

1860

It was a bitter, wrangling year. The Democratic national convention split; the majority nominated Douglas of Illinois for president and, in a vain gesture, a Georgian for vice-president. The Southern seceders nominated John Breckinridge of Kentucky for president and an Oregonian for vice-president. At the Republican convention William Seward led on the first ballot by 173½ votes to Lincoln's 102, but Lincoln soon overcame Seward's lead. In the fall election Lincoln received 1,866,452, Douglas 1,375,157, and Breckinridge 847,953. South Carolina passed an ordinance of secession and appointed three commissioners to go to Washington and treat with the government about the disposition of federal property within the state. President Buchanan received the commissioners as private gentlemen and shortly afterward announced in a letter to them that Fort Sumter would be defended to the last extremity. But he was not always so firm. The eighth decennial census gave the total population of the United States as 31,443,321—26,922,537 white, 3,953,760 Negro slaves, and 488,070 free Negroes. The center of population had moved to twenty miles south of Chillicothe. At mid-year the United States Army consisted of 1,080 officers and 14,926 enlisted men.

Business this year, as last, took an important part of Thoreau's time. His family now owned two houses, and Henry as executor of his father's estate could give bond for \$10,000. Still, he managed to fill up many pages of the *Journal* and found time for sauntering and traveling in addition. He published "A Plea for Captain John Brown" in an anthology called *Echoes of Harper's Ferry* and "The Succession of the Forest Trees" in Greeley's *Tribune*. In summer he spent most of a week on Monadnock with Ellery Channing. The letters are almost invariably

short except for a few to Blake and Ricketson. The best thing, it may be, coming out of this year is the continued fluency and precision of the nature writing in the *Journal*. The worst is the illness, only a cold to begin with, that Thoreau contracted in December while counting tree rings.

From R. ALLISON

Jany 9th 1860

Mr. H. D. Thoreau Concord Mass.

Dear Sir:

Enclosed please find \$10 Amt of your bill of 27th Ult. Please acknowledge recpt and oblige

Yours truly
R. Allison Supt.

Allison was superintendent of the Franklin Type and Stereotype Foundry in Cincinnati. MS., Berg; previously unpublished.

From EDWARD BANGS

[January 9, 1860]

Dear Sir:

Your Aunts case vs. Miss Pallies will be tried tomorrow--will you please come down by the first train?

Very truly yours
Edward Bangs

See Bangs's letter to Thoreau of October 5, 1859. MS., Berg; previously unpublished.

From HOBART & ROBBINS

Boston Jan'y 9, 1860

Mr. Henry D. Thoreaux Concord, Mass.

Enclosed are Nine Dollars, for which, please send at once 6 lbs
best (ground) plumbago, with bill

Yrs &c
Hobart & Robbins

MS., Berg; *previously unpublished.*

From DANIEL RICKETSON

The Shanty, 15 Jan., 1860.

Friend Thoreau,—

We've been having a good deal of wintry weather for our section of late, and skating by both sexes is a great fashion. On the 26th of last month, Arthur, Walton, and I skated about fifteen miles. We rode out to the south end of Long pond (Aponoquet), and leaving our horse at a farmer's barn, put on our skates, and went nearly in a straight line to the north end of said pond, up to the old herring weir of King Philip, where we were obliged to take off our skates, as the passage to Assawamset was not frozen. We stopped about an hour at the old tavern and had a good solid anti-slavery, and John Brown talk with some travellers. One, a square-set, red-bearded farmer, said among other rough things, that *he would like to eat Southerners' hearts! and drink their blood! for a fortnight, and would be willing to die if he could not live on this fare!* This was said in reply to a spruce young fellow who had been in New Orleans, and *knew all about slavery*—damned the abolitionists most lustily, and John Brown and his associates in particular. Oaths flew like shot from one side to the other, but the renegade

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Northerner was no match for the honest farmer, who met him at every point with facts, statistics, oaths, and arguments, and finally swore his antagonist down flat. He "burst the bully" in good earnest. Occasionally I had interspersed a few words, and others present, but our farmer was the champion of the field, and a more complete annihilation of a dough-face I never witnessed.

My boys seemed to enjoy it well. After this scene we again assumed our skates from the Assawamset shore, near by, and skated down to the end of the East Quitticus pond, the extreme southern end of the ponds; thence crossing to West Quitticus, we skated around it, which with the return from the south end of the former pond to our crossing place, we estimated at something over 15 miles. Taking off our skates we took a path through the woods, and walking about a mile came out in some old fields near our starting point. We put on our skates at 10.30 o'clock a.m., and at 3 p.m. were eating dinner at the old farm-house of William A. Morton, near the south shore of Long Pond.

I, as well as my boys, enjoyed the excursion very much. We saw our favorite pond under entirely new aspects, and visited many nooks that we had never before seen—sometimes under the boughs of the old cedars, draped in long clusters of moss, like bearded veterans, and anon farther out on the bosom of the lake, with broad and refreshing views of wild nature, taking the imagination back to the times of the Indians and early settlers of these parts—shooting by little islands and rocky islets, among them the one called "Lewis Island," which you thought would do for a residence. I got a fresh hold of life that day, and hope to repeat the pleasure before winter closes his reign. I found myself not only not exhausted, as I had expected, but unusually fresh and cheerful on my arrival home about 5 p.m. The boys stood it equally well. So my friend we shall not allow you all the glory of the skating field, but must place our Aponoquet, Assawamset and Quitticas-et, in the skating account with your own beloved Musketaquid exploits.

Well, since I saw you, dear old John Brown has met, and O! how nobly, his death, at the hands of Southern tyrants. I honor him and his brave associates in my "heart of hearts"; but my voice is for peaceable measures henceforth, doubtful, alas! as their success appears.

I expect to be in Boston at the annual meeting of the Mass. A[nti] S[lavery] Society, near at hand, and hope to see you there, and if agreeable should like to have you return home with me, when, D.V., we may try our skates on the Middleborough ponds.

We all spoke of you and wished you were with us on our late excursion there.

