

IV

LETTERS OF SOPHIA E. THOREAU AND
DANIEL RICKETSON

Her memory makes our common landscape seem
Fairer than any of which painters dream,
Lights the brown hills and sings in every stream.

WHITTIER.

LETTERS OF SOPHIA E. THOREAU AND DANIEL RICKETSON

CONCORD, Dec. 19, 1861.

MR. RICKETSON :

DEAR SIR, — Thank you for your friendly interest in my dear brother. I wish that I could report more favorably in regard to his health.

Soon after your visit to Concord Henry commenced riding, and almost every day he introduced me to some of his familiar haunts, far away in the thick woods or by the ponds, all very new and delightful to me. The air and exercise which he enjoyed during the fine autumn days, was a benefit to him — he seemed stronger — had a good appetite, and was able to attend somewhat to his writing ; but since the cold weather has come his cough has increased and he is able to go out but seldom. Just now he is suffering from an attack of pleurisy which confines him wholly to the house.

His spirits do not fail him, he continues in his usual serene mood, which is very pleasant for his friends as well as himself. I am hoping for a short winter and early spring that the invalid may again be out of doors. I am sorry to hear of your indisposition, and trust that you will be well again soon. It would give me pleasure to see some of

your newspaper articles, since you possess a hopeful spirit.

My patience is very nearly exhausted, the times look *very* dark. I think that the next soldier who is shot for sleeping at his post should be General McClellan. Why does he not do something in the way of fighting? I despair of ever living under the reign of Sumner or Phillips. . . .

Mother joins with me in kind remembrances to yourself and family.

Yours with much esteem,

S. E. THOREAU.

CONCORD, April 7, 1862.

MR. RICKETSON :

DEAR SIR, — I feel moved to acknowledge the pleasant letters which Henry has lately received from you. It is really refreshing to hear of the flight of the wild geese and the singing of birds. There is a good deal of snow still whitening our fields. I am almost impatient to see the ground bare again.

My dear brother has survived the winter, and we should be most thankful if he might linger to welcome the green grass and the flowers once more. Believing as I do in the sincerity of your friendship for Henry, I feel anxious that you should know *how* ill he is. Since the autumn he has been gradually failing, and is now the embodiment of weakness; still, he enjoys seeing his friends, and every bright hour he devotes to his manuscripts which he is preparing for publication. For many weeks he has

spoken only in a faint whisper. Henry accepts this dispensation with such childlike trust and is so happy that I feel as if he were being translated, rather than dying in the ordinary way of most mortals. I hope you will come and see him *soon*, and be cheered. He has often expressed pleasure at the prospect of seeing you.

I asked Mr. Alcott to write to you some weeks since; but I do not think that he impressed you with Henry's true condition. Few of his friends realize how sick he is, his spirits are always so good.

In much haste, believe me,

Yours truly,

S. E. THOREAU.

P. S. Henry sends kind regards to you and your family, and desires me to tell you that he cannot rise to greet a guest, and has not been out for three months.

SUNDAY May 11th '62.

Mottoes placed in Henry's coffin by his friend W. E. C.:—

"Hail to thee, O man, who art come from the transitory place to the imperishable."

"Gazed on the heavens for what he missed on earth."

"I think for to touche also
The world whiche neweth everie daie,
So as I can, so as I maie."

Dear friend, you will not forget the bereaved mother and sister.

Yours truly,

S. E. THOREAU.

STANZAS

WRITTEN TO BE SUNG AT THE FUNERAL OF HENRY D. THOREAU, OF
CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS (Friday, May 9th, 1862).

Hearst thou the sobbing breeze complain
How faint the sunbeams light the shore, —
His heart more fixed than earth or main,
Henry! that faithful heart is o'er.

Oh, weep not thou thus vast a soul,
Oh, do not mourn this lordly man,
As long as Walden's waters roll,
And Concord River fills a span.

For thoughtful minds in Henry's page
Large welcome find and bless his verse,
Drawn from the poet's heritage,
From wells of right and nature's source.

Fountains of hope and faith! inspire
Most stricken hearts to lift this cross!
His perfect trust shall keep the fire,
His glorious peace disarm all loss!

WM. E. CHANNING.

BROOKLAWN, 13th May, 1862.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — Please accept my thanks for your kindness in sending me the lines sung at your dear brother's funeral. I did not know of his death until I read it in one of our New Bedford papers Thursday evening, the 8th inst. Although I was not unprepared for the sad event, still I was very seriously moved by the same. I had fondly, you know, cherished the hope that he might still be

spared to us who so much valued him, but he has passed on to a higher and happier sphere of existence. While at work in our garden the other day with my son Walton, I remarked that Henry would never hear the birds sing here again, adding how much we should miss him, and wondering whether he still felt an interest in things of earth. Walton very appropriately and beautifully, as I think, replied that he supposed Henry was interested in looking about upon the new scenes of his present experience. What a glorious field he has for his exquisitely curious mind to work in!

I hope your dear mother finds consolation. You have, I am aware, been often stricken, but I trust are not left hopeless nor comfortless. You spoke of Henry's serenity and resignation. Will you be so kind as to give me a few of the particulars of his latter days,—his expressions and the state of his mind generally, if it be agreeable to you. I should have been glad to have seen Henry again, and had hoped to come up to Concord from Boston at the time of the Anti-Slavery Convention this month. By referring to your letter I see that I should not have deferred it; but it is now too late to perform the last offices of a friendship which I trust was sincere and hope will again be renewed. I have sent some lines entitled "Walden," written some two years ago, to the "Liberator" for publication. I inclose the letter which I refer to in my last to Henry as unsent. I retained it by the advice of my daughters, who thought its tone too mournful, and so in consider-

ation of Henry's feelings I coincided with them. Had I known he was so near the close of his life I should have sent it.

Most certainly I will not forget "the bereaved mother and sister." May I be permitted to mourn with you the loss of one whose peer in virtue and intelligence I never knew! Daily I think of him, and my dear son, Walton, with whom I am now busily engaged in our garden work, often speaks of him; this very afternoon he remarked of Henry's companionship with some congenial spirit, and I suggested Plato.

The public have met with a great loss in Henry's death, — his friends and pupils were increasing, — Concord is sadly bereaved, and his friends, Emerson, Alcott, Channing, Hosmer, and others, must feel it very keenly. I should be glad for you and my daughters to know each other, and I should be happy, as they would, to see you at our house.

I am under many obligations to your kind mother and yourself for kindnesses which I should be happy to reciprocate. I should be glad to hear more about Henry's last experiences, as I have before written.

