the pinnacle of one Madame Grimes' house the other night at sunset, I could see almost round the island. Far in the horizon there was a fleet of sloops bound up the Hudson, which seemed to be going over the

edge of the earth; and in view of these trading ships, commerce seems quite imposing.

But it is rather derogatory that your dwelling-place should be only a neighborhood to a great city,—to live on an inclined plane. I do not like their cities and forts, with their morning and evening guns, and sails flapping in one's eye. I want a whole continent to breathe in, and a good deal of solitude and silence, such as all Wall Street cannot buy,—nor Broadway with its wooden pavement. I must live along the beach, on the southern shore, which looks directly out to sea,—and see what that great parade of water means, that dashes and roars, and has not yet wet me, as long as I have lived.

I must not know anything about my condition and relations here till what is not permanent is worn off. I have not yet subsided. Give me time enough, and I may like it. All my inner man heretofore has been a Concord impression; and here come these Sandy Hook and Coney Island breakers to meet and modify the former; but it will be long before I can make nature look as innocently grand and inspiring as in Concord.

Your affectionate son,  
Henry D. Thoreau.

*On May 6, 1843 Thoreau left his family and departed for Staten Island to become the tutor of William Emerson's son Haven. A complete account of the Staten Island stay is given in an article by Max Cosman, "Thoreau and Staten Island" in The Staten Island Historian, VI (January-March, 1943), 1 ff. Text, Familiar Letters of Thoreau, pp. 80-83. Sanborn notes the letter as being addressed to both Thoreau's mother and his father, but gives no authority.*

[1843]

From HENRY JAMES

New York May 12 1843 21 Washington Place

My dear Sir—

I feel indebted to Mr Emerson for the introduction he has given me to you. I hope you will call at my house when you next come to the city and give me some of the good tidings wherewith you are fraught from Concord. I am in at all hours & shall be glad to see you at any. I am liable I believe to be called to Albany any day between now and next Thursday—though when I do go I shall stay but a day. Remember when you come over I am at 21 Wash. Place, a little street running from the Washington Square to Broadway, flanked on one corner by the University, and on the opposite by a church. You will easily find it. Meanwhile I remain

Yours truly  
H. James

Mr H D Thoreau

*On May 6, 1843 Emerson had written to Henry James, Sr.: "A friend of mine who has been an inmate of my house for the last two years, Henry D. Thoreau, is now going (tomorrow) to New York to live with my brother William at Staten Island, to take charge of the education of his son. I should like both for Mr. Thoreau's and for your own sake that you would meet and see what you have for each other. . . . If you remain in the city this summer, which seemed uncertain, I wish you would send your card to him through my brother at 64 Wall Street." On May 11 James had replied: "I shall right gladly welcome Mr. Thoreau for all our sakes to my fireside, or any preferable summer seat the house affords—and will so advise him at once." (See Ralph Barton Perry, The Thought and Character of William James, I, 44-46.) Thoreau accepted the invitation before many weeks and reported on the meeting in his letter to Emerson of June 8, 1843. MS., Morgan; previously unpublished.*

From EMERSON

Concord Sunday Eve. 21 May, 1843

My dear Friend,

Our Dial is already printing & 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. Otherwise send by Harnden, W. E. paying to Boston & charging to me. Let the packet bring letters also from you & from Waldo & Tappan, I entreat. You will not doubt that you are well remembered here, by young, older, & old people and your letter to your mother was borrowed & read with great interest, pending the arrival of direct accounts & 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 & works very steadily thus far & our intercourse is very agreeable to me. Young Ball has been to see me & is a prodigious reader & a youth of great promise,—born too in the good town. Mr Hawthorne is well; and Mr Alcott & Mr. L. are resolving a purchase in Harvard of 90 acres. Yours affectionately,

R. W. Emerson

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

*Thoreau had a variety of items in the belated April 1843 Dial. Giles Waldo, like William Tappan, was—as Thoreau explained in a letter of May 22 to his sister Sophia—a young friend of Emerson. For Emerson's further account of the visit of Benjamin Ball see his Journals, VI, 396–99. Alcott and Lane established their Fruitlands community soon after this letter was written. MS., Morgan.*

To MRS. R. W. EMERSON

Castleton, Staten Island, May 22, 1843.

My dear Friend,—

I believe a good many conversations with you were left in an unfinished state, and now indeed I don't know where to take them up. But I will resume some of the unfinished silence. I shall not hesitate to know you. I think of you as some elder sister of mine, whom I could not have avoided,—a sort of lunar influence,—only of such age as the moon, whose time is measured by her light. You must know that you represent to me woman, for I have not traveled very far or wide,—and what if I had? I like to deal with you, for I believe you do not lie or steal, and these are very rare virtues. I thank you for your influence for two years. I was fortunate to be subjected to it, and am now to remember it. It is the noblest gift we can make; what signify all others that can be bestowed? You have helped to keep my life “on loft,” as Chaucer says of Griselda, and in a better sense. You always seemed to look down at me as from some elevation—some of your high humilities—and I was better for having to look up. I felt taxed not to disappoint your expectation; for could there be any accident so sad as to be respected for something better than we are? It was a pleasure even to go away from you, as it is not to meet some, as it apprised me of my high relations; and such a departure is a sort of further introduction and meeting. Nothing makes the earth seem so spacious as to have friends at a distance; they make the latitudes and longitudes.

You must not think that fate is so dark there, for even here I can see a faint reflected light over Concord, and I think that at this distance I can better weigh the value of a doubt there. Your moonlight, as I have told you, though it is a reflection of the sun, allows of bats and owls and other twilight birds to flit therein. But I am very glad that you can elevate your life with a doubt, for I am sure that it is nothing but an insatiable faith after all that deepens and darkens its current. And your doubt and my confidence are only a difference of expression.

I have hardly begun to live on Staten Island yet; but, like the man who, when forbidden to tread on English ground, carried Scottish ground in his boots, I carry Concord ground in my boots and in my hat,—and am I not made of Concord dust? I cannot realize that it is the



roar of the sea I hear now, and not the wind in Walden woods. I find more of Concord, after all, in the prospect of the sea, beyond Sandy Hook, than in the fields and woods.

If you were to have this Hugh the gardener for your man, you would think a new dispensation had commenced. He might put a fairer aspect on the natural world for you, or at any rate a screen between you and the almshouse. There is a beautiful red honeysuckle now in blossom in the woods here, which should be transplanted to Concord; and if what they tell me about the tulip-tree be true, you should have that also. I have not seen Mrs. Black yet, but I intend to call on her soon. Have you established those simpler modes of living yet?—"In the full tide of successful operation?"

Tell Mrs. Brown that I hope she is anchored in a secure haven and derives much pleasure still from reading the poets, and that her constellation is not quite set from my sight, though it is sunk so low in that northern horizon. Tell Elizabeth Hoar that her bright present did "carry ink safely to Staten Island," and was a conspicuous object in Master Haven's inventory of my effects. Give my respects to Madam Emerson, whose Concord face I should be glad to see here this summer; and remember me to the rest of the household who have had vision of me. Shake a day-day to Edith, and say good night to Ellen for me. Farewell.

*For a note on the relationship of Thoreau and Lidian Emerson see his letter of June 20, 1843. For Elizabeth Hoar's "bright present" see her letter of May 2, 1843. "Hugh the gardener" was Hugh Whelan, who later purchased and attempted to rebuild Thoreau's Walden hut. The Concord almshouse was just across the meadow in back of the Emerson house. Mrs. Rebecca Black was a New York friend of Emerson frequently mentioned in his letters and journals as a "spiritual woman" (for example, Emerson Letters, III, 23). Madam Emerson was Emerson's mother, who lived with him in Concord. Text, Familiar Letters of Thoreau, pp. 89-92.*

TO SOPHIA THOREAU

Castleton, Staten Island, May 22nd -43

Dear Sophia,

I have had a severe cold ever since I came here, and have been confined to the house for the last week with bronchitis, though I am now getting out, so I have not seen much in the botanical way. The cedar seems to be one of the most common trees here, and the fields are very fragrant with it. There are also the gum and tulip trees. The latter is not very common, but is very large and beautiful, having flowers as large as tulips and as handsome. It is not time for it yet. The woods are now full of a large honeysuckle in full bloom, which differs from ours in being red instead of white, so that at first I did not know its genus. The painted cup is very common in the meadows here. Peaches, and especially cherries, seem to grow by all the fences.