With kind regards to your family and my other Concord friends, I remain,

Yours faithfully,
D. Ricketson.

H. D. Thoreau, Concord.

Text, Ricketson, *pp.* 101–3.

TO SAMUEL RIPLEY BARTLETT

Concord Jan 19th 1860

Mr S. Ripley Bartlett,
Dear Sir,

I send you with this a letter of introduction to Ticknor & Fields, as you request; though I am rather remote from them.

I think that your poem was well calculated for our lyceum, and the neighboring towns, but I would advise you, if it is not impertinent, not to have it printed, as you propose. You might keep it by you, read it as you have done, as you may have opportunity, and see how it wears with yourself. It may be in your own way if printed. The public are very cold and indifferent to such things, and the publishers still more so. I have found that the precept "Write with fury, and correct with flegm" required me to print only the hundredth part of what I had written. If you print at first in newspapers, you can afterward collect survives [survivors?]-what your readers demand. That, I should say, is the simplest and safest, as it is the commonest, way. You so get the criticism of the public, & if you fail, no harm is done.

You may think this harsh advice, but, believe me, it is sincere.

Yrs truly
Henry D. Thoreau

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According to the records of the Concord Lyceum, now in the Concord Public Library, young Samuel Ripley Bartlett delivered his poem "The Concord Fight" on January 4, 1860. Sumner, Emerson, and Thoreau lectured in the same lyceum course. Thoreau's letter to Ticknor & Fields proved useless, as he thought it would; however, Bartlett got the Boston firm of A. Williams & Co. to print his poem, a tediously sentimental and patriotic affair in alternately rhyming pentameters. MS., Library of Congress; previously unpublished.

From CHAUNCEY SMITH

Boston Jan 23d 1860

Mr Henry D Thoreau
Dear Sir

Enclosed please find note of my brother L. L. Smith for \$100 payable in three months with my endorsement and acknowledge the receipt thereof to him

Yours truly
Chauncey Smith

Smith was a patent lawyer who practiced in Boston. We can only conjecture that his brother was in business and bought plumbago from Thoreau. MS., Huntington; previously unpublished.

From JAMES REDPATH

Feb'y 6, 1860

Henry D Thoreau
Dear Sir—

If you do not desire to know my address, (which you had better not know if you have any prospect of being summoned to Washington) please hand the enclose *knot* to F. B. S[anborn] who, perhaps, may wish to see me to consult as to our future course. I have been regularly summoned, but have resolutely refused to obey the summons; & am in the country, now, to have quiet until I shall complete the forthcoming Volume. I directed your Lecture to be sent to you for correction; which—I am told—has been done.

Can *you* furnish me with an a/c of the B[attle] of B[lack] J[ack]? I was very conscious of the defects of the a/c I copied; but as I recollect very little about the B, I cd not undertake to describe it from my own resources. I shall however yet obtain the testimony of the eye witnesses; as I have all their names (the "Orderly Book" that you allude to) & will either see or write to every man who was present, as soon as I can get their addresses or leave Mass. for K. Territory. I shall probably visit the ground in the spring.

For the Private Life I have already a number of very interesting letters from Kansas men,—just such plain, matter of fact statements as you are greedy for, & which, better than any rhetorical estimates of John Brown's character or cause, exhibit to the intelligent reader the spirit & life of the old warrior.

The very numerous faults of language (there have been very few of facts) & the imperfect estimates of character which disfigure my book warn me—& I will heed the hint—to take more time in fixing another original volume. As for my forthcoming book, as it is an *edited* volume only, I have nothing to fear in that a/c.

I have not even yet attempted to arrange my voluminous newspaper materials, & do not see that I shall be able to commence it for some weeks to come. This is my apology or reason rather for neglecting (in appearance) my promise with reference to Miss Thoreau's Scrap Book.

I find that the extracts that [word] made in my book for your lecture were incorrectly reported. Do you desire that they shall be altered? If

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so, please return the volume I sent you properly marked; & I will return you as many vols as you desire with the latest corrections. The 33d thousand has been printed & contains many corrections *not* in the edition I sent you. The prospect is that it will reach over 50000 at least. I think it will do good among the masses; that is all I tried to do—for the educated have teachers enough; & over them I do not expect to have influence.

Remember me to Mrs Thoreau & thank her, in my own name & in behalf of my wife, also—for her kind invitation; which we shall, as soon as possible, accept.

Very truly yours
Jas Redpath

James Redpath had assisted John Brown in his preparations for the Harpers Ferry excursion and was now afraid of being summoned to Washington to testify before a Senate committee investigating the affair. Indeed, on February 16, 1860 an order for his arrest was issued by the Senate committee. In that same year Redpath published The Public Life of Capt. John Brown, dedicated to Thoreau, Emerson, and Wendell Phillips, and Echoes of Harper's Ferry, a collection of tributes to Brown that included "A Plea for Captain John Brown" and Thoreau's remarks at the memorial service in Concord. The "Private Life" of Brown that Redpath mentions seems not to have been printed. Sophia Thoreau's scrapbook of antislavery clippings is in the hands of a private collector. Redpath, once the storm of civil war was over, became the most noted of American lecture managers. The Battle of Black Jack was Brown's most noted encounter at arms in Kansas; with nine men of his own he captured over twice that number of his proslavery enemy. According to Sanborn (Recollections of Seventy Years, I, 103) Brown told Thoreau about it in detail. MS., Abernethy (typescript); previously unpublished.

From WELCH, BIGELOW & CO.

Cambridge Feb 7, 60

Mr Thoreau

Dear Sir

Enclosed please find draft on Boston for thirty-seven 50/100 dollars the amt of your bill due By receipting the same and returning it you will oblige

Yours truly
Welch, Bigelow & Co.

MS., Berg; *previously unpublished.*

From HENRY WILLIAMS

Boston, February 9, 1860

My Dear Sir:

At the last annual meeting of the Class of '37, a vote was passed, that the members of the Class be requested to furnish the Secretary with their photographs, to be placed in the Class Book. Several fellows, in accordance with the above vote, have already sent me their pictures, and I trust that you will feel disposed, at an early date, to follow their example. You can send to me through the Post Office, at 18 Concord Square.