With my kindest regards and sympathy to your mother and aunts, I remain, my dear friend, for your own as well as for Henry's sake,

Yours faithfully,

DAN'L RICKETSON.

P. S. Did my last letter to Henry, dated the 4th inst., reach him in time for him to read it or have it read? I did not think it would be my last to him.

I write amid many interruptions from various callers and visitors.

CONCORD, May 20th, 1862.

MR. RICKETSON :

DEAR FRIEND, — Profound joy mingles with my grief. I feel as if something very beautiful had happened, not death ; although Henry is with us no longer, yet the memory of his sweet and virtuous soul must ever cheer and comfort me. My heart is filled with praise to God for the gift of such a brother, and may I never distrust the love and wisdom of Him who made him, and who has now called him to labor in more glorious fields than earth affords.

You ask for some particulars relating to Henry's illness. I feel like saying that Henry was never affected, never reached by it. I never before saw such a manifestation of the power of spirit over matter. Very often I have heard him tell his visitors that he enjoyed existence as well as ever. He remarked to me that there was as much comfort in perfect disease as in perfect health, the mind always conforming to the condition of the body. The thought of death, he said, could not begin to trouble him. His thoughts had entertained him all his life, and did still.

When he had wakeful nights, he would ask me to arrange the furniture so as to make fantastic shadows on the wall, and he wished his bed was in the form of a shell, that he might curl up in it. He considered occupation as necessary for the sick as

for those in health, and has accomplished a vast amount of labor during the past few months in preparing some papers for the press. He did not cease to call for his manuscripts till the last day of his life.

During his long illness I never heard a murmur escape him, or the slightest wish expressed to remain with us; his perfect contentment was truly wonderful. None of his friends seemed to realize how very ill he was, so full of life and good cheer did he seem. One friend, as if by way of consolation, said to him, "Well, Mr. Thoreau, we must all go." Henry replied, "When I was a very little boy I learned that I must die, and I set that down, so of course I am not disappointed now. Death is as near to you as it is to me."

There is very much that I should like to write you about my precious brother, had I time and strength. I wish you to know how very gentle, lovely, and submissive he was in all his ways. His little study bed was brought down into our front parlor, when he could no longer walk with our assistance, and every arrangement pleased him. The devotion of his friends was most rare and touching; his room was made fragrant by the gift of flowers from young and old; fruit of every kind which the season afforded, and game of all sorts was sent him. It was really pathetic, the way in which the town was moved to minister to his comfort. Total strangers sent grateful messages, remembering the good he had done them. All this attention was fully

appreciated and very gratifying to Henry ; he would sometimes say, "I should be ashamed to stay in this world after so much had been done for me, I could never repay my friends." And they so remembered him to the last. Only about two hours before he left us, Judge Hoar called with a bouquet of hyacinths fresh from his garden, which Henry smelled and said he liked, and a few minutes after he was gone, another friend came with a dish of his favorite jelly.

I can never be grateful enough for the gentle, easy exit which was granted him. At seven o'clock Tuesday morning he became restless and desired to be moved ; dear mother, Aunt Louisa, and myself were with him ; his self-possession did not forsake him. A little after eight he asked to be raised quite up, his breathing grew fainter and fainter, and without the slightest struggle, he left us at nine o'clock. But not alone. Our Heavenly Father was with us.

Your last letter reached us by the evening mail on Monday. H. asked me to read it to him, which I did. He enjoyed your letters, and felt disappointed not to see you again. Mr. Blake and Brown came twice to visit him since January. They were present at his funeral, which took place in the church. Mr. Emerson read such an address as no other man could have done. It is a source of great satisfaction that one so gifted knew and loved my brother and is prepared to speak such brave words about him at this time. The "Atlantic Monthly" for July will contain Mr. E.'s memorial of Henry.

I hope that you saw a notice of the services on Friday written by Mr. Fields in the "Transcript."

Let me thank you for your very friendly letters. I trust we shall see you in Concord anniversary week. It would give me pleasure to make the acquaintance of your family, of whom my brother has so often told me.

If convenient, will you please bring the ambrotype of Henry which was taken last autumn in New Bedford? I am interested to see it. Mr. Channing will take the crayon likeness to Boston this week to secure some photographs.

My intention was to apologize for *not* writing you at this time: but I must now trust to your generosity to pardon this hasty letter, written under a great pressure of cares and amid frequent interruptions.

My mother unites with me in very kind regards to your family.

Yours truly,

S. E. THOREAU.

BROOKLAWN, 22d May, 1862.

DEAR MISS THOREAU, — Your deeply affecting letter of the 20th inst. relative to Henry's death arrived yesterday. My family as well as myself have read and reread the contents with truly reverential feelings for the beautiful and noble spirit of your brother. You hardly need our sympathy, sustained as you are by a higher and better support than any earthly friend can lend.

I am very glad that Henry was so upheld to the last, and that you appear to possess the same admirable element of faith and trust. Still we shall all miss him, we shall be sensible of a void which will for us never be filled ; and the fair fields, the woods, and the river he so much loved will lose to many of us their highest interest now he is gone, except such as memory may hold in store for us, of the master spirit that once so graced and depicted them.

Henry was the roundest man I ever knew — he seemed as near perfect as it is possible for humanity to be. Other men have been great in their particular vocations, but he became master in whatever he grasped, — at once poet, and painter, naturalist, scholar, artisan, philanthropist, and withal, and more than all else, so Christlike in the childlike simplicity and strength of his character. Truly, we shall never behold his peer, and I am so poor and weak that I must mourn his loss. With the loss of friend after friend and the lessening hold of life in advancing years, I feel the deep necessity of diligently seeking the true ground of faith and hope. Possessing not the grand and well-balanced mind of your brother, I am still anxiously inquiring the way to life and immortality, and often feel like a poor weary pilgrim on the dusty road I travel. I am becoming more and more drawn to the faith of my fathers, who were Friends from the days of George Fox, and so much of the old leaven remains in me that I find myself involuntarily, as it were, drawn into their simple and rational ways of life.

As it is quite uncertain about my going to the Anti-Slavery Convention next week, and thence to Concord, I have concluded to send the ambrotype of Henry by mail. When I heard of your brother's death, I went to the artist who took the picture and got the duplicate of the one I had for you. I send you the strongest impression, the first taken. The one I keep is a little lighter in color, which led me to choose it, but I now see the stronger expression in yours. If you were here I should like for you to take your choice. We all consider it very lifelike and one of the most successful likenesses we ever saw. What is rather remarkable is that it shews scarcely at all Henry's loss of health, suffering deeply as he was at the time it was taken, from his disease.