Things are very forward here compared with Concord. The apricots growing out of doors are already as large as plums. The apple, pear, peach, cherry and plum trees, have shed their blossoms. The whole Island is like a garden, and affords very fine scenery. In front of the house is a very extensive wood, beyond which is the sea, whose roar I can hear all night long, when there is no wind, if easterly winds have prevailed on the Atlantic. There are always some vessels in sight—ten, twenty, or thirty miles off and Sunday before last there were hundreds in long procession, stretching from New York to Sanday [*sic*] Hook, and far beyond, for Sunday is a lucky day.

I went to New York Saturday before last. A walk of half an hour, by half a dozen houses along the Richmond road, ie. the road that leads to R— on which we live—brings me to the village of Stapleton, in Southfield, where is the lower dock; but if I prefer I can walk along the shore three quarters of a mile further toward New York, to Quarantine, village of Castleton, to the upper dock, which the boat leaves five or six times every day, a quarter of an hour later than the former place. Further on is the village of New Brighton and further still Port Richmond, which villages another steamboat visits.

In New York I saw Geo. Ward, and also Giles Waldo and William Tappan, whom I can describe better when I have seen them more. They are young friends of Mr Emerson. Waldo came down to the Island to

see me the next day. I also saw the Great Western, the Croton Water-works, and the picture gallery of the National Academy of Design. But I have not had time to see or do much in N. Y. yet.

Tell Miss [Prudence] Ward I shall try to put my microscope to a good use, and if I find any new and pressible flower, will throw it into my common place book. Garlic, the original of the common onion, grows like grass here all over the fields, and during its season spoils the cream and butter for the market, as the cows like it very much. Tell Helen there are two schools just established in this neighborhood, with large prospects, or rather designs, one for boys, and another for girls. The latter by a Miss Errington—and though it is very small as yet—will keep my ears open for her in such directions—The encouragement is very slight.

I hope you will not be washed away by the Irish sea. Tell mother I think my cold was not wholly owing to imprudence. Perhaps I was being acclimated.

Tell father that Mr Tappan whose son I know—and whose clerks young Tappan and Waldo are—has invented and established a new and very important business—which Waldo thinks could allow them to burn 99 out of 100 of the stores in N. Y. which now only offset and cancel one another. It is a kind of intelligence office for the whole country—with branches in the principal cities, giving information with regard to the credit and affairs of every man of business in the country. Of course it is not popular at the South and West. It is an extensive business, and will employ a great many clerks.

Love to all—not forgetting Aunt and Aunts—and Miss and Mrs. Ward.

Yr Affectionate Brother

Henry D. Thoreau.

*Thoreau had been ill in February, and perhaps the trip to Staten Island brought on an attack of bronchitis, an early indication of his chronic tendency to consumption. Possibly he felt that the sea air at Staten Island would help his condition; anyway, he soon recovered from his cold. The "Irish sea" is the influx of laborers to help build the railroad from Boston to Fitchburg, MS., Berg.*

TO EMERSON

Castleton, Staten Island, May 23d.

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 &c—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 or 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. Every thing 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 these—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 that 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. Every thing there is on a grand and generous scale—sea-weed, water, and sand; and even the dead fishes, horses and hogs have a rank luxuriant odor. Great shad nets spread to dry, crabs and horse-shoes crawling over the sand—Clumsy boats, only for service, dancing like sea-fowl on 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 and Brown's. He may have been a virtuoso—but we will give him the credit.

What with Alcott & Lane & 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

Yr friend  
Henry D Thoreau

*Rockwood Hoar, later a distinguished judge, was the brother of Elizabeth Hoar. None of Thoreau's poems was included in the July issue of the Dial: there is no indication of what ones he sent to Emerson at this time. He was evidently too late in completing "A Winter Walk," since it was not published till the October issue. Ellery Channing's first volume, Poems, had just been published. Thoreau attempted to help Lane sell his library to raise money for Fruitlands. The final disposition of the books is accounted for in the Lane letter of February 17, 1846. MS., Huntington.*

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TO HELEN THOREAU

Castleton Staten Island May 23d 43

Dear Helen.

In place of something fresher I send you the following verses from my journal, written some time ago.

Brother where dost thou dwell?  
What sun shines for thee now?

[1843]

Dost thou indeed farewell?  
As we wished here below.

What season didst thou find?  
Twas winter here.  
Are not the fates more kind  
Than they appear?

Is thy brow clear again  
As in thy youthful years?  
And was that ugly pain  
The summit of thy fears?

Yet thou wast cheery still,  
They could not quench thy fire,  
Thou didst abide their will,  
And then retire.

Where chiefly shall I look  
To feel thy presence near?  
Along the neighboring brook  
May I thy voice still hear?

Dost thou still haunt the brink  
Of yonder river's tide?  
And may I ever think  
That thou art at my side?

What bird wilt thou employ  
To bring me word of thee?  
For it would give them joy,  
'Twould give them liberty,  
To serve their former lord  
With wing and minstrelsy.

A sadder strain has mixed with their song,  
They've slower built their nests,  
Since thou art gone  
Their lively labor rests.

Where is the finch—the thrush,  
I used to hear?

Ah! they could well abide  
 The dying year.  
 Now they no more return,  
 I hear them not;  
 They have remained to mourn,  
 Or else forgot.

*"Brother where dost thou dwell?" is the tribute to John Thoreau, who died in January 1842. The seventh stanza probably refers to the interest in ornithology shared by the brothers. MS., Abernethy (typescript).*

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 somehow!" He likes Carlyle's book, but says that it leaves him in an excited and unprofitable state, and that Carlyle is so

[1843]

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 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 inflictions 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 forthright father of William and Henry James, who interested Thoreau very much, met him with a directness that almost equaled*

[1843]

*Thoreau's own. The book by Carlyle was apparently Past and Present, just published in its first American edition in Boston at Emerson's behest. Wright may have been either Alcott's English friend Henry G. Wright or Henry C. Wright, the American reformer. Wymond Bradbury was a member of the Boston publishing house of Bradbury, Soden, & Co., which published Thoreau's essay "A Walk to Wachusett" in the Boston Miscellany and then ignored his requests for payment. Text, Emerson-Thoreau, pp. 587–88.*

TO MR. AND MRS. JOHN THOREAU

Castleton, Staten Island, June 8th 1843

Dear Parents,

I have got quite well now, and like the lay of the land and the look of the sea very much—only the country is so fair that it seems rather too much as if it were made to be looked at. I have been to N.Y. four or five times, and have run about the island a good deal. Geo. Ward when I last saw him, which was at his house in Brooklyn, was studying the daguerreotype process, preparing to set up in that line. The boats run now almost every hour, from 8 A.M. to 7 P.M. back and forth, so that I can get to the city much more easily than before. I have seen there one Henry James, a lame man, of whom I had heard before, whom I like very much, and he asks me to make free use of his house, which is situated in a pleasant part of the city, adjoining the University. I have met several people whom I knew before, and among the rest Mr Wright, who was on his way to Niagara.

I feel already about as well acquainted with New York as with Boston, that is about as little, perhaps. It is large enough now and they intend it shall be larger still. 15th Street, where some of my new acquaintances live, is two or three miles from the battery where the boat touches, clear brick and stone and no give to the foot; and they have layed out though not built, up to the 149th Street above. I had rather see a brick for a specimen for my part such as they exhibited in old times. You see it is quite a day's training to make a few calls in different parts of the city. (to say nothing of 12 miles by water and three by land,

ie. not brick and stone) especially if it does not rain shillings which might interest omnibuses in your behalf. Some Omnibuses are marked "Broadway--Fourth Street"--and they go no further--others "8th Street" and so on, and so of the other principal streets. This letter will be circumstantial enough for Helen.

This is in all respects a very pleasant residence--much more rural than you would expect of the vicinity of New York. There are woods all around.

We breakfast at half past six--lunch if we will at twelve--and dine or sup at five. Thus is the day partitioned off. From 9 to 2 or thereabouts I am the schoolmaster--and at other times as much the pupil as I can be. Mr and Mrs Emerson & family are not indeed of my kith or kin in any sense--but they are irreproachable and kind.

I have met no one yet *on the Island* whose acquaintance I shall actually cultivate--or hoe around--unless it be our neighbor Capt. Smith--an old fisherman who catches the fish called moss-bunkers--(so it sounds) and invites me to come to the beach where he spends the week and see him and his fish.

Farms are for sale all around here--and so I suppose men are for purchase.

North of us live Peter Wandell--Mr Mell--and Mr. Disusway (dont mind the spelling) as far as the Clove road; and south John Britton--Van Pelt and Capt Smith as far as the Fingerboard road. Behind is the hill, some 250 feet high--on the side of which we live, and in front the forest and the sea--the latter at the distance of a mile and a half.

