

1854

A treaty between Japan and the United States was signed after Commodore Perry had presented American gifts to the Japanese commissioners, the gifts including a fully equipped miniature railroad, a telegraph line, and a steamboat, all intended to represent the arts of Western civilization. Abram Gessner patented kerosene, thus carrying the arts a step farther. The first international convention of the Young Men's Christian Association assembled in Buffalo. A convention of Whigs and Free Soilers met in Detroit and adopted the name "Republican." The Kansas-Nebraska Bill, introduced by Senator Stephen Douglas, was passed; it repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and allowed the two new territories to decide for themselves whether they wanted slavery or not. Settlers from the North, including New England, and from the South streamed into Kansas. Proslavery men formed secret societies called "Blue Lodges," which were effective in carrying the congressional election in November for a proslavery candidate. An agreement with Russia was signed respecting rights of neutrals at sea. In Boston the runaway slave Anthony Burns was arrested; his arrest caused riots and an attack on the courthouse, but he was returned to slavery in a cutter provided by the government.

On August 9 the firm of Ticknor and Fields, at a cost to themselves of 43 cents a copy, published *Walden*. It sold for \$1.00; though the American public did not know it then, few better bargains were offered in 1854. The book was not widely reviewed. However, the few reviews were appreciative. In the *Journal* for June—to take a month at random—Thoreau wrote about oak galls; the birth of a shadow; a flight of

ephemerae; the river clams; the injustice of fame; a nighthawk; painted tortoises laying eggs; oak leaves; tracks of turtles; a snapping turtle; "artificial wants"; the great fringed orchis; the Anthony Burns affair; the upper Sudbury River; the evergreen forest bird; river plants; the cricket's homely chirp; harvest flies; dew; the waterlily; flowers and morality; the Anthony Burns affair again; beauty and baseness; wild roses; mountain laurel; an ocean of fog; the Fugitive Slave Law and the Constitution; the season of small fruits; the Burns affair; a snapping turtle's nest; the "tweezer-bird"; a free-man party wanted; a thunder-shower; a school of young pouts; grassy hollows; miscellaneous notes; and large black birches. This year Thoreau found a new disciple—or, rather, the disciple found him—and a new friend from England. The disciple was the Quaker Daniel Ricketson of New Bedford. The Englishman was the cultivated and well traveled Thomas Cholmondeley.

From EMERSON

Concord 1 Jan'y 1854

Dear Henry,

I meant to have seen you, but for delays that grew out of the snowbanks, to ask your aid in these following particulars. On the 8 February, Professor Horsford is to lecture at the Lyceum; on the 15th Feb.y, Theodore Parker. They are both to come to my house for the night. Now I wish to entreat your courtesy & counsel to receive these lonely pilgrims, when they arrive, to guide them to our house, & help the alarmed wife to entertain them, & see that they do not lose the way to the Lyceum, nor the hour. For, it seems pretty certain that I shall not be at home until perhaps the next week following these two. If you shall be in town, & can help these gentlemen so far, you will serve the whole municipality as well as

Yours faithfully,
R. W. Emerson

Emerson had been elected a curator of the Concord Lyceum on November 16, 1853. Theodore Parker delivered a lecture, "The Function of Beauty." Professor Eben N. Horsford's lecture was postponed because of inclement weather. MS., Morgan.

From L. MARETT

Middlesex. S[ummon]S To Henry D. Thoreau of Concord in said County of Middlesex.

Greeting.

You are hereby required, in the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to make your appearance before Justices of the Court of Common Pleas now holden at Cambridge within and for the County of Middlesex on Thursday the Twentieth day of January instant at 9 O'clock A.M. and from day to day until the Action herein named is heard by the court, to give evidence of what you know relating to an Action or Plea of Tort then and there to be heard and tried betwixt Leonard Spaulding Lots [?] Plaintiff and William C. Benjamin Defendant

Hereof fail not, as you will answer your default under the pains and penalty in the law in that behalf made and provided. Dated at Cambridge the Eighteenth day of January in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty four

L. Marett Justice of the Peace

Thoreau's work as a surveyor was herein used as court testimony. Leonard Spaulding was a contemporary resident of Concord. MS., Hunting-ton; previously unpublished; the italicized portions were part of a printed form.

To H. G. O. BLAKE

Concord Jan 21st '54

Mr Blake,

My coat is at last done, and my mother & sister allow that I am so far in a condition to go abroad. I feel as if I had gone abroad the

moment I put it on. It is, as usual a production strange to me, the wearer, invented by some Count D'Orsay, and the maker of it was not acquainted with any of my real depressions or elevations. He only measured a peg to hang it on, and might have made the loop big enough to go over my head. It requires a not quite innocent indifference not to say insolence to wear it. Ah, the process by which we get overcoats is not what it should be. Though the church declare it righteous & its priest pardons me, my own Good Genius tells me that it is hasty & coarse & false. I expect a time when, or rather an integrity by which a man will get his coat as honestly, and as perfectly fitting as a tree its bark. Now our garments are typical of our conformity to the ways of the world, i.e. of the Devil, & to some extent react on us and poison us like that shirt which Hercules put on.

I think to come & see you next week on Monday if nothing hinders. I have just returned from Court at Cambridge, whither I was called as a witness, having surveyed a water-privilege about which there is a dispute since you were here.

Ah! what foreign countries there are, greater in extent than the U. S. or Russia, and with no more souls to a square mile—stretching away on every side from every human being with whom you have no sympathy. Their humanity affects me as simply monstrous. Rocks—earth—brute beasts comparatively are not so strange to me. When I sit in the parlors or kitchens of some with whom my business brings me— I was going to say in contact—(business, like misery, makes strange bedfellows) I feel a sort of awe and as forlorn as if I were cast away on a desolate shore—I think of Riley's Narrative & his sufferings. You who soared like a merlin with your mate through the realms of ether—in the presence of the unlike drop at once to earth a mere amorphous squab—divested of your air inflated pinions. (By the way, excuse this writing, for I am using the stub of the last feather I chance to possess.) You travel on, however, through this dark & desert world. You see in the distance an intelligent & sympathizing lineament,—stars come forth in the dark & oases appear in the desert.

But (to return to the subject of coats), we are well nigh smothered under yet more fatal coats, which do not fit us, our whole lives long. Consider the cloak that our employment or station is—how rarely men treat each other for what in their true & naked characters they are. How we use & tolerate pretension; how the judge is clothed with dignity which does not belong to him, and the trembling witness with humility

that does not belong to him, and the criminal perchance with shame or impudence which no more belong to him. It does not matter so much then what is the fashion of the cloak with which we cloak these cloaks. Change the coat—put the judge in the criminal box & the criminal on the bench, and you might think that you had changed the men.

No doubt the thinnest of all cloaks is conscious deception or lies it is sleazy & frays out, it is not close woven like cloth—but its meshes are a coarse net-work. A man can afford to lie only at the intersection of the threads, but truth puts in the filling & makes a consistent stuff.

I mean merely to suggest how much the station affects the demeanor & self-respectability of the parties, & that the difference between the judge's coat of cloth & the criminal's is insignificant compared with—or only partially significant of—the difference between the coats which their respective stations permits them to wear. What airs the judge may put on over his coat which the criminal may not! The judge's opinion (*sententia*) of the criminal *sentences* him & is read by the clerk of the court, & published to the world, & executed by the sheriff—but the criminal's opinion of the judge has the weight of a sentence & is published & executed only in the supreme court of the universe—a court not of common pleas. How much juster is the one than the other? Men are continually *sentencing* each other, but whether we be judges or criminals, the sentence is ineffectual unless we condemn ourselves.