Farewell, dear friend! I shall never forget thy noble worth and the many instructive days I have passed in thy companionship. As Milton mourned his beloved Lycidas, so I must mourn the loss of thee, dear Henry!

Excuse my sad conclusion, and believe me,

Ever truly yours,

DAN'L RICKETSON.

P. S. I should like to hear of the receipt of the ambrotype and how you like it.

CONCORD, May 26th, 1862.

MR. RICKETSON :

DEAR FRIEND, — Most heartily do I thank you for the picture of my dear brother which was received on Saturday. It was *very* kind of you to

secure the duplicate for me. Until a few weeks since, I did not know that Henry had his picture taken when in New Bedford last; he accidentally spoke of it, and said that you considered it a good likeness. None of his Daguerreotypes have pleased us, and I did not imagine that the ambrotype would afford us much satisfaction, still I felt curious to see it, thinking I might get a copy of yours in case we liked it.

I need not tell you, for I cannot, how agreeably surprised I was on opening the little box, to find my own lost brother again. I could not restrain my tears. The picture is invaluable to us. I discover a slight shade about the eyes expressive of weariness, but a stranger might not observe it. I am very glad to possess a picture of so late a date. The crayon drawn eight years ago this summer we considered good, it betrays the poet. I always liked it. Mr. Channing, Emerson, Alcott, and many other friends who have looked at the ambrotype, express much satisfaction.

We are disappointed that we may not see you at present. I know that our home has lost all its attraction. You are aware what a host Henry was, how full of profit and entertainment was all his conversation. Still the town contains many valued friends of my dear brother whom I know that you would enjoy meeting, and I trust that it will not be long ere we see you in Concord.

Let me thank you for your late letters, so full of heartfelt sympathy, as well as appreciation and

admiration for my dear brother's rare traits. I shall ever prize them most highly.

Henry left a vast amount of manuscript. He made disposition of some of his effects, and he often spoke of yourself, Mr. Blake and Brown, but I regret that he did not decide what should be given to these friends. When you come to Concord I hope that you may find something to keep which belonged to Henry, if you desire it.

I regret that you did not see Henry during his late illness. It was not possible to be sad in his presence. I feel as if he had done much to strengthen the faith of all his friends.

No shadow of gloom attaches to anything in my mind, connected with my precious brother. Henry's whole life impresses me as a grand miracle. I always thought him the most upright man I ever knew, and now it is a pleasure to praise him.

With very kind regards to your family, believe me,

Yours truly,

S. E. THOREAU.

CONCORD, Aug. 31, 1862.

MR. RICKETSON :

VERY DEAR FRIEND, — Nothing but illness, which has prostrated me all the summer, has prevented my acknowledging your kind letter of May 27th.

No opportunity has occurred to send to New Bedford, else I should have forwarded "Wilson's Ornithology." Henry mentioned the volume to me,

as one of value, and as being out of print. Believe me, I shall be most happy to transfer it to the shelves of your library. Henry always admired your relation to Nature, and he much enjoyed your letters last spring containing a record of the coming of the birds.

You refer to Henry's "dance" at your house some years since. I have so often witnessed the like that I can easily imagine how it was, and I remember that Henry gave me some account of the same. I recollect he said that he did not scruple to tread on Mr. Alcott's toes. I hope you will some day let me see the verses written on the occasion.

Your lines entitled "Walden" afforded mother and myself much satisfaction, they seem very just, and I am glad to know that in his lifetime, you appreciated so well my precious brother.

I have thought that you might like to see some verses which Henry wrote soon after my brother John's decease, and I will transcribe them. Henry scarcely spoke of dear John, it pained him too much. He sent the following verses from Castleton, Staten Island, in a letter to Helen in May, 1843. You will see that they apply to himself.

"Brother, where dost thou dwell?

What sun shines for thee now?

Dost thou indeed fare well?

As we wished here below?

"What season didst thou find?

'T was winter here.

Are not the fates more kind
Than they appear?

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

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

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

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

“What bird wilt thou employ
To bring me word of thee?
For it would give them joy,
'T would give them liberty,
To serve their former lord
With wing and minstrelsy.

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

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

Ah! they could well abide
The dying year.

“Now they no more return,
I hear them not;
They have remained to mourn,
Or else forgot.”

I suppose you have read Mr. Emerson's article.
I should like to know what you think of it.

I hope the autumn will not pass without a visit
from you. I long to see you and talk with you of
dear Henry.

Mother joins with me in kind regards to yourself
and family.

Yours truly,

S. E. T.

THE SHANTY, 2d Sept., 1862.

DEAR MISS THOREAU, — In my younger days I
had a seal with a harp upon it, and this motto, “I
answer to the touch;” and though I grow more
sedate with increasing years, I am not sorry to find
that your kind and friendly letter has touched a
responsive chord. I am pained to hear that you
have been so ill, the announcement of which by
yourself is the first intimation I have had of it, for
certainly had I known it, I should have hastened to
write you or some one of your family about you. I
trust that you are fast recovering, and that the cooler
weather of autumn will prove favorable to you. I
shall be very glad to have Henry's copy of Wilson's
Ornithology, although I felt after I had written to

you for the same, that I had been too forward, and should have waited for you to have asked what book I would prefer. I am happy to learn that my last letters to Henry afforded him some gratification. I do not regret that I did not see Henry towards his close, as my remembrances of him are now as he usually appeared when on our rural rambles here and at Concord. I am glad that my lines entitled "Walden" pleased you and your mother. I am not much of a versifier, though by nature of the poetic temperament, but my lines can claim one recommendation, they are genuine.

I have never before seen the verses of your brother you sent me. How tender and beautiful they are, and to you and your mother they must be a precious memento of her dear, noble sons, who I trust have met and joined the dear sister and father in a higher and better sphere of existence. It will be one year ago the 5th of this month when I parted with Henry at the Concord depot. He had made me a visit in the latter part of the previous August as you may remember, but was too feeble at that time to ramble much; but we took a number of pleasant rural drives about the country and to the seashore.

The following are the verses you refer to.

THOREAU'S DANCE.

Like the Indian dance of old,
Far within the forest shade,
Showing forth the spirit bold,
That no foeman e'er dismayed; —

Like the dancing of the Hours,
 Tripping on with merry feet,
 Triumphant o'er earthly powers,
 Yet with footsteps all must greet ; —

Like the Fauns, and Satyrs, too,
 Nimble leaping in the grove,
 Now unseen, and then in view,
 As amid the trees they move ; —

Like the leaves by whirlwind tossed
 In some forest's valley wide,
 Scattered by the Autumn frost,
 Whirling madly, side by side ; —

Thus, and still mysterious more,
 Our philosopher did prance,
 Skipping on our parlor floor,
 In his wild *improvised* dance.

