

1856

In Kansas the war or, as the acting governor of the territory termed it, the "state of open insurrection and rebellion" went on. Charles Sumner of Massachusetts made his "Crime against Kansas" speech on the floor of the Senate, adding a personal arraignment of his fellow senators Douglas of Illinois and Butler of South Carolina. Two days afterward he was beaten into insensibility by Butler's nephew, Representative Preston Brooks. James Buchanan of Pennsylvania was elected president with a popular vote of 1,838,169. He defeated that free-wheeling military man and explorer, John Fremont, and a former president, Millard Fillmore. The first street railroad in New England was opened between Boston and Cambridge. Congress made grants of public land to Iowa, Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Michigan, and Mississippi that they might subsidize railroads within their boundaries. A treaty of friendship and commerce with Persia was signed.

Superficially Thoreau was active enough during this year. By spring he felt well again and did much surveying and much walking. His new throat beard is pictured in the daguerreotype of him that a man named Maxham made when Thoreau journeyed to Worcester. In fall he visited Bronson Alcott in Walpole, N. H., and then did his customary stint of lecturing. He gave five lectures, three of them at a onetime utopian settlement near Perth Amboy, the others at Philadelphia and Amherst, New Hampshire. Toward the end of the year he was introduced to Walt Whitman. Each man was reserved during the meeting, but Thoreau's enthusiasm for Walt grew remarkably. "We ought to rejoice greatly in him," he said in a letter to H. G. O. Blake. Blake and Daniel Ricketson of New Bedford continued to be the two disciples Thoreau corresponded with most.

From JOHN F. TROW

377-379 Broadway New York Jan 4 '56

Mr. Thoreau

Dear Sir

Inclosed please find \$10, for which please to send me 5 lbs of blacklead for electrotyping purposes:—such as Mr. Filmore has sent for occasionally.

Respectfully yours
John F. Trow

MS., Abernethy (*typescript*); *previously unpublished*.

To CALVIN GREENE

Concord Jan. 18th 1856.

Dear Sir,

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

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

[1856]

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

Yrs respectfully
Henry D. Thoreau

Calvin H. Greene

The fullest account of the relationship between these two correspondents is to be found in Samuel Arthur Jones, Some Unpublished Letters of Henry D. and Sophia E. Thoreau, pp. 25-49. MS., Princeton University Library.

To CALVIN GREENE

Concord Feb 10th '56

Dear Sir,

I forwarded to you by mail on the 31st of January a copy of my "Week," post paid, which I trust that you have received. I thank you heartily for the expression of your interest in "Walden" and hope that you will not be disappointed by the "Week." You ask how the former has been received. It has found an audience of excellent character, and quite numerous, some 2000 copies having been dispersed. I should consider it a greater success to interest one wise and earnest soul, than a million unwise & frivolous.

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

I like the name of your county. May it grow men as sturdy as its trees. Methinks I hear your flute echo amid the oaks. Is not yours too a good place to study theology? I hope that you will ere long recover

your turtle-dove, and that it will bring you glad tidings out of that heaven in which it disappeared.

Yrs Sincerely
Henry D. Thoreau

Calvin H. Greene Esq

Greene's county is Oakland. The reference to the turtledove is from Walden; in the most famous set of symbols in the book Thoreau wrote that he had long ago lost a hound, a bay horse, and a turtledove and was still on their trail. MS., Princeton University Library.

From DANIEL RICKETSON

The Shanty, Brooklawn, 26th Feb., 1856.

Dear Thoreau,—

I often think of you and nearly as often feel the prompting to write you, and being alone in the Shanty this afternoon I have concluded to obey the prompting. I say alone, but I can fancy you seated opposite on the settee looking very *Orphic* or something more mystical. This winter must have been a grand one for your ruminations and I conclude that you will thaw out in the spring with the snakes and frogs, more of a philosopher than ever, which perhaps is needless. It has required all my little share of *feelosofy* to keep up my fortitude during the past Hyperborean interregnum. We have usually flattered ourselves that our winters were much milder than of most places in New England or even in the same latitude farther inland, on account of our vicinity to the sea and the Gulf stream in particular. But O! the cold, cold days and weeks we have had in common with the rest of our country North, South, East and West!

But we are beginning to relax a little, and like barn-yard fowls begin to plume ourselves again and pick about, but we hardly begin to lay and cackle yet—that will all come in due season, and such a crowing some of us old cocks will make that if you are awake you will perhaps hear at Concord.

The snow has nearly gone, but our river is still firmly bound, and great sport have gentle and simple, young and old, thereon—skating, ice-boats, boys holding sails in their hands are shooting like “mercurial trout” in every direction up and down, even horses and sleighs and loaded wagons have passed where large ships float.

But I glory in none of this, on the contrary sigh for the more genial past, and hope for no more such desperate seasons. Ah! but March is close here, and she wears at least the gentle name of Spring as Bryant says—and soon may we expect to hear the bluebird and song sparrow again. Then let “Hope rule triumphant in the breast,” and buckling our girth a little tighter journey on.

Dear Thoreau, I am under the greatest obligations to you. Before your Walden I felt quite alone in my best attainments and experiences, but now I find myself sustained and strengthened in my hopes of life. Can we not meet occasionally ere the evil days, should there be any in store for us, come? The accumulated years “notched upon my stick” warn me not to be too prodigal of time. By April then I hope you will be ready to wend this way, and take Spring a little in advance of Concord; then with the bluebirds and sparrows, the robins and thrushes, will I welcome you and associate you.

I should have told you before that Channing is here in New Bedford. I had but just written his name, when old Ranger announced him, and he is now quietly smoking his pipe by the shanty fire. He arrived on Christmas day, and his first salutation on meeting me at the front door of my house was, “That’s your shanty,” pointing towards it. He is engaged with the editor of the N. B. Mercury, and boards in town, but whereabouts I have not yet discovered. He usually spends Saturday and a part of Sunday with me, and seems to enjoy himself pretty well.

Mr. Emerson is expected to lecture before our Lyceum to-morrow evening, but from a note I received from him in answer to an invitation to Brooklawn I should think it quite uncertain whether he be here.

I too have written and delivered a lecture this winter before the Lyceum of our village, Acushnet, on Popular Education, into which I contrived to get a good deal of radicalism, and had a successful time.

Should your Lyceum be in want of a lecture you might let me know, although I should hardly dare to promise to come,—that is, gratuitously except incidental expenditures. I have commenced a new lecture of a little higher literary tone upon “The Poet Cowper and his Friends,” and am meditating a grand affair wherein I expect to introduce some of

the philosophy I have found in solitude, or rather to publish some of the communications and revelations received from a certain *old neighbor and visitor*, who occasionally favors by his presence, the world's outcasts, holding them up by the chin, and occasionally whispering weighty matters into their ears, which at these times are particularly free from wax.

Channing is not here now, that is in the Shanty, but it being after tea, is chatting by the fireside with my wife and daughters, and I am writing by the humming of my fire and the music of my Eolian harp. These are fine things to have in your windows, and lest you are not acquainted with them I will describe the way to make them.

Make two wedges of soft wood—make a slight incision in the top of thick part of the wedges and another in the thin part, which should be shaved down quite thin—then take a string of saddler's silk, or several strands of fine silk twisted to the size of the other, waxed or not, as you may see fit, make a knot in each end, the length of the string to be governed by the width of the window-sash where it is to be placed. Put one end of the string into the incision upon the top of the wedge and then down the side through the other split in the thin end and the other end likewise on the other wedge, then place the two wedges drawing the string tight between the upper and lower sashes of your window and if the wind be favorable, it will give you a pleasing serenade.

Write soon and believe me,

Yours very truly,
D. R.

Thursday a.m., 29th.

Another pleasant day—the song sparrows singing from the old rail fences, and whortleberry bushes—the last day of winter. How rich we are!

My dear old Northman, sitting by the sea,
Whose azure tint is seen, reflected in thy e'e,
Leave your sharks and your dolphins, and eke the sporting whale,
And for a little while on milder scenes regale:
My heart is beating strongly to see your face once more,
So leave the land of *Thor*, and row along our shore!

D. R.

Pax vobiscum

[1856]

Thoreau was already fully familiar with the Aeolian harp and had built himself one, which is now in the collection of the Concord Anti-quarian Society. Text, Ricketson, pp. 53-57.

From HORACE GREELEY

[March ? 4, 1856]

Our home is two hours (36 miles) from New York . . . in a quiet Quaker neighborhood. . . You would be out of doors nearly all pleasant days, under a pleasant shade, with a pleasant little landscape in view from the open hill just back of our house.

Charles F. Libbie & Co. sold the manuscript of an autograph letter from Greeley to Thoreau at the Garfield sale of January 27-28, 1914. The firm described it as "4 pp., 8vo. Washington. Nov. 4, 1856, to 'My Friend Thoreau.' Asking Thoreau to come and live with him and teach his two young children." We feel, however, that the letter is wrongly dated. By November the offer to Thoreau had already been made and the details had been discussed. Unless the letter is a restatement of the original invitation, it should be dated at least several months earlier than it now is. At least once before, Greeley's bad handwriting had caused someone to date his letter March 18, 1852, as November 18. This is an easy error to make, furthermore, because of Greeley's use of "Mar." and "Nov." If the letter of invitation could be placed in March, a perfectly logical sequence would develop. It would begin with the letter from Greeley to Thoreau of March 4, when the invitation was extended. Next would come Thoreau's answer of March 10. (We do not have this letter, but Greeley acknowledged it.) Greeley's letter of March 12 would follow, and the rest of their correspondence would continue from there. One other possibility that should be mentioned, though, is that the letter supposedly dated March 2 (and listed in our check list) contained the original invitation.

Against our general line of argument, however, is the fact that the catalogue of the Gable sale (American Art Association, March 10–11, 1924) notes what is obviously the same letter, although it is described as 12mo instead of 8vo, and dates it November 9. Two auction catalogues, then, read the month as "Nov." One, though, reads the day as "4," the other as "9," further illustrating the difficulty of Greeley's hand. Here we feel that the 4th is a more logical date than the 9th, because Greeley, writing to Thoreau from Washington, acknowledged what was probably the answer to him as of March 10 (in his letter to Thoreau of March 12). Text, catalogue of the Garfield sale.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON

Concord Mar. 5 '56

Friend Ricketson,

I have been out of town, else I should have acknowledged your letters before. Though not in the best mood for writing I will say what I can now. You plainly have a rare, though a cheap, resource in your shanty. Perhaps the time will come when every country-seat will have one—when every country-seat will *be one*. I would advice you to see that shanty business out, though you go shanty mad. Work your vein till it is exhausted, or conducts you to a broader one; so that C[hanning] shall stand before your shanty, & say "That is your house."

This has indeed been a grand winter for me & for all of us. I am not considering how much I have enjoyed it. What matters it how happy or unhappy we have been, if we have minded our business and advanced our affairs I have made it a part of my business to wade in the snow & take the measure of the ice. The ice on one of our ponds was just two feet thick on the first of March—and I have to-day been surveying a wood-lot where I sank about two feet at every step.

It is high time that you, fanned by the warm breezes of the Gulf Stream, had begun to "lay"—for even the Concord hens have—though one wonders where they find the raw material of egg-shells here. Be-

ware how you put off your laying to any later spring, else your cackling will not have the inspiring *early* spring sound.

I was surprised to hear the other day that Channing was in New Bedford. When he was here last (in Dec., I think) he said, like himself, in answer to my inquiry where he lived, that he did not know the name of the place; so it has remained in a degree of obscurity to me. As you have made it certain to me that he is in New Bedford, perhaps I can return the favor by putting you on the track to his boarding house there. Mrs Arnold told Mrs Emerson where it was—and the latter thinks, though she may be mistaken, that it was at a Mrs Lindsey's

I am rejoiced to hear that you are getting on so bravely with him & his verses. He and I, as you know, have been old cronies.

"Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, & rill.
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eye-lids of the morn,
We drove afield, and both together heard &c &c &c"

"But O the heavy change" now he is gone!

The C you have seen & described is the real Simon Pure. You have seen him. Many a good ramble may you have together. You will see in him still more of *the same kind*—to attract & to puzzle you. How to serve him most effectually has long been a problem with his friends. Perhaps it is left for you to solve it. I suspect that the most that you or any one can do for him is to appreciate his genius—to buy & read, & cause others to buy & read his poems. That is the hand which he has put forth to the world—Take hold of that. Review them if you can. Perhaps take the risk of publishing something more which he may write.

Your knowledge of Cowper will help you to know C. He will accept sympathy & aid, but he will not bear questioning—unless the aspects of the sky are particularly auspicious. He will even be "reserved & enigmatic," & you must deal with him at arm's length.

I have no secrets to tell you concerning him, and do not wish to call obvious excellences & defects by far-fetched names. I think I have already spoken to you more, and more to the purpose, on this theme, than I am likely to write now—nor need I suggest how witty & poetic he is—and what an inexhaustible fund of good-fellowship you will find in him.

As for visiting you in April,—though I am inclined enough to take some more rambles in your neighborhood, especially by the sea-side—

I dare not engage myself, nor allow you to expect me. The truth is, I have my enterprises now as ever, at which I tug with ridiculous feebleness, but admirable perseverance—and cannot say when I shall be sufficiently fancy-free for such an excursion.

You have done well to write a lecture on Cowper. In the expectation of getting you to read it here, I applied to the curators of our Lyceum but alas our Lyceum has been a failure this winter for want of funds. It ceased some weeks since, with a debt—they tell me, to be carried over to the next years' account. Only one more lecture is to be read by a Signor somebody—an Italian—paid for by private subscription—as a deed of charity to the lecturer. They are not rich enough to offer you your expenses even, though probably a month or two ago they would have been glad of the chance.

However the old house has not failed yet. That offers you lodging for an indefinite time after you get into it—and in the mean while I offer you bed & board in my father's house—always excepting hair pillows & new-fangled bedding.

Remember me to your family.

Yrs
H. D. T.

If there was ever a Transcendentalist more individual than Thoreau, it was Ellery Channing. Here in this letter is the clearest picture of him to be found anywhere in a small space. MS., Huntington.

From DANIEL RICKETSON

The Shanty, 7th March, 1856.

To My dear Gabriel,

Who like the one of old that appeared to Daniel, Zachariah, &c. hath in these latter days appeared unto the least of all Daniels,—Greetings,—

I have just received and read your genuine epistle of the 5th Inst. You satisfy me fully in regard to C and I trust we shall draw with an even yoke in future. I had thought of attempting something by way of reviving his poems. A new public has grown up since their appearance, and their assassinator Poe, lies in the Potter's Field at Baltimore, without a stone to mark his grave, as somebody in the Home Journal of this week, says: and thus hath Nemesis overtaken him.

Mrs Ricketson as well as myself have felt a good deal of sympathy for Mrs. C. but of course the matter cannot be spoken of to C.

I think, however, that he is now working for his family. His courage and endurance under the circumstances are wonderful. Unless he has a very strong physical as well as mental constitution, I fear he will suffer, & perhaps break down. I conclude you received my newspaper notice of Mr. Emerson's explosion before the N. B. Lyceum, although you make no mention of it. You may be surprised at my sudden regard for his genius, but not more so than myself. It came by revelation. I had never, I believe, read a page of his writings when I heard his lecture. How I came to go to hear him I hardly know, and must conclude that my good Gabriel led me there.

Dont despair of me yet, I am getting along bravely in my shanty & hope to* crow in due time. Somehow too, I am getting wonderfully interested in ancient lore, and am delighted to find that there were odd fellows like you & I & C. some hundreds of years before our *data*.

How wonderfully daylight shines upon us at times.

I no longer wonder that you had Homer, Valmiki, Vyasa &c in your Walden Shanty. They have already peeped into my windows & I shall not be surprized to have them seated within as my guests ere long. You need not be astonished if you hear of my swearing in Sanscrit or at least in Pan scrit!

I have just got a taste of these old fellows, and what a glorious feast awaits me. What a lucky mortal are you to be the possessor of these priceless treasures, sent you from England. I am about starting upon a pilgrimage into the country of those ancient Hindus, and already in fancy at least see the "gigantic peaks of the Himalayas" and sit beneath "the tremendous heights of the Dhawalagiri range"—so far as the railway of books can convey me there. Give me your hand Gabriel, and lead the way. †

* a true shanty clear (chanticleer!)

† My lamp has soiled my paper.—

Now for the present time. We are beginning to have spring here—and I have already heard the warbling of the blue-bird near the Shanty—but did not get a sight of one. The bluebird once appeared here as early as the middle of February, but disappeared as the weather proved colder & did not return until about the middle of March. I am sorry you talk so discouragingly about coming this way this spring. Dont be afraid of me dear Gabriel—I will do you no harm. I have my fears also. I conclude that I am too social for you, although this is a *sin* I have never been accused of. Think of it again, about coming here; but dont come unless you get a clear '*response from your oracle*' I quote Gabriel himself. I am quite humbled at your halting—the cords of love do not draw you and I have none stronger to bring into requisition, but I shall not release you without a struggle.—May I not then expect you in May—things *may* be done in that month which none other in the calendar admit of. It is the month of May bees—so some fine morning may you alight here a *thoro' maybe* fresh from Musketaquid. Then you and Channing & I can sit in the little hermitage like the Gymnosophists of old, and you may do the stamping on the ground to any Alexander that may offer himself as intruder.

I copy from my Journal of this day the following for your *edification!* "Orphics" by a Modern Hindu.

The ancient Hindus of course wrote no "orphics."—the gentleman is a Modern.

In proportion as we see the merits of others we add to our own.

Mind is ever in the Spring—one eternal May morning—the same in its original freshness whether in the Sanscrit, the Greek and other languages or the English as a Medium of expression.

Mind has an eternal youth.

"Haunted forever by the eternal mind" is a fine thought of Wordsworth, himself a philosopher and priest of Nature. Man must ever find this to be true—the thoughtful man.

A Diurnal Rhyme

Time Evening

In my humble shanty rude,
Where I pass the graceful hours,
Sweetened by sweet solitude—
The true springtime with its flowers,

[1856]

Many solemn truths I learn,
That are found not in the books,
Ne'er denied to those who yearn,
For them in their chosen nooks:—
For primeval wisdom here
Finds me ready at her call,
And upon my listening ear,
Oft her kindly whisperings fall,—
Telling me in accents clear,—
Known but to the ear within,
That the source of all I hear,
Did with Man at first begin.
And in silence as I sit,
Calmly waiting for the Power,
Knowledge to my soul doth flit,
That no learning e'er could shower:—
Sempiternal wisdom deep,
From the endless source divine,
Not as creeds and dogmas creep,
But as doth the day-god shine—
With broad beams of amber light,
Reaching into every cell,
Driving out the ancient night,
That my soul in peace may dwell.—
Thus I'm taught to look & learn,
Rather calmly to receive,
And from stupid schoolmen turn,
To that which will ne'er deceive.

* * * * *

I copy the above as the shortest way of informing you how I am getting along & so abruptly close.

My dear Gabriel Jungfung [Jungfang?: cheerful one]

Yours warmly
D. the least

How is she of the 'lotus eyes'? since her perilous journey—

"A foolish letter," Daniel Ricketson wrote wryly on the top of the first page when he reread his epistle a dozen years later. Emerson had lectured before the New Bedford Lyceum on February 28, 1856. Ms., Hosmer; printed in Ricketson, pp. 61-63 and 64-65, where another letter, undated and beginning "Your letter as usual was full of wisdom," is inserted ahead of "A Diurnal Rhyme." For the inserted letter, see below.

From DANIEL RICKETSON

(Parachute)

Solar lamp, 10 p.m.

Dear T.

Your letter as usual was full of wisdom and has done me much good. Your visit here last fall did much to carry me well through the winter. I consider a visit from you a perfect benison, & hope that you will get a good response for May. I must try to get a look at the old house during the spring.—I thank you for your kind invitation but I am already too much in debt to you. Should I visit Concord it must be in a way not to incommode your household. I think I will set up a bed at once in the old house, to be kept as a kind of retreat for a few days at a time occasionally. I should have stated before that Channing and I have passed a word in relation to going to Concord together. So look out!

I wish to know if you think my sketch of the Concord sage was right—if you received the paper.

With kind remembrances to your family—Good night.

I go to bed.

his
D. R.
a la Bewick mark

[1856]

MS., Hosmer; the manuscript contains a fingerprint, doubtless Ricketson's, in the midst of "D. R. his mark." Here Ricketson was imitating a volume of Thomas Bewick from his library on which Thoreau commented in his Journal for October 1, 1855.

From HORACE GREELEY

Washington, March 12, '56.

My Friend Thoreau,

I thank you for yours of the 10th. I hope we shall agree to know each other better, and that we shall be able to talk over some matters on which we agree, with others on which we may differ.

I will say now that money shall not divide us—that is, I am very sure that I shall be willing to pay such sum as you will consider satisfactory. I will not attempt to fix on a price just now, as I wish to write to Mrs. Greeley in Europe and induce her (if I can) to return somewhat earlier in view of the prospect of securing your services.

I concur entirely in your suggestion that both parties be left at liberty to terminate the engagement when either shall see fit. But I trust no such termination will be deemed advisable, for a year or two at least; and I hope at least a part of your books and other surroundings will follow you to our cottage in the woods after you shall have had time to pronounce us endurable.

I will write by Saturday's steamer to Mrs. Greeley, and trust you will make no arrangements incompatible with that we contemplate until further communication between us. I expect to have you join us, if you will, in early summer.

Your obliged friend,
Horace Greeley.

Henry D. Thoreau, Concord, Mass.

In spite of good will on both sides, the idea of having Thoreau tutor the Greeley children at their "farm" in Chappaqua was never put into

effect. MS., Daniel Gregory Mason, lent through the courtesy of Van Wyck Brooks; previously unpublished.

To H.C.O. BLAKE

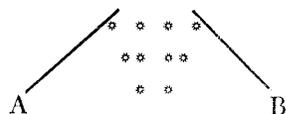
Concord Mar. 13 1856.

Mr Blake—

It is high time I sent you a word. I have not heard from Harrisburg since offering to go there, and have not been invited to lecture anywhere else the past winter. So you see I am fast growing rich. This is quite right, for such is my relation to the lecture-goers. I should be surprised and alarmed if there were any great call for me. I confess that I am considerably alarmed even when I hear that an individual wishes to meet me, for my experience teaches me that we shall thus only be made certain of a mutual strangeness, which otherwise we might never have been aware of.

I have not yet recovered strength enough for such a walk as you propose, though pretty well again for circumscribed rambles & chamber work. Even now I am probably the greatest walker in Concord—to its disgrace be it said. I remember our walks & talks & sailing in the past, with great satisfaction, and trust that we shall have more of them ere long—have more woodings-up—for even in the spring we must still seek “fuel to maintain our fires.”

As you suggest, we would fain value one another for what we are absolutely, rather than relatively. How will this do for a symbol of sympathy?



