

*Editor's Notes*

PE supplies the date "June 9, 1843" based on information in *HDT* 1882. In *Alcott: His Life and Philosophy* 1893, Sanborn and Harris date the letter June 7 (p. 377).

handwriting] *PE*; hand- / writing in *copy-text*

*Substantive Variants*

The text of this letter is based on a published source, *HDT* 1882; potentially authoritative substantive readings in *Alcott: His Life and Philosophy* 1893 are reported below.

assistance] in *copy-text*; assistant in *Alcott: His Life and Philosophy* 1893

cottages] in *copy-text*; little cottages in *Alcott: His Life and Philosophy* 1893

*From Ralph Waldo Emerson*

June 10 and 15, 1843

Concord, 10 June 1843

Dear Henry,

It is high time that you had some token from us in acknowledgment of the parcel of kind & tuneful things you sent us, as well as of your permanent rights in us all. The cold weather saddened our gardens & our landscape here almost until now but today's sunshine is obliterating the memory of such things. I have just been visiting my petty plantation and find that all your grafts live excepting a single scion and all my new trees, including twenty pines to fill up interstices in my "Curtain," are well alive. The town is full of Irish & the woods of engineers with theodolite & red flag singing out their feet & inches to each other from station to station. Near Mr Alcott's the road is already begun.— From Mr A. & Mr Lane at Harvard we have yet heard nothing. They went away in good spirits having sent "Wood Abram" & Larned<sup>1</sup> & Wm Lane before them with horse & plough a few days in advance of them to begin the spring work. Mr Lane paid me a long visit in which he was more than I had ever known him gentle & open, and it was impossible not to sympathize with & honour projects that so often seem without feet

or hands.<sup>2</sup> They have near a hundred acres of land, which they do not want, & no house, which they want first of all. But they account this an advantage, as it gives them the occasion they so much desire of building after their own idea. In the event of their attracting to their company a carpenter or two, which is not impossible, it would be a great pleasure to see their building which could hardly fail to be new & beautiful. They have 15 acres of woodland with good timber. Ellery Channing is excellent company and we walk in all directions<sup>3</sup> He remembers<sup>e</sup> you with great faith & hope thinks you ought not to see Concord again these ten years, that you ought to grind up fifty ConCORDS in your mill & much other opinion & counsel he holds in store on this topic. Hawthorne walked with me yesterday P. m. and not until after our return did I read his "Celestial Railroad" which has a serene strength<sup>a</sup> which one cannot afford not to praise, -in this low life.<sup>4</sup>

Our Dial thrives well enough in these weeks. I print W. E. C.'s "Letters" or the first ones, but he does not care to have them named as his for a while.<sup>5</sup> They are very agreeable reading, & their wisdom lightened by a vivacity very rare in the D. - Ward too has sent me some sheets on architecture,<sup>6</sup> whose good sense is eminent. I have a valuable manuscript - a sea voyage, from a new hand, which is all clear good sense, and I may make some of Mr Lane's graver sheets give way for this honest story, otherwise I shall print it in October.<sup>7</sup> I have transferred the publishing of the Dial to Jas. Munroe & Co.<sup>8,e</sup> Do not, I entreat you, let me be in ignorance of any thing good which you know of my fine friends Waldo & Tappan Tappan writes me never a word. I had a letter from H. James, promising to see you, & you must not fail to visit him. I must soon write to him, though my debts of this nature are perhaps too many. To him I much prefer to talk than to write. Let me know well how you prosper & what you meditate. And all good abide with you!

R. W. E.

15 June— Whilst my letter has lain on the table waiting for a traveller, your letter & parcel has safely arrived. I may not have place now for the Winter's Walk in the July Dial<sup>9</sup> which is just making up its last sheets & somehow I must end it to-morrow—when I go to Boston. I shall then keep it for October, subject however to your order if you find a better disposition for it.— I will carry the order to the faithless booksellers. Thanks for all these tidings of my friends at N.Y. & at the Island. & love to the last. I have letters from Lane at "Fruitlands" & from Miss Fuller at Niagara. Miss F. found it sadly cold & rainy<sup>a</sup> at the Falls.<sup>10</sup>

*Correspondent:* See p. 53.

<sup>1</sup> Charles Lane's two assistants at Fruitlands; see p. 190, note 4.

<sup>2</sup> Cameron (*Companion* 1964, p. 35) suggests an allusion to Luther, whom Emerson quoted in his 1835 lecture on Milton: "It is, as Luther said of one of Melancthon's writings, 'alive, hath hands and feet,—and not like Erasmus's sentences, which were made, not grown'" (Emerson, *Early Lectures*, 3 vols., ed. Stephen E. Whicher and Robert E. Spiller [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959-1972], 1:147).

<sup>3</sup> Emerson described one such walk in a journal entry dated May 20: "Walked with Ellery. In the landscape felt the magic of colour; the world is all opal & those ethereal tints the mountains wear have the finest effects of magic on us" (*JMN*, 8:405).