April, 1857.

You ask my opinion of Mr. Emerson's article on your brother. When I read it for the first time I felt somewhat disappointed in its want of fullness, but on subsequent reading I feel better satisfied, and bating a few errors in fact, I do not think it could be much improved. I think Mr. Emerson intended the strictest justice to Henry's memory, but I think also that to strangers the article would fail in some important particulars to convey an idea of his noblest and highest qualities. I do not myself think that Henry was fully revealed, and I had looked forward to the more genial years of advanced life, when the spiritual experiences of his soul should bring us nearer together. But a truer or

better man I never knew, and his like I cannot hope to meet again. I keep his memory sacred in my heart. I thank you for your kind wishes to see and talk with me about your brother. I should be glad to do so, and hope before autumn closes to come to Concord. With kind regards from my wife, son, and daughters to yourself and mother, and my own, I remain

Very truly yours,

DAN'L RICKETSON.

CONCORD, Feb. 7th, 1863.

MR. RICKETSON :

DEAR FRIEND, — I hasten to acknowledge your tribute to my dear brother. Any word in memory of him awakens my gratitude.

Mother and myself live almost wholly in the past. Henry is ever in our thoughts. I feel continually sustained and cheered by the influence of his child-like faith.

You are evidently not aware that I have been recently called to pass through a most fiery trial. Seven weeks ago yesterday, my poor mother fell down our back stairway, a long, steep flight (perhaps you may remember them), shattering her right arm frightfully, and otherwise seriously injuring herself. For an hour or two she was deprived of her senses, and during her insanity it was heart-rending to me to hear her call almost incessantly for Henry, so sadly did I miss his strong arm and kind, brave heart in that dark hour. Ether was administered, her arm was set, and since then my dear

mother has lain in her bed, a most patient sufferer. I have been her constant and only nurse. It is wonderful how much discipline we need, although this late affliction is wholly mysterious; somehow I feel a little wiser, and trust that it has been good for me.

You speak of a biography of Henry. I think the world is so much better for his having lived in it, that I ardently wish that a faithful record of his life might be written for the profit of all men. I do not think, however, of one competent to write it. Mr. W., whom you suggest, had a very slight acquaintance with my brother. Mr. Blake and Brown would be truer to him than any who knew him. Mr. Alcott perhaps best understood his religious character, while Mr. Emerson possesses the rare wisdom, discrimination, and taste requisite for the purpose. Mr. Channing and yourself might aid in the work. Henry's character was so comprehensive that I think it would take many minds to portray it.

Mr. Emerson's article in the "Atlantic" I value *very* highly, but you know that he always eschewed pathos, and reading it for consolation as a stricken mourner, I felt somewhat disappointed. Henry never impressed me as the Stoic which Mr. E. represents him. I think Henry was a person of much more faith than Mr. Emerson. I remember with pleasure Henry's criticism upon some chapters in "The Conduct of Life" which I read to him last winter.

I shall always regret that you did not see Henry during his last illness. He often seemed radiant.

One day observing his wasted limbs he said, "Sophia, my knees look like balls on a string, — I go on as if I were to stay a thousand years. I do enjoy myself."

Mr. Blake and Brown spent a day with me not long since, and paid a visit to Walden.

I hope we shall see you soon. Henry's friends are most welcome.

Mother joins with me in very kind regards to yourself and household. We are glad to know that you sometimes speak of dear Henry.

Yours very truly,

S. E. THOREAU.

CONCORD, May 18th, 1863.

MY DEAR MR. RICKETSON, — I cannot tell you how very welcome was your last kind note. The sympathy of friends is truly prized by us.

I always reproach myself for any sadness in view of dear Henry's departure, knowing that the possession of such a priceless treasure as he was to us, for so long a time, should ever fill our hearts with gratitude. But I have passed the round of one year with no earthly friend to lean upon — the spring finds us in feeble health — my dear mother's frame sadly shattered, with no prospect of ever recovering the use of her right hand, and often when overwhelmed with care, I so miss the counsel of my precious brother, who was never cast down and who in every emergency could make the light shine, that I confess, my heart at times is heavy.

It is pleasant, and indeed impossible for me not to associate all Nature with Henry; he did so love all God's works. — When you come to Concord, I shall show you some of his Journals, and you will see how much he enjoyed, what lessons he learned from day to day.

“No flower or herb his vernal head shall rear
 But when thou comest nigh will know thy tread,
 And lift a little more his happy head;
 The birds will watch thee walking, and thy breast
 Confide in as a wider, warmer nest;
 Beneath thy step shall thrill the buried root;
 The rill will run to lave thy loved foot;
 The earliest flowers of Spring from other eye
 Will hide, and wishful wait thy passing by;
 And when thy footstep to the forest roams
 The pines among their tops will say, ‘He comes,’
 And give new balsam to their healing breath.”

I often think how much Henry is spared when I realize the terrible state of our country, — it would have darkened his sky; he was most sensitive.

Did you receive my note with the photograph? — The prayer I copied is one Henry selected for the Dial years ago. I do not know the author.

I enjoyed your lines, “The Fallow Fields” — they made for me a charming picture.

Ticknor & Fields are about to issue a volume of Henry's papers.

I think that I have not told you of Calvin H. Green, of Michigan, a most enthusiastic admirer of my brother, — a total stranger to us. Mr. G. has written me several times since Henry left us, and

once said that he had desired to bestow some token of friendship upon Henry during his life, but now that it was too late, he wished to give it to the companion who walked most frequently with him, asking his name. Since then he has sent a cane to Mr. Channing. The wood is highly polished, a silver band with a motto from the "Week" and the names Thoreau and Channing encircle the cane, and on the top is a silver plate with "Friendship" engraved upon it. I should have said that the wood is of a bright red color, and came from California. The stick was cut from the "Manzanita," a little shrub which grows on the tops of mountains and bears apples, with evergreen leaves. Was not this a rare instance of friendship? How dear Henry would have enjoyed receiving the gift! Perhaps he knows all about it now.

You do not write as if you planned coming to Concord this season, but really, I think if you knew how *much* pleasure it would give me to see you here, that you would come. May we not expect you?

Mother unites with me in very kind regards to yourself and family.

Yours very sincerely,
SOPHIA E. THOREAU.

CONCORD, Dec. 15th, '63.

MR. RICKETSON :

DEAR FRIEND, — I cannot let another day pass without assuring you of my most grateful remembrance of all the members of your family, who so

kindly contributed to the pleasure of my stay at Brooklawn.