As for compliments,—even the stars praise me, and I praise them,—they & I sometimes belong to a mutual admiration society. Is it not so with you? I know you of old. Are you not tough & earnest to be talked

at, praised or blamed? Must *you* go out of the room because you are the subject of conversation? Where will you go to—pray? Shall we look into the “Letter Writer” to see what compliments are admissible. I am not afraid of praise for I have practised it on myself. As for my deserts, I never took an account of that stock, and in this connection care not whether I am deserving or not. When I hear praise coming do I not elevate & arch myself to hear it like the sky, and as impersonally? Think I appropriate any of it to my weak legs? No—praise away *till all is blue*.

I see by the newspapers that the season for making sugar is at hand. Now is the time, whether you be rock or white maple,—or hickory. I trust that you have prepared a store of sap tubs and sumach spouts, and invested largely in kettles. Early the first frosty morning tap your maples—the sap will not run in summer, you know—It matters not how little juice you get, if you get all you can, and boil it down. I made just one crystal of sugar once, one twentieth of an inch cube out of a pumpkin, & it sufficed. Though the yield be no greater than that,—this is not less the reason for it, & it will be not the less sweet,—nay, it will be infinitely the sweeter.

Shall then the maple yield sugar, & not man? Shall the farmer be thus active, & surely have so much sugar to show for it before this very March is gone,—while I read the newspaper? While he works in his sugar camp, let me work in mine—for sweetness is in me, & to sugar it shall come;—it shall not all go to leaves & wood. Am I not a *sugar maple* man then?

Boil down the sweet sap which the spring causes to flow within you—Stop not at syrup; go on to sugar,—though you present the world with but a single crystal—a crystal not made from trees in your yard, but from the new life that stirs in your pores. Cheerfully skim your kettle, & watch it set & crystalize—making a holiday of it, if you will. Heaven will be propitious to you as to him.

Say to the farmer,—There is your crop,—Here is mine. Mine is sugar to sweeten sugar with. If you will listen to me, I will sweeten your whole load,—your whole life.

Then will the callers ask—Where is Blake?—He is in his sugar-camp on the *Mt.* side.—Let the world await him.

Then will the little boys bless you, & the great boys too,—for such sugar is the origin of many condiments—Blakeians, in the shops of Worcester, of new form, with their mottos wrapped up in them.

Shall men taste only the sweetness of the maple & the cane, the coming year?

A walk over the crust to Asnybumskit, standing there in its inviting simplicity,—is tempting to think of,—making a fire on the snow under some rock! The very poverty of outward nature implies an inward wealth in the walker. What a Golconda is he conversant with, thawing his fingers over such a blaze! —But—but—

Have you read the new poem—"The Angel in the House"?—perhaps you will find it good for you.

H. D. T.

Thoreau's plan for a Western lecture tour was canceled through lack of engagements. Ticknor & Fields had just published Coventry Patmore's Angel in the House, which Thoreau recommends to Blake. MS., C. Waller Barrett.

From HORACE GREELEY

New York, Wednesday, April 30, '56

Friend Thoreau,

Immediately on the receipt of your letter, I wrote to Mrs. Greeley its substance. She was then in Dresden, but I wrote to Paris, and she did not receive my letter till the 9th inst. I have now her response, and she is heartily gratified with the prospect that you will come to us and teach our children. She says she thinks it may at least sometimes be best to have instruction communicated by familiar oral conversations while walking in the fields and woods, and that it might not be well to be confined always to the same portion of each day. However, she hopes, as I do, that interest in and love for the children would soon supersede all formal stipulations, and that what is best for them will also be found consistent with what is most agreeable for you.

Mrs. Greeley will not be home till the middle of June, so that I sup-

[1856]

pose the 1st of July will be about as soon as we should be snugly at home in our country cottage, ready for instruction and profit. Please write me your ideas with regard to the whole matter, including the amount of compensation that you consider fair and just. I prefer that you should come to us feeling at perfect liberty to leave at any time when you think best to do so; but I hope you will be reconciled to stay with us for one year at least. Of course, this would not preclude your going away to lecture or visit when you should see fit. Please write me soon and fully, and oblige

Yours,
Horace Greeley

Henry D. Thoreau Concord Mass.

MS., Abernethy (*typescript*).

To H.C.O. BLAKE

Concord May 21st '56

Mr. Blake,

I have not for a long time been *putting such thoughts together* as I should like to read to the company you speak of. I have enough of that sort to say, or even read, but not time now to arrange it. Something I have prepared might prove for their entertainment or refreshment perchance, but I would not like to have a hat carried round for it. I have just been reading some papers to see if they would do for your company; but though I thought pretty well of them as long as I read them to myself, when I got an auditor to try them on, I felt that they would not answer. How could I let you drum up a company to hear them?—In fine, what I have is either too scattered or loosely arranged, or too light, or else is too scientific and matter of fact (I run a good deal into that of late) for so hungry a company.

I am still a learner, not a teacher, feeding somewhat omnivorously,

browsing both stalk & leaves—but I shall perhaps be enabled to speak with the more precision & authority by & by—if philosophy & sentiment are not buried under a multitude of details.

I do not refuse, but accept your invitation—only changing the time—I consider myself invited to Worcester once for all—& many thanks to the inviter.

As for the Harvard excursion, will you let me suggest another? Do you & Brown come to Concord on Saturday, if the weather promises well, and spend the Sunday here on the river or hills or both. So we shall save some of our money, (which is of next importance to our souls) and lose—I do not know what. You say you *talked* of coming here before, now *do* it. I do not propose this because I think that I am worth your spending time with—but because I hope that we may prove flint & steel to one another. It is at most only an hour's ride further, & you can at any rate do what you please when you get here.

Then we will see if we have any apology to offer for our existence. So come to Concord!—come to Concord!—come to Concord! or — — — — — your suit shall be defaulted.

As for the dispute about solitude & society any comparison is impertinent. It is an idling down on the plain at the base of a mountain instead of climbing steadily to its top. Of course you will be glad of all the society you can get to go up with. Will you go to glory with me? is the burden of the song. I love society so much that I swallowed it all at a gulp—i.e. all that came in my way. It is not that we love to be alone, but that we love to soar, and when we do soar, the company grows thinner & thinner till there is none at all. It is either the Tribune on the plain, a sermon on the mount, or a very private *extacy* still higher up. We are not the less to aim at the summits, though the multitude does not ascend them. Use all the society that will abet you. But perhaps I do not enter into the spirit of your talk.

H.D.T.

There is no record of Thoreau's delivering a lecture in Worcester at this time. MS., Massachusetts Historical Society.

[1856]

To JOHN LANGDON SIBLEY, Harvard Librarian

Concord May 27 '56

Dear Sir

I return herewith the following books to the Library—viz—“*Columella of Husbandry*” 1. v. “*Pennsylvania, Ohio, & Delaware*” 1. v. *Jesuit Relations for 1639 & 1642 & 3* 2. vols.

Yrs

Henry D. Thoreau

There is a discussion of Thoreau's use of Columella in Francis L. Utley, "Thoreau and Columella: A Study in Reading Habits," The New England Quarterly, XI (March 1938), 171-80, and a reply to this article in Odell Shepard, "Thoreau and Columella: A Comment," The New England Quarterly, XI (September 1938), 605-6. MS., Harvard; previously unpublished.

To CALVIN GREENE

Concord May 31st '56

Dear Sir,

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

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

I thank you heartily for your kind intentions respecting me. The West has many attractions for me, particularly the lake country & the Indians. Yet I do not foresee what my engagements may be in the fall. I have once or twice come near going West a-lecturing, and perhaps

some winter may bring me into your neighborhood, in which case I should probably see you. Yet lecturing has commonly proved so foreign & irksome to me, that I think I could only use it to acquire the means with which to make an independent tour another time.

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

With many thanks

Yrs truly
Henry D. Thoreau

Calvin H. Greene

MS., Princeton University Library.

TO CALVIN GREENE

Concord Saturday June 21st '56

Dear Sir

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

Books & postage	---	---	---	\$2.64
Daguerreotype				.50
Postage	---	---	---	.16
				3.30

5 00

3.30

find 1.70 enclosed with my shadow

You will accordingly

Yrs
Henry D. Thoreau

[1856]

The picture was the Maxham daguerreotype showing Thoreau with Galway whiskers underneath his chin. F. H. Allen notes Thoreau's habitual misuse of "ult." for "inst." (A Bibliography of Henry David Thoreau, p. xiii.) MS., Princeton University Library.

From MARY MOODY EMERSON

Saturday Noon, July 12, 1856.

Will my young friend visit me tomorrow early as he can? This evening my Sister [Sarah Alden] Ripley sends word she will come, and go to see Mrs. William Emerson, who is in town. I wish for your writings, hoping they will give me a clearer clue to your faith,—its nature, its destination and object. While excited by your original wit and thoughts, I lose sight, perhaps, of the motive and end and infinite responsibility of talent, in any of its endless consequences. To enter the interior of a peculiar organization of mind is desirable to all who think and read in intermitted solitude. They believe, when the novelty of genius opens on their unpractised eye, that the spirit itself must own and feel its natural relations to their God of revelation, where alone every talent can be perfected and bring its additions to the owner; that faith in the discipline towards moral excellence can alone insure an immortal fame,—or even success and happiness here. God bless you, and thus make you useful to your Country and kind, prays

M E

Slight, waspish, and brilliant, Mary Moody Emerson left few persons indifferent to her. She had been a great stimulant to her nephew Ralph Waldo when he was a youth, and although she was later much disappointed by his deserting Unitarianism for Transcendentalism she maintained an affection for him throughout her long life. Now at eighty-two she was visiting him and also seeing Henry Thoreau frequently. Per-

haps she saw in him an individualism as striking as her own. Text, F. B. Sanborn, "A Concord Note-Book," *The Critic*, XLVIII (April 1906), 344.

From MARY MOODY EMERSON

Dear Henry:

I expect to set out to-morrow morning for Goshen,—a place where wit and gaiety never come "that comes to all." But hope lives, and travels on with the speed of suns and stars; and when there are none but clouds in the sky,

"Its very nakedness has power
To aid the hour,"

says old Sir Walter. However, the "old Bobbin Woman was steady to her Bible," where each page unfolded words of comfort and assurance. Yet the memory of intelligence and extensive mentality will never fail to give a vivid pleasure to reflection,—if shaded by the faith of future uncertainties,—'t is well to admit the decrees of unerring rectitude. If you write to M.E. it will brighten the solitude so desired. Had I been detained by nothing but weather! but I must pack up by daylight.

Mary Emerson

This note from Emerson's indomitable aunt was written on the inside page of a letter dated July 17, 1856 from her to Thoreau's mother, father, and family. Text, F. B. Sanborn, "A Concord Note-Book," The Critic, XLVIII (April 1906), 345.

[1856]

To F. B. SANBORN

Friday eve

If you chance to be going to Cambridge. . . will. . . you take a small volume to the library. . . It is so rare a book I do not like to trust the expressmen with it. . . .

We are not sure when Thoreau wrote this penciled note, which the auction catalogue describes as 1 p. 12mo. It was almost certainly after August 1856. He and Sanborn were friends by the summer of 1856, and Thoreau might have asked this favor any time after that. Sanborn says that, starting during this summer, he "began to dine daily at [Thoreau's] mother's table, and thus saw him almost every day for three years" (Familiar Letters of Thoreau, p. 301). It may be argued that if Thoreau saw Sanborn, he would not have had to write him; and so this letter could be dated after the three-year period was over. Such a case, however, for dating the letter after 1859 is rather tenuous. Nor does the rarity of the book mentioned in the letter help us much. Kenneth Walter Cameron, in the second volume of his Emerson the Essayist, prints a chronological list (pp. 192-98) through 1860 of the books Thoreau borrowed from the Harvard library, but there are too many of them to determine what the book was and consequently when it was borrowed and when returned. Text, catalogue of the Hess sale (Anderson Auction Co., January 24, 1908).

