

cate. Prime Minister John Russell made him vice president of the Board of Trade in his government and then a privy councillor.

<sup>6</sup> George Thompson (1804-1878) was a member of the Anti-Corn Law League and a member of Parliament at the time. Known as an abolitionist, Thompson visited the United States in 1834-1835, lectured often, agitated for the abolition of slavery, and thus found himself the center of a heated controversy. Margaret Fuller described his voice as one "of uncommon compass and beauty" (*Letters of Margaret Fuller*, 1:218).

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*Editor's Notes*

This letter is addressed "Henry D. Thoreau / Concord. / Massachusetts. / By steamer / from Liverpool" and postmarked "MANCHESTER JA 28 1848" and "JA 29".

undeceivable] *PE*; undeceiv / able *in MS*

triumphant] *PE*; tri / umphant *in MS*

demonstration] *PE*; dem / onstration *in MS*

*Author's Alteration*

Brit.] *added in margin*

*To Ralph Waldo Emerson*

*February 23, 1848*

Concord Feb 23<sup>d</sup> 1848

Dear Waldo,

For I think I have heard that that is your name<sup>-1</sup> My letter which was put last into the leathern bag arrived first- Whatever I may *call* you, I know you better than I know your name, and what becomes of the fittest name- if in any sense you are here with him who *calls*, and not there simply to be called.

I believe I never thanked you for your lectures-one and all-which I have heard formerly read here in Concord- I

*know* I never have—there was some excellent reason each time why I did not—but it will never be too late. I have had that advantage at least, over you in my education.

Lidian is too unwell to write to you and so I must tell you what I can about the children and herself. I am afraid she has not told you how unwell she is, or today perhaps we may say—has been. She has been confined to her chamber four or five weeks, and three or four weeks, at least to her bed—with the jaundice, accompanied with *constant* nausea, which makes life intolerable to her. This added to her general ill health has made her *very sick*. She is as yellow as saffron— The Doctor,<sup>2</sup> who comes once a day does not let her read (nor can she now) nor *hear* much reading. She has written her letters to you till recently sitting up in bed—but he said that he would not come again if she did so. She has Abby and Almira<sup>3</sup> to take care of her, & Mrs Brown to read to her, and I also occasionally have something to read or to say. The Doctor says she must not expect to “take any comfort of her life” for a week or two yet. She wishes me to say that she has written 2 long and full letters to you about the household economies &c which she hopes have not been delayed.

The children are quite well and full of spirits—and are going through a regular course of picture seeing, with commentary by me—every evening—for Eddy’s behoof. All the annuals and “diadems” are in requisition,<sup>4</sup> and Eddy is forward to exclaim when the hour arrives—“Now for the dem dems”! I overheard this dialogue when Frank<sup>5</sup> came down to breakfast the other morning.— Eddy—Why Frank, I am *astonished* that you should leave your boots in the dining-room.— Frank. I guess you mean *surprised*, dont you?— Eddy—No—Boots!— “If Waldo were here”, said he the other night at bed-time, “we’d be four going up stairs”.

Would he like to tell Papa anything? “No—not anything” but finally “Yes”—he would—that one of the white horses in

his new barouche is broken. Ellen and Edith will perhaps speak for themselves as I hear something about letters to be written by them.

Mr Alcott seems to be reading well<sup>a</sup> this winter Plato–Montaigne–Ben Jonson–Beaumont & Fletcher–Sir Thomas Browne &c &c–<sup>6</sup> “I believe I have read them all now–or nearly all”–those English authors He is rallying for another foray with his pen, in his latter years, not discouraged by the past–into that crowd of unexpressed ideas of his–that undisciplined Parthian army<sup>7</sup>–which as soon as a Roman soldier would face retreats on all hands–occasionally firing behind–easily routed–not easily subdued–hovering on the skirts of society. Another summer shall not be devoted to the raising of vegetables (Arbors?)<sup>8</sup> which rot in the cellar for want of consumers–but perchance to the arrangement of the material–the brain-crop which the winter has furnished I have good talks with him.<sup>a</sup>

His respect for Carlyle has been steadily increasing for some time. He has read him with new sympathy and appreciation.<sup>9</sup>

I see Channing often. He also goes often to Alcott’s, and confesses that he has made a discovery in him–and give vent to his admiration or his confusion in characteristic exaggerations–but between this extreme & that you may get a fair report–& draw<sup>a</sup> an inference if you can. Sometimes *he will* ride a broom stick still–though there is nothing to keep him or it up–but a certain centrifugal force of whim which is soon spent–and there lies your stick–not worth picking up to sweep an oven with now. His accustomed path is strewn with them But then again & perhaps for the most part he sits on the cliffs amid the lichens, or flits past on noiseless pinion like the Barred Owl in the day time–as wise & unobserved.

