

Editor's Note

This letter is addressed "B. M. Watson Esq / Plymouth / Mass" and postmarked "Concord Mass. Sep 19".

To Harrison Gray Otis Blake

September 21, 1854

Concord Sep 21st '54

Blake,

I have just read your letter, but do not mean now to answer it, solely for want of time to say what I wish. I directed a copy of *Walden* to you at Ticknor's on the day of its publication,¹ and it should have reached you before. I am encouraged to know that it interests you as it now stands—a printed book—for you apply a very severe test to it—you make the highest demand on me.

As for the excursion you speak of,² I should like it right well, indeed I thought of proposing the same thing to you & Brown³ some months ago. Perhaps it would have been better if I had done so then, for in that case I should have been able to enter into it with that infinite margin to my views—spotless of all engagements—which I think so necessary. As^e it is, I have agreed to go a-lecturing to Plymouth Sunday after next (Oct 1st) and to Philadelphia in November—and thereafter to the West, *if they shall want me*, and as I have prepared nothing in that shape, I feel as if my^e hours were spoken for.⁴

However, I *think* that after having been to Plymouth I may take a day or two.—if that date will suit you & Brown. *At any rate*, I will write to you then.

Henry D. Thoreau.

Correspondent: See p. 22.

¹ *Walden* was published on August 9, 1854.

² This excursion, to Mount Wachusett, about thirty-five miles west of Concord, took place on October 19. See pp. 252 and 258.

³ Theophilus Brown.

⁴ T lectured on "Moonlight" in Plymouth on October 8, 1854 (see pp. 242-244), and on "The Wild" in Philadelphia on November 21 (see p. 253). He tried to arrange lectures in Hamilton, Ontario, and Akron, Ohio, but did not succeed (see pp. 264-265, 278-279, and 279-280).

Copy-text: PE lines 234.29-33 (Concord . . . Ticknor's on), facsimile of AL (location of MS unknown); PE lines 245.10-20 (the day . . . engagements-), ALS (VtMiM, aberms.thoreauhd.1854.09.21); PE lines 245.20-25 (which . . . my), facsimile of AL (location of MS unknown); PE line 245.25 (hours . . . for.), *FL* 1894, 281; PE lines 235.16-19 (However, . . . Thoreau.), ALS (VtMiM, aberms.thoreauhd.245.26-29)

Published: *FL* 1894, 281; *FL* 1906, 233-234; *Cor* 1958, 339; *Spiritual Seeker* 2004, 107-108

Editor's Notes

The copy-text is a composite of manuscript and published sources. The manuscript leaf, with text on both sides, was cut horizontally into three parts, apparently by Blake. One of the parts survives only in facsimile; the other two are at VtMiM. On the verso of one of the parts at VtMiM, Blake wrote:

I cut out to-day, Jan. 12, 1885, above, for Mr. Charles M. Skinner of Brooklyn, N.Y., connected apparently with the Brooklyn Daily Times, the following words on this page, 'However, I *think* that after having been to Plymouth I may take a day or two.-if that date will suit you & Brown. *At any rate*, I will write to you then. Henry D. Thoreau.'

One line of the letter ("hours were spoken for.") is supplied from *FL* 1894.

A portion of the copy-text is based on a facsimile of the recipient's copy. In the emendations below, PE uses "{text lacking}" to indicate characters that are not visible in the facsimile but that appear in *FL* 1894.

As] *FL* 1894; A{text lacking} in copy-text (facsimile of MS)

my] *FL* 1894; m{text lacking} in copy-text (facsimile of MS)