I was much benefited by my absence from Concord, and since my return have been able to walk five or six miles with ease, which is a great gain. I spend much time out of doors, visit Walden very often, and the other day I enticed my good aunt Jennie, who will be 79 years old Christmas day, to accompany me to the pond. It gave her much satisfaction to visit the spot where dear Henry enjoyed so much. I walked up to the north part of the town lately, where his little house now stands, and ate my dinner under its roof, with the mice for company.

I hope you like the new volume "Excursions." I am quite reconciled to the title.

I found Mr. Blake in Concord when I got home. He shrinks from undertaking such a book as Mr. Fields desires to make of the letters — thinks he lacks literary skill. I trust, however, that he will simply edit the letters if nothing more.

Mr. Curtis lectured before the Lyceum a few weeks since, and we are to have Mr. Emerson tomorrow evening.

Mr. Channing is quite neighborly, although he did not condescend to make any inquiries as to his New Bedford friends when he first met me after my return, yet I am quite sure that he was interested to hear all that I had to tell him about them.

Mrs. Brooks is sadly afflicted by the death of her husband — indeed all Concord sympathize in the

loss, for Mr. Brooks had won the respect and affection of all who knew him.

For many weeks I have had a lame wrist, which has compelled me to neglect all my correspondents; nothing taxes it so severely as writing. This must be my apology for any seeming neglect.

I trust that you have had a visit from your son Arthur. Please remember me affectionately to your gentle wife, and daughters.

Thinking of Miss Anna one day at our cliffs, I plucked a frost-bitten leaf, which I will inclose.

Hoping to hear a pleasant report from your household, I remain,

Very truly yours,

S. E. THOREAU.

My kind regards to Walton. I would like to see him in Concord.

CONCORD, Nov. 29, 1864.

MR. RICKETSON :

DEAR FRIEND, — A few weeks since I felt moved to respond to your kindly notice of Mr. Phillips. It betrayed so much wisdom, and dignity, — I fancied it coming fresh and pure from your little Shanty, — a spot unspotted from this world, and I assure you it was most satisfactory, — it was refreshing to feel that another man as good as Mr. Phillips was ready to stand by his side.

I am still grateful for your last pleasant note, which I have so long neglected to acknowledge. I

did hope that the summer would not pass without seeing you, with your daughters, in Concord. The invalid state of my family forbids my inviting guests, but I do like to have them take the responsibility of coming and sharing what hospitality it is in our power to bestow.

I thought ere this to send you a volume of my brother's letters. Mr. Blake shrank from the task of editing them, feeling that he lacked the requisite literary skill, so Mr. Emerson assumed the labor and I suppose that they will not appear at present.

The "Cape Cod" papers have been printed. I believe that the publisher wishes to issue the letters first, so the volume is delayed.

Mr. Blake and Brown visited us this autumn, and Mr. Channing treated them very courteously — on Henry's account, I have no doubt.

Since I last wrote you I have parted with one more out of my narrow circle of relatives. My dear Aunt Jane died in Bangor in August last, while visiting her nieces — she had paralysis of the lungs. Aunt Maria, the only surviving member of the family, makes her home with us for the present.

I trust you are enjoying these Indian summer days.

Mother joins with me in very kind regards to all your family.

With sincere respect, believe me,

Yours truly,

S. E. THOREAU.

CONCORD, March, 1865.

DEAR MR. RICKETSON, — I felt that I got much more than my deserts when your welcome letters reached me in response to my note.

You can scarcely realize how much pleasure your communications afford me, since I am so tardy in acknowledging them. But the kind words you so sincerely write of my dear brother are very comforting to me.

I cannot tell you how startled and grieved we all felt to hear of Mr. Cholmondeley's death. His brother's letter impressed me as a painful chapter from some romance. It is hard to realize that he has left us. We have always felt the truest regard for Mr. C. as a person of rare integrity, great benevolence, and the sincerest friendliness, and I am sure that his loss must be *very* great to those who knew, and loved him best.

I have lately read his letters to Henry, with peculiar interest. He really cared much for America, and I think seriously entertained the idea at one time, of making it his home.

I am surprised by referring to your letters to find that they were written December 2d — so quickly has the spring come. It was Henry's favorite season. Did you see some lines, by Channing, entitled "A Voice of Spring"? I fancy that dear Henry's absence inspired the lament. Some of Mr. C.'s verses are very charming to me, he makes such lovely pictures of birds and flowers. I will copy a part of the poem.

"The swallow is flying over
 But he will *not* come to me ;
 He who heard his cry of spring
 Hears that no more, heeds not his wing.

"How bright the skies that dally
 Along day's cheerful arch,
 And paint the sunset valley !
 How redly buds the larch !

"Blackbirds are singing,
 Clear hylas ringing,
 Over the meadow the frogs proclaim
 The coming of spring to boy and dame,
 But not to me,
 Nor thee.

"A wail in the wind is all I hear ;
 A voice of woe for a lover's loss,
 A motto for a traveling cross —
 And yet it is mean to mourn for thee,
 In the form of bird or blossom or bee."

Some time I will copy all the lines if you care for them.

Mr. Hosmer was here not long since, and enjoyed hearing your letter. He said, "Tell Mr. Ricketson that I hope he will come to Concord, I should be glad to see him. How would he feel if he were sixty-seven years old, as I am?"

A few years since Mr. Emerson repeated "The Touchstone," in one of his lectures, and the newspapers printed it. I was delighted with it and saved it, and will enclose it for you.

How do you feel about Mr. Garrison's position to-day? I am sorry that he cannot see danger in the future, but I must adhere to the *cause* if I forsake the *man*. I will not inflict upon you any account of my many cares, which must serve as an apology for this meagre note, but pray that you will not think me selfish if I hope to hear from you again soon.

Mother joins with me in very kind regards to yourself and family.

Yours truly,

S. E. THOREAU.

BROOKLAWN, 15 March, 1865.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — Your kind and thoughtful present of Henry's Cape Cod book, came duly to hand, for which please accept my best thanks. But may I not soon expect to have a few lines, at least, from you to blend with the kindly spring influences? Already has spring set in with us. I had hardly sent my last letter to you before the bluebird arrived and saluted the Shanty and its inmate with his rich warble, and now we are rejoicing in song with the red-winged blackbird, song-sparrow and the coarser notes of pigeon woodpecker, crow, and blue jay. All winter we have the sweet meadow lark, and he, too, joins the vernal choir, as a kind of master of ceremonies. Several flocks of wild geese have also flown over, and the woodcock has already commenced his twilight gyrations and jubilant utterances, a kind of chuckling warble. So, my

dear friend, we are still blessed, and as happy as thoughtful patient creatures may be. Calm and grateful, are we all, I trust, for Heavenly favors.

