

13, 1862, letter to T, Ricketson wrote: "My dear Uncle James whom you may remember to have seen here, the companion of my woodland walks for more than quarter of a century, died a year ago this month" (*Cor* 1958, p. 649).

*Copy-text:* ALS (MaLiTIW, Thoreau Society Archives, Parmenter Collection)

*Published:* *Ricketson* 1902, 48-49; *Cor* 1958, 392

*Editor's Notes*

This letter is endorsed "Oct 13<sup>th</sup> 1855 / to / H. D. T."

At the top center of p. 1, Ricketson wrote "N<sup>o</sup> 2".

*Author's Alterations*

review] *preceded by cancelled* review

my] *interlined with a caret*

is] *interlined with a caret*

*To Daniel Ricketson*

*October 16, 1855*

Concord Oct 16<sup>th</sup> 1855

Friend Ricketson,

I have got both your letters at once. You must not think Concord so barren a place when Channing is away. There are the river & fields left yet, and I, though ordinarily a man of business, should have some afternoons & evenings to spend with you, I trust; that is, if you could stand so much of me. If you can spend your time profitably here, or without ennui, having an occasional ramble or tête-a-tête with one of the natives, it will give me pleasure to have you in the neighborhood. You see I am preparing you for our awful unsocial ways,—keeping in our dens a good part of the day, sucking our claws perhaps.— But then we make a religion of it, and that you cannot but respect.

If you know the taste of your own heart & like it—come to Concord, and I'll warrant you enough here to season the dish with,—aye, even though C. & E. & I were all away.

We might paddle quietly up the river— Then there are one or two more ponds to be seen, &c—

I should very much enjoy further rambling with you in your vicinity, but must postpone it for the present. To tell the truth, I am planning to get seriously to work after these long months of inefficiency and idleness. I do not know whether you are haunted by any such demon which puts you on the alert to pluck the fruit of each day as it passes, and store it safely in your bin. True; it is well to live abandonedly from time to time, but to our working hours that must be as the spile to the bung.<sup>1</sup> So for a long season I must enjoy only a low slanting gleam in my mind's eye from the Middleborough Ponds far away.

Methinks I am getting a little more strength into those knees of mine; and for my part I believe that God *does* delight in the strength of a man's legs.<sup>2</sup>

Yrs

Henry D. Thoreau

*Correspondent:* See pp. 231-232.

<sup>1</sup> T compares the ideal proportions of serious work and unrestrained play to the method of storing a fermented liquid in a cask or barrel: securely plugging the larger bung-hole prevents contamination, and the smaller air hole, the spile, is opened from time to time to release any gases that have built up.

<sup>2</sup> "He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy" (Ps. 147:10-11).

*Copy-text:* ALS (VtMiM, aberms.thoreauhd.1855.10.16)

*Published:* *LVP* 1865, 125-126; *Life* 1890, 157-158; *FL* 1894, 314-315; *Ricketson* 1902, 49-50; *FL* 1906, 266-267; *Cor* 1958, 393

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