Tell Helen that Miss Errington is provided with assistance. This were as good a place as any to establish a school if one could wait a little. Families come down here to board in the summer--and three or four have been already established this season.

As for money matters I have not set my traps yet, but I am getting the bait ready. Pray how does the garden thrive and what improvements in the pencil line? I miss you all very much. Write soon and send a Concord paper to

Yr affectionate son  
Henry D. Thoreau

[1843]

From CHARLES LANE

Dear Friend,--

The receipt of two acceptable numbers of the "Pathfinder" reminds me that I am not altogether forgotten by one who, if not in the busy world, is at least much nearer to it externally than I am. Busy indeed we all are, since our removal here; but so recluse is our position, that with the world at large we have scarcely any connection. You may possibly have heard that, after all our efforts during the spring had failed to place us in connection with the earth, and Mr. Alcott's journey to Oriskany and Vermont had turned out a blank,--one afternoon in the latter part of May, Providence sent to us the legal owner of a slice of the planet in this township (Harvard), with whom we have been enabled to conclude for the concession of his rights. It is very remotely placed, nearly three miles beyond the village, without a road, surrounded by a beautiful green landscape of fields and woods, with the distance filled up by some of the loftiest mountains in the State. The views are, indeed, most poetic and inspiring. You have no doubt seen the neighborhood; but from these very fields, where you may at once be at home and out, there is enough to love and revel in for sympathetic souls like yours. On the estate are about fourteen acres of wood, part of it extremely pleasant as a retreat, a very sylvan realization, which only wants a Thoreau's mind to elevate it to classic beauty.

I have some imagination that you are not so happy and so well housed in your present position as you would be here amongst us; although at present there is much hard manual labor,--so much that, as you perceive, my usual handwriting is very greatly suspended. We have only two associates in addition to our own families; our house accommodations are poor and scanty; but the greatest want is of good female aid. Far too much labor devolves on Mrs. Alcott. If you should light on any such assistance, it would be charitable to give it a direction this way. We may, perhaps, be rather particular about the quality; but the conditions will pretty well determine the acceptability of the parties without a direct adjudication on our part. For though to me our mode of life is luxurious in the highest degree, yet generally it seems to be thought that the setting aside of all impure diet, dirty habits, idle thoughts, and selfish feelings, is a course of self-denial, scarcely to be encountered or even thought of in such an alluring world as this in which we dwell.

Besides the busy occupations of each succeeding day, we form, in this ample theatre of hope, many forthcoming scenes. The nearer little copse is designed as the site of the cottages. Fountains can be made to descend from their granite sources on the hill-slope to every apartment if required. Gardens are to displace the warm grazing glades on the south, and numerous human beings, instead of cattle, shall here enjoy existence. The farther wood offers to the naturalist and the poet an exhaustless haunt; and a short cleaning of the brook would connect our boat with the Nashua. Such are the designs which Mr. Alcott and I have just sketched, as, resting from planting, we walked around this reserve.

In your intercourse with the dwellers in the great city, have you alighted on Mr. Edward Palmer, who studies with Dr. Beach, the Herbalist? He will, I think, from his previous nature-love, and his affirmations to Mr. Alcott, be animated on learning of this actual wooing and winning of Nature's regards. We should be most happy to see him with us. Having become so far actual, from the real, we might fairly enter into the typical, if he could help us in any way to types of the true metal. We have not passed away from home, to see or hear of the world's doings, but the report has reached us of Mr. W. H. Channing's fellowship with the Phalansterians, and of his eloquent speeches in their behalf. Their progress will be much aided by his accession. To both these worthy men be pleased to suggest our humanest sentiments. While they stand amongst men, it is well to find them acting out the truest possible at the moment.

Just before we heard of this place, Mr. Alcott had projected a settlement at the Cliffs on the Concord River, cutting down wood and building a cottage; but so many more facilities were presented here that we quitted the old classic town for one which is to be not less renowned. As far as I could judge, our absence promised little pleasure to our old Concord friends; but at signs of progress I presume they rejoiced with, dear friend,

Yours faithfully,  
Charles Lane.

*The Pathfinder mentioned in this pastoral letter from Harvard, Massachusetts, was a weekly journal of politics, literature, drama, and music.*

[1843]

*It first appeared on February 25, 1843 in New York. Text, Sanborn's Henry Thoreau, pp. 137-40. Sanborn, for one, dates the letter June 9 there and June 7 in his memoir of Alcott published eleven years later in A. Bronson Alcott: His Life and Philosophy, II, 377. Lacking the manuscript and satisfactory internal evidence, we know nothing against the date Sanborn gave first.*

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From EMERSON

Concord, 10 June 1843

Dear Henry,

It is high time that you had some token from us in acknowledgment of the parcel of kind & tuneful things you sent us, as well as your permanent right in us all. The cold weather saddened our gardens & our landscape here almost until now but today's sunshine is obliterating the memory of such things. I have just been visiting my petty plantation and find that all your grafts live excepting a single scion and all my new trees, including twenty pines to fill up interstices in my "Curtain," are well alive. The town is full of Irish & the woods of engineers with theodolite & red flag singing out their feet & inches to each other from station to station. Near Mr. Alcott's the road [Fitchburg R. R.] is already begun.—From Mr. A. & Mr. Lane at Harvard we have yet heard nothing. They went away in good spirits having sent "Wood Abram" & Larned & Wm Lane before them with horse & plough a few days in advance of them to begin the Spring work. Mr. Lane paid me a long visit in which he was more than I had ever known him gentle & open, and it was impossible not to sympathize with & honor projects that so often seem without feet or hands. They have near a hundred acres of land which they do not want, & no house, which they want first of all. But they account 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 im-

possible, it would be a great pleasure to see their building which could hardly fail to be new & beautiful. They have 15 acres of woodland with good timber. Ellery Channing is excellent company and we walk in all directions. He remembers you with great faith & hope thinks you ought not to see Concord again these ten years, that you ought to grind up fifty Concordes in your mill & much other opinion & counsel he holds in store on this topic. Hawthorne walked with me yesterday p.m. and not until after our return did I read his "Celestial Railroad" which has a serene strength which one cannot afford not to praise,—in this low life.

Our Dial thrives well enough in these weeks. I print W. E. C[hanning]'s "Letters" or the first ones, but he does not care to have them named as his for a while. They are very agreeable reading, their wisdom lightened by a vivacity very rare in the D.—[Samuel 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 Jas. Munroe & Co. Do not, I entreat you, let me be in ignorance of anything good which you know of my fine friends Waldo & Tappan. Tappan writes me never a word. I had a letter from H. James, promising to see you, & you must not fail to visit him. I must soon write to him, though my debts of this nature are perhaps too many. To him I much prefer to talk than to write. Let me know well how you prosper & what you meditate. And all good abide with you!

R. W. E.

15 June

Whilst my letter has lain on the table waiting for a traveler, your letter & parcel has 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 & 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. Thanks for all these tidings of my friends at N. Y. & at the Island & love to the last. I have letters from Lane at "Fruitlands" & from Miss Fuller at Niagara. Miss F. found it sadly cold & wet rainy at the Falls.

*The curtain, according to Sanborn, was a group of pine trees set out east of Emerson's house to break the wind. Channing's "Letters" is "The Youth of the Poet and the Painter"; Ward's paper is "Notes on Art and Architecture," both in the July Dial. "A Winter Walk" was postponed to the October number. The advance party at Fruitlands consisted of Samuel Larned, Abraham Everett, and Charles Lane's son. MS., Berg.*

TO MRS. EMERSON

Staten Island June 20th 1843

My very dear Friend,

I have only read a page of your letter and have come out to the top of the hill at sunset where I can see the ocean to prepare to read the rest. It is fitter that it should hear it than the walls of my chamber. The very crickets here seem to chirp around me as they did not before. I feel as if it were a great daring to go on and read the rest, and then to live accordingly. There are more than thirty vessels in sight going to sea. I am almost afraid to look at your letter. I see that it will make my life very steep, but it may lead to fairer prospects than this.

You seem to me to speak out of a very clear and high heaven, where any one may be who stands so high. Your voice seems not a voice, but comes as much from the blue heavens, as from the paper.

My dear friend it was very noble in you to write me so trustful an answer. It will do as well for another world as for this. Such a voice is for no particular time nor person, and it makes him who may hear it stand for all that is lofty and true in humanity. The thought of you will constantly elevate my life; it will be something always above the horizon to behold, as when I look up at the evening star. I think I know your thoughts without seeing you, and as well here as in Concord. You are not at all strange to me.