I am glad to hear that I do not always limit your vision when you look this way—that you sometimes see the light through me, that I am here & there windows & not all dead wall. Might not the community sometimes petition a man to remove himself as a nuisance—a darkener of the day—a too large mote?

H. D. T.

This letter shows a greater debt, perhaps, to Sartor Resartus than anything else Thoreau wrote. The volume referred to is James Riley's Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the American Brig Commerce. MS., Percy Brown.

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From THOMAS B. SMITH

New York Feby 23/54

Mr Henry Thoreau

Dear Sir

Enclosed I send Ten Dollars for which send me 5 pounds best Plumbago for Electrotpe purposes. The pound you sent before I found very good. Please send me a small quantity of the \$1.50 per pound Black Lead that I may try it.

Yours Truly
Thomas B Smith per R.H.S.

This is the earliest of many extant letters written to Thoreau ordering materials manufactured by the family. Apparently Thoreau was gradually taking over some responsibility for the business from his aging father. MS., Berg; previously unpublished.

To GEORGE THATCHER

Concord Feb 25 '54.

Dear Cousin,—

I should have answered you earlier if a wood merchant whom I engaged had kept his appointment. Measuring on Mr. Hubbard's plans of '36 and '52, which I enlarged, [word] the whole area wanted for a cemetery 16 acres & 114 rods. This includes a path one rod wide on the north side of the wood next to the meadow, and is all of the Brown Farm north of the New Road, except the meadow of about 7 acres and a small triangle of about a dozen rods next to the Agricultural Land. The above result is probably accurate within half an acre; nearer I cannot come with certainty without a resurvey.

9 acres & 9 rods are woodland, whose value I have got Anthony Wright, an old Farmer & now measurer of wood at the Depot, to assist me in determining. This is the result

Oak chiefly 4A 53rd 156 Cords at \$2.75	cord standing large & small	429
White & Pitch Pine 3A 30rd	143½ Cords 2	287
Pitch Pine	146rd 16½ Cords 2	41 25
Young P Pine	100rd 5 cord 2	10
		<hr/>
		\$767 25

Merchantable green oak wood, piled on the cars, brings here 4.75 pr cord.
Pitch pine 4.25.
White 2.50

An acquaintance in Boston applied to me last October for a small farm in Concord, and the small amount of land & the want of a good house may prevent his thinking of the Dutch House place, & besides circumstances have transpired which I fear will prevent his coming here; however I will inform him at once that it is on the market. I do not know about the state of his funds, only that he was in no hurry, though in earnest, & limited me to \$2000.

All well

Yours
Henry D. Thoreau

According to Miss Sarah Bartlett of the Concord Free Public Library (letter of August 17, 1951) the land Thoreau surveyed was probably for Sleepy Hollow cemetery; and it was probably Cyrus Hubbard whose plan Thoreau used. The Brown farm belonged to Deacon Reuben Brown. MS., Edward Wannemacher (typescript): previously unpublished.

TO DR. THADDEUS W. HARRIS

Concord March 1st 1854

Dear Sir,

I return herewith—three volumes viz. Price on the Picturesque 1st vol. McCulloh's Researches, and Josselyn's Voyages.

Yrs
Henry D. Thoreau

The letter is addressed to "Librarian of Harvard University Politeness of Mr. Gerrish." Gerrish is identified by Kenneth Cameron as Charles Pickering Gerrish, of the Class of 1854. MS. facsimile, Kenneth Walter Cameron, The Transcendentalists and Minerva, II, 481.

From HORACE GREELEY

March 6 1854

Dear Sir,—

I presume your first letter containing the \$2 was robbed by our general mail robber of New Haven, who has just been sent to the State's Prison. Your second letter has probably failed to receive attention owing to a press of business. But I will make all right. You ought to have the Semi-weekly, and I shall order it sent to you one year on trial; if you choose to write me a letter or so some time, very well; if not, we will be even without that.

Thoreau, I want you to do something on *my* urgency. I want you to collect and arrange your "Miscellanies" and send them to me. Put in "Ktaadn," "Carlyle," "A Winter Walk," "Canada," etc., and I will try to find a publisher who will bring them out at his own risk, and (I hope) to your ultimate profit. If you have anything new to put with them, very

well; but let me have about a 12mo volume whenever you can get it ready, and see if there is not something to your credit in the bank of Fortune.

Yours,
Horace Greeley.

Text, *Sanborn's* Henry D. Thoreau, pp. 238-39.

To?

In his *Journal* for March 8, 1854 (VI, 158) Thoreau records: "I wrote a letter for an Irishman night before last [March 6], sending for his wife in Ireland to come to this country. One sentence which he dictated was, 'Don't mind the rocking of the vessel, but take care of the children that they be not lost overboard.'"

From HORACE GREELEY

New York, Mar. 23, '54.

Dear Thoreau,

I am glad your "Walden" is coming out. I shall announce it at once, whether Ticknor does or not.

I am in no hurry now about your *Miscellanies*; take your time, select a good title, and prepare your articles deliberately and finally. Then if Ticknor will give you something worth having, let him have this too; if proffering it to him is to glut your market, let it come to me. But take your time. I was only thinking you were hibernating when you ought to be doing something. I referred (without naming you) to your 'Walden' experience in my lecture on "Self-Culture," with which I have

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bored ever so many audiences. This episode excited much interest and I have repeatedly been asked who it is that I refer to.

Yours,
Horace Greeley.

H. D. Thoreau, Concord, Ms.

P.S. You must know Miss Elizabeth Hoar, whereas I hardly do. Now I have agreed to edit Margaret's works, and I want of Elizabeth a letter or memorandum of personal recollections of Margaret and her ideas. Can't you ask her to write it for me?

Yours,
H. G.

MS., Princeton University Library.

From HORACE GREELEY

[April 2, 1854]

Dear Thoreau,—

Thank you for your kindness in the matter of Margaret. Pray take no further trouble; but if anything should come in your way, calculated to help me, do not forget.

Yours,
Horace Greeley.

Text, *Sanborn's* Henry D. Thoreau, p. 240.

To DR. THADDEUS W. HARRIS

Concord April 18th '54

Dear Sir,

I return by Mr. Gerrish three vols. viz Agassiz sur les Glaciers Shepard's Clear Sunshine and New England in 1652

Yrs
Henry D. Thoreau

MS., Harvard.

From CHARLES SCRIBNER

145 Nassau Street, New York, May 1854

As it is my intention to publish the coming season a work, entitled *An Encyclopaedia of American Literature*, embracing Personal and Critical Notices of Authors, with passages from their Writings, from the earliest period to the present day, with Portraits, Autographs, and other illustrations, I have adopted the method of addressing to you a Circular letter, as the best means of rendering the book as complete in regard to points on which you may be interested, as possible, and as faithful as may be to the memories and claims of the families and personages whose literary interests will be represented in it. The plan of the work is to furnish to the public, at one view, notices of the Lives and Writings of all American authors of importance. As it is quite probable you may have in your possession material or information which you would like the opportunity of seeing noticed in such a publication, you will serve the objects of the work by a reply to this circular, in such answers to the following suggestions as may appear desirable or convenient to you.

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1. Dates of birth, parentage, education, residence, with such biographical information and anecdote; as you may think proper to be employed in such a publication.
2. Names and dates of Books published, references to Articles in Reviews, Magazines, &c., of which you may be the author.
3. Family notices and sources of information touching American authors no longer living, of whom you may be the representative.