Very truly yours,

A printed form letter sent out by the secretary of Thoreau's class. There is no indication that Thoreau replied. MS., Harvard.

From JANE ANDREWS

Mr. Thoreau,

Please send me by mail a copy of your "Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers."

Enclosed please find one dollar and a quarter (\$1.25), which I believe you consider the pecuniary value of the book.

Address Jane Andrews, Newburyport, Mass. March 22, 1860.

MS., Harvard; *previously unpublished.*

From L. JOHNSON & CO.

L. Johnson & Co. Type Founders No. 606 Sansom St. Philadelphia

April 20, 1860

Mr. Henry D. Thoreau Concord, Mass.

Dear Sir—

Send us immediately by Express 10 lbs. Plumbago with bill to

Yours Respt
L. Johnson & Co.

MS., Morgan; *previously unpublished.*

From L. JOHNSON & CO.

L. Johnson & Co. Type Founders No. 606 Sansom St. Philadelphia

May 2nd 1860

Mr. Henry D. Thoreau Concord Mass.

Dear Sir—

Enclosed find Fifteen dollars in notes amt of your bill of 21st ult. Please acknowledge receipt.

Yours truly
L. Johnson & Co

MS., Morgan; *previously unpublished.*

To H. G. O. BLAKE

Concord May 20 1860

Mr Blake,

I must endeavor to pay some of my debts to you.

To begin where we left off then.

The presumption is that *we* are always the same; our opportunities & Nature herself fluctuating. Look at mankind. No great difference between two, apparently; perhaps the same height and breadth and weight; and yet to the man who sits most E. this life is a weariness, routine, dust and ashes, and he drowns his imaginary cares (!) (a sort of friction among his vital organs), in a bowl. But to the man who sits most W., his *contemporary* (!) it is a field for all noble endeavors, an elysium, the dwelling place of heroes & knights. The former complains that he has a thousand affairs to attend to; but he does not realize, that his affairs, (though they may be a thousand,) and he are one.

Men & boys are learning all kinds of trades but how to make *men* of themselves. They learn to make houses, but they are not so well

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housed, they are not so contented in their houses, as the woodchucks in their holes. What is the use of a house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on? If you can not tolerate the planet it is on? Grade the ground first. If a man believes and expects great things of himself, it makes no odds where you put him, or what you show him, (of course, you cannot put him anywhere nor show him anything), he will be surrounded by grandeur. He's in the condition of a healthy & hungry man, who says to himself—How sweet this crust is!

If he despairs of himself, then Tophet is his dwelling place, and he is in the condition of a sick man who is disgusted with the fruits of finest flavor.

Whether he sleeps or wakes, whether he runs or walks, whether he uses a microscope or a telescope, or his naked eye, a man never discovers anything, never overtakes anything or leaves anything behind, but himself. Whatever he says or does he merely reports himself. If he is in love, he *loves*; if he is in heaven he *enjoys*, if he is in hell he *suffers*. It is his condition that determines his locality.

The principal, the only thing a man makes is his condition, or fate. Though commonly he does not know it, nor put up a sign to this effect, "My own destiny made & mended here." [not *yours*] He is a master-workman in this business. He works 24 hours a day at it and gets it done. Whatever else he neglects or botches, no man was ever known to neglect this work. A great many pretend to make *shoes* chiefly, and would scout the idea that they make the hard times which they experience.

Each reaching and aspiration is an instinct with which all nature consists & cooperates, and therefore it is not in vain. But alas! each relaxing and desperation is an instinct too. To be active, well, happy, implies rare courage. To be ready to fight in a duel or a battle implies desperation, or that you hold your life cheap.

If you take this life to be simply what old religious folks pretend, (I mean the effete, gone to seed in a drought, mere human galls stung by the Devil once), then all your joy & serenity is reduced to grinning and bearing it. The fact is, you have got to take the world on your shoulders like Atlas and put along with it. You will do this for an idea's sake, and your success will be in proportion to your devotion to ideas. It may make your back ache occasionally, but you will have the satisfaction of hanging it or twirling it to suit yourself. Cowards suffer, heroes enjoy. After a long day's walk with it, pitch it into a hollow place, sit

down and eat your luncheon. Unexpectedly, by some immortal thoughts, you will be compensated. The bank whereon you sit will be a fragrant and flowery one, and your world in the hollow a sleek and light gazelle.

Where is the "Unexplored land" but in our own untried enterprises? To an adventurous spirit any place,—London New York, Worcester, or his own yard, is "unexplored land," to seek which Freemont & Kane travel so far. To a sluggish & defeated spirit even the Great Basin & the Polaris are trivial places. If they ever get there (& indeed they are there now) they will want to sleep & give it up, just as they always do. These are the regions of the Known & of the Unknown. What is the use of going right over the old track again? There is an adder in the path which your own feet have worn. You must make tracks into the Unknown. That is what you have your board & clothes for. Why do you ever mend your clothes, unless that, wearing them, you may mend your ways?

Let us sing

H.D.T.

MS., Scripps College Library. *The brackets are Thoreau's.*

From MRS. BRONSON ALCOTT

My dear friend Mr Thoreau

Will you join us for one hour (11 ocl to 12.) at our home this day to celebrate the marriage of our dear Anna and John

Yrs affectionately
Abby Alcott

According to The Journals of Bronson Alcott Anna Alcott and John Pratt were married May 23, 1860. MS., Berg; previously unpublished.

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From CHAUNCEY SMITH

Boston June 1st 1860

Mr Henry D Thoreau

Dear Sir

I enclose to you my brothers note with my endorsement, at his request.

Please acknowledge to him its reception

Yours truly
Chauncey Smith

Smith had endorsed an earlier note for his brother, L. L. Smith, and sent it to Thoreau on January 23, 1860. MS., Huntington; previously unpublished.