To BRONSON ALCOTT

Concord Sep 1st 56

Mr Alcott,

I remember that in the spring you invited me to visit you. I feel inclined to spend a day or two with you and on your hills at this season,

returning perhaps by way of Brattleboro. What if I should take the cars for Walpole next Friday morning? Are you at home? And will it be convenient and agreeable to you to see me then?—I will await an answer.

I am but poor company, and it will not be worth the while for you to put yourself out on my account; yet from time to time I have some thoughts which would be the better for an airing. I also wish to get some hints from September on the Connecticut to help me understand that season on the Concord;—to snuff the musty fragrance of the decaying year in the primitive woods. There is considerable cellar room in my nature for such stores, a whole row of bins waiting to be filled before I can celebrate my Thanksgiving. Mould is the richest of soils, yet I am not mould. It will always be found that one flourishing institution exists & battens on another mouldering one. The Present itself is parasitic to this extent.

Your fellow traveller
Henry D. Thoreau

According to his Journal (IX, 61 ff.), Thoreau started September 5 for Brattleboro, where he visited Charles Frost and Mary Brown. On September 10 he went on to Walpole, New Hampshire, to visit the Alcotts; on the 12th he returned to Concord. MS., F. W. Pratt.

To DANIEL RICKETSON

Concord Sep 2d '56

Friend Ricketson,

My father & mother regret that your indisposition is likely to prevent your coming to Concord at present. It is as well that you do not, if you depend on seeing me, for I expect to go to New Hampshire the latter part of the week. I shall be glad to see you afterward, if you are prepared for & can endure my unsocial habits.

I would suggest that you have one or two of the teeth—which you can best spare, extracted at once—for the sake of your general no less than particular health. This is the advice of one who has had quite his share of toothache in this world.—I am a trifle stouter than when I saw you last, yet far—far short of my best estate. I thank you for two newspapers which you have sent me—am glad to see that you have studied out the history of the ponds, got the Indian names straightened—which means made more crooked—&c &c I remember them with great satisfaction. They are all the more interesting to me for the lean & sandy soil that surrounds them. Heaven is not one [of] your fertile Ohio bottoms, you may depend on it. Ah, the Middleboro Ponds!—Great Platte Lakes! Remember me to the perch in them. I trust that I may have some better craft than that oarless pumpkin-seed the next time I navigate them.

From the size of your family I infer that Mrs. Ricketson & your daughters have returned from Franconia. Please remember me to them, & also to Arthur & Walton, & tell the latter that if in the course of his fishing he should chance to come across the shell of a terrapin & will save it for me, I shall be exceedingly obliged to him.

Channing dropped in on us the other day, but soon dropped out again.

Yrs
Henry D. Thoreau.

MS., Huntington.

From B. B. WILEY

Providence R.I. Sep 4, 1856

Henry D. Thoreau Esq Concord
Dear Sir

Having read your "Week on the Concord" which you sent D W Vaughan a short time since, I enclose \$1.27 for which will you please send me a copy of the same.

I have your "Walden" which I have read several times. If you can send me any writings of yours besides the above works I will esteem it a favor and will immediately remit you the amount due

I consider that the moderate price I pay for excellent writings does not remove my obligation to their author and I most gladly take this occasion to tender you my warmest thanks for the pleasure and improvement you have afforded me

Yours very truly
B. B. Wiley

Benjamin Wiley, when he first wrote Thoreau, was a Providence business man active as broker and banker. D. W. Vaughan, who lent Wiley his own copy of the Week, was also a Providence banker. MS., Berg; previously unpublished.

To DANIEL RICKETSON

Concord Sep 23 '56

Friend Ricketson,

I have returned from New Hampshire, and find myself *in statu quo*. My journey proved one of business purely. As you suspected, I saw Alcott, and I spoke to him of you, and your good will toward him; so now you may consider yourself introduced. He would be glad to hear from you about a conversation in New Bedford. He was about setting out on a conversing tour to Fitchburg, Worcester, & 3 or 4 weeks hence Waterbury Ct, New York, Newport (?) & Providence (?). You may be sure that you will not have occasion to repent of any exertions which you may make to secure an audience for him. I send you one of his programmes, lest he should not have done so himself.

I am sorry to hear so poor an account of C[hanning]. Perhaps he will turn up & show his better side again.

You propose to me teaching the following winter. I find that I can-

not entertain the idea. It would require such a revolution of all my habits, I think, as would sap the very foundation of me. I am engaged to Concord & my very private pursuits by 10,000 ties, & it would be suicide to cut them. If I were weaker, & not somewhat stronger physically, I should be more tempted. I am so busy that I cannot even think of visiting you. The days are not long enough or I am not strong enough to do the work of the day before bed-time.

Excuse my paper. It chances to be the best I have.

Yrs
Henry D. Thoreau

Alcott accepted Ricketson's invitation, according to Familiar Letters (p. 304), and visited New Bedford in the spring of 1857. MS., Hosmer.

From DANIEL RICKETSON

Brooklawn, 24 Sept. 1856.

Dear Friend,—

Yours of the 23rd is received, and I notice what you say in regard to Mr. Alcott's class; but I fear that I shall hardly prove able to undertake the business of obtaining one for him. It is entirely out of my line and very much *averse* to my taste, to solicit from any one. People are so ready to ride a "high horse," as soon as you present anything to them that is left for their consideration or decision, that I shrink at once from any such collision. Still should anything turn up whereby I may effect the object through a third party, I shall be very glad so to do. In the mean time I am ready to listen to any suggestions Mr. Alcott may make to me in the premises.

I am sorry that I shall not have the pleasure of a visit from you this fall, but as you need companionship so much less than I do I suppose the pleasure would not be reciprocal were we to meet. I am becoming quite a historical sketcher, and have already commenced publishing

a history of New Bedford, or rather of the old township of Dartmouth, which included New Bedford, also the townships of Westport, Fairhaven, and the present Dartmouth.

Have you ever observed how many of the Indian names of rivers, lakes, &c, end in *et*? Assawampsett, Acushnet, Pascamanset, &c., &c. I am informed by a person who appeared to have some knowledge of Indian words that *et* signifies water—the Taunton river was called Nemasket for several miles from its outlet from the Middleborough Ponds—then Tetiquet or Tetiquid. Now I come to my object—did not your own Musketaquid have the final syllable *quet*? If the fact can be established that *et* meant water, I should have no hesitation in making the alteration.

Please remember me most truly to your family, and to Mr. Emerson and his, when you next meet him.

Trusting that when the right time comes around we shall meet once more, I remain,

Yours faithfully,
D. Ricketson.

Text, Ricketson, pp. 68–69.

From SARAH ALDEN RIPLEY

My dear friend,

a story you once told me about the spontaneous generation of your butterfly was brought to mind by an article in Blackwood's magazine on "Sea side studies." I thought you would like to look at it, if you have not seen it. *The Magazine* belongs to Mr. Ames.

With much regard
S. A. Ripley

Mr Henry Thoreau

[1856]

Sarah Alden Ripley, Emerson's widowed aunt, was noted for her knowledge of foreign languages. Then living in Concord, she knew and liked Thoreau. On the day of his death, she wrote: "This morning is sad for those of us who sympathize with the friends of Henry Thoreau, the philosopher and the woodman."

A series of articles entitled "Sea-Side Studies" and "New Sea-Side Studies" appeared in Volumes LXXX and LXXXI of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine. This letter apparently refers to the second installment of the series, which appeared in the September 1856 issue. On this evidence we date the letter conjecturally as of September 1856; of course it may have been written at any time from this date to Thoreau's death. MS., Berg; previously unpublished.

To THOMAS CHOLMONDELEY

Concord Mass. Oct 20th 1856.

Dear Cholmondeley

I wish to thank you again for those books. They are the nucleus of my library. I wrote to you on the receipt of them last winter, (directing as now) but not having heard from you, do not know in what part of the world this may find you. Several here are enquiring if you have returned to England, as you had just started for the Crimea at the last account. The books have long been shelved in cases of my own construction made partly of the driftwood of our river. They are the admiration of all beholders. Alcott and Emerson, besides myself, have been cracking some of the nuts.

Certainly I shall never pay you for them. Of those new to me the Rig Veda is the most savory that I have yet tasted. As primitive poetry, I think as any extant. Indeed all the Vedantic literature is priceless. There they stand occupying two shelves, headed by Froissart, stretching round Egypt and India "Ultima Thule," as a fit conclusion. What a world of variety. I shall browse there for some winters to come. While war has given place to peace on your side, perhaps a more serious war still is breaking out here. I seem to hear its distant mutterings,

though it may be long before the bolt will fall in our midst. There has not been anything which you could call union between the North and South in this country for many years, and there cannot be so long as slavery is in the way. I only wish that Northern—that any men—were better material, or that I for one had more skill to deal with them; that the north had more spirit and would settle the question at once, and here instead of struggling feebly and protractedly away off on the plains of Kansas. They are on the eve of a Presidential election, as perhaps you know. and all good people are praying that of the three candidates Fremont may be the man; but in my opinion the issue is quite doubtful. As far as I have observed, the worst man stands the best chance in this country. But as for politics, what I most admire now-a-days, is not the regular governments but the irregular primitive ones, like the Vigilance committee in California and even the free state men in Kansas. They are the most divine.—I have just taken a run up country, as I did with you once, only a little farther, this time; to the Connecticut river in New Hampshire, where I saw Alcott, King of men. He is among those who ask after you, and takes a special interest in the oriental books. He cannot say enough about them. “And then that he should send you a library! Think of it!”

I am sorry that I can give but a poor account of myself. I got “run down” they say, more than a year ago, and have not yet got fairly up again. It has not touched my spirits however, for they are as indifferently tough, as sluggishly resilient, as a dried fungus. I would it were the kind called punk; that they might catch and retain some heavenly spark. I dwell as much aloof from society as ever: find it just as impossible to agree in opinion with the most intelligent of my neighbors; they not having improved one jot, nor I either. I am still immersed in nature, have much of the time a living sense of the breadth of the field on whose verge I dwell. The *great west* and *north west* stretching on infinitely far and grand and wild, qualifying all our thoughts. That is the only America I know. I prize this western reserve chiefly for its intellectual value. That is the road to new life and freedom,—if ever we are dissatisfied with this and not to exile as in Siberia and knowing this, one need not travel it. That great northwest where several of our shrubs, fruitless here, retain and mature their fruits properly.

I am pleased to think of you *in* that England, where we all seem to have originated, or at least sojourned which Emerson values so much, but which I know so little about. That island seems as full of good things

[1856]

as a nut is of meat: and I trust that it still is a sound nut without mould or worm. I hope that by this time you are settled in your mind and satisfactorily employed there.

My father mother and sister send their best wishes, and would be glad to see you in this country again. We are all quite anxious to hear that you are safe and sound: I in particular hope that you are in all respects unscathed by the battle of life, ready for still worthier encounters.

Yours,
H. D. T.

MS., Berg, *copy in an unknown hand; previously unpublished.*

From B. B. WILEY

Providence Oct 31, 1856

H D Thoreau Concord

Dear Sir

In Worcester I saw Theo Brown who was very glad to hear from you. In the evening we went together to see Harry Blake. Both these gentlemen were well. Mr Blake is an enthusiast in matters which the world passes by as of little account. Since I returned here I have taken two morning walks with Chas Newcomb. He suggested that he would like to walk to the White Mountains with me some time and it may yet be done. He walks daily some miles and seems to be in pretty good health. He says he would like to visit Concord, but named no time for that purpose.