He brought me a poem the other day–for me–on “Walden Hermitage”<sup>10</sup> not remarkable–

Lectures begin to multiply in my desk— I have one on Friendship which is new<sup>11</sup>—and the materials of some others. I read one last week to the Lyceum on the Rights & Duties of the Individual in relation to Government.—much to Mr. Alcott’s satisfaction.—<sup>12</sup> Joel Britton has failed and gone into Chancery—but the woods continue to fall before the axes of other men— Neighbor Coombs<sup>13</sup> was lately found dead in the woods near Goose Pond—with his half empty jug—after he had been missing a week.— Hugh by the last accounts was still in Worcester County.— Mr Hosmer who is himself again, and living in Concord—has just hauled the rest of your wood—amounting to about 10 1/2 cords.— The newspapers<sup>e</sup> say that they have printed a pirated edition of your Essays in England.<sup>14</sup> Is it as bad as they say—an undisguised unmitigated piracy?

I thought that the printed scrap would entertain Carlyle—notwithstanding its history. If this generation will see out of its hind head<sup>e</sup>, why then you may turn your back on its forehead. Will you forward it to him from me?<sup>15</sup> This stands written in your Day Book. “Sept. 3<sup>d</sup> Rec<sup>d</sup> of Boston Savings Bank—on account of Charles Lane his deposit with interest 131.33 16<sup>th</sup> Rec<sup>d</sup> of Joseph Palmer on account of Charles Lane three hundred twenty three 36/100 dollars being the balance of a note on demand for four hundred dollars with interest. 323.36”<sup>16</sup>

If you have any directions to give about the trees you must not forget that spring will soon be upon us.

Farewell—from  
your friend Henry Thoreau

*Correspondent:* See p. 53.

<sup>1</sup> T addresses Emerson as “Waldo” for the only time in their extant correspondence; see p. 354 for Emerson’s acknowledgment.

<sup>2</sup> Josiah Bartlett.

<sup>3</sup> Abby and Almira Stevens worked for the Emersons. Abby married Louis Munner (Monnier?) the following August.

<sup>4</sup> T was reading “annuals,” yearly gift books, to the children. Em-

erson had published poems in the 1846 and 1847 issues of *The Diadem for [year]: A Present for All Seasons* (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart), each of which included ten engravings.

<sup>5</sup> Francis Charles Browne (1829-1900) was the son of Charles and Lucy Cotton Brown (he added an "e" to the end of his family name). He graduated from Harvard in 1851 and became a farmer and naturalist. In 1854 he married Elizabeth Wheeler Goodwin (1835-1900), daughter of John Marston and Emeline Philleo Goodwin of Boston. A shy, reserved man, Browne had poor eyesight, but he was an avid collector of bird skins, shells, and coins.

<sup>6</sup> "Montaigne's book," wrote Alcott in his journal, "is the only one, almost, which I wish were longer." Of the dramatists, he commented: "It is refreshing to read these phrases of theirs. They admit us into an intimacy so entire with the thoughts and manners and speech of their day" (*Journals of Bronson Alcott* 1938, pp. 202-203).

<sup>7</sup> The Parthians, an Indo-European dynasty that spread from Bactria to Babylonia, met the Romans in battle on several occasions; their strategy of appearing to flee only to turn and fire lethal volleys of arrows is the origin of the expression "Parthian shot."

<sup>8</sup> As he did each year the family lived at Hillside, Alcott spent the summer of 1847 developing his elaborate gardens and orchards. In late spring 1846 he had built himself an "arbour" on the ridge, which prompted Emerson to ask him to build one on his property, with T's help (see pp. 318-319, note 6).

<sup>9</sup> Alcott, who had met and quarreled with Carlyle in London in 1842 (see *Journals of Bronson Alcott* 1938, pp. 161-162), continued to read his work with enthusiasm, as he had done from the start. A month before this letter, Alcott wrote in his journal, "Carlyle has a broader and solid dramatic range than any living modern writer. What movement! What storm!" His "energy is almost demonic, and even under his calmest and stillest sentences there seems to slumber a hell of fires that shall break forth and scorch and consume you as you read" (*Journals of Bronson Alcott* 1938, pp. 199-200).