To SOPHIA THOREAU

Concord July 8 1860

Dear Sophia,

Mother reminds me that I must write to you, if only a few lines, though I have sprained my thumb so that it is questionable whether I can write legibly, if at all. I can't bear on much. What is worse, I believe that I have sprained my brain too—i.e it sympathizes with my thumb. But there is no excuse, I suppose, for writing a letter in such a case, is, like sending a newspaper, only a hint to let you know that "all is well"—but my thumb.

I hope that you begin to derive some benefit from that more mountainous air which you are breathing Have you had a distinct view of the Franconia Notch mts (blue peaks in the N horizon)? which I told you that you could get from the road in Campton, & probably from some

other points nearer. Such a view of the *mts* is more memorable than any other.

Have you been to Squam Lake, or overlooked it— I should think that you could easily make an excursion to some *mt* in that direction from which you could see the lake & the *mts* generally.

Is there no friend of N.P. Rogers who can tell you where the “lions” are. Of course I did not go to North Elba, but I sent some reminiscences of last fall

I hear that John Brown jr has just come to Boston for a few days. Mr Sanborn’s case, it is said, will come on after some murder cases have been disposed of—here.

I have just been invited, formally, to be present at the annual picnic of Theodore Parker’s society (that was) at Waverly next Wednesday, & to make some remarks. But that is wholly out of my line— I do not go to picnics even in Concord you know.

Mother & Aunt Sophia rode to Acton in time yesterday. I suppose that you have heard that Mr Hawthorne has come home. I went to meet him the other evening & found that he has not altered except that he was looking pretty brown after his voyage. He is as simple & child-like as ever.

I believe that I have fairly scared the kittens away, at last, by my pretended fierceness—which was humane merely.

& now I will consider my thumb— & your *eyes*

Henry

According to Sanborn (Familiar Letters of Thoreau, p. 419), Sophia was in Campton, New Hampshire when her brother wrote this geographical-political letter. Rogers (he died in 1846) had been a strong New Hampshire antislavery man; presumably the “lions” Thoreau mentions in connection with him are abolitionist ones. Thoreau had been invited to North Elba, an upstate New York village, to attend services for John Brown on his burial there on July 4, 1860. “Mr. Sanborn’s case” was the indictment against not Sanborn but the federal deputies who had attempted to arrest him for not testifying before the Senate in its John Brown investigation (see also Thoreau to Sumner, July 16, 1860). MS., Morgan; the writing is frequently slurred because of Thoreau’s injury.

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From CHARLES C. MORSE

Atheneum & Mechanics Association Rochester N. Y.

Henry D. Thoreau

Dear Sir: I have been unable to obtain from our booksellers your “Week on the Concord & Merrimack Rivers” and therefore enclose you the supposed price. You will please send it to my address by mail.

I would also inquire if you are in the lecture field and whether you could be obtained to deliver two or more lectures upon some[?] scientific subjects before our association this coming winter?

Yours Respectfully
Chas C. Morse

The rough draft of Thoreau’s answer to this undated letter is dated July 12. MS., Huntington; previously unpublished.

To CHARLES C. MORSE

Conc[or]d July 12 1860

Mr Charles C Morse

Dear Sir—

I mail to your address today a copy of my “Week” as you request—

I *am* in the lecture field—but my subjects are not *scientific*—rather [Transcendentalist & aesthetic. I devote myself to the absorption of nature generally.] Such as “Walking or *the Wild*” “Autumnal tints” &c— [Even if the utterances were scientific, the treatment would hardly bear that sense]

less in a popular vein if you think that your audience will incline or erect[?] their ears to such themes as these. I shall be happy to read to them.

Yr respect[ful]ly
Hen. D. Thoreau

We cannot be sure whether Morse's group was depressed or not by the prospect of Transcendentalist and aesthetic lectures, but there is no record of further negotiations, nor does the final copy of Thoreau's draft survive in the files of the Rochester Athenaeum (now the Rochester Institute of Technology). (But see also Thoreau to Benjamin Austin, Jr., July 16, 1860.) MS., Huntington, a penciled scrawl on the back of Morse's letter; printed with additions (given here in brackets) in the catalogue of the Bixby sale (Anderson Auction Co., February 28, 1917).

TO BENJAMIN H. AUSTIN, JR.

Concord July 16 1860

Mr Benjamin H Austin Jr
Dear Sir

I shall be very happy to read to your association three lectures on the evenings named, but the question is about their character. They will not be scientific in the common, nor, perhaps, in any sense. They will be such as you might infer from reading my books. As I have just told Mr. Morse, they will be *transcendental*, that is, to the mass of hearers, probably *moonshine*. Do you think that this will do? Or does your audience prefer lamplight, or total darkness these nights? I dare say, however, that they would interest those who are most interested in what is called nature.

Mr Morse named no evenings & I have not had time to hear from, or make any arrangement with him.

Yrs respectfully
Henry D. Thoreau

Austin was one of the lecture managers for the Young Men's Association of Buffalo. Thoreau was apparently trying to arrange something of a lecture tour, with Rochester and Buffalo as two of his stops. His apparently talking about Mr. Morse of Rochester as if Austin knew of him

is puzzling. Is there a lost letter? (Thoreau, however, had written Morse only four days before.) Had Morse written Austin about Thoreau's coming to Rochester? Another possibility is that Thoreau was referring to a Charles H. Morse of Buffalo who became the corresponding secretary of the Young Men's Association in 1861, though not listed as an officer in 1860. According to Miss Margaret H. Evans of the Buffalo Public Library there is no mention of Thoreau in the reports of the Young Men's Association there, though other speakers are listed. Probably he never spoke in either Buffalo or Rochester. MS., Buffalo Public Library; previously unpublished.

TO CHARLES SUMNER

Concord July 16 1860

Mr Sumner
Dear Sir,

Allow me to thank you for your two speeches on the Hyatt case, & for two Patent Office Reports on Agriculture

Especially, I wish to thank you for your speech on the Barbarism of Slavery, which, I hope and suspect, commences a new era in the history of our Congress; when questions of national importance have come to be considered occasionally from a broadly ethical, and not from a narrowly political point of view alone.