I am anxious to know a little more of Confucius. Can you briefly, so that it will not take too much of *your* time, write me his views in regard to Creation, Immortality, man's preexistence if he speaks of it, and generally anything relating to man's Origin, Purpose, & Destiny.

I would also like much to know the names of the leading Hindu philosophers and their ideas on the preceding topics

Is Swedenborg a valuable man to you, and if so, why?

Do not think me too presuming because I ask you these questions. I am an inquirer (as indeed I always hope to be) and have to avail myself of the wisdom of those who have commenced life before me. Though I cannot hope that my existence will be of any direct benefit to you, yet I cannot fail to exert influence somewhere, and that it may be of an elevating character, I wish to make my own the experience of collective humanity.

I shall leave here next Thursday Nov 6 for Chicago. My address there will be *care of Strong & Wiley*. I shall undoubtedly spend the winter there and how much longer I shall stay I cannot tell.

I suggested brevity in your remarks about the views of those philosophers. This was entirely for your convenience. I shall read appreciatively and most attentively whatever you find time to write.

Yours truly
B. B. Wiley

Newcomb was Emerson's Providence friend and correspondent. Thoreau found him an interesting walking companion (Journal, VII, 79). MS., Berg; previously unpublished.

To SOPHIA THOREAU

Direct

Eagleswood--Perth Amboy N. J. Sat. Eve Nov. 1st '56

Dear Sophia,

I have hardly had time & repose enough to write to you before. I spent the afternoon of Friday (it seems some months ago) in Worcester, but failed to see Blake, he having "gone to the horse race" in

Boston;—to atone for which I have just received a letter from him, asking me to stop at Worcester & lecture on my return—I called on [Theo] Brown & [T. W.] Higginson, & in the evening came by way of Norwich to N. Y. in the steamer Commonwealth, and though it was so windy in land, had a perfectly smooth passage, and about as good a sleep as usually at home. Reached N Y about 7 Am, too late for the John Potter (there was'nt any Jonas) so I spent the forenoon there, called on Greeley, (who was not in) met [F. A. T.] Bellew in Broadway and walked into his workshop, read at the Astor Library &c &c—I arrived here about 30 miles from N. Y. about 5 pm Saturday, in company with Miss E. Peabody, who was returning in the same covered wagon from the Landing to Eagleswood, which last place she has just left for the winter. This is a queer place— There is one large long stone building, which cost some \$40000, in which I do not know exactly who or how many work—(one or two familiar faces, & more familiar names have turned up)—a few shops & offices, an old farm house and Mr [Marcus] Spring's perfectly private residence within 20 rods of the main building. "The City of Perth Amboy" is about as big as Concord, and Eagleswood is 1¼ miles S W of it, on the bay side. The central fact here is evidently Mr [Theodore] Weld's school—recently established—around which various other things revolve. Saturday evening I went to the school room, hall, or what not, to see the children & their teachers & patrons dance. Mr Weld, a kind looking man with a long white beard, danced with them, & Mr [E. J.] Cutler his assistant, lately from Cambridge, who is acquainted [with] Sanborn, Mr Spring—and others. This Sat. eve-dance is a regular thing, & it is thought something strange if you dont attend. They take it for granted that you want *society!*

Sunday forenoon, I attended a sort of Quaker meeting at the same place—(The Quaker aspect & spirit prevails here— Mrs Spring says "—does thee not?") where it was expected that the spirit would move me (I having been previously spoken to about it) & it, or something else, did, an inch or so. I said just enough to set them a little by the ears & make it lively. I had excused myself by saying that I could not adapt myself to a particular audience, for all the speaking & lecturing here has reference to the children, who are far the greater part of the audience, & they are not so bright as N. E. children Imagine them sitting close to the wall all around a hall—with old Quaker looking men & women here & there. There sat Mrs. Weld (Grimke) & her sister, two

elderly grayheaded ladies, the former in extreme Bloomer costume, which was what you may call remarkable; Mr [Arnold] Buffum with broad face & a great white beard, looking like a pier head made of the cork tree with the bark on, as if he could buffet a considerable wave;—James G. Birney, formerly candidate for the Presidency, with another particularly white head & beard—Edward Palmer, the anti-money man (for whom communities were made) with [word] ample beard somewhat grayish. Some of them I suspect are very worthy people. Of course you are wondering to what extent all these make one family—to what extent 20. Mrs [Caroline] Kirkland, and this [a] name only to me, I saw— She has just bought a lot here. They all know more about your neighbors & acquaintances than you suspected.

On Sunday evening, I read the moose-story to the children to their satisfaction. Ever since I have been constantly engaged in surveying Eagleswood—through woods ravines marshes & along the shore, dodging the tide—through cat-briar mud & beggar ticks—having no time to look up or think where I am—(it takes 10 or 15 minutes before each meal to pick the beggar ticks out of my clothes—burrs & the rest are left—rents mended at the first convenient opportunity) I shall be engaged perhaps as much longer. Mr Spring wants me to help him about setting out an orchard & vineyard—Mr Birney asks me to survey a small piece for him, & Mr Alcott who has just come down here for the 3d Sunday—says that Greeley (I left my name for him) invites him & me to go to his home with him next Saturday morning & spend the Sunday.

It seems a twelve-month since I was not here—but I hope to get settled deep into my den again ere long. The hardest thing to find here is solitude & Concord. I am at Mr Spring's house— Both he & she & their family are quite agreeable.

I want you to write to me immediately— (just left off to talk French with the servant man—) & let Father & Mother put in a word—to them & to aunts—

Love from
Henry.

MS., Huntington.

[1856]

TO H. C. O. BLAKE

Eagleswood, N. J., November 19, 1856.

Mr. Blake,—

I have been here much longer than I expected, but have deferred answering you, because I could not foresee when I shall return. I do not know yet within three or four days. This uncertainty makes it impossible for me to appoint a day to meet you, until it shall be too late to hear from you again. I think, therefore, that I must go straight home. I feel some objection to reading that "What shall it profit" lecture *again* in Worcester; but if you are quite sure that it will be worth the while (it is a grave consideration), I will even make an independent journey from Concord for that purpose. I have read three of my old lectures (that included) to the Eagleswood people, and, unexpectedly, with rare success—*i. e.*, I was aware that what I was saying was silently taken in by their ears.

You must excuse me if I write mainly a business letter now, for I am sold for the time,—am merely Thoreau the surveyor here,—and solitude is scarcely obtainable in these parts.

Alcott has been here three times, and, Saturday before last, I went with him and Greeley, by invitation of the last, to G.'s farm, thirty-six miles north of New York. The next day A. and I heard Beecher preach; and what was more, we visited Whitman the next morning (A. had already seen him), and were much interested and provoked. He is apparently the greatest democrat the world has seen. Kings and aristocracy go by the board at once, as they have long deserved to. A remarkably strong though coarse nature, of a sweet disposition, and much prized by his friends. Though peculiar and rough in his exterior, his skin (all over (?)) red, he is essentially a gentleman. I am still somewhat in a quandary about him,—feel that he is essentially strange to me, at any rate; but I am surprised by the sight of him. He is very broad, but, as I have said, not fine. He said that I misapprehended him. I am not quite sure that I do. He told us that he loved to ride up and down Broadway all day on an omnibus, sitting beside the driver, listening to the roar of the carts, and sometimes gesticulating and declaiming Homer at the top of his voice. He has long been an editor and writer for the newspapers,—was editor of the "New Orleans Crescent" once; but

now has no employment but to read and write in the forenoon, and walk in the afternoon, like all the rest of the scribbling gentry.

I shall probably be in Concord next week; so you can direct to me there.

A penciled draft of the last part of this letter—the draft begins with “A remarkably strong,” in Abernethy—includes an interesting addition to Thoreau’s comments on Whitman as printed in Familiar Letters of Thoreau. Whitman spoke to Thoreau about his having published Emerson’s letter of endorsement of Leaves of Grass, an action that created a stir at the time and is still debated. Thoreau says: “In his apologizing account of the matter he made the printing of Es letter seem a simple thing—& to some extent throws the burden of it—if there is any, on the writer,” that is, on Emerson—the sentence omitted from the published version. Text, Familiar Letters of Thoreau, pp. 339–41; the manuscript of the finished letter was sold by the Anderson Auction Co. at the Haber sale on December 7–8, 1909; the sale catalogue quotes some of the omitted sentence.

TO H. G. O. BLAKE

Concord Dec 6 '56

Mr Blake,

What is wanting above is merely an engraving of Eagleswood, which I have used. I trust that you got a note from me at Eagleswood about a fortnight ago. I passed thru' Worcester on the morning of the 25th of November, and spent several hours (from 3.30 to 6.20) in the travellers' room at the Depot, as in a dream, it now seems. As the first Harlem train unexpectedly connected with the first from Fitchburg, I did not spend the forenoon with you, as I had anticipated, on account of baggage &c— If it had been a seasonable hour I should have seen you, i.e. if you had not been gone to a horse-race. But think of making a call

at half past three in the morning! (Would it not have implied a 3 o'clock in the morning courage in both you & me?) As it were ignoring the fact that mankind are really not at home—are not out, but so deeply in that they cannot be seen—nearly half their hours at this season of the year. I walked up & down the Main Street at half past 5 in the dark, and paused long in front of [Theo] Brown's store trying to distinguish its features; considering whether I might safely leave his "Putnam" in the door handle, but concluded not to risk it. Meanwhile a watchman (?) seemed to be watching me, & I moved off. Took another turn around there, a little later, and had the very earliest offer of the Transcript from an urchin behind, whom I actually could not see, it was so dark. So I withdrew, wondering if you & B. would know that I had been there. You little dream who is occupying Worcester when you are all asleep. Several things occurred there that night, which I will venture to say were not put into the Transcript. A cat caught a mouse at the depot, & gave it to her kitten to play with. So that world famous tragedy goes on by night as well as by day, & nature is *emphatically* wrong.* Also I saw a young Irishman kneel before his mother, as if in prayer, while she wiped a cinder out of his eye with her tongue; and I found that it was never too late (or early?) to learn something.—These things transpired while you and B. were, to all practical purposes, no where, & good for nothing—not even for society,—not for horse-races,—nor the taking back of a Putnam's Magazine. It is true I might have recalled you to life, but it would have been a cruel act, considering the kind of life you would have come back to.

However, I would fain write to you now by broad daylight, and report to you some of my life, such as it is, and recall you to your life, which is not always lived by you, even by day light.

Blake! Blake! Are you awake? Are you aware what an ever-glorious morning this is? What long expected never to be repeated opportunity is now offered to get life & knowledge?

For my part I am trying to wake up,—to wring slumber out of my pores;—For, generally, I take events as unconcernedly as a fence post,—absorb wet & cold like it, and am pleasantly tickled with lichens slowly spreading over me. Could I not be content then to be a cedar post, which lasts 25 years? Would I not rather be that than the farmer that set it? or he that preaches to that farmer?—& go to the heaven of posts at last? I think I should like that as well as any would like it. But

* Left on the stove too long. [Thoreau's note.]

I should not care if I sprouted into a living tree, put forth leaves & flowers, & have fruit.

I am grateful for what I am & have. My thanksgiving is perpetual. It is surprising how contented one can be with nothing definite—only a sense of* existence. Well anything for variety. I am ready to try this for the next 1000 years, & exhaust it. How sweet to think of! My extremities well charred, and my intellectual part too, so that there is no danger of worm or rot for a long while. My breath is sweet to me. O how I laugh when I think of my vague indefinite riches. No run on my bank can drain it—for my wealth is not possession but enjoyment.

What are all these years made for? and now another winter comes, so much like the last? Cant we satisfy the beggars once for all? Have you got in your wood for this winter? What else have you got in? Of what use a great fire on the hearth & a confounded little fire in the heart? Are you prepared to make a decisive campaign—to pay for your costly tuition—to pay for the suns of past summers—for happiness & unhappiness lavished upon you?

