1857

A Negro named Dred Scott maintained that he had become free by staying with his owner in the free state of Illinois and the free territory of Minnesota. His case finally went up to the Supreme Court. Chief Justice Roger Taney presided and read the opinion. Taney ruled that Negroes were property, had no rights of citizenship, and could not sue in the federal courts. It followed that the Missouri Compromise and similar legislation were unconstitutional. There were other signs of crisis as well. The boom that had followed the discovery of gold in California collapsed. Over five thousand banks and railroads failed within the year, and in October there was a general suspension of specie payments by banks. A mass meeting of the unemployed in Philadelphia was attended by some 10,000 men. The tariff was reduced by Congressional action to the lowest point since 1815. The warfare in Kansas went on.

Out of Kansas came John Brown of Osawatomie. Thoreau met him twice when he came to Concord asking for support. Frank Sanborn, a young Harvard graduate acquaintance of Thoreau's, brought him to Thoreau's house the first evening, and Thoreau met him again at Emerson's the next night. Thoreau was deeply impressed by Brown's fanatical integrity; the later essays will bear witness to the impression. This year Thoreau visited both the Maine woods and Cape Cod. A new pair of corduroy trousers cost him $1.60. The letters for this year are scattered and miscellaneous. Thoreau's correspondents include Blake and his wandering English friend Thomas Cholmondeley.

To H. G. O. BLAKE

Concord Feb. 6th 57

Mr. Blake,

I will come to you on Friday Feb. 13th with that lecture. You may call it "The Wild"—or "Walking" or both—whichever you choose. I told [Theo] Brown that it had not been much altered since I read it in Worcester, but now I think of it, much of it must have been new to you, because, having since divided it into two, I am able to read what before I omitted. Nevertheless, I should like to have it understood by those whom it concerns, that I am invited to read in public (if it be so) what I have already read, in part, to a private audience.

Henry D. Thoreau.

MS., Berg, *copy in Blake's hand.*

From TICKNOR & FIELDS

H. D. Thoreau Esq
In acc with Ticknor & Fields Co.

1856	By copy't on 240 Walden	36.00
	12 Concord River	9.00
		$45.00
[?] Jan 31 1857		
Feb. 16	Cash Check	$45.00

Boston Feby 16/57

Dear Sir
Enclosed we beg to hand our check for forty Five Dollars in accordance with above statement.
Please acknowledge its receipt
And oblige
Your obdt servant
Ticknor & Fields
Clark

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

From ?

Buffalo Feb 17th 1857

Henry D. Thoreau Esq Concord Mass
My Dear Sir,
I came home from Cleveland and found yours of the 7th inst. I had an idea the map of Superior [indecipherable word]

MS., Harvard; *previously unpublished.*

From THOMAS CHOLMONDELEY

Feb. 22, 1857 *Town.*

Dear Thoreau
You see I've *saved* this letter which is the best I ever wrote you (for I burnt the rest) & posted it in Town. For Rome being so uncertain a Post I thought 'better wait till I get to Town'; & send it properly.

I am just going now on an expedition to search for a little cottage somewhere in Kent or Sussex where I may henceforth dwell & endeavour to gather a little moss. I hope to get a few acres of land with it on lease—for as to *buying*, it is almost out of the question They ask about £500 an acre now for anything like decent land in England. In fact land is worth too much. It is a shame. I suppose I could buy a *good farm* in New England for £2000 couldnt I? I shouldn't wonder if I was to settle in New England after all—for the ties which hold me here are very slender.

However if I *do* succeed in getting my cottage in Kent remember there will be a room for you there, & as much as ever you can eat & drink. I am staying in town with my brother Reginald who is a painter, & has very agreeable rooms. He is very good to me & trots me out to see people whom otherwise I should scarcely be able to meet.

I heard [Frederick] Maurice preach today in Lincolns Inn. It was on Faith, Hope & Charity. He explained that this charity is not human—but Divine—& to be enjoyed in communion with God. It was a good & strictly orthodox sermon, & not extempore in any sense. I called at John Chapmans the other day, but he was out, being they said engaged in one of the Hospitals. He has turned Doctor it seem s. The fact is I fear that Chapman has done himself mischief by publishing books containing new views & philosophy which the English from the Lord to the Cabman hate & sneer at. The very beggars in the streets are all conservatives except on the subject of their sores. To speculate in thought in this country is *ruin*—& sure to lead if pursued long enough —to the Queens Bench or Bedlam. I am persuaded that the Turks & the chinese are *nothing* to us. Perhaps we are more like the Japanese than any other people—I mean as regards what Swedenborg would call "our interiors." The prophets prophesy as they did among the ancient Hebrews & the smooth prophets bear away the bells.

I met [James] Spedding the other day & had much talk with him—but nothing *real*—but he is a good man & in expression like your Alcott. He is now bringing out his Bacon the work of his whole life. Farewell
Ever yrs
Thos Cholley

I mean within hail of Town—for I dont want to settle finally in Wales or Yorkshire

This is Cholmondeley's addendum to his letter of December 16, 1856. MS., Berg.

From JOHN BURT

Bellvale[?] Feb. 23rd '57

Dear Sir,

If I was in a Lyceum Lecture Committee I would use my greatest efforts to engage you to deliver a Lecture as I perceive your name in among a list published a short time since. But as I do not occupy any such influential position in this Community I suppose I will have to forgo for the present a long cherished wish to see and hear you. To compensate for this deprivation I would most respectfully solicit your Autograph.

I have read your Hermit Life and also a very appropriate Fourth of July Oration on Slavery in Massachusetts. To say that I greatly admired both would be but an inadequate expression.

A compliance with the above request will be gratefully remembered by

Yours Truly
John Burt
Bellvale Orange Co N. Y.

We discover no Bellvale post office in Orange County, but the word appears to be clearly that. MS., Harvard; *previously unpublished.*

To JOHN BURT

Concord Feb. 26th 1857

"Herein is the tragedy; that men doing outrage to their proper natures, even those called wise & good, lend themselves to perform the office of inferior and brutal ones. Hence come war and slavery in; and what else may not come in by this opening?"

A Week on the Concord & Merrimack Rivers—p 137.

Henry D. Thoreau

The quotation is from the Monday chapter of A Week. *The letter is addressed to John Burt, Esq., Bellvale, Orange Co., New York.* MS., Chapin Library, Williams College; *previously unpublished.*

From TICKNOR & CO.

Boston, 27 Feb. 1857

H. Thoreau Esq. Concord Mass.

Dear Sir

Please send us as soon as convenient twelve copies of the "Week &c" on sale and oblige

Truly yours
Ticknor & Co.
per J.R. Osgood

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

To DANIEL RICKETSON

Concord, March 28, 1857.