Dates, facts, and precise information, in reference to points which have not been noticed in collections of this kind, or which may have been misstated, are desirable. Your own judgment will be the best guide as to the material of this nature which should be employed in a work which it is intended shall be of general interest and of a National character. It will represent the whole country, its only aim being to exhibit to the readers a full, fair, and entertaining account of the literary products thus far of America.

It is trusted that the plan of the work will engage your sympathy and concurrence, and that you will find in it a sufficient motive for a reply to this Circular. The materials which you may communicate will be employed, so far as is consistent with the limits and necessary unity of the work, for the preparation of which I have engaged Evert A. and George L. Duyckinck, who have been prominently before the public for several years in a similar connection, as Editors of the "Literary World."

Yours, respectfully,
Charles Scribner

The volume was published by Scribner in 1855 under the title of Cyclopaedia of American Literature, and a notice of Thoreau's writings was included (II, 653-56). MS., Huntington; previously unpublished. Except for the date the letter is printed.

From TICKNOR & CO.

Boston June 10 1854

Dear Sir

Our Mr. Fields who left by the steamer of the 7th for England took the proof sheets of *Walden*—In order to secure a copy in England the book must be published there as soon as here and at least 12 copies published and offered for sale. If Mr. F. succeeds in making a sale of the early sheets, it will doubtless be printed in London so as to cause very little delay here but if it be necessary to print and send out the copies it will delay us 3 or 4 weeks. Probably not more than three weeks. You will probably prefer to delay the publication that you may be sure of your copy in England.

Truly yours
W. D. Ticknor & Co.

H. D. Thoreau

On that trip James Fields never reached England; he became so seasick that he had to leave ship at Halifax and return home. Nevertheless, as Tryon and Charvat point out in The Cost Books of Ticknor & Fields, he continued his efforts on behalf of Walden. He recommended the book to the London publisher Richard Bentley, as Emerson had done, and he added: "The book is sure to make a noise in the literary world." Fields also wrote his firm's agent, Trübner, asking him to dispose of the English rights to some publisher, Bentley preferably. In the Trübner letter Fields said of Walden: "It belongs to the same class of works with Mr. Emerson's writings & will be likely to attract attention. . . . Walden is no common book" (The Cost Books, p. 290). In spite of these and other efforts, Walden was not published in England until 1884. MS., Harvard (typescript).

From DR. THADDEUS W. HARRIS

Cambridge, Mass. June 27, 1854.

Mr. Henry D. Thoreau,

Dear Sir.

Your letter of the 25th, the books, and the *Cicada* came to hand this evening,—and I am much obliged to you for all of them;—for the books,—because I am very busy with putting the Library in order for examination, & want every book to be in its place;—for the letter, because it gives me interesting facts concerning Cicadas; and for the specimen because it is *new* to me, as a species or as a variety.

The *Cicada* seems to be a *female*, and of course when living could not make the noise peculiar to the other sex. It differs from my specimens of *Cicada septemdecim* (& indeed still more from all the other species in my collection). It is not so large as the *C.17*; it has more orange about its thorax; the wing-veins are not so vividly stained with orange, and the dusky zigzag W on the anterior or upper wings, which is very distinct in the *C.17*, is hardly visible in this specimen. It has much the same form as the female *C.17*; but I must see the *male* in order to determine positively whether it be merely a variety or a different species. I should be very glad to get more specimens and of both sexes. Will you try for them?

Your much obliged
Thaddeus William Harris.

Harris, the Harvard librarian and a leading entomologist, was the author of the classic Report on Insects Injurious to Vegetation (Boston, 1841). Thoreau reports the discovery of this cicada in his Journal for June 13, 1854. MS., Morgan; previously unpublished.

To H. G. O. BLAKE

Concord, August 8, 1854.

Mr. Blake,—

Methinks I have spent a rather unprofitable summer thus far. I have been too much with the world, as the poet might say. The completest performance of the highest duties it imposes would yield me but little satisfaction. Better the neglect of all such, because your life passed on a level where it was impossible to recognize them. Latterly, I have heard the very flies buzz too distinctly, and have accused myself because I did not still this superficial din. We must not be too easily distracted by the crying of children or of dynasties. The Irishman erects his sty, and gets drunk, and jabbers more and more under my eaves, and I am responsible for all that filth and folly. I find it, as ever, very unprofitable to have much to do with men. It is sowing the wind, but not reaping even the whirlwind; only reaping an unprofitable calm and stagnation. Our conversation is a smooth, and civil, and never-ending speculation merely. I take up the thread of it again in the morning, with very much such courage as the invalid takes his prescribed Seidlitz powders. Shall I help you to some of the mackerel? It would be more respectable if men, as has been said before, instead of being such pigmy desperates, were Giant Despairs. Emerson says that his life is so unprofitable and shabby for the most part, that he is driven to all sorts of resources [recources?], and, among the rest, to men. I tell him that we differ only in our resources. Mine is to get away from men. They very rarely affect me as grand or beautiful; but I know that there is a sunrise and a sunset every day. In the summer, this world is a mere watering-place,—a Saratoga,—drinking so many tumblers of Congress water; and in the winter, is it any better, with its oratorios? I have seen more men than usual, lately; and, well as I was acquainted with one, I am surprised to find what vulgar fellows they are. They do a little business commonly each day, in order to pay their board, and then they congregate in sitting-rooms and feebly fabulate and paddle in the social slush; and when I think that they have sufficiently relaxed, and am prepared to see them steal away to their shrines, they go unashamed to their beds, and take on a new layer of sloth. They may be single, or have families in their *faineancy*. I do not meet men who can have nothing to do with me because they have so much to do with themselves. However, I trust

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that a very few cherish purposes which they never declare. Only think, for a moment, of a man about his affairs! How we should respect him! How glorious he would appear! Not working for any corporation, its agent, or president, but fulfilling the end of his being! A man about *his business* would be the cynosure of all eyes.

The other evening I was determined that I would silence this shallow din; that I would walk in various directions and see if there was not to be found any depth of silence around. As Bonaparte sent out his horsemen in the Red Sea on all sides to find shallow water, so I sent forth my mounted thoughts to find deep water. I left the village and paddled up the river to Fair Haven Pond. As the sun went down, I saw a solitary boatman disporting on the smooth lake. The falling dews seemed to strain and purify the air, and I was soothed with an infinite stillness. I got the world, as it were, by the nape of the neck, and held it under in the tide of its own events, till it was drowned, and then I let it go down stream like a dead dog. Vast hollow chambers of silence stretched away on every side, and my being expanded in proportion, and filled them. Then first could I appreciate sound, and find it musical.

But now for your news. Tell us of the year. Have you fought the good fight? What is the state of your crops? Will your harvest answer well to the seed-time, and are you cheered by the prospect of stretching corn-fields? Is there any blight on your fields, any murrain in your herds? Have you tried the size and quality of your potatoes? It does one good to see their balls dangling in the lowlands. Have you got your meadow hay before the fall rains shall have set in? Is there enough in your barns to keep your cattle over? Are you killing weeds nowadays? or have you earned leisure to go a-fishing? Did you plant any Giant Regrets last spring, such as I saw advertised? It is not a new species, but the result of cultivation and a fertile soil. They are excellent for sauce. How is it with your marrow squashes for winter use? Is there likely to be a sufficiency of fall feed in your neighborhood? What is the state of the springs? I read that in your country there is more water on the hills than in the valleys. Do you find it easy to get all the help you require? Work early and late, and let your men and teams rest at noon. Be careful not to drink too much sweetened water, while at your hoeing, this hot weather. You can bear the heat much better for it.