It is refreshing to hear some naked truth, moral or otherwise, uttered there—which can always take care of itself when uttered, and of course belongs to no party. (That was the whole value of Gerrit Smith's presence there, methinks, though he did go to bed early.) Whereas this has only been employed occasionally to perfume the wheel-grease of party or national politics.

The Patent Office Reports on Agriculture contain much that concerns me, & I am very glad to possess now a pretty complete series of them.

Yrs truly
Henry D. Thoreau

Charles Sumner made two speeches in the Senate on behalf of Thaddeus Hyatt of New York. The Senate had appointed a special committee to investigate John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry. The committee summoned a large number of citizens suspected of having had some connection with Brown, among them F. B. Sanborn, James Redpath (see his letter of February 6, 1860), and Hyatt. Hyatt appeared, refused to testify as the committee desired, and was charged with contempt of the Senate and thrown into the District of Columbia jail. Sumner spoke against his imprisonment. Thoreau's dig at the wealthy agrarian abolitionist Gerrit Smith was based on the rumor that Smith had failed to vote against the Kansas-Nebraska Bill because it came up for passage after his customary bedtime, nine o'clock. MS., Harvard; previously unpublished.

TO WELCH, BIGELOW & CO.

Concord July 27 1860

Messrs Welch, Bigelow, & Co

Below you will find my bill for plumbago. I will thank you to send a Draft for the amount on a Boston bank, as heretofore. Trusting that you will not require me to wait so long, without explanation, as the last time, I remain

Yrs truly
Henry D. Thoreau

Concord July 27 1860

Messrs Welch Bigelow & Co

Bought of Henry D. Thoreau

Twenty-four lb of Plumbago

\$36.00

sent April 27

Recd Payt

MS., Berg, Thoreau's manuscript draft; previously unpublished.

Concord July 27 1860

Messrs Welch, Bigelow, & Co

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Twenty-four lb of Plumbago \$36.00
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Recd Payt

To H. G. O. BLAKE

Concord, August 3, 1860.

Mr. Blake,—

I some time ago asked Channing if he would not spend a week with me on Monadnoc; but he did not answer decidedly. Lately he has talked of an excursion somewhere, but I said that *now* I must wait till my sister returned from Plymouth, N.H. She has returned,—and accordingly, on receiving your note this morning, I made known its contents to Channing, in order to see how far I was engaged with him. The result is that he decides to go to Monadnoc to-morrow morning; so I must defer making an excursion with you and Brown to another season. Perhaps you will call as you pass the mountain. I send this by the earliest mail.

P. S.—That was a very insufficient visit you made here the last time. My mother is better, though far from well; and if you should chance along here any time after your journey, I trust that we shall all do better.

Text, Familiar Letters of Thoreau, pp. 421–22.

From CHARLES P. RICKER

Lowell, Aug 31 1860

Mr. Thoreau:

Dear Sir:

By the instructions of our Committee I am requested to write, that we have two lectures on the Sabbath.

If you could give us two lectures instead of one for the terms you state we shall be happy to hear you. Otherwise we shall be obliged to

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wait till we gain a stronger hold on the public mind, and chiefly increase or better our financial condition.

Please answer if possible by return of mail.

Yours Respectfully
Charles P. Ricker

MS., Berg; *previously unpublished*.

From CHARLES P. RICKER

Lowell, Sept. 6 / 60

Mr. H. D. Thoreau:

Yours of the 31st. is received. We shall expect you to address our people next Sabbath. Arriving at Lowell, you will find me at No 21 Central Street, or at residence No. 123 East Merrimack Street, or you can take a coach direct to Mr. Owen's, No 52 East Merrimack Street, who will be in readiness to entertain you, and with whom you will find a pleasant home during your stay among us.

Hoping to see you soon I remain

Yours Respectfully
Charles P. Ricker

Thoreau's Journal shows that he went to Lowell as agreed, leaving Concord on the 8th and returning on the 10th. MS., Berg; previously unpublished.

[1860]

To THE PUBLISHERS OF "THE WORLD," September 17, 1860

This letter asked the publishers of a newly organized New York newspaper to include Thoreau's name in their list of lecturers, according to the catalogue of the E. C. Stedman sale (Anderson Galleries, January 24-25, 1911), which listed the manuscript. It was later listed in the catalogue of the John Heise sale (American Art Association, May 6, 1915), with one sentence quoted: "I should like to have my name included in your list."

To HORACE GREELEY

Concord Sep 29 1860

Friend Greeley,

Knowing your interest in whatever relates to Agriculture, I send you with this a short address delivered by me before "the Middlesex Agricultural Society," in this town, Sep. 20, on The Succession of Forest Trees. It is part of a chapter on the Dispersion of Seeds. If you would like to print it, please accept it. If you do not wish to print it entire, *return it to me* at once, for it is *due to the Society's* "Report" a month or 6 weeks hence

Yours truly
Henry D. Thoreau

Greeley accepted the address and printed it in the October 6, 1860 New-York Weekly Tribune. It was also printed in the Transactions of the Middlesex Agricultural Society for the Year 1860. But Thoreau never completed "The Dispersion of Seeds." MS., New York; previously unpublished.

From A. S. CHASE

Waterbury Conn Oct 5 1860

Dear Sir

I have yours of the 22nd ult— We accept your offer to lecture here and have assigned you for Tuesday evening December 11th. We have Rev. H. H. Bellows for the 4th & Bayard Taylor for the 18th. Please name your subject in advance of the time if convenient as we would like to be able to state it.

Truly yours
A. S Chase Cor Sy

Mr Henry D. Thoreau

Thoreau lectured on "Autumnal Tints." He was suffering from a severe cold, and the strain of the journey probably brought on a succeeding attack of bronchitis. The report in the Waterbury American spoke caustically of his performance: "it was dull, commonplace and unsatisfactory." MS., Berg; previously unpublished.

