To Charles Sumner  
December 5, 1854  
Concord Mass Dec 5th  
1854

Mr Sumner,
Dear Sir,

Allow me to thank you once more for the Report of Sittgreaves,¹ the Patent Office 2d Part,² and on Emigrant Ships.³

At this rate there will be one department in my library, and that not the smallest one, which I may call the Sumnerian–

Yours sincerely

Henry D. Thoreau.

Correspondent: See p. 76.

¹ Report of an Expedition down the Zuni and Colorado Rivers, written by Captain L. Sitgreaves.
² Volume 2 of the Report of the Commissioner of Patents for the Year 1853 focused on agriculture. The intent of the report was to “promote, as far as practicable, the paramount interests of the farmers and planters of the United States in the improvement of their crops and live stock” (p. v). By the time of this letter T was well into his phenological studies, and the section on climatology,
which takes up about a quarter of the report, would have been of particular interest to him.

3 Report of the Select Committee of the Senate of the United States on the Sickness and Mortality on Board Emigrant Ships.

Copy-text:  ALS (MH-H, MS Am 1 [6271])

Published:  Cor 1958, 353

To Harrison Gray Otis Blake
December 19, 1854

Mr. Blake,

I suppose you have heard of my truly providential meeting with Mr Brown—providential, because it saved me from the suspicion that my words had fallen altogether on stony ground, when it turned out that there was some Worcester soil there. You will allow me to consider that I correspond with him thro’ you.

I confess that I am a very bad correspondent, so far as promptness of reply is concerned, but then I am sure to answer sooner or later. The longer I have forgotten you, the more I remember you. For the most part I have not been idle since I saw you. How does the world go with you? or rather, how do you get along without it? I have not yet learned to live, that I can see, and I fear that I shall not very soon. I find however, that in the long run things correspond to my original idea—that they correspond to nothing else so much,—and thus a man may really be a true prophet without any great exertion. The day is never so dark, nor the night even, but that the laws, at least, of light still prevail, and so may make it light in our minds if they are open to the truth. There is considerable danger that a man will be crazy between dinner and supper—but it will not directly answer any good purpose that I know of, & it is just as easy to be sane. We have got to know what both life and death are before we can begin to live after