Text, Familiar Letters of Thoreau, pp. 275-79.

From DANIEL RICKETSON

Brooklawn, near New Bedford Mass. Aug. 12th, 1854

Dear Sir,

I have just finished reading "Walden" and hasten to thank you for the great degree of satisfaction it has afforded me. Having always been a lover of Nature, in man, as well as in the material universe, I hail with pleasure every original production in literature which bears the stamp of a genuine and earnest love for the true philosophy of human life.—Such I assure you I esteem your book to be. To many, and to most, it will appear to be the wild musings of an eccentric and strange mind, though all must recognize your affectionate regard for the gentle denizens of the woods and pond as well as the great love you have shewn for what are familiarly called the beauties of Nature. But to me the book appears to evince a mind most thoroughly self possessed, highly cultivated with a strong vein of common sense. The whole book is a prose poem (pardon the solecism) and at the same time as simple as a running brook.

I have always loved ponds of pure translucent water, and some of my happiest and most memorable days have been passed on and around the beautiful Middleboro' Ponds, particularly the largest, Assawampset—here King Philip frequently came, and a beautiful round hill near by, is still known as "King Philip's look-out." I have often felt an inclination when tired of the noise and strife of society, to retire to the shores of this noble old pond, or rather lake, for it is some 5 or 6 miles in length and 2 broad. But I have a wife and four children, & besides have got a *little* too far along, being in my forty-second year, to undertake a new mode of life. I strive however, and have striven during the whole of my life, to live as free from the restraint of mere forms & ceremonies as I possibly can. I love a quiet, peaceful rural retirement; but it was not my fate to realize this until a little past thirty years of age—since then I have been a sort of rustic, genteel perhaps, rustic. Not so very genteel you might reply, if you saw the place where I am writing. It is a rough board shanty 12 × 14 three miles from New Bedford in a quiet & secluded spot—here for the present I eat, & sleep, read, write, receive visitors &c. My house is now *undergoing* repairs &c and my family are in town. A short time since a whip-poor-will serenaded me,

and later at night I hear the cuckoos near my windows. It has long been my delight to observe the feathered tribes, and earlier in life I was quite an ornithologist. The coming of the first Blue bird in early Spring is to me still a delightful circumstance. But more particularly soothing to me is the insect hum so multitudinous at this season.—Now as I write the crickets & other little companions are sweetly & soothingly singing around my dwelling, & occasionally in my room. I am quite at home with partridges, Quails, rabbits skunks & woodchucks. But Winter is my best time, then I am a great trumper through the woods. O how I love the woods. I have walked thousands of miles in the woods hereabouts. I recognize many of my own experiences in your "Walden." Still I am not altogether given up to these matters—they are my pastimes. I have a farm to attend to, fruit trees & a garden & a little business occasionally in town to look after, but much leisure nevertheless. In fact I am the only man of leisure I know of, every body here as well as elsewhere is upon the stir. I love quiet, this you know friend Thoreau dont necessarily imply that the body should be still all the time. I am often quietest, arn't you, when walking among the still haunts of Nature or hoeing perhaps beans as I have oftentimes done as well as corn & potatoes &c &c.

Poetry has been to me a great consolation amid the jarring elements of this life. The English poets some of them at least, and one Latin, our good old Virgil, have been like household gods to me.—Cowper's Task, my greatest favorite now lies before me in which I had been reading & alternately looking at the western sky just after sunset before I commenced this letter. Cowper was a true lover of the country. How often have I felt the force of these lines upon the country in my own experience

"I never framed a wish or formed a plan,
That flattered me with hopes of earthly bliss
But there I laid the scene."

All through my boyhood, *the country* haunted my thoughts. Though blessed with a good home, books & teachers, the latter however with one exception were not blessings, I would have exchanged all for the life of a rustic. I envied as I then thought the freedom of the farmer boy. But I have long thought that the life of the farmer, that is most farmers, possessed but little of the poetry of labour. How we accumulate cares around us. The very repairs

I am now making upon my house will to some considerable extent increase my cares. A rough board shanty, rye & indian bread, water from the spring, or as in your case, from the pond, and other things in keeping, do not burden the body & mind. It is fine houses, fine furniture, sumptuous fare, fine clothes, and many in number, horses & carriages, servants &c &c &c, there are the harpies, that so disturb our real happiness.

My next move in life I hope will be into a much more simple mode of living. I should like to live in a small house, with my family, uncarpeted white washed walls, simple old fashioned furniture & plain wholesome old fashioned fare. Though I have always been inclined to be a vegetarian in diet & once lived in capital health two years on the Graham system.

Well this will do for myself. Now for you friend Thoreau. Why return to the world again? a life such as you spent at Walden was too true & beautiful to be abandoned for any slight reason.

The ponds I allude to are much more secluded than Walden, and really delightful places—Should you ever incline again to try your “philosophy of living” I would introduce you into haunts, that your very soul would leap to behold. Well I thought I would just write you a few lines to thank you for the pleasure I have received from the reading of your “Walden,” but I have found myself running on till now. I feel that you are a kindred spirit and so fear not. I was pleased to find a kind word or two in your book for the poor down trodden slave. Wilberforce, Clarkson and John Woolman & Anthony Benezet were household words in my father’s house.—I early became acquainted with the subject of slavery for my parents were Quakers, & Quakers were then all Abolitionists. My love of Nature, absolute, undefiled Nature makes me an abolitionist. How could I listen to the woodland songs—or gaze upon the outstretched landscape, or look at the great clouds & the starry heavens and be aught but a friend of the poor and oppressed coloured race of our land But why do I write—it is in vain to portray these things—they can only be felt and lived, and to you of all others I would refrain from being prolix.

I have outlived, or nearly so, all ambition for notoriety. I wish only to be a simple, good man & so live that when I come to surrender up my spirit to the Great Father, I may depart in peace.

I wrote the above last evening. It is now Sunday afternoon, and alone in my Shanty I sit down at my desk to add a little more. A great white

cloud which I have been watching for the past half hour is now majestically moving off to the north east before the fine S. W. breeze which sets in here nearly every summer afternoon from the ocean. We have here the best climate in New England—sheltered on the north & east by dense pine woods from the cold winds which so cut up the healths of eastern folks, or rather are suffered to—but I think if the habits of our people were right the north easters would do but little harm. I never heard that the Indians were troubled by them—but they were nature’s philosophers and lived in the woods. I *love* to go by my instincts, inspiration rather. O how much we lose by civilization! In the eyes of the world you & I are demi savages— But I rather think we could stand our hand at the dinner table or in the drawing room with most of folks. I would risk you anywhere, and as for myself I have about done with the follies of “society.” I never was trump’d yet.

I have lived out all the experiences of idle youth—some gentle, & some savage experiences but my heart was not made of the stuff for a sportsman or angler—early in life I ranged the woods, fields & shores with my gun, or rod, but I found that all I sought could be obtained much better without the death dealing implements. So now my rustic staff is all the companion I usually take, unless my old dog joins me—taking no track as he often does, and bounding upon me in some distant thicket. My favorite books are—Cowper’s task, Thomson’s Seasons Milton, Shakespeare, &c &c— Goldsmith Gray’s Elegy— Beattie’s Minstrel (parts) Howitt, Gil. White, (Selbourne) Bewick (wood-engraver) moderns—Wordsworth Ch. Lamb—De Quincy, Macaulay, Kit. North, &c &c

These and others are more my companions than men. I like talented women & swear lustily by May Wolstoncroft, &c &c—Roland, Joan d’arc & somewhat by dear Margaret Fuller.

