

controversy, in addition to poor health and fatigue stemming from overwork, Parker delayed his Concord lecture until March 22. On February 15, "Mr. Knapp of Lexington" lectured in his stead. Kenneth Walter Cameron speculates that the lecturer is either Francis Bellows Knapp (1820-1896) or his brother Frederick Newman Knapp (1821-1889), both then seniors at Harvard ("Thoreau and the Concord Lyceum—A Strategy for Enlarging Our Knowledge," *ARLR* 1990, p. 20). Neither had a connection with Lexington.

*Copy-text:* ALS (InU-Li, American Literature Manuscripts)

*Published:* *Life* 1890, 69-70; "Emerson-Thoreau Correspondence," *AM* 69 (May 1892): 578-579; *Alcott* 1893, 348-350; *FL* 1894, 58-62; *Life* 1896, 58; *T: Home* 1902, 94; *FL* 1906, 50-53; *Recollections* 1909, 447; *Magazine of History* 1915, 117; *Cor* 1958, 76-78

*Editor's Note*

This letter is addressed "Ralph Waldo Emerson / Philadelphia / PA", postmarked "CONCORD MAS. JAN 24", and endorsed "H. D Thoreau / Jany: 1843".

*Author's Alterations*

Peace] peace  
evening,] -.  
(L & A)] *interlined with a caret*

*From Ralph Waldo Emerson*

*February 9?, 10, and 11, 1843*

Carlton House:  
New York Feb 1843

My dear Henry,

I have yet seen no new men in N.Y. (excepting young Tappan)<sup>1</sup> but only seen again some of my old friends of last year. Mr Brisbane<sup>2</sup> has just given me a faithful hour & a half of what he calls his principles, and he shames truer men by his fidelity & zeal, and already begins to hear the reverberations of his single voice from most of the states of the Union. He thinks himself sure of W. H. Channing here, as a good Fourierist.<sup>3</sup> I laugh incredulous whilst he recites (for it seems always as if he was repeating

paragraphs out of his master's book) descriptions of the self augmenting potency of the solar system which is destined to contain 132 bodies I believe and his urgent inculcation of our *stellar duties*.<sup>4</sup> But it has its kernel of sound truth and its insanity is so wide of New York insanities that it is virtue & honor.

10. I beg you my dear friend to say to those faithful lovers of me who have just sent me letters which any man should be happy & proud to receive—I mean my mother & my wife that I am grieved that they should have found my silence so vexatious, & think that some letter must have failed for I cannot have let ten days go by without writing home<sup>5</sup> I have kept no account but am confident that that cannot be. Mr Mackay<sup>6</sup> has just brought me his good package & I will not at this hour commence a new letter but you shall tell Mrs E. that my first steps in N.Y in this visit seem not to have been prudent & so I lose several precious days. 11 Feb.<sup>a</sup> A Society invited me to read my Course before them in the Bowery<sup>7</sup> on certain terms one of which was that they guaranteed me a thousand auditors. I referred them to my brother William<sup>8</sup> who covenanted with them. It turned out that their Church was in a dark inaccessible place a terror to the honest & fair citizens of N.Y. & our first lecture had a handful of persons & they all personal friends of mine from a distant part of the city.

But the Bereans felt so sadly about the disappointment that it seemed at last on much colloquy not quite good-natured<sup>c</sup> & affectionate to abandon them at once but to read also a second lecture & then part. The second was read with faint success & then we parted. I begin this evening anew in the Society Library<sup>9</sup> where I was last year. This takes more time than I could wish, a great deal—& I grieve that I cannot come home. I see W. H Channing & Mr James at leisure & have had what the Quakers call “a solid season”, once or twice.<sup>10</sup> With Tappan a very happy

pair of hours & him I must see again. I am enriched greatly by your letter & now by the dear letters which Mr Mackay has bro't me from Lidian Emerson & Elizabeth Hoar and for speed in part &<sup>a</sup> partly because I like to write so I make you the organ of communication<sup>e</sup> to the whole household & must still owe you a special letter. I dare not say when I will come home as the time so fast approaches when I should speak to the Mercantile Lib.<sup>y</sup>.<sup>1</sup> Yesterday eve. I was at Staten Island where William had promised me as a lecturer & made a speech at Tompkinsville. Dear love to My Mother I shall try within 24 hours to write to my Wife. Thanks thanks for your love to Edie.<sup>12</sup> Farewell!