Does not Time go by swifter than the swiftest equine trotter or racker?

Stir up Brown—Remind him of his duties, which outrun the date & span of Worcester's years past & to come. Tell him to be sure that he is on the Main Street, however narrow it may be—and to have a lit sign, visible by night as well as by day.

Are they not patient waiters—They who wait for us? But even they shall not be losers.

Dec. 7

That Walt Whitman, of whom I wrote to you, is the most interesting fact to me at present. I have just read his 2nd edition (which he gave me) and it has done me more good than any reading for a long time. Perhaps I remember best the poem of Walt Whitman an American & the Sun Down Poem. There are 2 or 3 pieces in the book which are disagreeable to say the least, simply sensual. He does not celebrate love at all. It is as if the beasts spoke. I think that men have not been ashamed of themselves without reason. No doubt, there have always been dens where such deeds were unblushingly recited, and it is no merit to com-

* Eagleswood again all cut off! [Thoreau's note, referring to the letterhead.]

pete with their inhabitants. But even on this side, he has spoken more truth than any American or modern that I know. I have found his poem exhilarating encouraging. As for its sensuality,—& it may turn out to be less sensual than it appeared—I do not so much wish that those parts were not written, as that men & women were so pure that they could read them without harm, that is, without understanding them. One woman told me that no woman could read it as if a man could read what a woman could not. Of course Walt Whitman can communicate to us no experience, and if we are shocked, whose experience is it that we are reminded of?

On the whole it sounds to me very brave & American after whatever deductions. I do not believe that all the sermons so called that have been preached in this land put together are equal to it for preaching—

We ought to rejoice greatly in him. He occasionally suggests something a little more than human. You cant confound him with the other inhabitants of Brooklyn or New York. How they must shudder when they read him! He is awfully good.

To be sure I sometimes feel a little imposed on. By his heartiness & broad generalities he puts me into a liberal frame of mind prepared to see wonders—as it were sets me upon a hill or in the midst of a plain—stirs me well up, and then—throws in a thousand of brick. Though rude & sometimes ineffectual, it is a great primitive poem,—an alarum or trumpet-note ringing through the American camp. Wonderfully like the Orientals, too, considering that when I asked him if he had read them, he answered, "No: tell me about them."

I did not get far in conversation with him,—two more being present,—and among the few things which I chanced to say, I remember that one was, in answer to him as representing America, that I did not think much of America or of politics, and so on, which may have been somewhat of a damper to him.

Since I have seen him, I find that I am not disturbed by any brag or egoism in his book. He may turn out the least of a braggart of all, having a better right to be confident.

He is a great fellow.

One measure of the stature of the two leading Transcendentalists, Emerson and Thoreau, is that both praised Walt Whitman. It would have

been unusually easy for them to be repelled by so different a personality and so physical a poem as Leaves of Grass. MS., Berg.

TO B. B. WILEY

Concord Dec 12 '56

Dear Sir,

I but recently returned from New Jersey after an absence of a little over a month, and found your letter awaiting me. I am glad to hear that you have walked with [Charles] Newcomb, though I fear that you will not have many more opportunities to do so. I have no doubt that in his company you would ere long find yourself, if not on those White Mountains you speak of, yet on some equally high, though not laid down in the geographies.

It is refreshing to hear of your earnest purposes with respect to your culture, & I can send you no better wish, than that they may not be thwarted by the cares and temptations of life. Depend on it, *now* is the accepted time, & probably you will never find yourself better disposed or freer to attend to your culture than at this moment. When *They* who inspire us with the idea are ready, shall not we be ready also?

I do not now remember anything which Confucius has said directly respecting man's "origin, purpose, and destiny." He was more practical than that. He is full of wisdom applied to human relations—to the private life—the Family—Government &c. It is remarkable that according to his own account the sum & substance of his teaching is, as you know, to Do as you would be done by.

He also said—(I translate from the French) ["Conduct yourself suitably toward the persons of your family, then you will be able to instruct and to direct a nation of men."]"]

"To nourish ones self with a little rice, to drink water, to have only his bended arm to support his head, is a state which has also its satisfaction. To be rich and honored by iniquitous means, is for me as the floating cloud which passes."

[1856]

"As soon as a child is born he must respect its faculties; the knowledge which will come to it by & by does not resemble at all its present state. If it arrives at the age of 40 or 50 years, without having learned anything, it is no more worthy of any respect."

This last, I think, will speak to your condition.

But at this rate I might fill many letters.

Our acquaintance with the Ancient Hindoos is not at all personal. The few names that can be relied on are very shadowy. It is however tangible works that we know. The best I think of are the Bhagvat-Geeta (an episode in an ancient heroic poem called the Mahabarata)—the Vedas—the Vishnu Purana—The Institutes of Menu—&c

I cannot say that Swedenborg has been directly & practically valuable to me, for I have not been a reader of him, except to a slight extent—but I have the highest regard for him and trust that I shall read all his works in some world or other. He had a wonderful knowledge of our interior & spiritual life—though his illuminations are occasionally blurred by trivialities. He comes nearer to answering, or attempting to answer, literally, your questions concerning man's origin, purpose & destiny than any of the worthies I have referred to. But I think that this is not *altogether* a recommendation; since such an answer to these questions cannot be discovered, any more than perpetual motion, for which no reward is now offered. The noblest man it is, methinks, that knows, & by his life suggests, the most about these things. Crack away at these nuts however as long as you can—the very exercise will ennoble you—& you may get something better than the answer you expect—

Yrs

Henry D. Thoreau

MS., Berg.

From THOMAS CHOLMONDELEY

Rome, December 16, 1856.

My dear Thoreau,—

I wish that I was an accomplished young American lady, for then I could write the most elegant and "recherché" letters without any trouble or thought. But now, being an Englishman, even my pleasures are fraught with toil and pain. Why, I have written several letters to you, but always, on reading them over to myself, I was obliged to burn them, because I felt they were bad letters, and insufficient for a passage of the ocean. To begin, then, a new and a good letter, I must acquaint you that I received your former communication, which gave me *the sincerest pleasure*, since it informed me that the books which I sent came to hand, and were approved of. I had indeed studied your character closely, and knew what you would like. Besides, I had, even from our first acquaintance, a previous memory of you, like the vision of a landscape a man has seen, he cannot tell where.

As for me, my life still continues (through the friendship of an unseen hand) a fountain of never-ending delight, a romance renewed every morning, and never smaller to-day than it was yesterday, but always enhancing itself with every breath I draw. I delight myself, I love to live, and if I have been "run down" I am not aware of it.

I often say to God, "What, O Lord, will you do with me in particular? Is it politics, or philosophical leisure, or war, or hunting, or what?" He always seems to answer, "Enjoy yourself, and leave the rest to itself." Hence everything always happens at the right time and place, and rough and smooth ride together. There is an old Yorkshire gentleman—a great-grandfather of ninety—who promises to see his hundred yet, before he flits. This man was asked lately (he has had his troubles, too) "what of all things he should like best." The merry old squire laughed, and declared that "he should like of all things to begin and live his life over again, in any condition almost,—he was not particular." Now, I am like the squire in my appreciation of life. It is so great a matter to exist pleasurably. The sensation of Being!

Thus much about myself. As for my Phenomena, I have seen and thought and done quite up to my highest mark; but I will not weary you with descriptions of the Crimea, Constantinople, or even Rome, whence I am now writing.

But one thing I will attempt to tell you. I saw the great explosion when the Windmill Magazine blew up. I was out at sea, a good ten miles from the spot. The day was fine; suddenly the heaven was rent open by a pillar of fire, which seemed ready to tear the very firmament down. It was like the "idea" of the hottest oven. As it hung (for it lasted while you might count) on the horizon, the earth shook and the sea trembled, and we felt the ship quivering under us. It was felt far and wide like an earthquake. We held our breath and felt our beating hearts. Presently we recovered, and the first feeling in every heart was, "Better go home after that!" The *roaring noise* was, I am told, tremendous. Strange that I cannot at all recollect it! I only saw the apparition and felt the shock. . . .

The English temper keeps very war-like. They want another turn with Russia. But since Europe is now pretty well closed up, it seems to be the general impression that Asia will be the field of the next Russian war: and who knows how long it may last when once it begins? They descending from their Riphean hills, hordes of poor and hardy Tartars,—Gog and Magog and their company; we ascending, with the immense resources of India behind us, towards the central regions, the scarce-explored backbone of Asia. The ruins of long-forgotten cities half buried in sand, the shattered temples of preadamite giants, the Promethean cliffs themselves, will ring with the clang of many a battle, with the wail of great defeats and the delirious transports of victory. There is a very old English prophecy now in circulation, "that the hardest day would come when we should have to fight against men having snow on their helmets." So that superstition swells the anti-Russian tide.

I have seen something of Turks, Greeks, Frenchmen, and Italians, and they impress me thus: the Turk, brave, honest, religious; the Greek, unclean, lying, a slave, and the son of a slave; the Frenchman, light-hearted, clever, and great *in small things*; the Italian, great, deep, ingenious. I would put him first. He is greater than the Frenchman.

Having been in the Redan, the Malakoff, etc., I am truly astonished at the endurance of the Russians. The filth and misery of those horrid dens were beyond expression. Even the cleanest part of our own camp swarmed with vermin. I caught an aristocrat—a member of Parliament—one day stopped for a flea-hunt in his tent. Though too late for any regular engagement, I managed to experience the sensation of being under fire. It is only pleasurable for about a quarter of an hour; in short,

it soon fatigues, like a second-rate concert. The missiles make strange and laughable sounds sometimes,—whistling and crowing and boiling. Watching them moving through the air from the north side of the harbor, they seemed to come so slow!

The Crimea is a beautiful country,—the air clear, hilly, clothed with brushwood; the pine on the hill, and the vine in the valley. It is a fine country for horseback, and many a good ride I had through it. I see that I am falling into description, whether I will or no. The Bosphorus and the Sea of Marmora—indeed, all the neighborhood of Stamboul—are charming, in spite of rags, dirt, and disease. Nature has done her utmost here, and the view from the Seraskier's Tower is the finest in the world. The Turkish ladies (for I saw plenty of beauties in the bazaars) are, in figure, like our own; that is, "very fat." The Turk and the Briton seem to agree that a good breed cannot be got out of lean kine. In the face, however, they excel ours; the lines are more regular. In expression, *babies*; in gait, waddling; the teeth often rotten from too much sweetmeat.

There was an English lady at Stamboul who had traveled with a bashaw's favorite wife. They were put in one cabin on board a ship. She told us how the favorite behaved; how she was laughing and crying and praying in a breath; how she was continually falling fast asleep and snoring loudly, waking up again in a few minutes; she was the merest infant, and as fat as a little pig; lastly, how the bashaw was always popping into the cabin, to see what she was about, at all hours, and cared nothing for the English lady, though she was sometimes quite *en déshabillé*.

I met Abdel Kadir in the East. He is a very handsome man, with mild, engaging manners, a face deadly pale, very fine eyes, beard, and hands. Very like one of your Southerners, some of whom are not to be surpassed. He is now residing at Damascus. I noted the Circassians to be a fine race, very tall and well made, with high features; grave and fierce, and yet sweet withal. They wear high caps, and carry an armful of daggers and pistols. The feet and hands long and small. They have, too, a fine, light, high-going step, full of spring and elasticity, like the gait of a high-mettled horse. "*Incessu patuit*." But every nation has a motion of its own. Among the boatmen on the Bosphorus I saw many faces and figures very like the same class at Hong-Kong and on the Canton River in China. Both have a Tartar look. Mongolians, I imagine.