Friend Ricketson,—

If it chances to be perfectly agreeable and convenient to you, I will make you a visit next week, say Wednesday or Thursday, and we will have some more rides to Assawampset and the seashore. Have you got a boat on the former yet? Who knows but we may camp out on the island?

I propose this now, because it will be more novel to me at this season, and I should like to see your early birds, &c.

Your historical papers have all come safely to hand, and I thank you for them. I see that they will be indispensable, *memoires pour servier*. By the way, have you read Church's History of Philip's War, and looked up the localities? It should make part of a chapter.

I had a long letter from Cholmondeley lately, which I should like to show you.

I will expect an answer to this straightaway—but be sure you let your own convenience and inclinations rule it.

Yours truly,
Henry D. Thoreau.

P.S.—Please remember me to your family.

The phrase in French makes no apparent sense; lacking the manuscript, we cannot tell whether the error was Thoreau's or his editor's. Apparently he was trying to say that the papers sent would help him. Text, Ricketson, *pp. 70–71.*

From DANIEL RICKETSON

New Bedford, Sunday a.m., 29 March, '57

Dear Thoreau,—

I have just received your note of the 28th at my brother's, and hasten a reply for the Post Office before I leave for Brooklawn.

Nothing would give me more pleasure than a visit from you at any time. It will be perfectly agreeable to myself and family at this present time, and I shall duly expect you on Wednesday or Thursday. Should this reach you in time for an answer, I will be at Tarkiln Hill station to meet you; if not, make your appearance as early as you wish. You can leave your baggage at the depot, and I will send for it if you do not find me or our carriage in waiting.

As Channing did not make his usual appearance, yesterday p.m., I conclude that he is with you today, and if he leaves before Wednesday or Thursday, you may like to have his company hereward. We are getting on very nicely together.

The early birds are daily coming. Song sparrows, bluebirds, robins, meadow larks, blackbirds ("Gen. Abercrombies") are already here, frogs croaking, but not piping yet, and the spring quite genial.

My historical sketches have kept me quite busy, but agreeably so during the past winter. They are quite to my surprise, very popular. I should have hardly supposed that my homely habits and homelier style of composition would have suited many.

Should Channing be in Concord and in the humor, he can report my home affairs more fully, if you wish.

Remember me to your parents and sister and other friends, particularly the Emersons.

I write at my brother's, and in the midst of conversation, in which I am participating. You will perceive this is not a Shanty letter, but I am none the less cordially yours,

D. Ricketson.

The Shanty was Ricketson's retreat from, among other things, a disputatious wife. Text, Ricketson, *pp. 71–72.*

To MARY BROWN

Mrs. Elizabeth B. Davenport, in "Thoreau in Vermont in 1856" in the *Vermont Botanical Club Bulletin* No. 3 (April 1908), 36–38, quotes from a letter from Mrs. Mary Brown Dunton: "Among my most cherished possessions are three letters from [Thoreau]. The first dated March, 1857, was written on sending me a spray of 'Lygodium palmatum,' a little known fern to me at that time. He gave directions for opening and mounting it and added 'The Climbing Fern' would have been a pretty name for some delicate Indian maiden,' also 'Please give my regards and thanks to your mother and to the rest of your family if they chance to be with you.'"

Thoreau visited the Addison Browns, Mary's parents, in Brattleboro during the fall of 1856 on his way to see Bronson Alcott in Walpole, New Hampshire. He gives a full account of the trip, with much botanical detail, in his Journal *(IX, 61–80).*

To DANIEL RICKETSON

Concord Ap. 1 1857

Dear Ricketson,

I got your note of welcome night before last. Channing is not here, at least I have not seen nor heard of him, but depend on meeting him in New Bedford. I expect if the weather is favorable, to take the 4:30 train from Boston tomorrow, Thursday, *pm*—for I hear of no noon train, and shall be glad to find your wagon at Tarkiln Hill, for I see it will be rather late for going across lots.

Alcott was here last week, and will probably visit New Bedford within a week or 2.

I have seen all the spring signs you mention and a few more, even here. Nay I heard one frog peep nearly a week ago, methinks the very first one in all this region. I wish that there were a few more signs of

spring in myself—however, I take it that there *are* as many within us as we think we hear *without* us. I am decent for steady pace but not yet for a race. I have a little cold at present, & you speak of rheumatism about the head & shoulders. Your frost is not quite out. I suppose that the earth itself has a little cold & rheumatism about these times, but all these things together produce a very fair general result. In a concert, you know, we must sing our parts feebly sometimes that we may not injure the general effect. I shouldn't wonder if my two-year old invalidity had been a positively charming feature to some amateurs favorably located. Why not a blasted man, as well as a blasted tree, on your lawn?

If you should happen not to see me by the train named, do not go again, but wait at home for me, or a note from

Yrs
Henry D Thoreau

MS., Thoreau Museum, Middlesex School.

From B. B. WILEY

Chicago Apl 7, 1857

Mr Thoreau

In January I was in Providence a short time and had a walk with Newcomb at Narragansett Bay. Since you heard from me I have learned more of him and I find your statements fall short of the truth. He has thrown light on doubts with which I was wrestling. Reading is useful but it may be long before one finds what he is in search of and when a man or saint appears who can help us solve the problem we cannot be too grateful. This acquaintance is one of the results of my pregnant Concord visit. Then Emerson told me that if we needed each other we should be brought together. I have had some illustrations of this and perhaps accept the remark as irrefragably true

I want in this material atmosphere some breath from the hills of Concord. Will you favor me with a copy of the "Wild & Walking" Do not disappoint me. I want it for my own reading mainly, though I may sometimes read it to friends. I of course do not want it for publication. I trust I shall have a copy in your own hand

I have read much of Plato; some of it with almost a wild delight. Many of the biographies I have read with equal or perhaps greater interest. I like to have the principles illustrated by an actual life. He (Carlyle) is a wondrous clear & reverent thinker. As for an obscure faulty style in him, I have yet to discover it.

Leaves of Grass I read and I appreciate Walt's pure freedom & humanity

Plutarch's Morals I have more recently commenced. This I shall take in gradually as I did the Iliad. I could have wished that in the latter those good enough fellows had been less ready to annihilate each other with big stones "such as two men could not now lift." The morning of the 1st we had a hard storm on the Lake and I walked along the "much-resounding sea" for a long distance seeing it dash grandly against the pier. I wish you had been there with me.

Heroes & Hero Worship I intend to read soon. Montaigne I have read with much interest. I have given you those names to inquire whether you think of any other valuable books not too abstruse for me. Books of a half biographical character have great charm for me. I have read none of the German authors. I think Wilhelm Meister may be full of meaning to me. I hope Goethe is that great universal man that Carlyle accounts him. His auto-biography I suppose is valuable. Dont think I am reading at random. I have a place for all true thoughts on my own subjects. Now and then I return and read again and again my leading books so that they become my intimate friends and help me to test my own life.