R Waldo E

*Correspondent:* See p. 53.

<sup>1</sup> William Aspinwall Tappan (1819-1905), son of Lewis and Susanna Aspinwall Tappan, was one of a number of young men Emerson befriended and championed. At their first meeting, the two talked "two or three hours" until Emerson "forgot everything but Montaigne & Michel Angelo." Tappan later married Caroline Sturgis (1819-1888), another Emerson protégée and the daughter of William and Elizabeth Davis Sturgis (*Letters of RWE* 1939, 3:143).

<sup>2</sup> Albert Brisbane (1809-1890), a New York journalist and intellectual, had studied in Europe, first with Victor Cousin and François Pierre Guillaume Guizot, then with Hegel, and finally with François Marie Charles Fourier (1772-1837). On his return to the United States in 1834, Brisbane became Fourier's chief American proponent. Emerson first met Brisbane in February 1842 in the company of Horace Greeley. Brisbane immediately tried to recruit Emerson to the Fourierist cause, and Emerson as quickly saw that he could not "content" his two new friends: "They are bent on popular action: I am in all my theory, ethics, & politics a poet and of no more use in their New York than a rainbow or a firefly" (*Letters of RWE* 1939, 3:18). Emerson did publish one essay by Brisbane, "Means of Effecting a Final Reconciliation between Religion and Science," in the July 1842 number of the *Dial* (pp. 90-96).

<sup>3</sup> William Henry Channing (1810-1884), son of Francis Dana and Susan Higginson Channing, graduated from Harvard University in 1829 and from the Harvard Divinity School in 1833. He married Julia Allen (1813-1889), daughter of William and Maria Verplanck

Allen, in 1836. Channing followed an eclectic career as minister, writer, and reformer. He took a Unitarian pulpit in Cincinnati in 1838, helped James Clarke edit the *Western Messenger*, and went to New York City in 1842. Channing had known Fuller and Clarke from the late 1820s and Hedge from at least 1833. Emerson first mentions Channing in his journal for November 8, 1837, where he speaks of him as an acquaintance of some time. T and Channing may have met in September 1838, when the latter visited Emerson in Concord. By 1843 Channing had become deeply interested in the work of Fourier.

<sup>4</sup> Fourier developed a theory of societies divided into “phalansteries,” each a self-sustaining social and economic unit. He derived his social system from his understanding of the cosmos, according to which “[p]lanets can copulate: 1st with themselves by means of the north and south poles, like plants; 2nd with another planet by means of emissions from opposite poles; 3rd with an intermediary: the Tuberose is engendered from three aromas: Earth-South, Herschel-North and Sun-South” (Charles Fourier, *The Theory of the Four Movements*, ed. Gareth Stedman Jones and Ian Patterson, trans. Ian Patterson [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996], p. 45n). Fourier estimated that there are 32 bodies in our solar system (p. 311), rather than 132, as Emerson reports here. Years later, Emerson evaluated the Fourierists in his “Historic Notes on Life and Letters in New England,” *AM* 52 (October 1883): 529-543.

<sup>5</sup> Emerson had written Lidian on February 1 and February 7.

<sup>6</sup> Tristram Barnard MacKay (1802-1884), son of William and Amelia Hussey MacKay, had been an auctioneer and commission merchant in Boston. After retiring from his business, he divided his time between Boston and Concord, sometimes staying in the village the entire year.

<sup>7</sup> Emerson began his lecture series for the Berean Society with “The Origins of New England Character” on February 7 and “Trade” on February 9. The Berean Society, which met at a Universalist church near the Bowery, was founded in June 1841. Its members were American followers of Rev. John Barclay (1734-1798), a Scottish minister who founded the Berean Assembly in Edinburgh in 1773.

<sup>8</sup> William Emerson (1801-1868), son of William and Ruth Haskins Emerson, graduated from Harvard in 1818, studied in Germany, and became a lawyer in New York City. In 1833 he married Susan Haven (1807-1868), daughter of John and Ann Woodward Haven. The couple lived on Staten Island, where T tutored their son William (1835-1864) in 1843.