I think I should like, as I grow older and more stay-at-home, to pay attention to the subject of "breeding." Astonishing facts come out upon inquiry. Now, *sheep, horses, dogs, and men* should be more closely watched. I see already some things. I see that Nature is always flowing. *She will not let you fix her*, and she refuses to be caught out by an process of exhaustion. There is always somewhat unknown, and that somewhat is everything. You may think that you have exhausted the chances of vice and disease by putting the best always together. Now, if you merely put the best together, you will have either no breed or a very bad one. There is something in the "black sheep" which the better one loses. There is something divine, which is pity to lose, even in the most barbarous stock. Lord Byron said that the finest man and the best boxer he ever met told him that he was the offspring of positive deformity, and that he had brothers still finer than himself. On the other hand, I know a young gentleman who is an absolute baboon, but the son of a good-looking father and a mother of a race famous for beauty. But the family crest is a baboon, and it came out after the lapse of centuries.

A student of family pictures will observe, in a good gallery, how the same face comes and goes. It will sometimes sleep for three hundred years. A certain expression of countenance is in a certain family; some change takes place,—perhaps they lose an estate or gain a peerage; it goes, and turns up again in another branch which never had it before. Is not Walker the best representative of old Rolf Granger? I think that both *gang* the same gait.

This is enchanted ground,—St. Peter's, the Pantheon, the Coliseum, etc. But let me tell you what attracts me most in Rome and its neighborhood. It is the lake and woods of the ancient Alba Longa, the mother city of Rome, which you see clearly and well in the distance (about 14 miles off). The lake, which is very large, many miles round, is in the crater of an old volcano, and therefore high up. It is surrounded by woods, chiefly of holm oaks; but here are also the stone pine, the common deciduous oak, and other fine trees. These woods are pierced by numerous beautiful walks.

This little map [a sketch of the neighborhood of the Alban Lake] will give you some inkling of these beautiful hills, of the lake of Alba and its sister Nemi. You will see that the colonists moved northwest to found Rome; you will imagine, when you stand on the bank of the lake, where is the long ridge or street whence the old city (all long ago

gone) took its name, that you are at a height sufficient to see all the country round; yet you have got the Monte Calvo, with the old temple (now a convent) of Jupiter Latiaris at your back and many hundred feet above you (perhaps a thousand). What a position for a city! What an eagle's nest! Here is every variety of scenery, with the sea quite plainly seen to the west. Hence you wind up through a modern town, called Rocca di Papa, and across a section of *Hannibal's camp* (you remember when he came so near Rome), which is another mountain basin, towards the temple aforesaid, where the thirty Latin cities used to sacrifice. The holy road to the top of the mountain still remains. It is very narrow, and flagged with great uneven stones. Algidus (not so high) lies behind. To the east, across the Campagna, are the Sabine hills, with Tibur in their bosom, and the old temple of Bona Dea on a great hill near it. The Etrurian hills are to the north, behind Rome, and Soracte, a little isolated shelf of rock, stands midway between them and the Sabine. Snow on Soracte marks a very hard winter. You remember the ode, "*Vides ut alta, etc., . . . Soracte*" [Horace's Ode IX, Book I].

And now to come to yourself. I have your two letters by me, and read them over with deep interest. You are not living altogether as I could wish. You ought to have society. A college, a conventual life is for you. You should be the member of some society not yet formed. You want it greatly, and without this you will be liable to moulder away as you get older. *Forgive my English plainness of speech*. Your love for, and intimate acquaintance with, Nature is ancillary to some affection which you have not yet discovered.

The great Kant never dined alone. Once, when there was a danger of the empty dinner table, he sent his valet out, bidding him catch the first man he could find and bring him in! So necessary was the tonic, the effervescing cup of conversation, to his deeper labors. Laughter, chatter, politics, and even the prose of ordinary talk is better than nothing. Are there no clubs in Boston? The lonely man is a diseased man, I greatly fear. See how carefully Mr. Emerson avoids it; and yet, who dwells, in all essentials, more religiously free than he? Now, I would have you one of a well-knit society or guild, from which rays of thought and activity might emanate, and penetrate every corner of your country. By such a course you would not lose Nature. But supposing that reasons, of which I can know nothing, determine you to remain in "quasi" retirement; still, let not this retirement be too lonely.

Take up every man as you take up a leaf, and look attentively at him. This would be easy for you, who have such powers of observation, and of attracting the juices of all you meet to yourself. Even I, who have no such power, somehow find acquaintances, and nobody knows what I get from those about me. They give me all they have, and never suspect it. What treasures I gleaned at Concord! And I remember at Boston, at my lodgings, the worthy people only held out a week, after which I was the friend of the family, and chattered away like a magpie, and was included in their religious services. I positively loved them before I went away. I wish I lived near you, and that you could somehow originate some such society as I have in my head.

What you are engaged in I suspect to be Meditations on the Higher Laws as they show themselves in Common Things. This, if well weaved, may become a great work; but I fear that this kind of study may become too desultory. Try a history. How if you could write the sweet, beautiful history of Massachusetts? Positively, there is an immense field open. Or take Concord,—still better, perhaps. As for myself, so enamored am I of history that it is my intention, if I live long enough, to write a history of Salop; and I will endeavor to strike out something entirely new, and to put county history where it ought to be. Take the spirit of Walton and a spice of White! It would be a great labor and a grand achievement,—one for which you are singularly qualified.

By being "run down" I suppose you mean a little "hipped,"—a disorder which no one escapes. I have had it so badly as to have meditated suicide more than once. But it goes away with the merest trifle, and leaves you stronger than ever. Ordinary men of the world defeat the enemy with a sop, such as getting drunk or having a woman; but this is a bad plan, and only successful for a time. He is better defeated by sobriety or a change of scene, such as your trip to the Connecticut River. "*He is beginning to preach now,*" you will say. Well, then, let us have a turn at politics and literature. I was certain from the first that Buchanan would be President, because I felt sure that the Middle States are not with the North. Nor is the North itself in earnest. You are fond of humanity, but you like commerce, and a great heap, and a big name better. Of course you do. Besides, your principle and bond of union appears to be most negative,—you do not like slavery. Is there any positive root of strength in the North? Where and what? Your civilization is all in embryo, and what will come out no one can predict. At present, is there not a great thinness and poverty? *Magnas inter opes*

inops! You have indeed in New England the genius of liberty, and for construction and management; you have a wonderful *aplomb*, and are never off your feet. But when I think of your meagreness of invention, and your absurd whims and degraded fancies of spirit-rapping, etc., and the unseemly low ebb of your ordinary literature, I tremble.

You have one Phoenix,—the greatest man since Shakespeare, I believe,—but where is the rest of the choir? Why, the men that promise best—such as Channing, some of whose poems are admirable—do not go down; and they never will as long as newspaper novels are in request. It is the same as in England,—all is fragmentary, poor, and draggletail. There is no continence. A perfectly beautiful conception, generously born and bred, such as Schiller's *Cranes of Ibycus* or *The Diver*, is simply impossible in such a state of things. And observe, I would affirm the very same thing of England as it is at this hour. There is no poetry, and very little or no literature. We are drenched with mawkish lollipops, and clothed in tawdry rags. I am sorry to see even in Mr. Emerson's *Traits of England* that one or two chapters are far inferior to the rest of the book. He knows it, no doubt. He has sinned against his conception herein in order to accommodate the public with a few sugarplums. Those chapters will hurt the book, which would otherwise be, like his *Essays*, of perfect proportion and of historical beauty. I have seen some fragments by a certain W. Whitman, who appears to be a strong man. But why write fragments? It is not modest. Completeness of conception is the very first element of that sweet wonder which I know not how to call by its right name. There is a man we both of us respect and admire,—Carlyle; but has he not damaged his own hand beyond cure? He drives a cart, and strikes against every stone he sees. He has no "perception" of the highest kind. A good preacher, but after all a creaking, bumping, tortuous, involved, and visionary author.

I wonder what Emerson will give us for his next book. The only new books in England I have seen are Froude's *History*, of which I cannot speak too highly, and a report on India by Lord Dalhousie, very able and businesslike. There are also the Russian accounts of the battle of Inkerman (which were printed in the *Times*), curious and able. Grey's *Polynesian legend* is getting old, but we have *Sandwich on Kars* and *Russell's admirable account of the Crimean campaign*, of which I need say nothing. His excellent letters from Moscow will also form a good book. I had forgot *Maurice's* and *Kingsley's last*, and *Mansfield's Paraguay*. (Read that.) Truly the list grows. Our poems, such as *Arnold's*,

Sydney Dobell's, and Owen Meredith's, are the very dregs and sweepings of imitation. Alexander Smith's last I have not seen, but it is no great haul, I hear,—small potatoes! But they talk of a Catholic priest of the name of Stoddart,—that he has written well.

Burton's *African and Arabian travels*, Arthur Stanley's *Palestine*, Cotton's *Public Works of India*, are all good and sound. We ought to have a book from Livingstone before long. He is now on his way home, after having succeeded in traversing Africa,—a feat never accomplished before. (He is at home, and going out again.) Newman on *Universities* ought to be good. The other day a man asked me, "Have you ever read the *Chronicles of the Emperor Baber*?" I had never even heard of them before. He said they outdid Caesar's. Was he imposing upon my ignorance?

The books above mentioned I will endeavor to get when I visit England in the spring; some indeed I have already, and will send them to you. I want you to send me a copy of *Emerson's Poems*, which I cannot obtain, do what I will. Also please obtain for me a catalogue (you'll hear of it at the Boston Athenaeum) of your local histories in the United States. There are hundreds of them, I believe; a list has been made which I want to examine. I suppose you are well versed in the French works written by early travelers and missionaries on America. Would you tell me one or two of the best authors of Canadian or Louisianian research? I am at present working at an essay on America, which gives me great pleasure and no little pain. I have a conception of America surveyed as "one thought"; but the members are not yet forthcoming. I have not yet written above a page or two. I have also been engaged upon Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, and indeed in other ways. For my daily reading I am taking *Tasso's Jerusalem*, *Chateaubriand's Génie*, and sometimes a little *Tacitus*; and I also read the Bible every day.

Farewell, dear Thoreau. Give my best love to your father, mother, and sister, and to old Channing; and convey my respect to Mr. Emerson and Mr. Alcott; and when next you go to Boston, call at my old lodgings, and give my regards to them there. If you write to Morton, don't forget me there. He is a clever lad, is n't he? Also my respect to Mr. Theodore Parker, whose sermons are rather to be heard than read.

Ever yours, and not in haste,
Thos. Cholmondeley.

Posted in London February 22, 1857.

Cholmondeley kept this letter by him until he arrived in London. There he added some more to it on February 22, 1857, and mailed the whole thing to Thoreau on the same day. Text, Cholmondeley, pp. 746-51. The Life of Henry David Thoreau (p. 306) transcribes the sentence in the sixteenth paragraph as "A college, a conventual life is not for you." Since we have not been able to locate the manuscript, we have been unable to determine which is the correct reading.

From B. B. WILEY

Chicago Dec 21, 1856

Mr Thoreau

So much time had elapsed since I wrote you that I feared I should get no reply; I was therefore surprised & delighted as well as encouraged when your letter of 12th reached me. I do not want to encroach on your time but I shall take the liberty of writing to you occasionally, in hopes of drawing out a response, even though it be a criticism, for this would be valuable to me, as I do not want to slumber in false security. Like those knights who loudly sang hymns while they were passing the enchanted isle, I will remember that I am going to tell you some of my outward, though more of my inward life. This of itself will be a strong incentive to virtue.