If it be not unfair to ask an author what he means I would inquire what I am to understand when in your list of employments given in Walden you say "I long ago lost a hound a bay-horse and a turtle-dove." If I transgress let the question pass unnoticed.

For myself I make fictitious employments. I am not satisfied with much that I do. Exultingly should I hail that wherein I could give exercise to my best powers for an end of unquestionable value

With one and only one here do I have really valuable hours. Rev R R Shippen. He is a true man—working, living, hoping, strong. I have

not been to his church yet, wicked rebel that I am, but I may soon attend, though again I may not. In private however he tells me of his sermons and necessarily speaks to me as he could not in an assembly. He tells me that lately from "we are members one of another" he told them of their duties as members of a Christian church and threatened if he were not more zealously seconded to "shake off the dust from his feet and depart out of their city." I am sorry that this is not a mere rhetorical flourish. He will probably leave in the Fall as he must at any rate have rest.

Among other works you recommended some of Coleridge. I took up his books, but was so repelled by the Trinitarian dogmas that I read almost none. I am very sensitive to that theological dust. As a child I was kept in it too much

Please give my love to Emerson. I trust he carried home pleasanter experiences than the measles

Your friend
B B Wiley

Thoreau had read his lecture on walking several times during the preceding winter; it was not to be printed until just after his death. For the answer to Wiley's question about hound, bay horse, and turtledove see the letter to him dated April 26, 1857. MS., Berg; *previously unpublished.*

To CAROLINE C. ANDREWS

Concord, Ap. 16[?], '57

Miss Caroline C. Andrews,

I send to you by the same mail with this a copy of my "Week." I was away from home when your note arrived, and have but just returned; otherwise you would have received the book earlier.

Henry D. Thoreau

The dating of the letter is difficult to decipher, but Thoreau's Journal *records a visit to New Bedford April 2–15.* MS., William Cummings (*typescript*); *previously unpublished.*

To H. G. O. BLAKE

Concord Ap. 17th 1857

Mr Blake,

I returned from New Bedford night before last. I met Alcott there & learned from him that probably you had gone to Concord. I am very sorry that I missed you. I had expected you earlier, & at last thought that I should get back before you came, but I ought to have notified you of my absence. However, it would have been too late, after I had made up my mind to go. I hope you lost nothing by going a little round.

I took out the Celtis seeds at your request, at the time we spoke of them, and left them in the chamber on some shelf or other. If you have found them, very well; if you have not found them, very well; but tell [Edward Everett] Hale of it, if you see him.

My mother says that you & [Theo] Brown & [Seth] Rogers & [David A.] Wasson (titles left behind) talk of "coming down on" me some day. Do not fail to come one & all, and within a week or two, if possible, else I *may* be gone again. Give me a short notice, and then come & spend a day on Concord River—or say that you will come if it is fair, unless you are confident of bringing fair weather with you. Come & be Concord, as I have been Worcestered.

Perhaps you came nearer to me for not finding me at home, for trains of thought the more connect when trains of cars do not. If I had actually met you, you would have gone again, but now I have not yet dismissed you.

I hear what you say about personal relations with joy. It is as if you were to say, I value the best & finest part of you, & not the worst. I can even endure your very near & real approach, & prefer it to a shake of the hand. This intercourse is not subject to time or dis[tance.

I have a very long new and faithful le]tter from Cholmondeley which I wish to show you. He speaks of sending me more books!!

If I were with you now I could tell you much of Ricketson, and my visit to New Bedford, but I do not know how it will be by & by. I should like to have you meet R—who is the frankest man I know. Alcott & he get along very well together.

Channing has returned to Concord with me, probably for a short visit only.

Consider this a business letter, which you know *counts* nothing in the game we play.

Remember me particularly to Brown.

MS., Abernethy (*typescript*); *Familiar Letters of Thoreau, pp. 357–59; bracketed portion, torn from the original, is supplied from the printed text; most of the identifications are Sanborn's.*

To B. B. WILEY

Concord April 26th 1857

Dear Sir

I have been spending a fortnight in New Bedford, and on my return find your last letter awaiting me.

I was sure that you would find Newcomb inexhaustible, if you found your way into him at all. I might say, however, by way of criticism, that he does not take firm enough hold on this world, where surely we are bound to triumph.

I am sorry to say that I do not see how I can furnish you with a copy of my essay on the wild. It has not been prepared for publication, only for lectures, and would cover at least a hundred written pages. Even if it were ready to be dispersed, I could not easily find time to copy it. So I return the order.

I see that you are turning a broad furrow among the books, but I

trust that some very private journal all the while holds its own through their midst. Books can only reveal us to ourselves, and as often as they do us this service we lay them aside. I should say read Goethe's Autobiography, by all means, also Gibbon's Haydon the Painter's–& our Franklin's of course; perhaps also Alfieris, Benvenuto Cellini's, & DeQuincey's Confessions of an Opium Eater–since you like Autobiography.

I think you must read Coleridge again & further–skipping all his theology–i. e. if you value precise definitions & a discriminating use of language. By the way, read DeQuincey's reminiscences of Coleridge & Wordsworth.

How shall we account for our pursuits if they are original? We get the language with which to describe our various lives out of a common mint. If others have their losses, which they are busy repairing, so have I *mine,* & their hound & horse may *perhaps* be the symbols of some of them. But also I have lost, or am in danger of losing, a far finer & more etherial treasure, which commonly no loss of which they are conscious will symbolize–this I answer hastily & with some hesitation, according as I now understand my own words.

I take this occasion to acknowledge, & thank you for, your long letter of Dec. 21st. So poor a correspondent am I. If I wait for the fit time to reply, it commonly does not come at all, as you see. I require the presence of the other party to suggest what I shall say.

Methinks a certain polygamy with its troubles is the fate of almost all men. They are married to two wives–their genius (a celestial muse) and also to some fair daughter of the earth. Unless these two were fast friends before marriage, and so are afterward, there will be but little peace in the house.

In answer to your questions, I must say that I never made, nor had occasion to use a filter of any kind; but, no doubt, they can be bought in Chicago.

You cannot surely identify a plant from a scientific description until after long practice.

The "millers" you speak of are the perfect or final state of the insect. The chrysalis is the silken bag they spun when caterpillars, & occupied in the nymph state.