<sup>4</sup> Emerson recorded his conversation with Hawthorne in his journal entry for June 10: "Hawthorne & I talked of the number of superior young men we have seen. H. said, that he had seen several from whom he had expected much, but they had not distinguished themselves; and he had inferred that he must not expect a popular success from such; he had in nowise lost his confidence in their power" (*JMN*, 8:423). "The Celestial Railroad," a sharp satire on Transcendentalism, appeared in the *United States Magazine, and Democratic Review* 12 (May 1843): 515-523.

<sup>5</sup> The July 1843 number of the *Dial* published the first installment of "The Youth of the Poet and the Painter" (pp. 48-58), Ellery Channing's autobiographical story written in the form of a series of letters between Edward Ashford and others. Three more installments of such letters would appear in the October 1843 (pp. 174-186), January 1844 (pp. 273-284), and April 1844 (pp. 427-454) numbers, which were the last three numbers of the magazine.

<sup>6</sup> Samuel Gray Ward (1817-1907), son of Thomas Wren and Lydia Gray Ward of Boston, graduated from Harvard in 1836 and married Anna Hazard Barker (1813-1900), daughter of Jacob and Eliza Hazard Barker, in 1840. He toyed with the idea of pursuing a career as a painter but instead followed his father in the Baring Brothers Bank. He and Ellery Channing were close friends from their boyhood days at the Round Hill School in Northampton, Massachusetts. His "Notes on Art and Architecture" appeared in the July *Dial* (pp. 107-115).

<sup>7</sup> Benjamin Peter Hunt's "Voyage to Jamaica" appeared in two parts in the July (pp. 116-133) and October (pp. 227-244) numbers of the *Dial*. Hunt (1808-1877), son of Joshua and Olive Chamberlain Hunt, had been Emerson's pupil in 1825, and the editor's enthusiasm for his former student's piece was unabashed: "It delights me by its directness & veracity, by its plain strength and its insight, and by its capital art of compression & of omission which in all writing seems so much" (*Letters of RWE* 1939, 3:199). Despite this praise, Emerson thoroughly edited the manuscript by compressing it and creating a narrative line. To make room for Hunt's piece in the July number, Emerson broke Charles Lane's "Social Tendencies" into two parts and published them in the July (pp. 65-86) and October (pp. 188-204) numbers. Margaret Fuller thought that this was a mistake: "It was pity to break Mr Lane's piece. He needs to fall his whole length to show his weight" (*Letters of Margaret Fuller*, 3:136-137).

<sup>8</sup> Weeks, Jordan, and Company published the first five numbers of the *Dial* before the publishing house went out of business in September 1841. William H. S. Jordan, former partner in the failed concern, published the next number, and Elizabeth Peabody then became the publisher for the following six numbers. James Munroe published the final four numbers.

<sup>9</sup> T's essay "A Winter Walk" appeared in the October number (pp. 211-226; see *Excursions* 2007, pp. 55-77).

<sup>10</sup> "We have had bad weather here, bitterly cold," wrote Fuller. "The place is what I expected: it is too great and beautiful to agitate or surprise: it satisfies: it does not excite thought, but fully occupies" (*Letters of Margaret Fuller*, 3:128).

*Copy-text:* ALS (NN-BGC, Henry David Thoreau Collection, 1837-1917, Series IV)

*Published:* HDT 1882, 135-136, 136-137; "E-T" May 1892, 589-590; *Alcott* 1893, 353; *FL* 1894, 111n, 143; *FL* 1906, 94n, 120; *Americana* 1912,

527; Clara Endicott Sears, comp., *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1915), 20; *Cor* 1958, 117-118; *Letters of RWE* 1990-1995, 7:545-547; *The Selected Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Joel Myerson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 289-291

*Editor's Notes*

This letter is addressed "Henry D. Thoreau / Care of Wm Emerson Esq / 64 Wall Street / New York."

remembers] *PE*; re / members *in MS*

Co.] *PE*; possibly Co.- *in MS*

*Author's Alterations*

strength] *interlined with a caret*

rainy] *preceded by cancelled wet*

*To Lidian Jackson Emerson*

*June 20, 1843*

Staten Island

June 20<sup>th</sup> 1843

My very dear Friend,

I have only read a page of your letter, and have come out to the top of the hill at sunset, where I can see the ocean to prepare to read the rest. It is fitter that it should hear it than the walls of my chamber. The very crickets here seem to chirp around me as they did not before. I feel as if it were a great daring to go on and read the rest, and then to live accordingly- There are more than thirty vessels in sight going to sea- I am almost afraid to look at your letter. I see that it will make<sup>a</sup> my life very steep, but it may lead to fairer prospects than this.

You seem to me to speak out of a very clear and high heaven, where any one may be who stands so high. Your voice seems not a voice, but comes as much from the blue heavens, as from the paper.

My dear friend it was very noble in you to write me so trustful an answer. It will do as well for another world as for this. Such a voice is for no particular time nor person,