To DR. SAMUEL KNEELAND

Concord Oct 13 1860

Dr. Samuel Kneeland

Dear Sir;

The members of the Nat. Hist. Soc. may be interested to hear, that a female Canada Lynx (L. Canadensis, or Loup Cervier) was killed, on the 9th of September, in Carlisle, about three miles from the middle of Concord. I saw the carcass, & have the skin & skull, which I have set up. It is as large as any of its kind which I find described. I was at first troubled to identify it in the books, because it has naked soles, though I believed it to be the *Canadensis*. Audubon & Bachman give

"soles hairy" as one of the specific characters of this species, and "soles naked" as a specific character of *L. Rufus*. Emmons (in the Massachusetts' Reports) says further & more particularly, "The two most remarkable characters of the Lynx [i.e. The *Canadensis*] are the beautiful pencils of black hair which ornament the ears, and the perfect hairiness of the soles of the feet, which have no naked spots or tubercles like the other species of the feline race." And, speaking of the Bay Lynx, he says that it "is easily distinguished from the preceding by the shorter pencils of hair upon the ear, and by the nakedness of the balls of the toes. This last character, it appears to me, is sufficiently important in the *borealis* [i.e. *Canadensis*] to constitute it a genus by itself."

At length, I obtained a copy of Bairds' "Mammals"; but still I was not satisfied till I had read to near the end of his account, when he says that he has received a second specimen, "in summer pelage," and that "the pads of the feet in this specimen are distinctly visible, not being at all overgrown, as in winter specimens." This is my animal, both in this and in other respects. I am thus minute because it is not yet made quite distinct enough, that hairy soles are no more characteristic of this Lynx than naked soles are.

Judging from the above descriptions, the only peculiarity in my specimen is a distinct black line commencing at the eye and terminating in the black portion of the ruff.

I suspect that some of the Lynxes killed in this vicinity of late years, and called the Bay Lynx, were the Canada Lynx.

Yrs truly
Henry D. Thoreau

Dr. Kneeland was recording secretary of the Boston Society of Natural History. Thoreau had been elected a corresponding member in 1850 and for the rest of his life kept in contact with the Society's activities. The brackets are Thoreau's. MS., Boston Society of Natural History.

From DANIEL RICKETSON

The Shanty, Oct. 14, 1860.

Friend Thoreau,—

Am I to infer from your silence that you decline any farther correspondence and intercourse with me? Or is it that having nothing in particular to communicate you deem silence the wiser course? Yet, between friends, to observe a certain degree of consideration is well, and as I wrote you last, and that some nine or ten months ago, inviting you to visit me, I have often felt disappointed and hurt by your almost sepulchral silence towards me.

I am aware that I have no claims upon you, that I voluntarily introduced myself to your notice, and that from the first you have always behaved toward me with a composure which leads me not to judge too severely your present neutrality. I know also that I have but little to give you in return for the edification and pleasure I have derived from your society, and of which to be deprived not only myself but my family would deem a great and irreparable loss. I readily admit that this gives me no claim upon your friendship, but having passed so much of my life in the want of rural companionship I cannot easily surrender the opportunity of occasionally conversing and rambling among the scenes of our beloved neighborhood, here and at Concord, with you. I trust you will now pardon me for again obtruding myself upon you. I am not accustomed to be humble, nor do I intend to be at this time, for I am not conscious of having committed any offence of sufficient magnitude to forfeit your regard for me.

I would, however, state, that you have probably never seen me under the most favorable circumstances, that is, in my *calmest* hours. I am by nature very easily disturbed, mentally and physically, and this tendency, or infirmity, has been increased by smoking. I have, at last, abandoned the use of the weed. It is now about four months since I have made any use whatever of tobacco, and nearly a year since I began to battle seriously with this enemy of my soul's and body's peace. When I was last at Concord, owing to bad sleep, and the consequent nervous irritability aggravated by smoking, I was particularly out of order, and like an intoxicated or crazed man, hardly responsible for my conduct. Wherefore, if I betrayed any want of kind or gentlemanly feeling, which, I fear, may

have been the case, I trust you will pardon the same and attribute it to a source not normal with me.

In conclusion, I would add that it would give me much pleasure to continue our friendship and occasional intimacy. Still I would not press it, for in so doing I should be selfish, as I have so little to return you for your favors. But ah! me, what is this life worth, if those of congenial tastes and pursuits cannot exchange common courtesies with each other?

Channing is occasionally in New Bedford, but he never comes to see me, nor writes me. I endeavored to be to him a good friend, and his cold, strange ways hurt and grieve me. Would to God that he were able to be true to his higher nature, so beautiful and intelligent.

It is possible you may not have got the last letter I wrote you, which was in December last, if so, the cause of your silence will prove less painful to me.

I write under embarrassment, and must trust to your generosity for the want of felicity of expression in my attempt to convey to you my estimation of the value of your friendship, and my unwillingness to lose it.

I remain, truly and faithfully your friend,

D. Ricketson

Ricketson's reference to a letter of "December last" is probably a slip of memory: we have a letter of January 1860, but none for December. Text, Ricketson, pp. 104-6.

[1860]

From WELCH, BIGELOW & CO.

Oct 30, 1860

Mr H D Thoreau

Dear Sir

Please send us another installment of Black Lead as before. Only you should pay express chg. to Boston as heretofore with the exception of the last

Yours truly
Welch Bigelow & Co

MS., Berg; *previously unpublished.*

To H. G. O. BLAKE

Concord Nov. 4 1860

Mr Blake,

I am glad to hear any particulars of your excursion. As for myself, I looked out for you somewhat on that Monday, when, it appears, you passed Monadnock—turned my glass upon several parties that were ascending the mountain half a mile on one side of us. In short, I came as near to seeing you as you to seeing me. I have no doubt that we should have had a good time if you had come, for I had, all ready, two good spruce houses, in which you could stand up, complete in all respects, half a mile apart, and you & B[rown] could have lodged by yourselves in one, if not with us.