I could hardly believe after the lapse of one night that I had such a noble letter still at hand to read—that it was not some fine dream. I



looked at midnight to be sure that it was real. I feel that I am unworthy to know you, and yet they will not permit it wrongfully.

I, perhaps, am more willing to deceive by appearances than you say you are; it would not be worth the while to tell how willing—but I have the power perhaps too much to forget my meanness as soon as seen, and not be incited by permanent sorrow. My actual life is unspeakably mean, compared with what I know and see that it might be—Yet the ground from which I see and say this is some part of it. It ranges from heaven to earth and is all things in an hour. The experience of every past moment but belies the faith of each present. We never conceive the greatness of our fates. Are not these faint flashes of light, which sometimes obscure the sun, their certain dawn?

My friend, I have read your letter as if I was not reading it. After each pause I could defer the rest forever. The thought of you will be a new motive for every right action. You are another human being whom I know, and might not our topic be as broad as the universe. What have we to do with petty rumbling news? We have our own great affairs. Sometimes in Concord I found my actions dictated, as it were, by your influence, and though it lead almost to trivial Hindoo observances, yet it was good and elevating.

To hear that you have sad hours is not sad to me. I rather rejoice at the richness of your experience. Only think of some sadness away in Pekin—unseen and unknown there. What a mine it is. Would it not weigh down the Celestial empire, with all its gay Chinese? Our sadness is not sad, but our cheap joys. Let us be sad about all we see and are, for so we demand and pray for better. It is the constant prayer and whole Christian religion. I could hope that you would get well soon, and have a healthy body for this world, but I know this cannot be—and the Fates after all, are the accomplisshers of our hopes. Yet I do hope that you may find it a worthy struggle, and life seems grand still through the clouds.

What wealth is it to have such friends that we cannot think of them without elevation. And we can think of them any time, and any where, and it costs nothing but the lofty disposition. I cannot tell you the joy your letter gives me—which will not quite cease till the latest time. Let me accompany your finest thought.

I send my love to my other friend and brother, whose nobleness I slowly recognize.

Henry

*This beautifully affectionate letter is one of the most controversial Thoreau ever wrote. Was he in love with Lidian Emerson when he wrote it? Canby (Thoreau, p. 160) feels that in it Thoreau "was perilously close to love, by any definition" and uses it as the keystone of his theory that "Thoreau was what the common man would call in love with Emerson's wife" (p. 163). Dr. Raymond Adams in reviewing Canby's Thoreau (American Literature, XII [March, 1940], 114) says on the other hand: "I think Mr. Canby shows that there was a slight mother-fixation about the Thoreau-Lidian Emerson relationship, but nothing more." Unfortunately neither of the letters that Mrs. Emerson wrote before and after receiving this letter has survived. They might have helped to answer the question. To almost anyone who will read the text with an open mind, this is a love letter. MS., Bruce Museum, reproduced through the courtesy of Miss Nellie P. Bigelow.*

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TO MRS. JOHN THOREAU

Staten Island July 7th

Dear Mother,

I was very glad to get your letter and papers. Tell Father that circumstantial letters make very substantial reading, at any rate. I like to know even how the sun shines and garden grows with you.

I did not get my money in Boston and probably shall not at all. Tell Sophia that I have pressed some blossoms of the tulip tree for her. They look somewhat like white lilies. The magnolia too is in blossom here. Pray have you the Seventeen year locust in Concord? The air here is filled with their din. They come out of the ground at first in an imperfect state, and crawling up the shrubs and plants, the perfect insect burst[s] out through the bark. They are doing great damage to the fruit and forest trees. The latter are covered with dead twigs, which in the distance looks like the blossoms of the chestnut. They bore every twig of last year's growth in order to deposit their eggs in it. In a few weeks the

eggs will be hatched, and the worms fall to the ground and enter it—and in 1860 make their appearance again. I conversed about their coming this season before they arrived. They do no injury to the leaves, but beside boring the twigs—suck their sap for sustenance. Their din is heard by those who sail along the shore—from the distant woods. Phar-r-r-a oh—Pha-r-r-aoh. They are departing now. Dogs, cats and chickens subsist mainly upon them in some places.

I have not been to N.Y. for more than three weeks.—I have had an interesting letter from Mr Lane, describing their new prospects.—My pupil and I are getting on apace. He is remarkably well advanced in Latin and is well advancing.

Your letter has just arrived. I was not aware that it was so long since I wrote home; I only knew that I had sent five or six letters to the town. It is very refreshing to hear from you—though it is not all good news—But I trust that Stearns Wheeler is not dead. I should be slow to believe it. He was made to work very well in this world. There need be no tragedy in his death.

The demon which is said to haunt the Jones family—hovering over their eyelids with wings steeped in juice of poppies—has commenced another campaign against me. I am “clear Jones” in this respect at least. But he finds little encouragement in my atmosphere I assure you—for I do not once fairly lose myself—except in those hours of truce allotted to rest by immemorial custom. However, this skirmishing interferes sadly with my literary projects—and I am apt to think it a good day’s work if I maintain a soldier’s eye till nightfall. Very well it does not matter much in what wars we serve—whether in the Highlands or the Lowlands—Everywhere we get soldiers’ pay still.

Give my love to Aunt Louisa—whose benignant face I sometimes see right in the wall—as naturally and necessarily shining on my path as some star—of unaccountably greater age and higher orbit than myself. Let it be inquired by her of George Minott—as from me—for she sees him—If he has seen any pigeons yet—and tell him there are plenty of Jacksnipes here.—As for William P. the “worthy young man”—as I live, my eyes have not fallen on him yet. I have not had the influenza—though here are its head-quarters—unless my first week’s cold was it. Tell Helen I shall write to her soon. I have heard Lucretia Mott—This is badly written—but the worse the writing the sooner you get it this time—from yr affectionate son H. D. T.

*The “interesting letter from Mr Lane” is probably that of June 9[?], 1843. Stearns Wheeler, Thoreau’s Harvard classmate and friend, died in Leipzig on June 13, 1843. He had gone abroad to study in the German universities. Mrs. Thoreau’s maternal grandparents were the Joneses. Thoreau’s Uncle Charlie Dunbar inherited the sleepiness of the Jones family; as Thoreau once reported, he was known to have fallen asleep while shaving. A full account of Thoreau’s seeing Lucretia Mott will be found in his letter to Helen Thoreau of July 21, 1843. The “money in Boston” was the Boston Miscellany debt (see Elizabeth Peabody’s letter of February 26, 1843). Aunt Louisa Dunbar lived with the Thoreaus from 1830 on. George Minott was Thoreau’s Concord farmer friend. The unnamed year is plainly 1843. MS., Huntington.*

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TO MR. AND MRS. R. W. EMERSON

Staten Island July 8th—43

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. Yet will 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 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 be-

ginning 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 Brown 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 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 earnest, the sad and cheery voices of my friends and to me it is like 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 forever more.—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 D. 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 N. Y. for a month and so have not seen W[aldo] and T[appan]. 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.

*Hate as a basis for love plus some shrewd comments on the Dial are two of the noteworthy things about this letter. Nor should the fact that Lidian Emerson is now merely included with her husband under the heading of "Dear Friends" be overlooked. It may be surmised, as it is by Canby, that Lidian had just given Thoreau's emotional letter of June 20 a cold reply and that the present letter represents a corresponding return to moderation by Thoreau himself.*

*Sanborn (Hawthorne and His Friends, p. 37) identifies "the cabin of the brave farmer man" as that of Edmund Hosmer. "The Notes from the Journal of a Scholar" was by C. C. Emerson. Margaret Fuller's piece was "The Great Lawsuit." The "sea piece" was probably B. P. Hunt's "Voyage to Jamaica." Emerson's "good word for Carlyle" was a review of Past and Present. MS., Berg.*

From EMERSON

Concord 20 July 1843

Dear Henry,

Giles Waldo shall not go back without a line to you if only to pay 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 B. 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 B. 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 & on all personal accounts. Hawthorn & Channing are both in good health & spirits & 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. T[appan] will be exhausted in one interview. My wife is at Plymouth to recruit her wasted strength but left word with me to acknowledge & heartily thank you for your last letter to her. Edith & 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 remembrances to you whom "she misses," & whom "she thinks of." In this fine weather we look very bright & green in yard & garden though this sun without showers will perchance spoil our potatoes. Our clover grew well on your patch between the dikes & Reuben Brown adjudged that Cyrus Warren should pay 14.00 this year for my grass. Last year he paid 0. All your grafts of this year have lived & done well. The apple trees & plums speak of you in every wind. You will have read & 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 & ingenuous mind. The papers have contained ample notices of his life & death.—I saw Charles Newcomb the other day at Brook Farm, & he expressed his great grati-

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fication in your translations & said that he had been minded to write you & 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 in 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.