I write in haste and intend this only as an acknowledgment of thanks for your valued present. Hoping to hear from you soon, or what would be better still to have a visit from you, with love to your mother and other friends, I remain,

Faithfully yours,

DAN'L RICKETSON.

Memo. J. F. C. in his article on Mr. Emerson was very unjust to Henry, and went quite out of his way to wound him. But it can do him no harm. In charity to Mr. C. who would not, I think, do any one wrong, it must have been very carelessly done. In common respect for the departed and remaining friends, I do not see how he could have done it. Henry has a good and lasting fame. As Virgil says, "Sic itur ad astra."

CONCORD, July 17th, 1865.

MR. RICKETSON :

DEAR FRIEND, — I trust that you have received a few lines from Miss Hosmer, who was kind enough to befriend me by replying to your last note. I was sorry to delay acknowledging it so long.

Mr. Emerson was very kind in assuming the task of editing the letters, and I do not like to express any dissatisfaction in relation thereto, but I despair of justice being done to Henry's character by any one. I do not mean that I despair in the future, for I am wholly content in the faith that God will

use the work of his own hands in blessing the example of my precious brother to those who knew him and to many who may come after him.

Oh ! that there were more lives as transparent, as unclouded by sin, as dear Henry's !

During Mr. E.'s absence last winter some of the proofs of the letters were sent to me. I was disappointed to find that some passages betraying natural affection had been omitted. I consulted Mrs. Emerson, who said that her husband was a Greek, and that he treated his own writings in the same manner. I expressed my desire that the passages should not be left out — it did not seem quite honest to Henry not to print them. I presume that the sentences to which I refer seemed to Mr. Emerson trivial. Mr. Fields thought it best to use them, and they were retained. Mr. Alcott thought it a happy accident which brought the matter to my notice.

At the close of a beautiful letter to Mrs. Emerson, Henry wrote, "Shake a day-day to Edith, and say 'good-night' to Ellen for me." This ending was omitted, so the world might never have known that he loved the babies.

I did not see any of the proofs after Mr. Emerson's return. He told me that he had *bragged* that the coming volume would be a most perfect piece of stoicism, and he feared that I had marred his classic statue.

Mr. Fields called to see me lately ; he is very anxious to obtain the letters which Henry wrote to Mr. Cholmondeley, and will you do me the favor to

send to Europe for them, if it will not give you too much trouble. I do not know the address of Mr. C.'s widow or his brother? Please assure them of the sympathy which mother and myself feel in view of their great loss? Mr. C. gained our highest esteem and affection during his stay in our family. I shall be happy to defray expense attending the receipt of the letters.

We were much touched the other day to learn that a party of forty ladies and gentlemen, all strangers, came to Walden to celebrate Henry's birthday. A party of young ladies who went to the pond to bathe accidentally discovered the company. They had spread a table on the spot where his little hut formerly stood.

I should like to know how you feel about the perilous times in which we live.

Miss Louisa Alcott sails for Germany this week.

Please remember me very kindly to your family.

Yours truly,

S. E. THOREAU.

THE SHANTY, BROOKLAWN,

4 June, 1866.

DEAR MISS THOREAU, — Your late, though very welcome letter of the 26th ult., with the book also, came in due time. The latter proves to be "Sewell's History," instead of the Journal of George Fox as I supposed, but it contains a large portion of the life and experiences of this, as I believe, godly as well as remarkable man, and is altogether a very valuable

and interesting work. I am quite inclined to agree with Charles Lamb that it is "worth all Ecclesiastical History put together." The interesting letters, too, of Mr. Cholmondeley, and the photographic likeness of his brother, and that of his house, Concord Hall, which I received with the book, I will retain, with your permission, for the present, and return them by my son Walton, who expects to go to Concord to visit Mr. Bull's vineyard in September, unless you desire them before that time. Besides, I expect to write Mr. C. soon, and should like to have them in the way of inspiration. I shall value the book very highly, not only for its intrinsic merits, but for its associations with your family, and particularly that it was Henry's. . . . I suppose you already know that I hold to the religious principles of my ancestors, who were Friends, although I am not sectarian, and by no means exclusive, and I hope to

" Become more sage,
Milder, and mellowed with declining age."

I am sorry that ill health should have been the cause of your long silence, which I hope will soon be overcome by the more genial season we are now enjoying.

I should like to come to Concord once more, but since the death of Henry I have hardly felt equal to the undertaking. I should so much miss him, I could hardly have supposed any place possessed so much human interest as that of Concord in my mind from its alliance with your brother. He was indeed

her presiding genius and interpreter ; and now that he is gone, the river, the woods, the landscape, and even Walden Pond, with all its beauty, have lost for me their greatest charm. I could not have joined the party of forty strangers who lately had a picnic on the spot of Henry's hermitage. I may at some not far distant time retrace our walks, or sail upon the river, alone or with some congenial friend, possibly, but hardly. May we not hope ere long to see you here again ? Your visit is remembered by us all with much pleasure. With the united love of my wife, son, and daughters to yourself and mother, I remain,

Truly and affect'ly yours,

DAN'L RICKETSON.

THE SHANTY, BROOKLAWN,
4th Aug. 1866.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I have been thinking for a long time of writing you, for few days pass but I think of Henry, and of course, as you are next to him, I naturally look to you. If he were now alive, I think I could enjoy and appreciate his company better than ever before. I have passed through with an experience since his death which, however severe at first and uncompromising in its exactions, has, I thank God, left me with larger faith in and charity towards my fellow men. It is not often that a man at fifty changes for the better, but I hope that such is my case, at least in that world-wide sympathy for the conditions of mankind. I have been so disap-

pointed in the religion of the churches that I am convinced more than ever that that which saves the soul is the spirit which purifies and prepares it for the good of humanity. This is, however, only a revival of a former experience which I had in early life, and which was at that time intensified by the pro-slavery of the so-called church. While I am led, therefore, to believe in the marvellous records of the Christian religion, and feel the importance of giving heed to my ways herein, I see more of the heavenly spirit it inculcates in pagan humanity than in the hardness and selfishness of most of those it has been my lot to know prominently connected with church and sect. It now appears to me that what I saw in Henry, so good and pure, was the effect of the true baptism, and I can understand how one so heavenly minded could meet death with Christian composure. How his noble soul must have expanded when it launched into the broader atmosphere of light and knowledge! But something checks me — have I sufficient faith in life and immortality thus to write? I hope tremblingly, prayerfully, and may God pardon all my faint-heartedness. I write to you as to a sister in the Lord, for in you I think I see the spirit of the same good angel as in Henry.