Yrs truly
Henry D. Thoreau

The famous "hound, bay horse and turtle dove" symbolism, one of the most intriguing problems of Thoreau scholarship, will probably never be solved to everyone's satisfaction. Sanborn records (in his footnote to this letter in Familiar Letters of Thoreau, *p. 353) a conversation between Thoreau and Uncle Ed Watson of Plymouth in 1855 or 1856: "'You say in one of your books,' said Uncle Ed, 'that you once lost a horse and a hound and a dove,–now I should like to know what you meant by that?' 'Why, everybody has met with losses, have n't they?' 'H'm,–pretty way to answer a fellow!' said Mr. Watson; but it seems this was the usual answer."* MS. Berg.

To DANIEL RICKETSON

Concord May 13 57

Friend Ricketson

A recent neighbor of ours, W*m*. W. Wheildon, having heard that you talked somewhat of moving to Concord (for such things will leak out) has just been asking me to inform you that he will rent his house, which is a *furnished one,* with a garden, or sell the same, if you like them. It is a large house, the third below (East of) us on the same side of the street–was built some 20 years ago partly of old material, & since altered. The garden is a very good one, of about 2 1/2 acres, with many fruit trees &c &c. Channing can tell you about it. When I ask his price, he merely answers 'I think it worth $ 8000. But I would rather have Mr R. see it before I speak of the price." It could probably be bought for a thousand or two less. Indeed I have heard $ 6000 named. If you think seriously of coming to Concord to live, it will be worth your while to see it. His address is "W*m* W. Wheildon, Editor of the Bunker Hill Aurora, Charlestown Mass."–for he lives there at present. You would see his name over his office if you went there. Since you are so much attracted to New Bedford that it is doubtful if you can live any where else–would it not be safer–if you do anything about it –to hire first, with liberty to buy afterward at a price before agreed on?

My mother & sister join with me in saying that if you think it worth your while to look at the premises, we shall be glad of the opportunity to receive you with any of your family under our roof.

Since I left N B I have made several voyages equal to the circumnavigation of the Middleboro Ponds, and have done much work beside with my hands– In short, I am suddenly become much stouter than for the past 2 years.

Let me improve this opportunity to acknowledge the receit of "Tom Bowling"–& the May-flower–for which convey my thanks to the donor. His soul is gone aloft–his body only is epigaea repens (creeping over the earth). It has been sung & encored several times–& is duly made over to my sister & her piano.

In haste
Yours truly
Henry D. Thoreau

"Tom Bowling" was Thoreau's favorite song. MS., Huntington.

From THOMAS CHOLMONDELEY

May 26, 1857 London.

My dear Thoreau

I have received your four books & what is more I have read them. Olmstead was the only entire stranger. His book I think might have been shortened–& if he had indeed written only one word instead of ten–I should have liked it better. It *is* a horrid vice this *word*iness–Emerson is beautiful & glorious–Of all his poems the *"Rhodora"* is my favorite. I repeat it to myself over & over again. I am also delighted with "Guy" "Uriel" & "Beauty" Of your own book I will say nothing but I will ask you a question, which perhaps may be a very ignorant one. I have observed a few lines about [sentence unfinished].

Now there is *something here* unlike anything else in these pages.

Are they absolutely your own, or whose? And afterward you shall hear what I think of them. Walt Whitmans poems have only been heard of in England to be laughed at & voted offensive–Here are "Leaves" indeed which I can no more understand than the book of Enoch or the inedited Poems of Daniel! I cannot believe that such a man lives unless I actually touch him. He is further ahead of me in yonder west than Buddha is behind me in the Orient. I find reality & beauty mixed with not a little violence & coarseness both of which are to me *effeminate*. I am amused at his views of sexual energy–which however are absurdly false. I believe that rudeness & excitement in the act of generation are injurious to the issue. The man appears to me not to know how to behave himself. I find the gentleman altogether left out of the book! Altogether these leaves completely puzzle me. Is there actually such a man as Whitman? Has anyone seen or handled him? His is a tongue "not understanded" of the English people. It is the first book I have ever seen which I should call 'a *new* book' & thus I would sum up the impression it makes upon me.

While I am writing, Prince Albert & Duke Constantine are reviewing the guards in a corner of St James Park. I hear the music. About two hours ago I took a turn round the Park before breakfast & saw the troops formed. The varieties of colour gleamed fully out from their uniforms. They looked like an Army of soldier butterflies just dropped from the lovely green trees under which they marched. Never saw the trees look so green before as they do this spring. Some of the oaks incredibly so. I stood before some the other day in Richmond & was obliged to pinch myself & ask "is this oak tree really growing on the earth they call so bad & wicked an earth; & itself so *undeniably* & astonishingly fresh & fair"? It did not look like magic. It *was* magic.

I have had a thousand strange experiences lately–most of them delicious & some almost awful. I seem to do so much in my life when I am doing nothing at all. I seem to be hiving up strength all the while as a sleeping man does; who sleeps & dreams & strengthens himself unconsciously; only sometimes half-awakes with a sense of cool refreshment. Sometimes it is wonderful to me that I say so little & somehow cannot speak even to my friends! Why all the time I was at Concord I never could tell you much of all I have seen & done! I never could somehow tell you anything! How ungrateful to my guardian genius to think any of it trivial or superfluous! But it always seemed already

told & long ago said. What is past & what is to come seems as it were all shut up in some very simple but very dear notes of music which I never can repeat.

Tonight I intend to hear Mr. [Neal] Dow the American lecture in Exeter Hall. I *believe* it is tonight. But I go forearmed against him—being convinced in my mind that a good man is all the better for a bottle of Port under his belt every day of his life.

I heard Spurgeon the Preacher the other day. He said some very good things: among others "If I can make the bells ring in *one* heart I shall be content." Two young men not behaving themselves, he called them as sternly to order as if they were *serving* under him. Talking of Jerusalem he said that "every good man had a mansion of his own there & a crown that would fit no other head save his." That I felt was true. It is the voice of Spurgeon that draws more than his matter. His organ is very fine—but I fear he is hurting it by preaching to too large & frequent congregations. I found this out—because he is falling into *two voices* the usual clerical infirmity.

The bells—church bells are ringing somewhere for the queens birthday they tell me. I have not a court-guide at hand to see if this is so. London is cram-full. Not a bed! Not a corner! After all the finest sight is to see such numbers of beautiful girls riding about & riding well. There are certainly no women in the world like ours. The men are far, far inferior to them.