*Charles Newcomb, one of the minor Transcendentalists, was a member of Brook Farm. Reuben Brown and Cyrus Warren were Concord residents. Thoreau eventually translated some fragments from Pindar and published them in the January 1844 Dial. MS., photostat in the possession of the Columbia University Library.*

TO HELEN THOREAU

Staten Island July 21st 43

Dear Helen,

I am not in such haste to write home when I remember that I make my readers pay the postage—But I believe I have not taxed you before—I have pretty much explored this island—inland and along the shore—finding my health inclined me to the peripatetic philosophy—I have visited Telegraph Stations—Sailor's Snug Harbors—Seaman's Retreats—Old Elm Trees, where the Hugonots landed—Brittons Mills—and all the villages on the island. Last Sunday I walked over to Lake Island Farm—8 or 9 miles from here—where Moses Prichard lived, and found the present occupant, one Mr Davenport formerly from Mass.—with 3 or four men to help him—raising sweet potatoes and tomatoes by the acre. It seemed a cool and pleasant retreat, but a hungry soil. As I was coming away I took my toll out of the soil in the shape of arrowheads—which may after all be the surest crop—certainly not affected by drought.

I am well enough situated here to observe one aspect of the modern world at least—I mean the migratory—the western movement. Sixteen hundred immigrants arrived at quarantine ground on the fourth of July, and more or less every day since I have been here. I see them occasionally washing their persons and clothes, or men women and children gathered on an isolated quay near the shore, stretching their limbs and taking the air, the children running races and swinging—on their artificial piece of the land of liberty—while the vessels are undergoing purification. They are detained but a day or two, and then go up to the city, for the most part without having *landed* here.

In the city I have seen since I wrote last—W. H. Channing—at whose house in 15th St. I spent a few pleasant hours, discussing the all absorbing question—What to do for the race. (He is sadly in earnest—about going up the river to rusticate for six weeks—and issues a new periodical called *The Present* in September.)—Also Horace Greeley Editor of the *Tribune*—who is cheerfully in earnest,—at his office of all work—a hearty New Hampshire boy as one would wish to meet. And says “now be neighborly”—and believes only or mainly, first, in the Sylvania Association somewhere in Pennsylvania—and secondly and most of all, in a new association to go into operation soon in New Jersey, with which he is connected.—Edward Palmer came down to see me Sunday before last. As for Waldo and Tappan we have strangely dodged one another and have not met for some weeks.

I believe I have not told you anything about Lucretia Mott. It was a good while ago that I heard her at the Quaker Church in Hester St. She is a preacher, and it was advertised that she would be present on that day. I liked all the proceedings very well—their plainly greater harmony and sincerity than elsewhere. They do nothing in a hurry. Every one that walks up the aisle in his square coat and expansive hat—has a history, and comes from a house to a house. The women come in one after another in their Quaker bonnets and handkerchiefs, looking all like sisters and so many chic-a-dees—At length, after a long silence, waiting for the spirit, Mrs Mott rose, took off her bonnet, and began to utter very deliberately what the spirit suggested. Her self-possession was something to say, if all else failed—but it did not. Her subject was the abuse of the Bible—and thence she straightway digressed to slavery and the degradation of woman. It was a good speech—transcendentalism in its mildest form. She sat down at length and after a long and decorous silence in which some seemed to be really digesting her words, the elders

shook hands and the meeting dispersed. On the whole I liked their ways, and the plainness of their meeting house. It looked as if it was indeed made for service. I think that Stearns Wheeler has left a gap in the community not easy to be filled. Though he did not exhibit the highest qualities of the scholar, he possessed in a remarkable degree many of the essential and rarer ones—and his patient industry and energy—his reverent love of letters—and his proverbial accuracy—will cause him to be associated in my memory even with many venerable names of former days. It was not wholly unfit that so pure a lover of books should have ended his pilgrimage at the great book-mart of the world. I think of him as healthy and brave, and am confident that if he had lived he would have proved useful in more ways than I can describe—He would have been authority on all matters of fact—and a sort of connecting link between men and scholars of different walks and tastes. The literary enterprises he was planning for himself and friends remind one of an older and more studious time—so much then remains for us to do who survive.

Tell mother that there is no Ann Jones in the directory. Love to all—Tell all my friends in Concord that I do not send m[y lov]e to them but retain it still.

Your affectionate brother  
H. D. T.

*Moses Prichard was a former Concord resident. This may have been Thoreau's first meeting with Greeley, who was later to become so helpful in selling Thoreau's essays to the various magazines. Greeley was, as always, interested in all community experiments from Brook Farm to the phalanxes. Ann Jones was probably a cousin of Mrs. Thoreau. MS., Huntington. The bracketed matter replaces portions torn from the manuscript.*

From J. L. O'SULLIVAN

New York, July 28, 1843.

My dear Sir,

I am very sorry that with so much in it that I like very much there are others in the paper you have favored me with which have decided me against its insertion. I trust, however, soon to hear from you again,—especially should I like some of those extracts from your Journal, reporting some of your private interviews with nature, with which I have before been so much pleased. That book of Etzler's I had for some time had my mind upon to review. If you have got it, I should be very much obliged to you for a sight of it, and if you would not object I think it very likely that some addition & modification made with your concurrence would put your review of it into the shape to suit my peculiar notion on the subject. Articles of this nature are not in general published in the D[emocratic] R[evue] on the responsibility of the individual name of the author, but under the general impersonality of the collective "we"—(the name of the author being usually indicated in pencil on the Index in the copies sent to the editors of newspapers). This system renders a certain pervading homogeneity necessary, inviting often the necessity of this process of editorial revision, or rather communication.

Very Respectfully Yours,  
J. L. O'Sullivan

I am at present staying out of town. When I return to the city, if you are still in these latitudes, I shall hope to be afforded the pleasure of renewing the acquaintance begun under the auspices of our common friend Hawthorne.

*While Thoreau was living on Staten Island he made a constant round of the periodical publishers in an attempt to place his work. In general he was not successful. O'Sullivan, however, printed a little sketch of Thoreau's called "The Landlord" in the October 1843 number of the*

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*Democratic Review and the review of 'The Paradise within the Reach of All Men, by J. A. Etzler, under Thoreau's title of "Paradise (to be) Regained" in the November number. MS., Berg; previously unpublished.*

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TO MRS. JOHN THOREAU

Staten Island, August 6, 1843.

Dear Mother,—

As Mr. William Emerson is going to Concord on Tuesday, I must not omit sending a line by him,—though I wish I had something more weighty for so direct a post. I believe I directed my last letter to you by mistake; but it must have appeared that it was addressed to Helen. At any rate, this is to you without mistake.

I am chiefly indebted to your letters for what I have learned of Concord and family news, and am very glad when I get one. I should have liked to be in Walden woods with you, but not with the railroad. I think of you all very often, and wonder if you are still separated from me only by so many miles of earth, or so many miles of memory. This life we live is a strange dream, and I don't believe at all any account men give of it. Methinks I should be content to sit at the back-door in Concord, under the poplar-tree, henceforth forever. Not that I am homesick at all,—for places are strangely indifferent to me,—but Concord is still a cynosure to my eyes, and I find it hard to attach it, even in imagination, to the rest of the globe, and tell where the seam is.

I fancy that this Sunday evening you are poring over some select book almost transcendental perchance, or else "Burgh's Dignity," or Massillon, or the "Christian Examiner." Father has just taken one more look at the garden, and is now absorbed in Chaptelle, or reading the newspaper quite abstractedly, only looking up occasionally over his spectacles to see how the rest are engaged, and not to miss any newer news that may not be in the paper. Helen has slipped in for the fourth time to learn the very latest item. Sophia, I suppose, is at Bangor; but Aunt Louisa, without doubt, is just flitting away to some good meeting, to save the credit of you all.

It is still a cardinal virtue with me to keep awake. I find it impossible to write or read except at rare intervals, but am, generally speaking, tougher than formerly. I could make a pedestrian tour round the world, and sometimes think it would perhaps be better to do at once the things I *can*, rather than be trying to do what at present I cannot do well. However, I shall awake sooner or later.

I have been translating some Greek, and reading English poetry, and a month ago sent a paper to the "Democratic Review," which, at length, they were sorry they could not accept; but they could not adopt the sentiments. However, they were very polite, and earnest that I should send them something else, or reform that.