With these confessions you can see how much nearer I am drawn again to our friends Emerson, Alcott, *et id omne genus*.

I have not written Mr. Cholmondeley, or rather I have not sent him a letter, for I wrote one to him some time ago, which still remains unsent. I hope

ere long to find myself led that way, as I do not wish to write without having something to say to him. As it is possible I may reach Concord by and by, I will keep the photographs a little longer. Should I not come I will send them. But may we not hope to see you the coming autumn? I will promise to try to be good, and not combat with you on religion, at least.

My son, the doctor, speaks of having had a pleasant interview with you and your mother on his late visit to Concord. My boys, as well as myself and the rest of the family, all hold Henry in dear remembrance. Alas! how much we miss his visits here! It was Henry, I find, more than all else, that made Concord attractive to me. I still can see much to admire in her slowly flowing river, its banks, the old fields and woods, out-of-the-way places, and Walden Pond, sacred to H.'s memory. But the master who held the talismanic wand has gone, or only stands fading in the past, half real, half spiritual, still haunting these endeared abodes of poetry and peace. It is a great blessing to have a house to love — to have eyes to see and ears to hear what nature and nature's God has to reveal to you from your own doorway.

Pardon this egotistic scrawl, and with the united love of my household to yourself and mother, believe me as ever,

Your faithful friend,

DANIEL RICKETSON.

CONCORD, Aug. 25, 1867.

DEAR MR. RICKETSON, — There are seasons in my experience so filled with memories of the past that one drop of true sympathy quite melts me. At such a moment your letter reached me, and I thank you for your most friendly allusion to my dear brother.

I did receive a response to my invitation to your son and daughters, and to make amends for my disappointment, I sent for other friends, who came at once, and thus engrossed me, which must be my apology for not writing to New Bedford. I hope that nothing will occur in either family to prevent our seeing Walton and his sisters at the proposed time, when, too, I trust the weather will be more propitious for out-door enjoyment than of late.

I passed a day at Walden with my friends. We were disappointed to meet several hundreds collected from the neighboring towns. Since arrangements for picnic parties have been made, the pond seldom enjoys a quiet day during the summer months. Associations have rendered the spot so entirely sacred to me, that the music and dancing, swinging and tilting, seemed like profanity almost. An overwhelming sense of my great loss saddened me, and I felt that only the waters sympathized in my bereavement, for there seemed in all that throng no heart nor eye to appreciate the purity and beauty of Nature. The lover of Walden has, indeed, departed: I recalled my last day spent there with Henry: —

"Sweet September day, so calm, so cool, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky."

While I sat sketching, Henry gathered grapes from a vine, dropping its fruit into the green waters which gently laved its roots.

With the lapse of time my sense of loneliness increases, and I often fail to realize that each day shortens my separation from those who have gone before.

I will return your letters by Walton, when he comes again. Mr. Sanborn has received a letter from Mr. Cholmondeley since I have; it is a long time ago, however. Hope he is still alive, and that we may have good news of him ere long.

I was caught in a heavy shower the other day, and chanced to meet Farmer Hosmer in a store. He has worked hard on the land this summer, and consequently is in good health and spirits.

Mr. and Mrs. Alcott are better than I feared they would ever be, after their serious illness last winter.

Mother and myself send kind regards to yourself and family.

We anticipate with much pleasure the visit from the young people.

Yours very truly,

S. E. THOREAU.

CONCORD, Nov. 12th, 1867.

DEAR MR. RICKETSON, — Your letter of last week was cordially received, and I was much interested in the pleasant picture, which grew out of your finding

the old jack-knife. I wish you might find dear Henry's old knife, we never saw it after his departure, although, I think, he used it during his illness. Mr. Channing wished that it might be bestowed upon him, and we should gladly have consented, had it not mysteriously disappeared.

Thank you for your notice of Mr. Alger's new book. I have not seen the volume; but I did see a paper in a religious magazine, written by Mr. A. some time last winter, which proved his entire misapprehension of my brother's character; the writer seemed inspired by personal enmity. Mr. Channing was greatly disturbed by it. Mr. Emerson and Fields both censured the author so severely, that I really felt inclined to pity, more than blame, the poor man. I confess myself greatly surprised by Prof. Lowell's article, published in the "North American Review" a year since. I have too much respect for Mr. Lowell's powers of discrimination to account at all for his blundering and most unfriendly attack upon Henry's book. It is full of contradictions. I presume you have read it.

As you remark, "Henry has already received the homage of the best of our land," and surely I cannot allow myself to grieve over the unkindness, or ignorance, which may prompt any one to malign him. I would rather listen to the bay-wing. Let me tell you what Henry says about him:—

"While dropping beans in the garden, just after sundown, May 13th, I hear across the fields the note of the bay-wing (which I have no doubt sits on

some fence-post or rail there) and it instantly translates me from the sphere of my work. It reminds me of so many country afternoons and evenings when this bird's strain was heard far over the fields. The spirit of its earth-song, of its serene and true philosophy, was breathed into me, and I saw the world as through a glass — as it lies eternally. Some of its aboriginal contentment — even of its domestic felicity — possessed me. What he suggests is permanently true. As the bay-wing sang many a thousand years ago, so sings he to-night. In the beginning God heard his song and pronounced it good, and hence it has endured. It reminds me of many a summer sunset, of the farmhouse far in the fields, — its milk-pans and well-sweep and the cows coming home from pasture. He is a brother poet, this small gray bird (a bard) whose muse inspires mine. His lay is an idyl or pastoral older and sweeter than any that is classic.

“If you would have the song of the sparrow inspire you a thousand years hence, let your life be in harmony with its strain to-day.”. . .

We were much disappointed that Anna could not visit us this autumn. We do not despair of seeing Walton ere the winter sets in, and hope that you will favor us with your presence when next you visit your son, the Doctor.

With very kind regards from mother and myself to you and your family, I remain,

Yours truly,

S. E. THOREAU.

CONCORD, Mar. 30th, 1869.

DEAR MR. RICKETSON, — As you once wrote me, “I answer to the touch.” I had seated myself this rainy morning to invite you to mingle your note with that of the spring bird, when a neighbor, returning from the office, brought me your letter, — a cheering strain from New Bedford, — breaking the long silence, for which I thank you.

I am happy to hear that you have been so pleasantly occupied the past winter, & shall most cordially welcome the promised volume.