The arrival of your letter at this time makes me think of Napoleon's practice of leaving letters unopened for weeks till in many cases there was no necessity for a reply. Though I wanted your views, I kept on in my path and already more than dimly apprehended that no man can penetrate the secrets of creation & futurity—Still I like to dwell on those themes, particularly the latter, as I have never found a present worthy to have permanent dominion over me. I like to send my thoughts forward to meet my destiny more than half way and prepare myself to meet with alacrity any decree of Eternal Fate. I am obliged for the excellent quotations from Confucius and the idea given of his teachings. I trust that if on this planet I attain the age of 40 years, I shall by the wisdom that may be mine merit the respect of those whose standard is in-

finitely high and whose motto is excelsior. "To be rich & honored by iniquitous means is for me as the floating cloud which passes" speaks to me with power. The last No of the Westminster magazine contains an article on Buddhism which I presume you may have seen. It does not mention him (Confucius) though as you told me he was above all sects

On my way back to Providence after my unforgotten Concord visit, I pondered deeply on what you had told me "to follow the faintest aspiration &c." I perhaps almost resolved to give up my Western plans of trade. Soon after, I walked with Newcomb and I of course fully agree with you in your high estimate of him and when you speak of my few opportunities for repeating these walks, I hope you only refer to my distance—not to his health. He asked me if I knew any active outdoor sphere he was qualified to fill and from what he said I doubt not he would come here did such a place present itself. He could much better than I afford to let books alone, as he has studied much more and has a more original and powerful mind, at least for metaphysical thoughts. It would give me deep satisfaction to have him here if I am to remain here. Just before your letter reached me I had been thinking of a future White Mountain trip with him and was not putting it far off. It is a good plan for traders to go to higher spheres occasionally.

I will give you some of my reasons for coming here though I withhold such as these from "business men" or "worldlings" technically so called. (I have told these to no other person) I think I can truly say that I am content with my outward circumstances but I hope at some future day to sustain a refined intercourse with some good & gentle being whom I can call *wife*, or better still *companion* and I know that all persons would not be satisfied to live on what would content me. At that time I should want to carry out my ideas of life as well as I *can* now but I should want to give my companion the facilities to carry out her views. Again, unless I deceive myself, I wish to be liberal beyond the sphere of my own family. The perfect transparency of soul that I would have between us leads me to say that I also had some thought of reputation. While in business formerly I travelled courses that I shall never tread again, and this, united with the success that generally accompanies able industry but which at the same time whets the edge of envy & malice & also my habit of refusing to justify my acts raised against me in some quarters the voice of calumny, though it is true that it is most often applied to those concerns where I feel that censure may be due. Not

from any inconvenience of this kind however did I leave Providence, for such would have been the very thing to make me remain there, as I am ready and like to face difficulties & dangers. My former partner is my personal friend, but as partners I feel that we were entirely unsuited to each other and I dissolved the connection against his will and that of his present associate Had it not been for my personal relations to him I should have recommenced there, as my friends wished me to do, but such a course would have brought me into direct competition with him and would inevitably have taken away much of his profit and that I *will not* do particularly as here is a field large enough for all and where I am specially invited to take a prominent part in a large house. Do not imagine from what I said that my former cause was a type of all that is disgraceful in man. I was intensely busy and acted thoughtlessly & unintelligently and my acts were such as are all the time adroitly done by *decent* men rather with eclat than with damage to their *reputation*. That other men do the same however is no excuse for me and having during the quiet of my past summer drunk somewhat of eternal truth I see & feel my errors and so help me God shall not again fall into them. My very retirement from trade was in the eyes of my detracting neighbors not the least of my short-comings though I know it to be one of the most fortunate things I ever did. As I place character however infinitely before reputation, I am not necessarily pledged to trade again. The fact that I am almost invariably popular and flattered & courted in Providence circles shows me that I need a higher monitor than the voice of the multitude who must necessarily know so little of the motives that actuate me. So little do detracting remarks puzzle my temper that were it in my way I should gladly assist any of the *quintette club* that try to injure me though of course with the littleness of soul which they display I cannot have particular love for them. I trust that if I have future antagonists they may be greater than these little men who have never had the manliness to face me. I expect to find in Montaigne somewhere the story of Alexander the Great who when urged to punish a slanderer, refused, saying he would live so purely that all men would see the fellow spoke falsely

I thus give you the leading motives that influenced me to come here. Since I arrived I heard that one of my leading prospective partners is dissatisfied with the determination I have shown to attend to higher things than trade. I am perfectly aware that I have lost caste with mere traders. The gentleman referred to is now here and our grand council

will soon begin. Walden will not change color during its continuance nor the Concord stop flowing. I am here at the wish of others as well as the result of my own reasoning but I will not become a common business drudge for all the wealth of Chicago. Instead of a trader I am going to be a man. I believe a divine life can be nourished even in this Western Shrine of Mammon. Should our Council not end in a partnership, I have no settled plans for the future. I should in all probability soon favor myself with a visit to Concord. Were I more gifted I would now leave trade forever and be your Plato. I freely admit to you that this kind of life is not what pleases me. Do not interpret my remarks into the grumblings of disappointment, for I am what the world calls singularly favored by fortune. I await the result of our Council calmly though my wishes would lead me to the haunts of Nature. If you think my ideas erroneous write a severe criticism for me. I would like to have you tell me just what you think

I have a good deal of leisure now. I have read Montaigne's Essays to some extent & with unfailing interest. The ancient anecdotes make the valuable part of the book to me though they are so well incorporated with his generally sensible & pithy remarks that no common man can approach him. I have read some of Emerson, a man to whom I am much indebted. I saw his notice of Mr [Samuel] Hoar. You mentioned to me Miss [Elizabeth] Hoar when I was there. In one respect of *infinite* moment I think Emerson has put in for me the key-stone of an arch which has cost me much labor & travail to build. He will be here next month to lecture and I shall call on him, as he asked me to do. Most men here are intensely devoted to trade but I have found one with whom I have unreserved & delightful intercourse—Rev Rush R Shippen the Unitarian minister. Mr Emerson will remember him. He is no ways priestly but has that open guileless countenance that wins the fullest confidence. He is of course intelligent & well-informed. He generously places his library at my disposal. I gladly accepted an invitation to take tea with him tomorrow as there is entire absence of ceremony. I am glad to find such a man with whom I can talk of the Infinite & Eternal. In addition to his library I have access to a public one of about 2000 volumes & I think I can largely extend my facilities. *Very* few books I *read* but I like to look at the tables of contents the engravings & portraits of others. The N.Y. Tribune often has things of more than transient interest. Some of their political articles are most powerful. Their notice of "Walden" introduced it to me.

I take walks of considerable length almost daily and think I am in that respect the most enthusiastic of the plus 100,000 people here. I generally go along the Lake shore. I have to go 3 miles to reach woods any way. The Lake is the great feature of the place. Everything being level I have nothing on the land to meet my New England bred eyes and have learned (from Newcomb) to watch the clouds and I find it not the least valuable of his suggestions. One cloudy morning I saw in the East over the Lake as the moon rose what resembled a vast bird with outstretched wings holding her course towards the East. I recorded in my Journal that I might consider it emblematic of my own desire of progress towards the source of [word torn out] inward illumination. One morning I saw in the East a perpendicular pillar of cloud that would have answered well enough to guide any Israelites that were going in that direction—another morning I saw on the hitherto level surface of the frozen lake ice-hills of considerable size. I was glad to see hills anywhere.

The Lake water is carried over the city for drinking &c. It is almost always discolored by storms. That which comes moderately clear I fancy I can render white by beating with my hands and if allowed to stand, a sediment of lime is deposited. It makes some trouble with strangers' digestive organs and I am not entirely accustomed to it. If you have at your tongue's end a description of your own way to make a filter, I should probably put it in practice & should appreciate your kindness. I have been wondering how you know the different species of plants as described by science. Is the description so accurate that you know them at sight?

Are millers that come round our summer lamps Chrysalides and into what are they next transformed?

I have written much more than I expected to do. I hope I may ere long have a reply from you. Please remember me to Mr Emerson if you meet him. I am

Yours sincerely
B B Wiley

Ms., Berg; previously unpublished.

[1856]

To H. C. O. BLAKE

Concord, December 31, 1856.

Mr. Blake,—

I think it will not be worth the while for me to come to Worcester to lecture at all this year. It will be better to wait till I am—perhaps unfortunately—more in that line. My writing has not taken the shape of lectures, and therefore I should be obliged to read one of three or four old lectures, the best of which I have read to some of your auditors before. I carried that one which I call "Walking, or the Wild," to Amherst, N.H., the evening of that cold Thursday, and I am to read another at Fitchburg, February 3. I am simply their hired man. This will probably be the extent of my lecturing hereabouts.

I must depend on meeting Mr. [David A.] Wasson some other time. Perhaps it always costs me more than it comes to to lecture before a promiscuous audience. It is an irreparable injury done to my modesty even,—I become so indurated.

O solitude! obscurity! meanness! I never triumph so as when I have the least success in my neighbor's eyes. The lecturer gets fifty dollars a night; but what becomes of his winter? What consolation will it be hereafter to have fifty thousand dollars for living in the world? I should like not to exchange *any* of my life for money.

These, you may think, are reasons for not lecturing, when you have no great opportunity. It is even so, perhaps. I could lecture on dry oak leaves; I could, but who could hear me? If I were to try it on any large audience, I fear it would be no gain to them, and a positive loss to me. I should have behaved rudely toward my rustling friends.

I am surveying instead of lecturing, at present. Let me have a skimming from your "pan of unwrinkled cream."

H. D. T.

Thoreau did finally agree to lecture in Worcester that season, but not without further warnings that he had used up his best lectures. MS., Abernethy (typescript).

From WILLIAM D. TUTTLE

made a very small plan of it (about 2 rods to an inch I should judge) & cast it up making 14A 22 rods The plan was so small (& so unskillfully drawn) that I told Mr W that very little reliance could be placed upon it in computing areas. Since then I have computed the area several times by the aid of traverse tables finding the Lat & Dep both in chains & decimals of a chain & in rods & dec of a rod & obtaining answers varying from 13a-106½r to 13a-11.9r. By calling the bearing of the 3d course N 57E & taking out the Lat & dep in rods & decimals of a rod I made the area to be 13a-109.57r. I find but little (.01 of a rod) diff between the Eastings & Westings & but .19 of a rod between the Northings & Southings. & in ballancing the survey I subtracted the Diff between the North & Southings from the Southing of the 7th course.

Will you have the kindness to inform me by what method you computed the Lat in question: if by plotting to what scale your plan was drawn, or if by the traverse table whether you took out the distances in chains or rods & to how many decimal places you found the Lat & Dep of each course

What is your general method of computing areas? & What is the present variation of the needle in Concord?

Yours very respectfully,
Wm D. Tuttle.

Mr H. D. Thoreau Surveyor Concord Mass.

The Huntington Library chronology suggests that this letter, only the final page of which remains, should be dated between 1854 and 1856. MS., Huntington; previously unpublished.

To ?

Dear Sir,

I would advise not to take a revolver or other weapon of defense. It will affect the innocence of your enterprise. If you chance to

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meet with a wolf or a dangerous snake, you will be luckier than I have been, or expect to be. When I went to the White Mts. I carried a gun to kill game with, but finally left it at Concord, N.H. As for a knapsack, I should say wear something water-tight & comfortable, with two or three pockets to keep things separate. Wear old shoes; carry no thin clothes. Do not forget needle and thread and pins, a compass, and the best pocket map of the country attainable.

Yours in haste,
Henry D. Thoreau.

Text, Goodspeed's Catalogue No. 189, *Item 247*, p. 28, *where it is dated only "1856."*