

⁴ The Kansas-Nebraska bill, written by Stephen Douglas, passed the Senate on March 3 and the House on May 22. It created the territories of Kansas and Nebraska and in addition effectively repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820 by allowing slavery in the new territories, should their residents vote to do so. The congressional action began what was a de facto civil war in the area and led Charles Sumner and others to begin organizing the Republican Party.

Copy-text: ALS (CSmH, HM 954)

Published: Cor 1958, 345-346

Editor's Notes

and] *PE*; and | *in MS*
us] *possibly as in MS*

Author's Alterations

the] *interlined above*
who] *interlined with a mark for position*
and] *followed by cancelled a*
of slavery] *interlined with a mark for position*
at] *of*
not] *interlined with a mark for position*
them] *interlined with a mark for position*

To Daniel Foster?

Before October 19, 1854?

{*illegible*}

P{*illegible*} {*illegible*} in care of him which has duly reached me. I trust^a that your health is so far reestablished by this time—that your voice may again be heard in

“In liberty’s defense *your noble task*”¹

yrs trly Henry D Thoreau

Correspondent: Daniel Foster (1816-1864), son of Richard and Irene Burroughs Foster, graduated from Dartmouth in 1841 and entered the ministry, first as a Methodist, then a Congregationalist, and finally as a Unitarian. In 1850 he married Dora T. Swift (1826-1892), daughter of Joseph and Priscilla Chadwick Swift. Foster was the minister of the Congregational Church in Concord from March

1851 to March 1852. A dedicated abolitionist, he was associated with John Brown in Kansas. In the Civil War, Foster was a chaplain before becoming a captain in the Union army. He died in action in Virginia.

¹ T modifies Milton's Sonnet XXII, in which the poet speaks of his blindness, asking "What supports me, dost thou ask?" and answering "The conscience, Friend, to have lost them overlaid / In liberty's defence, my noble task" (Milton, vol. 5, p. 497).

Copy-text: ALS draft (MH-H, MS Am 278.5 [1A])

Published: *Companion* 1964, 188

Editor's Notes

The copy-text, including the alteration, is in pencil. The document also contains pencilled and ink versions of a portion of "What Shall It Profit," a lecture T delivered for the first time in Providence on December 6, 1854. T wrote part of the lecture material over part of the letter draft. The opening of the letter draft is illegible; of the words that can be read, several are very faint. See "To Daniel Foster?, Before October 19, 1854?," following p. 000.

In a January 12, 1984, letter to Elizabeth Witherell, Bradley P. Dean conjectured that Daniel Foster is probably the recipient of this very faint pencilled draft, written either in October or November of 1854. Dean reasoned that T would have written before he visited the Fosters on his way to climb Mount Wachusett (see p. 271), and that Foster was a likely audience for the Milton quotation. PE supplies the recipient's name "To Daniel Foster?" following Dean's conjecture; it supplies the date "Before October 19, 1854?" based on Dean's conjecture and on the contents of T's October 19, 1854, Journal entry, "7.15 A. M.—To Westminster by cars; thence on foot to Wachusett Mountain, four miles to Foster's, and two miles thence to mountain-top by road" (*Journal* 1906, 7:64).

Author's Alteration

trust] *preceded by cancelled hope*