The spring has come. It was the season dear Henry loved best. He detected its first symptom, — the softened air, even when snow and ice covered the ground, & he would go out in cold rain storms, feeling with wet and freezing fingers amid the withered grass & snow, for the radical leaves & prostrate stems of the fair flowers, so sure to bloom again. The bluebird he called “the angel of the spring! Fair & innocent, yet the offspring of the earth. The color of the sky *above* & of the subsoil *beneath*, suggesting what sweet & innocent melody (terrestrial melody) may have its birthplace between the sky and the ground.”

“The flowers that earliest usher in the spring
Long for the eye that kindred love did bring
To view their daily growth, and wait in vain
To hear thy childlike welcome ring again.

“To lure thee to thy long frequented haunts,
At early dawn the cheery robin chants;
Her notes, unheeded, rise on wings of love,
As if to greet thee in the blue above.”

The preceding lines are part of a poem entitled Thoreau, which was sent to Mr. Emerson signed I. A. E. He does not recognize the author.

You enquire for y'r old friends. Farmer Hosmer has blessed us with frequent calls & visits during the winter. He dropped in last Sat. just as we were going to tea. He drew up to the table, beginning at once to discourse upon a future life, letting fall many wise sayings — nibbling away, meanwhile, upon brown bread & cheese, which composed his meal. He talks about the weight of 71 winters. But I think he seems less burdened than formerly — appears to care less for this world's goods & so can afford to be cheerful. One evening I read *Snow Bound* to him & he enjoyed it so well that he took the book home for Mrs. Hosmer to see. Your poem, *The Old Barn*, afforded him satisfaction. He thought it the best you had ever written.

I have not seen the Alcotts since their return, if indeed they have got home again.

Mrs. Emerson has been an invalid most of the winter. She is better now. Mr. E. has been absent as usual from Concord during the lecturing season. Edward, perhaps you know, is studying medicine.

Mr. W. E. C. last & least, I can tell you nothing about, not having met him since Anna and Walton were with us last autumn.

I have not the pleasure of knowing Mr. Hotham.

I had a friendly letter from Mr. Conway recently. He writes me that he has determined to sever the

last strand that bound him to ecclesiasticism and thus enjoy a little personal freedom before he dies.

I shall not forget your cordial invitations to New Bedford.

I hope Anna and Walton will visit us this summer, when we can give them a *warm* reception. They are kindly remembered by Mr. Wheildon's family, who hope to see them again.

With kind regards from mother and myself,

Believe me,

Yours truly,

S. E. T.

BROOKLAWN, March 14th, 1872.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I have just received a few lines from the Doct'r announcing the decease of your dear mother. I regret that I am not near you to render such little services and express such poor words of sympathy as your great affliction would call forth. As it is, I can only send in this way my friendly feelings for the occasion. Your mother was a woman of unusual vivacity, as well as of rare intellectual powers; and in her youth, I doubt not, was not only handsome, but the life of her companions. I did not know her until she had passed her prime and had met with severe afflictions. I could recognize in her dramatic talent the origin of your brother Henry's fine gift for conversation, and in the quiet manner of your dear father his repose of mind; combined, the strong contrasts of your par-

ents produced Henry's character, one of the truest and noblest of our time. I was thinking of him yesterday, and thought that nearly ten years had already elapsed since he left us.

From a letter of Arthur's to his mother, received yesterday, I was prepared to hear of your mother's demise, although he spoke of her strong vitality, and thus admitting a possibility of her rallying. She lived to a good old age, and has gone in good time to join as we trust the departed ones of your family.

As the funeral will be to-morrow, I shall not be able to attend it. Still you may regard me as with you in spirit, and sympathizing with you as a friend upon the sad occasion. I trust that the Doct. will be able to render you such fraternal as well as professional assistance as may be in his power.

My family join with me in the expression of sympathy, and I remain, my dear friend,

Yours faithfully,

DAN'L RICKETSON.

P. S. I am thinking of visiting Concord when the spring is a little further advanced.

BANGOR, May 18th, 1876.

DEAR MR. RICKETSON, — It seems almost like distrusting your friendship to keep silent any longer, so now I write to tell you that I am ill. Very often I have thought how pleasant it would be to receive your kind and sympathetic letters as of old, but I have not asked you to write, for I felt that I should be a most unworthy correspondent, and then I have

refrained from arousing the anxiety of my friends. I cannot bear that they should be burdened on my account.

My health has been steadily failing ever since I left Concord. I am suffering with Ascites, — have been subjected to paracentesis seventeen times, so you can judge of the progress of the disease — it is a lingering one. My vitality surprises all my physicians. How long I may continue of course I cannot know. For the past five weeks I have been confined mostly to my bed, subjected to very great suffering. It is truly wonderful how evanescent are these bodily pains.

You will be glad to know that notwithstanding my invalid condition I have been able to get much satisfaction out of life. Memories of the past afford me true consolation. I feel as if I had been singled out for peculiar blessings. No sad hours as yet have befallen me — they may come. Thus far through Divine blessing my soul is permitted to dwell in an atmosphere of cheerfulness, and I am now conscious of the Infinite tenderness which overshadows all God's children.

I feel very much interested to hear of the welfare of your family, and I hope you will write me. Is the Doctor still in New Bedford? Some very sacred memories I associate with him, and shall be ever grateful for his most kind attentions.

Unless some favorable symptoms occur, I feel that my day for letter-writing is past.

I write out of great weakness this morning, be-

lieving that you will pardon all discrepancies, and accept these lines from one who has ever valued your friendship and has still faith in its endurance.

With very kind love to all, let me say farewell.

S. E. THOREAU.

CONCORD, Monday, Oct. 9, 1876.

DEAR SIR, — Our dear friend Sophia E. Thoreau, passed away at Bangor Saturday morning. (7th.)

Becoming necessary to have the remains interred with the least possible delay, I left Bangor Saturday evening, and they were deposited in her grave at "Sleepy Hollow," at half past three yesterday in the presence of such friends as could be notified. Rev. Mr. Reynolds performed the service at the grave and everything passed off most appropriately.

She suffered greatly during the last weeks of her illness, but she had great fortitude and patience and died in full faith of a blessed immortality.

Her mortal remains rest by the side of her dear brother Henry. The soul has gone to 'Him who gave it, and who endowed it with such superior capacities.

I should have written you from Bangor, but my time was occupied to the last moment in making the necessary arrangements for the removal of her remains. We have lost a dear friend, but she has found a sweet rest in heaven, I doubt not.

We cannot regret her escape from mortal agony, and bless God for what we have known and enjoyed of her on earth.

Mr. and Mrs. Le Brun have been exceedingly kind and attentive in this time of trouble.

With kind regards,
I am very truly yours, etc.,
GEO. H. THATCHER.