I am still searching after an abode & really my adventures have been most amusing. One Sussex farmer had a very good little cottage close to Battle—but he kept "a few horses & a score or two of Pigs" under the very windows. I remarked that his stables were very filthy. The man stared hard at me—as an English farmer only can stare: ie, as a man stares who is trying to catch a thought which is always running away from him. At last he said striking his stick on the ground—"But that *is why* I keep the Pigs. I want their dung for my hop-grounds" We could not arrange it after that. I received a very kind note today from Concord informing me that there was a farm to be sold on the hill just over your river & nearly opposite your house. But it is out of the question buying land by Deputy! I have however *almost* decided to settle finally in America. There are many reasons for it. I think of running over in the trial-trip of the Great Eastern which will be at

the close of the year. She is either to be the greatest success—or else to sink altogether without more ado! She is to be something decided. I was all over her the other day. The immense creature musical with the incessant tinkling of hammers is as yet unconscious of life. By measurement she is larger than the Ark. From the promenade of her decks you see the town & trade of London; the river—(the sacred river)—; Greenwich with its park & palace; the vast town of Southwark & the continuation of it at Deptford; the Sydenham palace & the Surrey hills. Altogether a noble Poem. Only think, I am losing all my teeth. All my magnificent teeth are going. I now begin to know I *have* had good teeth. This comes of too many cups of warm trash. If I had held to cold drinks—they would have lasted me out; but the effeminacy of tea coffee chocolate & sugar has been my bane. Miserable wretches were they who invented these comforters of exhaustion! They could not afford wine & beer. Hence God to punish them for their feeble hearts takes away the grinders from their representatives one of whom I have been induced to become. But, Thoreau, if ever I live again I vow never so much as to touch anything warm. It is as dangerous as to take a Pill which I am convinced is a most immoral custom. Give me ale for breakfast & claret or Port or ale again for dinner. I should then have a better conscience & not fear to lose my teeth any more than my tongue.

Farewell Thoreau. Success & the bounty of the gods attend you

Yrs ever

Thos Chol.ley

In response to Cholmondeley's letter of December 16, 1856, mailed February 22, 1857, Thoreau—according to Sanborn (Cholmondeley, *p. 752*)*—sent the Englishman the first volume* (*that is, the first edition probably, since it came out only in a single volume*) *of Emerson's* Poems, Walden, *the first edition of Whitman's* Leaves of Grass, *and a book by F. L. Olmsted on the Southern States* (A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States, *evidently*). MS., Berg; *previously unpublished.*

To H. G. O. BLAKE

Concord, June 6, 1857, 3 p. m.

Mr. Blake,—

I have just got your note, but I am sorry to say that this very morning I sent a note to Channing, stating that I would go with him to Cape Cod next week on an excursion which we have been talking of for some time. If there were time to communicate with you, I should ask you to come to Concord on Monday, before I go; but as it is, I must wait till I come back, which I think will be about ten days hence. I do not like this delay, but there seems to be a fate in it. Perhaps Mr. Wasson will be well enough to come by that time. I will notify you of my return, and shall depend on seeing you all.

Text, Familiar Letters of Thoreau, *p.* 359.

To H. G. O. BLAKE

Concord Tuesday Morning June 23d 1857

Mr Blake,

I returned from Cape Cod last evening, and now take the first opportunity to invite you men of Worcester to this quiet *Mediterranean* shore. Can you come this week on Friday or next Monday? I mention the earliest days on which I suppose you can be ready. If more convenient name some other time *within ten days.* I shall be rejoiced to see you, and to act the part of skipper in the contemplated voyage. I have just got another letter from Cholmondeley, which may interest you somewhat.

H. D. T.

MS., Gunn Memorial Library.

To CALVIN GREENE

Concord July 8th '57

Dear Sir,

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

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

Nevertheless, I should like to meet you, & if I ever come into your neighborhood shall endeavor to do so. Cant you tell the world of *your* life also? Then I shall know you, at least as well as you me.

Yrs truly
Henry D. Thoreau

MS., Princeton University Library.

To GEORGE THATCHER

Concord July 11th 1857

Dear Cousin,

Finding myself somewhat stronger than for 2 or 3 years past, I am bent on making a leisurely & economical excursion into your woods —say in a canoe, with two companions, through Moosehead to the Allegash Lakes, and possibly down that river to the French settlements,

& so homeward by whatever course we may prefer. I wish to go at an earlier season than formerly or within 10 days, notwithstanding the flies &c and we should want a month at our disposal.

I have just written to Mr [Eben J.] Loomis, one of the Cambridgeport men who went through Bangor last year, & called on you, inviting him to be one of the party, and for a third have thought of your son Charles, who has had some fresh, as well as salt, water experience. The object of this note is to ask if he would like to go, and you would like to have him go, on such an excursion. If so, I will come to Bangor, spend a day or 2 with you on my way, buy a canoe &c & be ready by the time my other man comes along. If Charles cannot go, we may find another man here, or possibly take an Indian. A friend of mine would like to accompany me, but I think that he has neither woodcraft nor strength enough.

Please let me hear from you as soon as possible.

Father has arrived safe & sound, and, he says, the better for his journey, though he has no longer his Bangor appetite. He intends writing to you.

Yours truly,
Henry D. Thoreau.

Thoreau's Bangor cousin, George Thatcher, must have said no to the suggested excursion, for it was finally made with a Concord neighbor, Edward Hoar, and an Indian guide, Joe Polis, as Thoreau's only companions. The excursion lasted from July 20 to August 8 and furnished the basis for the final chapter of The Maine Woods. MS., Berg.

From EDWIN BROWN C——

Henry David Thoreau E[sq.] Concord M[ass.]

Dear [Sir:]

W[ould you] have the kindness to s[ign your] Autograph (Paper & add[ress] for which I enclose) [and] oblige

Very Respectfully,
Yours
Edwin Brown C[?]

Boston 14th July 1857

Half of the manuscript has been torn away, making it difficult if not impossible to identify the sender. The Boston Directory *for 1857 lists no appropriate candidate; there are some Edwins under last names beginning with* C, *but no Edwin Browns or even Edwin B's.* MS., Berg; *previously unpublished.*

To MARSTON WATSON

Concord, August 17, 1857.

Mr. Watson,

I am much indebted to you for your glowing communication of July 20th. I had that very day left Concord for the wilds of Maine; but when I returned, August 8th, two out of the six worms remained nearly, if not quite, as bright as at first, I was assured. In their best estate they had excited the admiration of many of the inhabitants of Concord. It was a singular coincidence that I should find these worms awaiting me, for my mind was full of a phosphorescence which I had seen in the woods. I have waited to learn something more about them before acknowledging the receipt of them. I have frequently met with glow-worms in my night walks, but am not sure they were the same

kind with these. Dr. [Thaddeus] Harris once described to me a larger kind than I had found, "nearly as big as your little finger"; but he does not name them in his report.