<sup>9</sup> Emerson gave the whole New England series at the New York Society Library: "Genius of the Anglo-Saxon Race" on February 11, "Trade" on February 15, "Manners and Customs of New England" on February 17, "Recent Literature and Spiritual Influences" on February 20, and "Results and Tendencies" on February 22. The New York Society Library was formed in 1754 by a group of prominent citizens; users, most of whom were well-to-do, paid a fee to subscribe. Its collection, which grew from two collections given to the city in 1700 and 1729 for a public library, was housed first in City Hall, later at its own building on Nassau Street, and then, in 1840, at Broadway and Leonard Street.

<sup>10</sup> Henry James Sr. (1811-1882), a member of Albert Brisbane's intellectual circle, was, like many of Emerson's New York friends, very interested in Fourier. When he first met James in March 1842, Emerson called him "a very manlike thorough seeing person" (*Letters of RWE* 1939, 3:23). That meeting developed into a lasting, if edgy, friendship. When Emerson arrived in 1843 to lecture, James himself was giving his first lectures, a three-evening series on the "Inward Reason of Christianity," on February 2, February 9, and February 16. Emerson's success in that same period contrasted sharply with James's failure to move or retain his audience.

<sup>11</sup> After completing his course at the New York Society Library, Emerson moved to the Broadway Tabernacle, a spacious hall engaged by his sponsor, the Mercantile Library Association. He gave two lectures there: "Domestic Life" on February 28 and "Politics" on March 7. The Mercantile Library Association, a subscription library like the New York Society Library, was founded in 1820 by merchant clerks. It opened in February 1821 in rented rooms on Fulton Street; in 1830, as the Clinton Hall Association, the library moved to another set of rented rooms at the corner of Nassau and Beekman streets.

<sup>12</sup> In a letter dated February 1 and February 3, Lidian told Emerson that Edith was listening to T's music box.

*Copy-text:* ALS (NN-BGC, Henry David Thoreau Collection, 1837-1917, Series IV)

*Published:* *HDT* 1882, 133-134; "E-T" May 1892, 581-582; *Alcott* 1893, 522; *Cor* 1958, 81-82; *Letters of RWE* 1990-1995, 7:525-526

#### *Editor's Notes*

This letter is addressed "Henry D. Thoreau. / Concord. / Mass." and postmarked "NEW-YORK FEB 11".

The first date for this letter could be either February 8 or 9. PE supplies "9?" following Rusk's conjecture. On February 7 Emerson

wrote Lidian that he had met Tappan the evening before and that his letter to T was “yet to be written” (*Letters of RWE* 1939, 3:143).

good-natured] *PE*; good- / natured *in MS*  
 communication] *PE*; communi / cation *in MS*

*Author's Alterations*

11 Feb.] *interlined above*  
 &] I

*To Ralph Waldo Emerson*

*February 10, 1843*

Concord Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> 1843.

Dear Friend,

I have stolen one of your own sheets to write you a letter upon, and I hope with two layers of ink to turn it into a comforter.

If you like to receive a letter from me too, I am glad, for it gives me pleasure to write. But<sup>a</sup> dont let it come amiss—it must fall as harmlessly as leaves settle on the landscape. I will tell you what we are doing here now.

Supper is done and Edith the dessert perhaps more than the desert—is brought in—or even comes in per se—and round she goes now to this altar and then to that with her monosyllabic invocation of “oc” oc”— It makes me think of “Languè d’oc” she must belong to that province.<sup>1</sup> And like the gipsies she talks a language of her own while she understands ours. While she jabbers Sanscrit—Parsee—Pelvhi<sup>2</sup>— Say Edith go bah!<sup>3</sup> and bah it is— No intelligence passes between us—she knows. It is a capital joke—that is the reason she smiles so. How well the secret is kept! she never descends to explanation— It is not buried like a common secret bolstered up on two sides, but by an eternal silence on the one side at least— It has been long kept and comes in from the unexplored horizon like a blue mountain range to end abruptly at our door one day (dont stumble at this steep simile)<sup>a</sup>.— And now she studies the heights and depths of nature on shoulders whirled