I go moping about the fields and woods here as I did in Concord, and, it seems, am thought to be a surveyor,—an Eastern man inquiring narrowly into the condition and value of land, etc., here, preparatory to an extensive speculation. One neighbor observed to me, in a mysterious and half inquisitive way, that he supposed I must be pretty well acquainted with the state of things; that I kept pretty close; he did n't see any surveying instruments, but perhaps I had them in my pocket.

I have received Helen's note, but have not heard of Frisbie Hoar yet. She is a faint-hearted writer, who could not take the responsibility of blotting one sheet alone. However, I like very well the blottings I get. Tell her I have not seen Mrs. Child nor Mrs. Sedgwick.

Love to all from your affectionate son.

*Mrs. Thoreau's reading was James Burgh's Dignity of Human Nature and Massillon's Sermons. The latter, translated from the French by Dickson, is listed in Thoreau's 1840 catalogue of his own books (Sanborn's Life of Henry David Thoreau, p. 510). J. A. C. Chaptal was the author of a much-translated book on the technical applications of chemistry. Thoreau's father was probably studying some aspects of the graphite processes for his pencil manufactory. Sophia was visiting her cousins the Thatchers in Bangor. Frisbie Hoar, then a student at Harvard, was later a United States senator. Lydia Maria Child and Catherine M. Sedgwick were popular writers of the day. Text, Familiar Letters of Thoreau, pp. 117-20.*

To EMERSON

Staten Island Aug 7th 1843

My Dear Friend,

I fear I have nothing to send you worthy of so good an opportunity. Of New-York I still know but little, though out of so many thousands there are no doubt many units whom it would be worth my while to know. Mr James talks of going to Germany soon with his wife—to learn the language. He says he must know it—can never learn it here—there he may absorb it and is very anxious to learn beforehand where he had best locate himself, to enjoy the advantage of the highest culture, learn the language in its purity, and not exceed his limited means. I referred him to Longfellow—Perhaps you can help him.

I have had a pleasant talk with [W. H.] Channing—and Greeley too it was refreshing to meet. They were both much pleased with your criticism on Carlyle, but thought that you had overlooked what chiefly concerned them in the book—its practical aim and merits.

I have also spent some pleasant hours with W[aldo] & T[appan] at their counting room, or rather intelligence office.

I must still reckon myself with the innumerable army of invalids—undoubtedly in a fair field they would rout the well—though I am tougher than formerly. Methinks I could paint the sleepy God more truly than the poets have done, from more intimate experience. Indeed I have not kept my eyes very steadily open to the things of this world of late, and hence have little to report concerning them. However I trust the awakening will come before the last trump—and then perhaps I may remember some of my dreams.

I study the aspects of commerce at the Narrows here, where it passes in review before me, and this seems to be beginning at the right end to understand this Babylon.—I have made a very rude translation of the Seven Against Thebes and Pindar too I have looked at, and wish he was better worth translating. I believe even the best things are not equal to their fame. Perhaps it would be better to translate fame itself—or is not that what the poets themselves do? However I have not done with Pindar yet. I sent a long article on Etzler's book to the Dem Rev six weeks ago, which at length they have determined not to accept as they could not subscribe to all the opinions, but asked for other matter—

purely literary I suppose. O'Sullivan wrote me that articles of this kind have to be referred to the circle, who, it seems are represented by this journal, and said something about "collective we," and "homogeneity"—

Pray dont think of Bradbury and Soden any more

"For good deed done through praierie  
Is sold and bought too dear I wis  
To herte that of great valor is."

I see that they have given up their shop here.

Say to Mrs. Emerson that I am glad to remember how she too dwells there in Concord, and shall send her anon some of the thoughts that belong to her. As for Edith—I seem to see a star in the east over where the young child is.—Remember me to Mrs. Brown.

Yr friend  
Henry D. Thoreau.

*Thoreau's translations from Pindar went into the January 1844 Dial. Furthermore, as we know, O'Sullivan accepted the review of Etzler's book after all as well as a "purely literary" piece, "The Landlord," and both were in print before winter. MS., Berg.*

TO MRS. JOHN THOREAU

Tuesday Aug 29th-43

Dear Mother,

Mr Emerson has just given me a short warning that he is about to send to Concord, which I will endeavor to improve—I am a good deal more wakeful than I was, and growing stout in other respects—so that I may yet accomplish something in the literary way—indeed I should have done so before now but for the slowness and poverty of the Reviews themselves. I have tried sundry methods of earning money in the city of late but without success. have rambled into every book-

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sellers or publisher's house and discussed their affairs with them. Some propose to me to do what an honest man cannot—Among others I conversed with the Harpers—to see if they might not find me useful to them—but they say that they are making fifty thousand dollars annually, and their motto is to let well alone. I find that I talk with these poor men as if I were over head and ears in business and a few thousands were no consideration with me—I almost reproach myself for bothering them thus to no purpose—but it is very valuable experience—and the best introduction I could have.

We have had a tremendous rain here—last Monday night and Tuesday morning—I was in the city at Giles Waldo's—and the streets at day-break were absolutely impassable for the water. Yet the accounts of the storm which you may have seen are exaggerated, as indeed are all such things to my imagination.

On sunday I heard Mr [Henry Whitney] Bellows preach on the island—but the fine prospect over the bay and narrows from where I sat preached louder than he—though he did far better than the average, if I remember aright.

I should have liked to see Dan. Webster walking about Concord, I suppose the town shook every step he took—But I trust there were some sturdy Concordians who were not tumbled down by the jar, but represented still the upright town. Where was Geo. Minott? he would not have gone far to see him. Uncle Charles should have been there—he might as well have been catching cat naps in Concord as anywhere. And then what a whetter up of his memory this event would have been! You'd have had all the classmates again in alphabetical order reversed—and Seth Hunt & Bob Smith—and he was a student of my fathers—and where's Put now? and I wonder, you, if Henry's been to see Geo. Jones yet— A little account with Stow—Balcolm—Bigelow—poor miserable to-a-d (sound asleep) I vow you—what noise was that?—saving grace—and few there be—That's clear as preaching—Easter Brooks—moral[ly] depraved—How charming is divine p[hi]losophy—Some wise and some otherwise—Heighho! (Sound asleep again)

Webster's a smart fellow—bears his age well—how old should you think he was—you does he look as if he were ten years younger than I?

I met, or rather was overtaken by Fuller, who tended for Mr [Phineas] How, the other day in Broadway— He dislikes New York very much.—The Mercantile Library—ie its librarian—presented me with a stran-



ger's ticket for a month—and I was glad to read the reviews there—and Carlyle's late article.—In haste

from yr affectionate son  
Henry D. Thoreau

I have bought some pantaloons—and stockings show no holes yet Thin pantaloons cost \$2.25 ready made.

*According to Sanborn (Familiar Letters of Thoreau, p. 104), Daniel Webster had been retained in the once well-known Wyman case of a bank officer charged with fraud and spent several days in the Concord courthouse. Uncle Charles Dunbar, a great admirer of Webster, was notorious for his sleepiness. MS., Morgan. Bracketed portions replace material torn from the manuscript.*

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From EMERSON

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's 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 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 wood-chopper, 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, armics, 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.

*Miss Hoar, according to Sanborn, had attended the marriage of her cousin, W. M. Evarts, later a senator from New York. Peter Hutchinson was a Concord resident. According to Sanborn again, Emerson removed "two pages or so" from "A Winter Walk" before printing it in the Dial. Captain Abel Moore owned the Red Lodge in which Ellery Channing now lived. George Bradford, one of the minor Transcendentalists, had been a resident at Brook Farm. Further details of the house for Mrs. Brown may be found in Emerson's letter to brother William of this same date (Emerson Letters, III, 205-6). The triangle is the present site of the Concord Antiquarian Society. The house for Mrs. Lucy Brown was never built. Text, Emerson-Thoreau, pp. 592-93.*

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 ab-

[1843]

sent 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 Millbrook, in the midst of the garden with all its weeds; for what are botanical distinctions at this distance?

Your friend,  
Henry D. Thoreau.

*In an attempt to earn more money Thoreau tried, completely unsuccessfully, to sell subscriptions to the American Agriculturist, founded the year before and published in New York City. The other publications mentioned were more urbane New York periodicals. H. S. McKean was librarian of the Mercantile Library Association, from which Thoreau was being allowed to borrow books. Thoreau's interest in Quarles is*

shown particularly by quotations throughout his works. Shortly after writing this letter Thoreau characterized Quarles in his note of October 16 to Lidian Emerson. Text, Emerson-Thoreau, pp. 593-94.