The smaller fry, let go by—

Again permit me to thank you for the pleasure & strength I have found in reading “Walden.”

Dear Mr Walden good bye for the present.

Yours most respectfully
Daniel Ricketson

Henry D. Thoreau Esq

This new disciple became remarkably faithful, writing many more letters than he received and extending more invitations than were reciprocated. Thoreau learned to view him with affection not unmixed with exasperation. MS., Huntington.

From T. W. HIGGINSON

Newburyport, Aug 13, 1854.

Dear Sir:

Let me thank you heartily for your paper on the present condition of Massachusetts, read at Framingham and printed in the *Liberator*. As a literary statement of the truth, which every day is making more manifest, it surpasses everything else (so I think), which the terrible week in Boston has called out. I need hardly add my thanks for "Walden," which I have been awaiting for so many years. Through Mr. Field's kindness, I have read a great deal of it in sheets:—I have just secured two copies, one for myself, and one for a young girl here, who seems to me to have the most remarkable literary talent since Margaret Fuller,—and to whom your first book has been among the scriptures, ever since I gave her that. [No doubt your new book will have a larger circulation than the other, but not, I think, a more select or appreciate one.]

The paper that so impressed Higginson was "Slavery in Massachusetts." The young girl he mentions was Harriet Prescott, who later contributed numerous articles to the Atlantic Monthly. Text, Sanborn's Recollections of Seventy Years, p. 399; the manuscript was sold by Charles F. Libbie & Co. at the Garfield sale of January 27–28, 1914; the sale catalogue quotes the bracketed sentence.

[1854]

To SARAH E. WEBB

Concord Mass. Sep. 15 '54

Sarah E. Webb,

Your note, which was directed to Concord N.H., has just reached me. The address to which you refer has not been printed in a pamphlet form. It appeared in the *Liberator*, from which it was copied into the *Tribune*, & with omissions, into the *Anti-Slavery Standard*. I am sorry that I have not a copy to send you. I have published "A Week on the Concord & Merrimack Rivers," as well as "Walden, or Life in the Woods," and some miscellaneous papers. The "Week" probably is not for sale at any bookstore. The greater part of the edition was returned to me.

Respectfully
Henry D. Thoreau.

Undoubtedly "Slavery in Massachusetts," which Thoreau had delivered before the Anti-slavery Convention at Framingham the preceding July 4, was the address Miss Webb had in mind. MS., Berg; previously unpublished.

From MARSTON WATSON

Plymouth Mass Sept 17

My dear Sir—

Mr James Spooner and others here, your friends, have clubbed together and raised a small sum in hope of persuading you to come down and read them a paper or two some Sunday. They can offer you \$10 at least. Mr Alcott is now here, and I thought it might be agreeable to you to come down next Saturday and read a paper on Sunday morn-

ing and perhaps on Sunday evening also, if agreeable to yourself. I can assure you of a very warm reception but from a small party only.

Very truly yours
B. M. Watson

I will meet you at the Depot on Saturday evening, if you so advise me. Last train leaves at 5—

This is not a "Leyden Hall Meeting" but a private party—social gathering—almost sewing circle. Tho' perhaps we may meet you at Leyden Hall.

Watson, a friend of Thoreau's at Harvard, had in Plymouth an estate, "Hillside," that was a favorite spot for most of the Transcendentalists. Leyden Hall is a public hall in Plymouth. MS., Mrs. Robert Bowler, previously unpublished.

TO MARSTON WATSON

Concord Mass Sep 19th '54

Dear Sir

I am glad to hear from you & the Plymouth men again. The world still holds together between Concord and Plymouth, it seems. I should like to be with you while Mr Alcott is there, but I cannot come next Sunday. I will come Sunday after next, that is Oct 1st, if that will do,—and look out for you at the depot.

I do not like to promise now more than one discourse. Is there a good precedent for 2?

Yrs Concordially
Henry D. Thoreau.

MS., Huntington.

TO H. G. O. BLAKE

Concord, September 21, 1854.

Blake,—

I have just read your letter, but do not mean now to answer it, solely for want of time to say what I wish. I directed a copy of "Walden" to you at Ticknor's, on the day of its publication, and it should have reached you before. I am encouraged to know that it interests you as it now stands,—a printed book,—for you apply a very severe test to it,—you make the highest demand on me. As for the excursion you speak of, I should like it right well,—indeed I thought of proposing the same thing to you and [Theo] Brown, some months ago. Perhaps it would have been better if I had done so then; for in that case I should have been able to enter into it with that infinite margin to my views,—spotless of all engagements,—which I think so necessary. As it is, I have agreed to go a-lecturing to Plymouth, Sunday after next (October 1) and to Philadelphia in November, and thereafter to the West, *if they shall want me*; and, as I have prepared nothing in that shape, I feel as if my hours were spoken for. However, I think that, after having been to Plymouth, I may take a day or two—if that date will suit you and Brown. *At any rate* I will write you then.

Text, Familiar Letters of Thoreau, p. 281.

From MARSTON WATSON

Plymouth Mass. Sept 24.

My dear Sir:

There is to be a meeting here on Oct 1st that we think will interfere with yours, and so if the Lord is willing and you have no objections we will expect you on the next Sunday 8th October.

I think Mr A. will stay till that time.

I have been lately adding to my garden, and now have all that joins me—so I am ready to have it surveyed by you; a pleasure I have long promised myself. So, if you are at leisure and inclined to the field I hope I may be so fortunate as to engage your services

Very truly yrs
B. M. Watson

The survey might be before the Monday or after as you please, and I will meet you at the Depot any time you say.

Thoreau did make the survey of "Hillside," and the original survey is in the possession of Mrs. Bowler. He also delivered his lecture on "Moonlight" on the evening of October 8, 1854, as is reported by Bronson Alcott in his manuscript Journal in the Concord Free Public Library. MS., Mrs. Robert Bowler; previously unpublished.

From MARSTON WATSON

Plymouth Oct [sic] 30

My dear Sir—

I am glad to learn from Mr. Spooner that you are really coming down, with the tripod too, which is so good news that I hardly dared to expect it.

It seems a little uncertain whether you intend to read in the morning as well as evening, and so I write to enquire, that there may be no mistake in the announcement. Please let me know by return mail which will be in time.

Very truly yours
B. M. Watson

Although the letter is dated October 30, it is obviously a sequel to Watson's letter of September 24, written before Thoreau's lecture engagement of October 8. MS., Mrs. Robert Bowler; previously unpublished.

To DANIEL RICKETSON

Concord Mass, Oct 1st '54

Dear Sir,

I had duly received your very kind and frank letter, but delayed to answer it thus long because I have little skill as a correspondent, and wished to send you something more than my thanks. I was gratified by your prompt and hearty acceptance of my book. Yours is the only word of greeting I am likely to receive from a dweller in the woods like myself, from where the whippoorwill and cuckoo are heard, and there are better than moral clouds drifting over, and real breezes blow.

Your account excites in me a desire to see the Middleboro Ponds, of which I had already heard somewhat; as also of some very beautiful ponds on the Cape, in Harwich I think, near which I once passed. I have sometimes also thought of visiting that remnant of *our* Indians still living near you.— But then, you know there is nothing like ones native fields and lakes. The best news you send me is, not that Nature with you is so fair and genial, but that there is one there who likes her so well. That proves all that was asserted.