The only authorities on Glow-worms which I chance to have (and I am pretty well provided), are Kirby and Spence (the fullest), Knapp ("Journal of a Naturalist"), "The Library of Entertaining Knowledge" (*Rennie*), a French work, etc., etc.; but there is no minute, scientific description in any of these. This is apparently a female of the genus *Lampyris;* but Kirby and Spence say that there are nearly two hundred species of this genus alone. The one commonly referred to by English writers is the *Lampyris noctiluca;* but judging from Kirby and Spence's description, and from the description and plate in the French work, this is not that one, for, besides other differences, both say that the light proceeds from the abdomen. Perhaps the worms exhibited by Durkee (whose statement to the Boston Society of Natural History, second July meeting, in the "Traveller" of August 12, 1857, I send you) were the same with these. I do not see how they could be the L. *noctiluca,* as he states.

I expect to go to Cambridge before long, and if I get any more light on this subject I will inform you. The two worms are still alive.

I shall be glad to receive the *Drosera* at any time, if you chance to come across it. I am looking over Loudon's "Arboretum," which we have added to our Library, and it occurs to me that it was written expressly for you, and that you cannot avoid placing it on your own shelves.

I should have been glad to see the whale, and might perhaps have done so, if I had not at that time been seeing "the elephant" (or moose) in the Maine woods. I have been associating for about a month with one Joseph Polis, the chief man of the Penobscot tribe of Indians, and have learned a great deal from him, which I should like to tell you sometime.

Text, Familiar Letters of Thoreau, *pp. 360–62.*

To DANIEL RICKETSON

Concord Aug 18th 1857

Dear Sir,

Your Wilson Flagg seems a serious person, and it is encouraging to hear of a contemporary who recognizes nature so squarely, and selects such a theme as "Barns." (I would rather "*Mt* Auburn" were omitted.) But he is not alert enough. He wants stirring up with a pole. He should practice turning a series of somersets rapidly, or jump up & see how many times he can strike his feet together before coming down. Let him make the earth turn round now the other way—and whet his wits on it, whichever way it goes, as on a grindstone;—in short, see how many ideas he can entertain at once.

His style, as I remember, is singularly vague (I refer to the book) and before I got to the end of the sentences I was off the track. If you indulge in long periods you must be sure to have a snapper at the end. As for style of writing—if one has any thing to say, it drops from him simply & directly, as a stone falls to the ground for there are no two ways about it, but down it comes, and he may stick in the points and stops wherever he can get a chance. New ideas come into this world somewhat like falling meteors, with a flash and an explosion, and perhaps somebody's castle roof perforated. To try to polish the stone in its descent, to give it a peculiar turn and make it whistle a tune perchance, would be of no use, if it were possible. Your polished stuff turns out not to be meteoric, but of this earth.—However there is plenty of time, and Nature is an admirable schoolmistress.

Speaking of correspondence, you ask me if I "cannot turn over a new leaf in this line." I certainly could if I were to receive it; but just then I looked up and saw that your page was dated "May 10th" though mailed in August, and it occurred to me that I had seen you since that date this year. Looking again, it appeared that your note was written in '56!! However, it was a *new* leaf to me, and I *turned it over* with as much interest as if it had been written the day before. Perhaps you kept it so long in order that the MS & subject matter might be more in keeping with the old fashioned paper on which it was written.

I travelled the length of Cape Cod on foot, soon after you were here,

and within a few days have returned from the wilds of Maine, where I have made a journey of 325 miles with a canoe & an Indian & a single white companion, Edward Hoar of this town, lately from California,—traversing the headwaters of the Kennebeck–Penobscot–& St Johns.

Can't you extract any advantage out of that depression of spirits you refer to? It suggests to me cider mills, wine-presses, &c &c. All kinds of pressure or power should be used & made to turn some kind of machinery.

Channing was just leaving Concord for Plymouth when I arrived, but said he should be here again in 2 or 3 days.

Please remember me to your family & say that I have at length learned to sing Tom Bowling according to the notes—

Yrs truly
Henry D. Thoreau

Daniel Ricketson Esq.

Wilson Flagg's Studies in the Field & Forest *came out in this year.* MS., Morgan.

To H. G. O. BLAKE

Concord, August 18, 1857.

Mr. Blake,—

Fifteenthly. It seems to me that you need some absorbing pursuit. It does not matter much what it is, so it be honest. Such employment will be favorable to your development in more characteristic and important directions. You know there must be impulse enough for steerage way, though it be not toward your port, to prevent your drifting helplessly on to rocks or shoals. Some sails are set for this purpose only. There

is the large fleet of scholars and men of science, for instance, always to be seen standing off and on every coast, and saved thus from running on to reefs, who will at last run into their proper haven, we trust.

It is a pity you were not here with [Theo] Brown and [B. B.] Wiley. I think that in this case, *for a rarity,* the more the merrier.

You perceived that I did not entertain the idea of our going together to Maine on such an excursion as I had planned. The more I thought of it, the more imprudent it appeared to me. I did think to have written to you before going, though not to propose your going also; but I went at last very suddenly, and could only have written a business letter, if I had tried, when there was no business to be accomplished. I have now returned, and think I have had a quite profitable journey, chiefly from associating with an intelligent Indian. My companion, Edward Hoar, also found his account in it, though he suffered considerably from being obliged to carry unusual loads over wet and rough "carries," —in one instance five miles through a swamp, where the water was frequently up to our knees, and the fallen timber higher than our heads. He went over the ground three times, not being able to carry all his load at once. This prevented his ascending Ktaadn. Our best nights were those when it rained the hardest, on account of the mosquitoes. I speak of these things, which were not unexpected, merely to account for my not inviting you.

Having returned, I flatter myself that the world appears in some respects a little larger, and not, as usual, smaller and shallower, for having extended my range. I have made a short excursion into the new world which the Indian dwells in, or is. He begins where we leave off. It is worth the while to detect new faculties in man,—he is so much the more divine; and anything that fairly excites our admiration expands us. The Indian, who can find his way so wonderfully in the woods, possesses so much intelligence which the white man does not,—and it increases my own capacity, as well as faith, to observe it. I rejoice to find that intelligence flows in other channels than I knew. It redeems for me portions of what seemed brutish before.

It is a great satisfaction to find that your oldest convictions are permanent. With regard to essentials, I have never had occasion to change my mind. The aspect of the world varies from year to year, as the landscape is differently clothed, but I find that the *truth* is still *true,* and I never regret any emphasis which it may have inspired. Ktaadn is there

still, but much more surely my old conviction is there, resting with more than mountain breadth and weight on the world, the source still of fertilizing streams, and affording glorious views from its summit, if I can get up to it again. As the mountains still stand on the plain, and far more unchangeable and permanent,—stand still grouped around, farther or nearer to my maturer eye, the ideas which I have entertained, —the everlasting teats from which we draw our nourishment.

Text, Familiar Letters of Thoreau, *pp. 368–70.*

From DANIEL RICKETSON

The Shanty, Sept. 7th, 1857.