From MARGARET FULLER

Mr. Emerson has written a very fine poem, you will see it in the Dial. Ellery [Channing] will not go to the West. He regrets your absence, you, he says, are the man to be with in the woods.

*This quotation from a two-page folio letter appears in the catalogue of the Willard sale (Charles F. Libbie & Co.; February 15-16, 1910), where it is dated only 1843 and described as a "fine intimate letter." We believe, however, that the manuscript is the same one that came up for sale at least once more.*

*The Stephen H. Wakeman Collection sale catalogue, under Item 984, lists "an autograph letter signed, 2pp. folio, September 25, 1873 [1843], from Margaret Fuller to Henry Thoreau, relating to the poem 'Ode of Beauty.'" Emerson's poem "Ode to Beauty," which Thoreau criticized for him in a letter dated October 17, 1843, was printed in the Dial of October 1843. Margaret Fuller had returned from her tour of the West on September 19 and then "visited around." She went on to Brook Farm, and a letter from Emerson to her is postmarked Concord, October 10 and superscribed to her in care of George Ripley at Brook Farm (Emerson Letters, III, 211). Consequently we feel that the month and day are correctly given in the Wakeman catalogue, except that the "4" in the year was mistaken for a "7."*

*Certainly the two references in the sales catalogues do not conflict; we suggest that both describe the same letter.*

[1843]

To MRS. JOHN THOREAU

Staten Island Oct 1st 43

Dear Mother,

I hold together remarkably well as yet, speaking of my outward linen and woolen man, no holes more than I brought away, and no stitches needed yet. It is marvellous. I think the Fates must be on my side, for there is less than a plank between me and—Time, to say the least. As for Eldorado that is far off yet. My bait will not tempt the rats; they are too well fed. The Democratic Review is poor, and can only afford half or quarter pay—which it *will* do—and they say there is a Ldy's Companion that pays—but I could not write anything companionable. However, speculate as we will, it is quite gratuitous, for life never the less, and never the more, goes steadily on, well or ill fed and clothed, somehow, and "honor bright" withal. It is very gratifying to live in the prospect of great successes always, and for that purpose, we must leave a sufficient foreground to see them through. All the painters prefer distant prospects for the greater breadth of view, and delicacy of tint.—But this is no news, and describes no new conditions. Meanwhile I am somnambule at least—stirring in my sleep—indeed, quite awake. I read a good deal and am pretty well known in the libraries of New York. Am in with the Librarian, one Dr [Philip J.] Forbes, of the [New York] Society Library—who has lately been to Cambridge to learn liberality, and has come back to let me take out some untake-out-able-books, which I was threatening to read on the spot. And Mr [H. S.] Mackean, of the Mercantile Library, is a true gentleman—a former tutor of mine—and offers me every privilege there. I have from him a perpetual stranger's ticket, and a citizen's rights besides—all which privileges I pay handsomely for by improving.

A canoe-race "came off" on the Hudson the other day, between Chipeways and New Yorkers, which must have been as moving a sight as the buffalo hunt which I witnessed. But canoes and buffaloes are all lost, as is everything here, in the mob. It is only the people have come to see one another. Let them advertise that there will be a gathering at Hoboken—having bargained with the ferry boats, and there will be, and they need not throw in the buffaloes.

I have crossed the bay 20 or 30 times and have seen a great many

immigrants going up to the city for the first time—Norwegians who carry their old fashioned farming tools to the west with them, and will buy nothing here for fear of being cheated.—English operatives, known by their pale faces and stained hands, who will recover their birth-rights in a little cheap sun and wind,—English travellers on their way to the Astor House, to whom I have done the honors of the city.—Whole families of inigrants cooking their dinner upon the pavements, all sunburnt—so that you are in doubt where the foreigner's face of flesh begins—their tidy clothes laid on, and then tied to their swathed bodies which move about like a bandaged finger—caps set on the head, as if woven of the hair, which is still growing at the roots—each and all busily cooking, stooping from time to time over the pot, and having something to drop into it, that so they may be entitled to take something out, forsooth. They look like respectable but straightened [*sic*] people, who may turn out to be counts when they get to Wisconsin—and will have their experience to relate to their children.

Seeing so many people from day to day one comes to have less respect for flesh and bones, and thinks they must be more loosely [word torn out] of less firm fibre, than the few he had known. It must have a very bad influence on children to see so many human beings at once—mere herds of men.

I came across Henry Bigelow a week ago, sitting in front of a Hotel in Broadway, very much is [*sic*] if he were under his father's own stoop. He is seeking to be admitted into the bar in New York, but as yet, had not succeeded. I directed him to Fuller's store, which he had not found, and invited him to come and see me, if he came to the island. Tell Mrs & Miss [Prudence] Ward that I have not forgotten them, and was glad to hear from George [Ward] with whom I spent last night, that they had returned to C.—Tell Mrs Brown that it gives me as much pleasure to know that she thinks of me and my writing as if I had been the author of the piece in question; but I did not even read the papers I sent. The Mirror is really the most readable journal here. I see that they have printed a short piece which I wrote to sell in the Dem Review, and still keep the review of Paradise that I may include in it a notice of another book by the same author, which they have found, and are going to send me.—I dont know when I shall come home—I like to keep that feast in store—Tell Helen that I do not see any advertisement for her—and I am looking for myself—If I could find a rare opening, I might be tempted to try with her for a year till I had payed my debts; but for such I am

[1843]

sure it is not well to go out of N. Eng. Teachers are but poorly recompensed even here.—Tell her and Sophia (if she is not gone) to write to me—Father will know that this letter is to him as well as to you—I send him a paper which usually contains the news—if not all that is stirring—all that has stirred—and even draws a little on the future. I wish he would send me by and by the paper which contains the results of the Cattleshow. You must get Helen's eyes to read this—though she is a scoffer at honest penmanship yr affectionate son

Henry D. Thoreau

*The Henry Bigelow mentioned was a young Concordian five years Thoreau's junior. The short piece was "The Landlord," in the Democratic Review for this month. The "Paradise" review was in the November issue. The buffalo hunt was a Barnum publicity stunt. Barnum made a fortune by chartering all the ferries to Hoboken. MS., Huntington.*

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To MRS. EMERSON

Staten Island Oct 16th 1843

My Dear Friend,

I promised you some thoughts long ago, but it would be hard to tell whether these are the ones. I suppose that the great questions of Fate, Freewill, Foreknowledge absolute, which used to be discussed in Concord are still unsettled. And here comes Channing with his "Present," to vex the world again—a rather galvanic movement, I think. However, I like the man all the better, though his schemes the less. I am sorry for his confessions. Faith never makes a confession.

Have you had the annual berrying party, or sat on the Cliffs a whole day this summer? I suppose the flowers have fared quite as well since I was not there to scoff at them, and the hens without doubt keep up their reputation.

I have been reading lately what of Quarles's poetry I could get. He

was a contemporary of Herbert, and a kindred spirit. I think you would like him. It is rare to find one who was so much of a poet and so little of an artist. He wrote long poems, almost epics for length, about Jonah, Esther, Job, Samson & Solomon, interspersed with meditations after a quite original plan. Shepherd's Oracles, Comedies, Romances, Fancies and Meditations—the Quintessence of Meditation, and Enchiridions of Meditations all divine,—and what he calls his Morning Muse, besides prose works as curious as the rest. He was an unwearied Christian and a reformer of some old school withal. Hopelessly quaint, as if he lived all alone and knew nobody but his wife, who appears to have revered him. He never doubts his genius;—it is only he and his God in all the world. He uses language sometimes as greatly as Shakspeare, and though there is not much straight grain in him, there is plenty of tough crooked timber. In an age when Herbert is revived, Quarles surely ought not to be forgotten.

I will copy a few such sentences as I should read to you if there. Mrs Brown too may find some nutriment in them!

Mrs Emerson must have been sicker than I was aware of, to be confined so long, though they will not say that she is convalescent yet though the Dr pronounces her lungs unaffected.

How does the Saxon Edith do? Can you tell yet to which school of philosophy she belongs—whether she will be a fair saint of some Christian order, or a follower of Plato and the heathen? Bid Ellen a good night or a good morning from me, and see if she will remember where it comes from. And remember me to Mrs Brown and your mother and Elizabeth Hoar.

Yr friend  
Henry.