Homer, of course, you include in your list of lovers of Nature—and, by the way, let me mention here,—for this is "my thunder" lately—Wm Gilpin's long series of books on the Picturesque, with their illustrations. If it chances that you have not met with these, I cannot just now frame a better wish than that you may one day derive as much pleasure from the inspection of them as I have.

Much as you have told me of yourself, you have still I think a little the advantage of me in this correspondence, for I have told you still more in my book. You have therefore the broadest mark to fire at.

A young English author, Thomas Cholmondeley, is just now waiting for me to take a walk with him—therefore excuse this very barren note from

Yrs, hastily at last,
Henry D. Thoreau

Ricketson jotted in his journal: "Received a letter from Henry D. Thoreau to-day in reply to mine to him. Letter hastily written and hardly satisfactory, evidently well meant though overcautious" (Ricketson, p. 280). For a discussion of Thoreau's interest in Gilpin see W. D. Templeman, "Thoreau, Moralizer of the Picturesque," PMLA, XLVII (September 1932), 864-89. The young English author Thoreau mentions at the end of his letter was to become his good friend. Cholmondeley had arrived in America in August 1854. He went to Concord originally for the purpose of seeing Emerson, but soon developed more interest in Thoreau and corresponded with him until the end of his life. The most notable event in their friendship was probably Cholmondeley's gift to Thoreau, after Cholmondeley returned to England, of a rich library of Hindu writings in translation. They arrived in Concord at the end of November 1855, a treasure for Thoreau, forty-four volumes in all, as he noted in his journal at the time. MS., Huntington.

TO H. G. O. BLAKE

Concord Oct. 5 '54

Mr. Blake,

After I wrote to you Mr. Watson postponed my going to Plymouth one week i.e. till next Sunday, and now he wishes me to carry my instruments & survey his grounds, to which he has been adding. Since I want a little money, though I contemplate but a short excursion, I do not feel at liberty to decline this work. I do not know exactly how long it will detain me—but there is plenty of time yet—& I will write to you again—perhaps from Plymouth—

[1854]

There is a Mr. Thomas Cholmondeley (pronounced Chumly) a young English author, staying at our house at present—who asks me to teach him *botany*—i.e. anything which I know—and also to make an excursion to some mountain with him. He is a well-behaved person, and *possibly* I may propose his taking that run to Wachusett with us—if it will be agreeable to you. Nay If I do not hear any objection from you I will consider myself *at liberty* to invite him.

In haste,
H. D. Thoreau

MS., Berg, in Blake's hand.

From DANIEL RICKETSON

Brooklawn, near New Bedford, Oct. 12th, 1854.

Dear Mr. Walden,—

Your long delayed, but very acceptable acknowledgment of the 1st inst. came duly to hand. It requires no answer, and I trust you will not esteem this as such. I simply wish to say, that it will afford me pleasure to show you the Middleborough ponds, as well as the other Indian water spoken of by you, which I conclude to be what is called "Wakeebe Pond," at Mashpee near Sandwich.

Since I first wrote you my rough board shanty, which I then inhabited and from which I now write, has been partially forsaken, thro' the house of which I spoke to you as being built, having been completed and my family moved into it; so the shanty is somewhat shorn of its beams to the public or vulgar eye at least, but none the less prized by me. Here I spend a considerable part of my time in study and meditation, and here I also entertain my best and most welcome friends. Now, friend Walden, if it should be agreeable to you to leave home at this pleasant season, I shall be happy to receive you as my guest. Making my farm, which lies about three miles north of New Bedford, headquarters, we can sally

forth into the adjoining country—to the fine ponds in question and visit other objects of interest hitherward. I am just now quite busily engaged in the improvement of the grounds near my house, but expect to conclude them by the end of next week, when, should it meet your pleasure, I shall be very happy to see you here.

I am quite a *tramper* as well as yourself, but have horse-flesh and carriages at hand if preferable, which certainly for long distances, with all my antediluvian taste, I deem it to be.

Perhaps your young English friend and author, Mr. Cholmondeley, would like to accompany you, should you conclude to come. If so, please extend the invitation to him should you deem it proper.

I do not wish to push matters at all, but am of the opinion, if you are not too *learned*, we shall affiliate nicely in our rustic feelings—at any rate it will do no harm to try.

Your short and hastily written note embarrasses me, and I hardly know whether it best or no to send what I have now written, and so conclude, whether this shall reach you or not,

Your friend and fellow-worshipper at Nature's great shrine,
Daniel Ricketson.

Apparently Ricketson did not mail this letter for a while: he said in his journal, December 14, 1854: "Wrote an invitation to H. D. Thoreau of Concord, author of Walden, and sent a letter which I had had on hand some time" (Ricketson, p. 280). Text, Ricketson, pp. 32-34.

To H. G. O. BLAKE

Concord Sat. pm. Oct 14 '54

Blake,

I have just returned from Plymouth, where I have been detained surveying much longer than I expected.

What do you say to visiting Wachusett next Thursday? I will start

[1854]

at 7¼ a.m. *unless there is a prospect of a stormy day*, go by cars to Westminster, & thence on foot 5 or 6 miles to the *mt* tops, where I may engage to meet you at (or before) 12. m.

If the weather is unfavorable, I will try again—on Friday,—& again on Monday.

If a storm comes on after starting, I will seek you at the tavern in Princeton Center, as soon as circumstances will permit.

I shall expect an answer to clinch the bargain.

Yrs
Henry D. Thoreau.

Blake apparently accepted Thoreau's invitation, for the Journal entry on the following Thursday, October 19, reads: "7:15 a.m.—To Westminster by cars; thence on foot to Wachusett Mountain, four miles to Foster's and two miles thence to mountain-top by road." MS., Miss Charlotte Thatcher.

From A. FAIRBANKS

Providence Oct 14, 1854

Mr Henry D Thoreau
Dear Sir

Our Course of Independent, or reform Lectures (ten in number) we propose to commence Next Month. Will you give me liberty to put your name in the program, and say when it will suit your convenience to come every Lecturer will choose his own Subject, but we expect *all*, whether Antislavery or what else, will be of a *reformatory Character* We have engaged Theodore Parker, who will give the Introductory Nov. 1st (Garrison, W. Phillips Thos W. Higginson Lucy Stone (Mrs Rose of New York Antoinett L Brown and hope to have Cassius N Clay, & Henry Ward Beecher, (we had a course of these lectures last year and the receipts from tickets at a low price paid expenses and fifteen to twenty dollars to the Lecturers. We think we shall do as well this year

as last, and perhaps better. The Anthony Burns affair and the Nebraska bill, and other outrages of Slavery has done much to awaken the feeling of a class of Minds heretofore quiet, on all questions of reform. In getting up these popular Lectures we thought at first, it would not do as well to have them too radical, or it would be best to have a part of the Speakers of the conservative class, but experience has shown us in Providence surely, that the Masses who attend such Lectures are better suited with reform lectures than with the old school conservatives. I will thank you for an early reply

Yours Respectfully for true freedom
A. Fairbanks

This is, in some respects, the kind of letter that made Thoreau's hackles rise. He never liked to be told what to say, even if it were to be "of a reformatory Character." Although he accepted the invitation and lectured in Providence on December 6, his irritation overflowed into his Journal entry for the next day: "I would rather write books than lectures. That is fine, this coarse." We are not sure of the identity of Fairbanks. Brown's Providence Directory for 1853-54 lists two Fairbankses whose first names begin with "A": Addison M., a machinist, and Asa, a paper and paper stock dealer. MS., Huntington; previously unpublished.