Dear Thoreau,—

I wrote you some two weeks ago that I intended visiting Concord, but have not yet found the way there. The object of my now writing is to invite you to make me a visit. Walton's small sail boat is now in Assawampset Pond. We took it up in our farm wagon to the south shore of Long Pond (Apponoquet), visited the islands in course and passed through the river that connects the said ponds. This is the finest season as to weather to visit the ponds, and I feel much stronger than when you were here last Spring. The boys and myself have made several excursions to our favorite region this summer, but we have left the best of it, so far as the voyage is concerned, for you to accompany us.

We hear nothing of Channing, but conclude that he is with you—trust he has not left us entirely, and hope to see him again before long.

Now should my invitation prove acceptable to you, I should be glad to see you just as soon after the receipt of this as you like to come, immediately if you please.

If you cannot come and should like to see me in Concord, please inform me, but we all hope to see you here.

Mrs. R. and the rest join in regards and invitation.

Yours truly,
D. R.

Remember me to Channing.

Text, Ricketson, *p. 76.*

To DANIEL RICKETSON

Concord Sep 9 1857

Friend Ricketson

I thank you for your kind invitation to visit you—but I have taken so many vacations this year—at New Bedford—Cape Cod—& Maine—that any more relaxation, call it rather dissipation, will cover me with shame & disgrace. I have not earned what I have already enjoyed. As some heads cannot carry much wine, so it would seem that I cannot bear so much society as you can. I have an immense appetite for solitude, like an infant for sleep, and if I don't get enough of it this year I shall cry all the next.

I believe that Channing is here still—he was two or three days ago—but whether for good & all, I do not know nor ask.

My mother's house is full at present; but if it were not, I should have no right to invite you hither, while entertaining such designs as I have hinted at. However, if you care to storm the town, I will engage to take some afternoon walks with you—retiring into profoundest solitude the most sacred part of the day.

Yrs sincerely
H. D. T.

MS., Huntington; *printed in* Ricketson, *p. 77, with the postscript:* "*(Written before my late visit, as the date shows).*"

From DANIEL RICKETSON

The Shanty, 10th Sept 1857.

Dear Philosopher,

I received your note of yesterday this A.M. I am glad you write me so frankly. I know well how dear one's own time & solitude may be, and I would not on any consideration violate the sanctity of your prerogative.

I fear too that I may have heretofore trespassed upon your time too much If I have please pardon me as I did it unwittingly I felt the need of congenial society—& sought yours I forgot that I could not render you an equivalent. It is good for one to be checked—to be thrown more and more upon his own resources. I have lived years of solitude (seeing only my own family, & Uncle James occasionally,) and was never happier. My heart however was then more buoyant and the woods and fields—the birds & flowers, but more than these, my moral meditations afforded me a constant source of the truest enjoyment. I admire your strength & fortitude to battle the world. I am a weak and broken reed. Have charity for me, if not sympathy. Can any one heart know another's? If not let us suspend our too hasty judgment against those from whom we differ.

I hope to see you in due time at Brooklawn where you are always a welcome & instructive guest.

With my kind regards to your family, I remain

Yours faithfully
D. Ricketson

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

To GEORGE THATCHER

Concord Nov 12 1857

Dear Cousin,

Father has received your letter of Nov. 10, but is at present unable to reply. He is quite sick with the jaundice, having been under the doctor's care for a week; this, added to his long standing cold, has reduced him very much. He has no appetite, but little strength and gets very little sleep. We have written to aunts Maria & Jane to come up & see him.

I am glad if your western experience has made you the more a New Englander—though your part of N.E. is rather cold—Cold as it is, however, I should like to see those woods and lakes, & rivers in mid-winter, sometime.

I find that the most profitable way to travel is, to write down your questions before you start, & be sure that you get them all answered, for when the opportunity offers you cannot always tell what you want to know, or, if you can will often neglect to learn it

Edward Hoar is in Concord still. I hear that the moose horns which you gave him make the principal or best part of an elaborate hat-tree

Sophia sends much love to Cousin Rebecca & expects an answer to her letter.

Yrs
Henry D. Thoreau

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

To H. G. O. BLAKE

Concord, November 16, 1857.

Mr. Blake,—

You have got the start again. It was I that owed you a letter or two, if I mistake not.

They make a great ado nowadays about hard times; but I think that the community generally, ministers and all, take a wrong view of the matter, though some of the ministers preaching according to a formula may pretend to take a right one. This general failure, both private and public, is rather occasion for rejoicing, as reminding us whom we have at the helm,—that justice is always done. If our merchants did not most of them fail, and the banks too, my faith in the old laws of the world would be staggered. The statement that ninety-six in a hundred doing such business surely break down is perhaps the sweetest fact that statistics have revealed,—exhilarating as the fragrance of sallows in spring. Does it not say somewhere, "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice"? If thousands are thrown out of employment, it suggests that they were not well employed. Why don't they take the hint? It is not enough to be industrious; so are the ants. What are you industrious about?

The merchants and company have long laughed at transcendentalism, higher laws, etc., crying, "None of your moonshine," as if they were anchored to something not only definite, but sure and permanent. If there was any institution which was presumed to rest on a solid and secure basis, and more than any other represented this boasted common sense, prudence, and practical talent, it was the bank; and now those very banks are found to be mere reeds shaken by the wind. Scarcely one in the land has kept its promise. It would seem as if you only need live forty years in any age of this world, to see its most promising government become the government of Kansas, and banks nowhere. Not merely the Brook Farm and Fourierite communities, but now the community generally has failed. But there is the moonshine still, serene, beneficent, and unchanged. Hard times, I say, have this value, among others, that they show us what such promises are worth,—where the *sure* banks are. I heard some merchant praised the other day because he had paid some of his debts, though it took nearly all he had (why, I've done as much as that myself many times, and a little more), and then gone to board. What if he has? I hope he 's got a good boarding-place, and can pay for it. It 's not everybody that can. However, in my opinion, it is cheaper to keep house,—*i. e.*, if you don't keep too big a one.

Men will tell you sometimes that "money's hard." That shows it was not made to eat, I say. Only think of a man in this new world, in his log cabin, in the midst of a corn and potato patch, with a sheepfold on one

side, talking about money being hard! So are flints hard; there is no alloy in them. What has that to do with his raising his food, cutting his wood (or breaking it), keeping in-doors when it rains, and, if need be, spinning and weaving his clothes? Some of those who sank with the steamer the other day found out that money was *heavy* too. Think of a man's priding himself on this kind of wealth, as if it greatly enriched him. As if one struggling in mid-ocean with a bag of gold on his back should gasp out, "I am worth a hundred thousand dollars." I see them struggling just as ineffectually on dry land, nay, even more hopelessly, for, in the former case, rather than sink, they will finally let the bag go; but in the latter they are pretty sure to hold and go down with it. I see them swimming about in their great-coats, collecting their rents, really *getting their dues,* drinking bitter draughts which only increase their thirst, becoming more and more water-logged, till finally they sink plumb down to the bottom. But enough of this.