We made an excellent beginning of our *mt* life. You may remember that the Saturday previous was a stormy day. Well, we went up in the rain—wet through, and found ourselves in a cloud there at mid *pm*. in no situation to look about for the best place for a camp. So I proceeded at once, through the cloud, to that memorable stone "chunk yard," in

which we made our humble camp once, and there, after putting our packs under a rock, having a good hatchet, I proceeded to build a substantial house, which C[hanning] declared the handsomest he ever saw. (He never camped out before, and was, no doubt, prejudiced in its favor.) This was done about dark, and by that time we were nearly as wet as if we had stood in a hogshead of water. We then built a fire before the door, directly on the site of our little camp of two years ago, and it took a long time to burn thro' its remains to the earth beneath. Standing before this, and turning round slowly, like meat that is roasting, we were as dry if not drier than ever after a few hours, & so, at last we "turned in."

This was a great deal better than going up there in fair weather, & having no adventure (not knowing how to appreciate either fair weather or foul) but dull common-place sleep in a useless house, & before a comparatively useless fire—such as we get every night. Of course, we thanked our stars, when we saw them, which was about midnight, that they had seemingly withdrawn for a season. We had the *mt* all to ourselves that *pm* & night. There was nobody going up that day to engrave his name on the summit, nor to gather blueberries. The Genius of the *mts.* saw us starting from Concord & it said,— There come two of our folks. Let us get ready for them— Get up a serious storm, that will send a packing these holiday guests (They may have their say another time) Let us receive them with true *mt.* hospitality—kill the fatted cloud—Let them know the value of a spruce roof, & of a fire of dead spruce stumps. Every bush dripped tears of joy at our advent. Fire did its best & received our thanks.—What could fire have done in fair weather?—Spruce roof got its share of our blessings. And then such a view of the wet rocks with the wet lichens on them, as we had the next morning, but did not get again!

We & the *mt* had a sound season, as the saying is. How glad we were to be wet in order that we might be dried!—how glad we were of the storm which made our house seem like a new home to us! This day's experience was indeed lucky for we did not have a thunder shower during all our stay. Perhaps our host reserved this attention in order to tempt us to come again.

Our next house was more substantial still. One side was rock, good for durability, the floor the same, & the roof which I made would have upheld a horse. I stood on it to do the shingling.

I noticed, when I was at the White *Mts* last, several nuisances which render travelling there-about unpleasant. The chief of these was the

mt houses. I might have supposed that the main attraction of that region even to citizens, lay in its wildness and unlikeness to the city, & yet they make it as much like the city as they can afford to. I heard that the Crawford House was lighted with gas, & had a large saloon, with its band of music, for dancing. But give me a spruce house made in the rain.

An old Concord farmer tells me that he ascended Monadnock once, & danced on the top. How did that happen? Why, he being up there, a party of young men & women came up bringing boards & a fiddler, and having laid down the boards they made a level floor, on which they danced to the music of the fiddle. I suppose the tune was "Excelsior." This reminds me of the fellow who climbed to the top of a very high spire, stood upright on the ball, & then hurrahed for—what? Why for Harrison & Tyler. That's the kind of sound which most ambitious people emit when they culminate. They are wont to be singularly frivolous in the thin atmosphere they can't contain themselves, though our comfort & their safety require it; it takes the pressure of many atmospheres to do this; & hence they helplessly evaporate there. It would seem, that, as they ascend, they breathe shorter and shorter, and at each *expiration*, some of their wits leave them, till, when they reach the pinnacle, they are so light headed as to be fit only to show how the wind sits. I suspect that Emersons criticism called Monadnock was inspired not by remembering the inhabitants of N. H. as they are in the valleys, so much as by meeting some of them on the *mt* top.

After several nights' experience C came to the conclusion that he was "lying out doors," and inquired what was the largest beast that might nibble his legs there. I fear that he did not improve all the night, as he might have done, to sleep. I had asked him to go and spend a week there. We spent 5 nights, being gone 6 days, for C suggested that 6 working days made a week, & I saw that he was ready to *de-camp*. However, he found his account in it, as well as I.

We were seen to go up in the rain, grim & silent like 2 Genii of the storm, by Fassett's men or boys, but we were never identified afterward, though we were the subject of some conversation which we overheard. Five hundred persons at least came onto the *mt.* while we were there, but not one found our camp. We saw one party of three ladies & two gentlemen spread their blankets and spend the night on the top, & heard them converse, but they did not know that they had neighbors, who were

comparatively old settlers. We spared them the chagrin which that knowledge would have caused them, & let them print their story in a newspaper accordingly.

From what I heard of Fassett's infirmities I concluded that his partner was Tap. He has moved about thirty rods further down the *mt.*, & is still hammering at a new castle there when you go by, while Tap is probably down cellar. Such is the Cerberus that guards *this* passage. There always is one you know. This is not so bad to go by as the Glen House. However, we left those Elysian fields by a short cut of our own which departed just beyond where he is stationed.

Yes, to meet men on an honest and simple footing, meet with rebuffs, suffer from sore feet, as you did, aye & from a sore heart, as perhaps you also did,—all that is excellent. What a pity that that young prince could not enjoy a little of the legitimate experience of travelling, be dealt with simply & truly though rudely. He might have been invited to some hospitable house in the country, had his bowl of bread & milk set before him, with a clean pin-a-fore, been told that there were the punt & the fishing rod, and he could amuse himself as he chose—might have swung a few birches, dug out a woodchuck, & had a regular good time, & finally been sent to bed with the boys,—and so never have been introduced to Mr. [Edward] Everett at all. I have no doubt that this would have been a far more memorable & valuable experience than he got.

The snow-clad summit of *Mt. Washington* must have been a very interesting sight from Wachusett. How wholesome winter is seen far or near, how good above all mere sentimental warm-blooded—short-lived, soft-hearted *moral* goodness, commonly so called. Give me the goodness which has forgotten its own deeds,—which God has seen to be good and let be. None of your *just made perfect*—pickled eels! All that will save them will be their picturesqueness, as with blasted trees Whatever is and is not ashamed to be is good. I value no moral goodness or greatness unless it is good or great even as that snowy peak is. Pray how could thirty feet of bowels improve it? Nature is goodness crystalized. You looked into the land of promise. Whatever beauty we behold, the more it is distant, serene, and cold, the purer & more durable it is. It is better to warm ourselves with ice than with fire.