To DR. THADDEUS W. HARRIS

Concord Oct 23d '54

Sir,

I return herewith the "Bhagvat Geeta." Will you please send me the "Vishnoo Purana" a single volume—translated by Wilson.

Yrs respectly
Henry D. Thoreau

MS., Berg; previously unpublished.

From C. B. BERNARD

Akron Oct 26, 1854

Henry D. Thoreau Esq Concord Mass
Dear Sir

Seeing your name announced as a Lecturer, I write you a line to see if your services could be secured to give a Lecture before the Library Association of this place.

We can give #50—

Thinking you might have other calls this way, we thought we would add our solicitation with the rest—

Yours Respectfully
C B Bernard Cor Sec

Thoreau, probably because he was unable to arrange a large enough schedule to make the trip worth while, made no lecture tours so far west. MS., Berg; previously unpublished.

To CHARLES SUMNER

"These faithful reports with their admirable maps and plates, are some atonement for the mistakes of our Government," Thoreau wrote in a letter that was sold by the Anderson Galleries at the Manning sale of February 1-3, 1926. The catalogue of that sale described the documents merely as "some Government reports." Earlier, Francis H. Allen's *Bibliography of Henry David Thoreau* (p. 161) lists the letter as a "1 page, 4to" manuscript sold by Charles F. Libbie & Co. at the Stickney sale of December 18-19, 1907.

From CHARLES SUMNER

Boston 31st Oct. '54

My dear Sir,

I am glad to send books where they are so well appreciated as in your chamber.

Permit me to say that the courtesy of your letter admonishes me of my short-coming in not sooner acknowledging the gift of your book. Believe me I had not forgotten it, but I proposed to write you, when I had fully read & enjoyed it. At present I have been able to peruse only the early chapters, & have detected parts enough, however, to satisfy me that you have made a contribution to the permanent literature of our mother tongue, & to make me happy in your success.

Believe me, dear Sir,

Sincerely Yours,
Charles Sumner

Henry D. Thoreau Esq.

MS., University of Texas Library; *previously unpublished.*

From A. FAIRBANKS

Providence Nov. 6, 1854

Mr Henry D Thore[a]u
Dear Sir

I am in receipt of yours of the 4th inst, You stating explicitly that the 6th December would suit you better than any other time. I altered other arrangements on purpose to accommodate you, and notified you as soon as I was able to *accomplish* them. Had you named the last Wednesday in Nov. or the second Wednesday in December, I could have replied to you at once or any time in Janury or Feb it would have

[1854]

been the same I shall regret the disappointment very much but must submit to it if you have such overtures as you cannot avoid. I hope however you will be able to come at the time appointed

Truly
A. Fairbanks

Thoreau lectured in Providence on December 6. MS., Huntington; previously unpublished.

To REVEREND ADRIEN ROUQUETTE

Revd Adrien Rouquette

Concord Mass. Nov. 13th 1854

Dear Sir

I have just received your letter and the 3 works which accompanied it—and I make haste to send you a copy of "A Week on the Concord & Merrimack Rivers"—in the same mail with this. I thank you heartily for the interest which you express in my Walden—and also for the gift of your works. I have not had time to peruse [?] the books attentively but I am

In his Journal for November 11, 1854 Thoreau records that he had received a letter in French and three "ouvrages" from the Abbé Rouquette in Louisiana. In the catalogue of his library Thoreau lists Rouquette's La Thébaïde en Amérique and Wild Flowers. The third volume was probably Les Savanes, Poésies Américaines. MS., Harvard; previously unpublished; this is apparently Thoreau's rough draft of the letter, the latter part of which is missing.

To BRONSON ALCOTT

Concord Nov. 15, 1854

Mr. Alcott,

I wish to introduce to you Thomas Cholmondeley, an English man, of whom and his work in New Zealand I have already told you. He proposes to spend a part of the winter in Boston, pursuing his literary studies, at the same time that he is observing our institutions.

He is an English country gentleman of simple habits and truly liberal mind, who may one day take a part in the government of his country.

I think that you will find you[r] account in comparing notes with him.

MS., Concord Free Public Library; *the signature has been cut from the manuscript.*

 To DR. THADDEUS W. HARRIS

Concord Nov. 15 1854

Dr Harris
Dear Sir,

Will you allow me to introduce to you the bearer—Thomas Cholmondeley, who has been spending some months with us in Concord. He is an English country gentleman, and the author of a political work on New Zealand called "Ultima Thule." He wishes to look round the Library.

If you can give him a few moments of your time, you will confer a favor on both him & me.

[1854]

I have taken much pains, but in vain, to find another of those locusts for you—I have some of the grubs from the nuphar buds in spirits.

Yrs. truly
Henry D. Thoreau

Five days before sending this introduction to the Harvard librarian Thoreau had written in the Journal: "Got some donacia grubs for Harris, but find no chrysalids." And then he observed about the Nuphar or yellow pond lily: "The sight of the masses of yellow . . . leaves and flower-buds of the yellow lily, already five or six inches long, at the bottom of the river, reminds me that nature is prepared for an infinity of springs yet." Harris once remarked rather condescendingly that if Emerson had not spoiled Thoreau he would have been a good naturalist, but Thoreau's observation comprehended much more than most trained naturalists'. MS., Harvard; previously unpublished. In the manuscript 1854 looks at first glance to be 1853, but the external evidence is decisive.

 To WILLIAM E. SHELDON

Concord Nov. 17, 1854.

Wm E. Sheldon Esq.
Dear Sir

Thinking it possible that you might be expecting me [to] lecture before your Society on the 5th of December as I offered—I write to ask if it is so.

I am still at liberty for that evening—and will read you a lecture either on the Wild or on Moosehunting as you may prefer.

Yrs respectfully

We find no record of a lecture on December 5, 1854, and the Journal entry for the day implies that Thoreau remained in Concord. We have been unable to discover where Mr. Sheldon lived or for what society he labored. MS., Harvard; previously unpublished; apparently Thoreau's rough copy; it lacks a signature.

To C. B. BERNARD

Concord Mass Nov 20th 1854

C. B. Bernard Esq.
Dear Sir,

I expect to lecture in Hamilton C[anada] W[est], once or twice during the first week of January. In that case, how soon after (or before) that week will you hear me in Akron? My subject will

As we have noted, these plans for lecturing in Canada and the Middle West were apparently later abandoned. Bernard was the corresponding secretary of the Library Association in Akron, Ohio. MS., Harvard; previously unpublished; this is Thoreau's rough draft of the letter, the bottom portion of which has been torn away.

From ANDREW WHITNEY

Nantucket Nov 27, 1854

Dear Sir

Your favor of 25th is at hand this evening.

We cannot have you between the 4 & 15th of Dec. without bringing two lecturers in one week—which we wish to avoid if possible.

[1854]

If you cannot come the 28th of Dec. will the 2d week in January either the 9th 10th 11th or 12th of the month suit you?—if not, perhaps you can select a day in the 4th week in Jany., avoiding Monday and Saturday.

Write us as soon as possible and make the day as early as you can.—

Yours truly,
Andrew Whitney.

The lecture, a month later, turned out unusually well. Thoreau's topic was "Getting a Living." MS., Huntington; previously unpublished.

To CHARLES SUMNER

Concord Mass Dec 5 1854

Mr Sumner,
Dear Sir,

Allow me to thank you once more for the Report of Sittgreaves, the Patent Office 2d part, and on Emigrants Ships.

At this rate there will be one department in my library, and not the smallest one, which I may call the Sumnerian—

Yours sincerely
Henry D. Thoreau.