*Canby notes in his Thoreau (p. 160) the complete change in temper in this letter from that of June 20, 1843, and asserts: "She must have written him a cooling epistle," since he now deals with the very "petty rumbling news" that he earlier felt no need to write down. The Present was W. H. Channing's new and enthusiastic magazine. MS., Berg.*

To EMERSON

Staten Island Oct 17th

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 would 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 [Ellery] Channing's letters full of life and enjoy their wit highly. Lane writes straight and solid like a guide-board, 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 principle 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.

Mackean has imported within the year several new editions and collections of old poetry, which I have the reading of 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 Ethnical scripture 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 sea-shore 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 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 a parody. "Thee knew I of old" "Remediless thirst" are some of those stereotyped lines. I am frequently reminded, I believe of Jane Taylors 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 thoughts 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 around 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 have plowed well this year, it promises that something will be done these summers. But I am suspicious of that Brittoner who advertises so many cords of *good* oak, chestnut and maple wood for sale—*Good!* aye, 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 revelling 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 corn field—it being washing day—with the inkstand Elizabeth Hoar gave me—though it is not redolent of corn-stalks, I fear.

Let me not be forgotten by Channing & Hawthorne nor our gray-suited neighbor under the hill.

Yr friend  
H. D. Thoreau

*Charles Lane wrote both the "A Day with the Shakers" and "Social Tendencies" for the October Dial. Thoreau's manuscript was "A Winter Walk," which Emerson edited for that Dial. The "Ethical Scriptures"*

*were selections from the Chinese by Thoreau, a part of his long-dreamed-of anthology of the world's scriptures. The "Autumn verses" were by Ellery Channing; the "Sweep Ho" by Ellen Hooper; the "lecture on the Comic" by Emerson. For Elizabeth Hoar's inkstand see her letter of May 2, 1843. "The gray-suited neighbor under the hill" was Edmund Hosmer. MS., Berg.*

TO HELEN THOREAU

Staten Island Oct 18<sup>th</sup> 43

Dear Helen,

What do you mean by saying that "we have written eight times by private opportunity"? Isn't it the more the better? and am I not glad of it? But people have a habit of not letting me know it when they go to Concord from New York. I endeavored to get you *The Present*, when I was last in the city, but they were all sold—and now another is out, which I will send if I get it. I did not send the *Dem Rev* because I had no copy, and my piece was not worth fifty cents.—You think that [W. H.] Channing words would apply to me too, as living more in the natural than the moral world, but I think that you mean the world of men and women rather and reformers generally. My objection to Channing and all that fraternity is that they need and deserve sympathy themselves rather than are able to render it to others. They want faith and mistake their private ail for an infected atmosphere, but let any one of them recover hope for a moment, and right his *particular* grievance, and he will no longer train in that company. To speak or do any thing that shall concern mankind, one must speak and act as if well, or from that grain of health which he has left.—This *Present* book indeed is blue, but the hue of its thoughts is yellow.—I say these things with the less hesitation because I have the jaundice myself, but I also know what it is to be well. But do not think that one can escape from mankind, who is one of them, and is so constantly dealing with them.

I could not undertake to form a nucleus of an institution for the development of infant minds, where none already existed—It would be

too cruel, and then as if looking all this while one way with benevolence, to walk off another about ones own affairs suddenly!—Something of this kind is an unavoidable objection to that.

I am very sorry to hear such bad news about Aunt Maria, but I think that the worst is always the least to be apprehended—for nature is averse to it as well as we. I trust to hear that she is quite well soon. I send love to her and to Aunt Jane.

Mrs Emerson is not decidedly better yet, though she is not extremely sick. For three months I have not known whether to think of Sophia as in Bangor or Concord, and now you say that she is going directly. Tell her to write to me, and establish her whereabouts, and also to get well directly—And see that she has something worthy to do when she gets down there, for that's the best remedy for disease. [Four fifths of pp. 3–4 are cut away; at the top of p. 4 these lines follow:] judge that the prospect was as good as anywhere in the west—and yet I think it very uncertain, though perhaps not for anything that I know [page cut] unless that she got [page cut; and the conclusion of the letter follows in the margin of p. 1:] Tell Father and mother I hope to see them before long—

yr affectionate brother  
H. D. Thoreau.

MS., Huntington.

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From EMERSON

Concord, Oct 25, 1843—

Dear Henry,—

I have your letter this evening by the advent of Mrs [Timothy] Fuller to Ellery C and am heartily glad of the robust greeting. Ellery brought it to me & 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 & always in good wit, forms stricter ties with George

[1843]

Minott, and is always merry with the dulness of a world which will not support him. I am sorry you will dodge my hunters, T[appan] & W[aldo]. T. is a very satisfactory person only I could be very willing he should read a little more. he speaks seldom but easily & strongly, & 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, & the narrative of the death of the renowned friend Etienne de la Boétie. Then I have had Saadis' *Gulistan* Ross's translation; and Marot; & 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 & strong. They send us the "Revista Ligure," a respectable magazine from Genoa; "la Democratie Pacifique," a bright daily paper from Paris; the Deutsche Schnellpost,—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 publication 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—

*Thoreau's translations from Pindar were printed in the January 1844 Dial and more in the April number. The magazines mentioned were received in exchange for the Dial. In response to Emerson's request Thoreau delivered a lecture on "The Ancient Poets" before the Concord Lyceum November 29, 1843. MS., Berg.*

To HENRY SWASEY MCKEAN

Mr McKean

[Would you] be kind [and let] me take [your "C]hapman's Trans[lation] of the Greek Pastoral [Poets] & "Ossian's Genuine Remains"?"

Yrs resp'y  
Henry D. Thoreau.

MS., Abernethy. *The bracketed portions are torn from the manuscript and we have followed the reading assumed by Kenneth Walter Cameron, The Transcendentalists and Minerva, II, 371-72. Mr. Cameron assumes, quite rightfully, we believe, that this letter was written about November 1, 1843, to Henry Swasey McKean, librarian of the Mercantile Library of New York City.*

From EMERSON

Thursday P. m.

Dear Henry,

I am not today quite so robust as I expected to be & so have to beg that you will come down & drink tea with Mr Brownson & charge yourself with carrying him to the Lyceum & introducing him to the Curators. I hope you can oblige thus far.

Yours,  
R. W. E.

*Though the note is dated only "Thursday," November 23, 1843 was, as Rusk points out (Emerson Letters, III, 225), the only time that Orestes Brownson delivered a lecture before the Concord Lyceum on a*

[1843]

*Thursday. Thoreau probably returned from Staten Island in the middle of November; the date is not known. MS., Huntington.*

From MRS. NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

Mr Thoreau,

Will you be kind enough to take to New York the letter to Mr O'Sullivan, & if it be convenient for you, to carry my letter to Boston? If you cannot call at West St, it is just as well to put it into the Boston Post Office.

S A. Hawthorne.

Dec. 3, 1843

*Thoreau returned to Staten Island after the Thanksgiving period in Concord, but his stay was not long. Emerson wrote his brother on December 17, 1843 (Rusk, Emerson Letters, III, 228-29) indicating that Thoreau had once more returned to Concord. Probably this brief trip was to wind up his business affairs in New York.*

*This note from Hawthorne's wife contained a letter for the editor of the Democratic Review, who had published both Hawthorne and Thoreau, and one probably for Mrs. Hawthorne's sister Elizabeth Peabody, who ran a little bookstore at 13 West Street in Boston. The Hawthornes, in the Old Manse in Concord, were fairly well acquainted with Thoreau. MS., Morgan; previously unpublished.*



From CHARLES LANE

Boston Decr 3/43

Dear friend

As well as my wounded hands permit I have scribbled something for friend Hecker which if agreeable may be the opportunity for entering into closer relations with him; a course I think likely to be mutually encouraging, as well as beneficial to all men. But let it reach him in the manner most conformable to your own feelings.

That from all perils of a false position you may shortly be relieved and landed in the position where you feel "at home" is the sincere wish of yours most friendly

Charles Lane

Henry Thoreau

*Isaac Hecker, idealistic, enthusiastic, but troubled, had been a baker in New York and after that a seeker of truth in various places. From January 1843 he lived at Brook Farm off and on for several months; then he went to Fruitlands, Alcott's and Lane's vegetarian utopia, where he became friendly with Lane. Now he was back in New York working at the family bakery, thinking about religion and corresponding with the utopians he had met. Lane's final sentence probably signifies his hope that Thoreau would shortly leave his mundane tutoring at William Emerson's (as he had done) and return to Transcendental Concord. The Earl House, to which Lane directed his note, was the Boston tavern where mail and packages to or from Concord were transferred; Harn- den's Express, in particular, which ran over the Boston-New York route, made its Concord connections here. MS., Fruitlands Museum, Harvard, Massachusetts.*