Have you ever read Ruskin's books? If not, I would recommend you to try the second and third volumes (not parts) of his "Modern Painters." I am now reading the fourth, and have read most of his other books lately. They are singularly good and encouraging, though not without crudeness and bigotry. The themes in the volumes referred to are Infinity, Beauty, Imagination, Love of Nature, etc.,—all treated in a very living manner. I am rather surprised by them. It is remarkable that these things should be said with reference to painting chiefly, rather than literature. The "Seven Lamps of Architecture," too, is made of good stuff; but, as I remember, there is too much about art in it for me and the Hottentots. We want to know about matters and things in general. Our house is as yet a hut.

You must have been enriched by your solitary walk over the mountains. I suppose that I feel the same awe when on their summits that many do on entering a church. To see what kind of earth that is on which you have a house and garden somewhere, perchance! It is equal to the lapse of many years. You must ascend a mountain to learn your relation to matter, and so to your own body, for *it* is at home there, though *you* are not. It might have been composed there, and will have no farther to go to return to dust there, than in your garden; but your spirit inevitably comes away, and brings your body with it, if it lives. Just as awful really, and as glorious, is your garden. See how I can play with my fingers! They are the funniest companions I have ever found. Where did they come from? What strange control I have over them!

Who am I? What are they?—those little peaks—call them Madison, Jefferson, Lafayette. What is *the matter? My* fingers ten, I say. Why, erelong, they may form the top-most crystal of Mount Washington. I go up there to see my body's cousins. There are some fingers, toes, bowels, etc., that I take an interest in, and therefore I am interested in all their relations.

Let me suggest a theme for you: to state to yourself precisely and completely what that walk over the mountains amounted to for you,—returning to this essay again and again, until you are satisfied that all that was important in your experience is in it. Give this good reason to yourself for having gone over the mountains, for mankind is ever going over a mountain. Don't suppose that you can tell it precisely the first dozen times you try, but at 'em again, especially when, after a sufficient pause, you suspect that you are touching the heart or summit of the matter, reiterate your blows there, and account for the mountain to yourself. Not that the story need be long, but it will take a long while to make it short. It did not take very long to get over the mountain, you thought; but have you got over it indeed? If you have been to the top of Mount Washington, let me ask, what did you find there? That is the way they prove witnesses, you know. Going up there and being blown on is nothing. We never do much climbing while we are there, but we eat our luncheon, etc., very much as at home. It is after we get home that we really go over the mountain, if ever. What did the mountain say? What did the mountain do?

I keep a mountain anchored off eastward a little way, which I ascend in my dreams both awake and asleep. Its broad base spreads over a village or two, which do not know it; neither does it know them, nor do I when I ascend it. I can see its general outline as plainly now in my mind as that of Wachusett. I do not invent in the least, but state exactly what I see. I find that I go up it when I am light-footed and earnest. It ever smokes like an altar with its sacrifice. I am not aware that a single villager frequents it or knows of it. I keep this mountain to ride instead of a horse.

Do you not mistake about seeing Moosehead Lake from Mount Washington? That must be about one hundred and twenty miles distant, or nearly twice as far as the Atlantic, which last some doubt if they can see thence. Was it not Umbagog?

Dr. [Reinhold] Solger has been lecturing in the vestry in this town on Geography, to Sanborn's scholars, for several months past, at five

P. M. Emerson and Alcott have been to hear him. I was surprised when the former asked me, the other day, if I was not going to hear Dr. Solger. What, to be sitting in a meeting-house cellar at that time of day, when you might possibly be out-doors! I never thought of such a thing. What was the sun made for? If he does not prize daylight, I do. Let him lecture to owls and dormice. He must be a wonderful lecturer indeed who can keep me indoors at such an hour, when the night is coming in which no man can walk.

Are you in want of amusement nowadays? Then play a little at the game of getting a living. There never was anything equal to it. Do it temperately, though, and don't sweat. Don't let this secret out, for I have a design against the Opera. OPERA!! Pass along the exclamations, devil.

Now is the time to become conversant with your wood-pile (this comes under Work for the Month), and be sure you put some warmth into it by your mode of getting it. Do not consent to be passively warmed. An intense degree of that is the hotness that is threatened. But a positive warmth within can withstand the fiery furnace, as the vital heat of a living man can withstand the heat that cooks meat.

The starting point for this one of Thoreau's many sermons to Blake is the panic of 1857, the worst the country had experienced in a generation. A sidelight on the comments about mountains is the fact that he had had a "mountain dream" only a few days before (Journal, *X, 141–44*). Text, Familiar Letters of Thoreau, *pp. 371–78.*

From DANIEL RICKETSON

The Shanty, Friday Evening, Dec. 11, 1857.

Dear Thoreau,—

I expect to go to Boston next week, Thursday 17th, with my daughters Anna and Emma to attend the Anti-Slavery Bazaar. They will probably return home the next day, and I proceed to Malden for

a day or two. After which I may proceed to Concord, if I have your permission, and if you will be at home, for without you Concord would be quite poor and deserted, like to the place some poet, perhaps Walter Scott, describes,—

"Where thro' the desert walks the lapwing flies
And tires their echoes with unceasing cries."

Channing says I can take his room in the garret of his house, but I think I should take to the tavern. Were you at Walden I should probably storm your castle and make good an entrance, and perhaps as an act of generous heroism allow you quarters while I remained. But in sober truth I should like to see you and sit or lie down in your room and hear you growl once more, thou brave old Norseman—thou Thor, thunder-god-man. I long to see your long beard, which for a short man is rather a stretch of imagination or understanding. C[hanning] says it is terrible to behold, but improves you mightily.

How grandly your philosophy sits now in these *trying* times. I lent my Walden to a broken merchant lately as the best panacea I could offer him for his troubles.

You should now come out and call together the lost sheep of Israel, thou cool-headed pastor, no Corydon forsooth, but genuine Judean—fulminate from the banks of Concord upon the banks of Discord and once more set ajog a pure curren(t)cy whose peaceful tide may wash us clean once more again. *Io Paean!*

Is "Father Alcott" in your city? I should count much on seeing him too—a man who is All-cot should not be without a home at least in his chosen land.

Don't be provoked at my nonsense, for anything better would be like "carrying coals to Newcastle." I would sit at the feet of Gamaliel, so farewell for the present.

With kind remembrances to your family, I remain,

Faithfully your friend,
D. Ricketson

P.S. If I can't come please inform me.

Text, Ricketson, *pp.* 77–79.