The government documents that Sumner sent were Lorenzo Sitgreaves' Report of an Expedition down the Zuni and Colorado Rivers, the second part of the Patent Office Report, which dealt with agriculture, and probably the Message on Health of Emigrants, which dealt with the "health and comfort of emigrants by sea to the United States." MS., Harvard; previously unpublished.

TO H. G. O. BLAKE

Concord, December 19, 1854.

Mr. Blake,—

I suppose you have heard of my truly providential meeting with Mr T[heo] Brown; providential because it saved me from the suspicion that my words had fallen altogether on stony ground, when it turned out that there was some Worcester soil there. You will allow me to consider that I correspond with him through you.

I confess that I am a very bad correspondent, so far as promptness of reply is concerned; but then I am sure to answer sooner or later. The longer I have forgotten you, the more I remember you. For the most part I have not been idle since I saw you. How does the world go with you? or rather, how do you get along without it? I have not yet learned to live, that I can see, and I fear that I shall not very soon. I find, however, that in the long run things correspond to my original idea,—that they correspond to nothing else so much; and thus a man may really be a true prophet without any great exertion. The day is never so dark, nor the night even, but that the laws at least of light still prevail, and so may make it light in our minds if they are open to the truth. There is considerable danger that a man will be crazy between dinner and supper; but it will not directly answer any good purpose that I know of, and it is just as easy to be sane. We have got to know what both life and death are, before we can begin to live after our own fashion. Let us be learning our a-b-c's as soon as possible. I never yet knew the sun to be knocked down and rolled through a mud-puddle; he comes out honor-bright from behind every storm. Let us then take sides with the sun, seeing we have so much leisure. Let us not put all we prize into a football to be kicked, when a bladder will do as well.

When an Indian is burned, his body may be broiled, it may be no more than a beefsteak. What of that? They may broil his *heart*, but they do not therefore broil his *courage*,—his principles. Be of good courage! That is the main thing.

If a man were to place himself in an attitude to bear manfully the greatest evil that can be inflicted on him, he would find suddenly that there was no such evil to bear; his brave back would go a-begging. When Atlas got his back made up, that was all that was required. (In

this case a *priv.*, not *pleon.*, and $\tau\lambda\eta\mu$ [a subtraction, not an addition, and therefore not a burden].) The world rests on principles. The wise gods will never make underpinning of a man. But as long as he crouches, and skulks, and shirks his work, every creature that has weight will be treading on his toes, and crushing him; he will himself tread with one foot on the other foot.

The monster is never just there where we think he is. What is truly monstrous is our cowardice and sloth.

Have no idle disciplines like the Catholic Church and others; have only positive and fruitful ones. Do what you know you ought to do. Why should we ever go abroad, even across the way, to ask a neighbor's advice? There is a nearer neighbor within us incessantly telling us how we should behave. But we wait for the neighbor without to tell us of some false, easier way.

They have a census-table in which they put down the number of the insane. Do you believe that they put them all down there? Why, in every one of these houses there is at least one man fighting or squabbling a good part of his time with a dozen pet demons of his own breeding and cherishing, which are relentlessly gnawing at his vitals; and if perchance he resolve at length that he will courageously combat them, he says, "Ay! ay! I will attend to you after dinner!" And, when that time comes, he concludes that he is good for another stage, and reads a column or two about the *Eastern War!* Pray, to be in earnest, where is Sevastopol? Who is Menchikoff? and Nicholas behind there? who the Allies? Did not we fight a little (little enough to be sure, but just enough to make it interesting) at Alma, at Balaclava, at Inkermann? We love to fight far from home. Ah! the Minié musket is the king of weapons. Well, let us get one then.

I just put another stick into my stove,—a pretty large mass of white oak. How many men will do enough this cold winter to pay for the fuel that will be required to warm them? I suppose I have burned up a pretty good-sized tree to-night,—and for what? I settled with Mr. Tarbell for it the other day; but that wasn't the final settlement. I got off cheaply from him. At last, one will say, "Let us see, how much wood did you burn, sir?" And I shall shudder to think that the next question will be, "What did you do while you were warm?" Do we think the ashes will pay for it? that God is an ash-man? It is a fact that we have got to render an account for the deeds done in the body.

Who knows but we shall be better the next year than we have been

the past? At any rate, I wish you a really *new* year,—commencing from the instant you read this,—and happy or unhappy, according to your deserts.

Text, Familiar Letters of Thoreau, pp. 291-94.

To DANIEL RICKETSON

Concord Mass. Dec 19 1854.

Dear Sir,

I wish to thank you again for your sympathy. I had counted on seeing you when I came to New Bedford, though I did not know exactly how near to it you permanently dwelt; therefore I gladly accept your invitation to stop at your house.

I am going to lecture at Nantucket the 28th and as I suppose I must improve the earliest opportunity to get there from New Bedford, I will endeavor to come on Monday that I may see yourself and New Bedford before my lecture.

I should like right well to see your ponds, but that is hardly to be thought of at present. I fear that it is impossible *for me* to combine such things with the business of lecturing. You cannot serve God and Mammon. However perhaps I shall have time to see something of your country. I am aware that you have not so much snow as we. There has been excellent sleighing here ever since the 5th ult.

Mr Cholmondeley has left us; so that I shall come alone.

Will you be so kind as to warn Mr Mitchell that I accepted at once his invitation to lecture on the 26th of this month, for I do not know that he has got my letter.

Excuse this short note from yours truly

Henry D. Thoreau.

[1854]

Thoreau delivered "Getting a Living" in New Bedford December 26. Two days later he delivered the same lecture at Nantucket. As usual, he confused ult. with inst. MS., Huntington.

From DANIEL RICKETSON

H. D. Thoreau.

Dear Sir,—

Yours of the 19th came to hand this evening. I shall therefore look for you on Monday next.

My farm is three miles north of New Bedford. Say to the conductor to leave you at the Tarkiln Hill station, where I or some of my folks will be in readiness for you on the arrival of the evening train. Should you intend coming earlier in the day, please inform me in time.

I will get word to the Committee of the N. B. Lyceum, as you desire.

If I do not hear from you again, I shall prepare for your arrival as before.

In the meantime, I remain,

Yours very truly,
Dan'l Ricketson.

Brooklawn, near New Bedford, Wednesday Eve'g, Dec. 20, '54.

The first meeting of the two friends occurred December 25, 1854 at Ricketson's home. An amusing account with a pencil sketch of Thoreau is given in Ricketson, pp. 11-12. Text, Ricketson, p. 35.

To H. G. O. BLAKE

Concord Dec. 22nd '54

Mr Blake,

[I w]ill lecture for your [Lyceum on the 4]th of January next; and I hope that I shall have time for that good day out of doors. Mr Cholmondeley is in Boston, yet *perhaps* I may write him to accompany me.

I have engaged to lecture at New Bedford on the 26 inst, stopping with Daniel Ricketson 3 miles out of town; and at Nantucket on the 28th; so that I shall be gone all next week. They say there is some danger of being weather-bound at Nantucket, but I see that others run the same risk.

You had better acknowledge the receipt of this at any rate, though you should write nothing else, otherwise I shall not know whether you get it; but perhaps you will not wait till you have seen me to answer my letter. I will tell you what I think of lecturing when I see you.

Did you see the notice of Walden in the last Anti-Slavery Standard? You will not be surprised if I tell you that it reminded me of you.

Yrs,

[Henry D. Thoreau.]

MS., Miss Charlotte Thatcher; *portions in brackets have been clipped from the manuscript but are rewritten in another hand, probably Blake's.*