<sup>10</sup> Ellery Channing published this poem in *Thoreau: The Poet-Naturalist* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1873), pp. 196-199.

<sup>11</sup> See p. 340, note 7.

<sup>12</sup> Alcott's journal entries for January 26 and February 13 indicate that T lectured twice on the topic of the individual and the state. These lectures were probably the basis for the essay "Resistance to Civil Government," which T published in 1849 (see p. 147), and which was published in 1866 as "Civil Disobedience." In the January 26 entry, Alcott called T's lecture, delivered that evening, "an admirable statement of the rights of the individual to self-govern-

ment" and described the audience as "attentive." He found much to compliment in this lecture: "His allusions to the Mexican War, to Mr. Hoar's expulsion from Carolina, his own imprisonment in Concord Jail for refusal to pay his tax, Mr. Hoar's payment of mine when taken to prison for a similar refusal, were all pertinent, well considered, and reasoned. I took great pleasure in this deed of Thoreau's" (*Journals of Bronson Alcott* 1938, p. 201). In his February 13 journal entry, Alcott wrote: "Passed an hour or two with Thoreau at Emerson's conversing on the State upon which he is now writing and preparing a Lecture for the Concord Lyceum" (MH-H, MS Am 1130.12 [17], p. 120). These two journal entries suggest that the second lecture must have been somewhat different from the first. Based on the dates of Alcott's second journal entry (Sunday, February 13) and of this letter (Wednesday, February 23), Bradley P. Dean and Ronald Wesley Hoag conjecture that T delivered his second lecture on Wednesday, February 16, as the Concord Lyceum usually met on Wednesday evenings ("Thoreau's Lectures before *Walden: An Annotated Calendar*," SAR 1995, pp. 154-155).

<sup>13</sup> Eseck Coombs.

<sup>14</sup> The *Boston Daily Evening Transcript* for January 8 noted the publication in London of a pirated edition of Emerson's *Essays, Lectures and Orations* (William S. Orr, 1848).

<sup>15</sup> This enclosure is not extant.

<sup>16</sup> Emerson apparently had asked T to confirm the amount of Lane's money that he had accumulated. When Lane sold the Fruitlands property to Joseph Palmer in August 1846, Emerson agreed to act as Lane's trustee. In that capacity he wrote Palmer on August 7, 1847, to request a payment of \$323.36 by September 14, for he wanted to give the money to Lane when he was in England. Emerson received money for Lane on September 3 from the Boston Savings Bank, and on September 16 he recorded the payment from Palmer in his account book. In his October 27 letter to Lidian, Emerson reported that he had paid Lane "£92 17 s 9 pence-(of which payment let this record be kept until I get it into my Journal at home)" (*Letters of RWE* 1939, 3:425).

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*Editor's Notes*

This letter is addressed "R. Waldo Emerson / care of Alexander Ireland Esq. / Examiner Office / Manchester / England / By Hibernia / from New York / Feb 26<sup>th</sup>" and endorsed "H. D. Thoreau / March, 1848."

newspapers] *PE*; news- / papers *in MS*  
hind head] *PE*; possibly hindhead *in MS*

*Author's Alterations*

well] *added in margin*  
I . . . him.] *interlined below*  
draw] drag

*To James Elliot Cabot*

March 8, 1848

Concord March 8<sup>th</sup> -48

Dear Sir,

Mr Emerson's address is as yet—"R. W. Emerson, care<sup>e</sup> of Alexander Ireland Esq.—Examiner Office, Manchester, England."<sup>1</sup> We had a letter from him on Monday dated at Manchester 10<sup>th</sup> Feb, and he was then preparing to go to Edinburg the next day—where he was to lecture.<sup>2</sup> He thought that he should get through his northern journeying by the 25<sup>th</sup> of Feb. & go to London to spend March & April<sup>a</sup>, and, if he did not go to Paris, May—& then come home.<sup>3</sup> He has been eminently successful, though the papers this side of the water have been so silent about his adventures.

My book fortunately did not find a publisher ready to undertake it<sup>4</sup>—and you can imagine the effect of delay on an author's estimate of his own work. However, I like it well enough to mend it, and shall look to it again directly when I have despatched some other things.

I have been writing lectures for our Lyceum this winter, mainly for my own pleasure & advantage. I esteem it a rare happiness to be able to *write* anything, but there, if I ever get there, my concern for it is apt to end. Time &