Tell Brown that he sent me more than the price of the book—viz a word from himself, for which I am greatly his debtor.

H. D. T.

This was to be Thoreau's last visit to Monadnock. The young prince he mentions became Edward VII. MS., Lownes.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON

Concord Nov. 4 1860

Friend Ricketson,

I thank you for the verses. They are quite too good to apply to me. However, I know what a poet's license is, and will not get in the way.

But what do you mean by that prose? Why will you waste so many regards on me, and not know what to think of my silence? Infer from it what you might from the silence of a dense pine wood. It is its natural condition, except when the winds blow, and the jays scream, & the chickadee winds up his clock. My silence is just as inhuman as that, and no more.

You know that I never promised to correspond with you, & so, when I do, I do more than I promised.

Such are my pursuits and habits that I rarely go abroad, and it is quite a habit with me to decline invitations to do so. Not that I could not enjoy such visits, if I were not otherwise occupied. I have enjoyed very much my visits to you and my rides in your neighborhood, and am sorry that I cannot enjoy such things oftener; but life is short, and there are other things also to be done. I admit that you are more social than I am, and far more attentive to "the common courtesies of life" but this is partly for the reason that you have fewer or less exacting private pursuits.

Not to have written a note for a year is with me a very venial offence. I think that I do not correspond with any one so often as once in six-months.

I have a faint recollection of your invitation referred to, but I suppose that I had no new nor particular reason for declining & so made no new statements. I have felt that you would be glad to see me almost whenever I got ready to come, but I only offer myself as a rare visitor, & a still rarer correspondent.

I am very busy, after my fashion, little as there is to show for it, and feel as if I could not spend many days nor dollars in travelling, for the shortest visit must have a fair margin to it, and the days thus affect the weeks, you know. Nevertheless, we cannot forego these luxuries altogether.

You must not regard me as a regular diet, but at most only as acorns, which too are not to be despised, which, at least, we love to think are edible in a bracing walk. We have got along pretty well together in several directions, though we are such strangers in others.

I hardly know what to say in answer to your letter.

Some are accustomed to write many letters, others very few. I am one of the last. At any rate, we are pretty sure, if we write at all, to send those thoughts which we cherish, to that one, who, we believe, will most religiously attend to them.

This life is not for complaint, but for satisfaction. I do not feel addressed by this letter of yours. It suggests only misunderstanding. Inter-course may be good, but of what use are complaints & apologies? Any complaint I have to make is too serious to be uttered, for the evil cannot be mended.

Turn over a new leaf

My out-door harvest this fall has been one Canada Lynx, a fierce looking fellow, which, it seems, we have hereabouts; eleven barrels of apples from trees of my own planting; and a large crop of white oak acorns which I did not raise.

Please remember me to your family. I have a very pleasant recollection of your fireside, and I trust that I shall revisit it—also of your shanty & the surrounding regions.

Yrs truly
Henry D. Thoreau

The gap of which Ricketson complained is apparently considerable: the last extant letter before this one is dated February 12, 1859. Thoreau's opening reference to some verses is obscure. They must have been original ones—Ricketson fancied himself as a poet—but we are not sure which. The admonition to "Turn over a new leaf," at the bottom of a sheet, is a typically Thoreauvian pun. MS., Huntington.

[1860]

From MONCURE CONWAY

Cincinnati, Nov. 26.

My dear Mr. Thoreau,

We are thinking of issuing the *Dial* next year as a Quarterly instead of a Monthly; and I wish to ask if you will be so bountiful as to let me publish therein your Agricultural Address.

Your friend,
M. D. Conway.

Mr H D Thoreau.

The "Agricultural Address" was probably "The Succession of Forest Trees." But neither it nor any other work by Thoreau ever appeared in Conway's Dial. The year is omitted, but the letter is included in Berg with other manuscripts for 1860, the year of Thoreau's address. MS., Berg; previously unpublished.

To H. G. O. BLAKE

Concord Dec 2d '60

Mr Blake,

I am going to Waterbury Ct. to lecture on the 11th inst. If you are to be at home, & it will be agreeable to you, I will spend the afternoon & night of the 10th with you & Brown.

H. D. Thoreau

MS., Berg, copy in Blake's hand; previously unpublished.

From HOBART & ROBBINS

Boston 3d Dec'r, 1860.

Mr. Henry D. Thoreau Concord, N. H.
Dr. Sir

Enclosed are Nine Dollars, to pay our order of the 26th.
Return the enclosed bill receipted.

Yr's Resp'y
Hobart & Robbins

\$9.00

MS., Berg; *previously unpublished.*

To LOUIS A. SURETTE

Concord Dec 17 '60

Mr Surette
Dear Sir

I am very sorry to say that the illness of my mother, who is confined to her bed, will prevent her showing to Mr Phillips the attention which she desired to. The prospect is also that I shall be kept at home Wednesday evening by an influenza— My mother wishes me to say, however, that Mrs Brooks will be happy to entertain Mr Phillips at her home.

Yrs truly
Henry D. Thoreau

Surette, the curator of the Concord Lyceum, had evidently tried to make arrangements for hospitality for Wendell Phillips, who lectured two

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days after Thoreau wrote this note. Mrs. Nathan Brooks was a good friend of Thoreau's womenfolk. MS., Huntington; previously unpublished.

To E. H. RUSSELL

The book to which I referred was "Heywood's New England Gazetteer Concord, New Hampshire, 1839." There are later and probably better editions. I am glad to hear that my own book has afforded you any pleasure.

Yours truly,
Henry D. Thoreau.

Elias Harlow Russell was an elocutionist and teacher in Worcester and a good friend of H. G. O. Blake and Theo Brown. At one time, after Thoreau's death, Russell became his literary executor. Text, Goodspeed's Catalogue No. 271, Item 221, p. 28.