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*Editor's Notes*

This letter is addressed "James Munroe & Co." and endorsed "H. D. Thoreau / Concord. Oct. 9. 1844".

PE supplies the year "1844" following the endorsement.  
bearer] *obscured in MS by Done written in a different hand*

*From Ellery Channing*

*March 5, 1845*

New York March 5, 45

My dear Thoreau

the hand-writing of your letter is so miserable, that I am not sure I have made it out. If I have it seems to me you are the same old sixpence you used to be, rather rusty, but a genuine piece.

I see nothing for you in this earth but that field which I once christened "Briars";<sup>1</sup> go out upon that, build yourself a hut, & there begin the grand process of devouring yourself alive. I see no alternative, no other hope for you. Eat yourself up; you will eat nobody else, nor anything else.

Concord is just as good a place as any other; there are indeed, more people in the streets of that village, than in the streets of this. This is a singularly muddy town; muddy, solitary, & silent.<sup>2</sup>

They tell us, *it* is March; *it* has been all March in this place, since I came. It is much warmer now, than it was last November, foggy, rainy, stupefactive weather indeed.

In your line, I have not done a great deal since I arrived here; I do not mean the Pencil line, but the Staten Island line, having been there once, to walk on a beach by the Telegraph,<sup>3</sup> but did not visit the scene of your dominical duties. Staten Island is very distant from No. 30 Ann St.

I saw polite William Emerson in November last, but have not caught any glimpse of him since then.<sup>4</sup> I am as usual suffering the various alternations from agony to

despair, from hope to fear, from pain to pleasure. Such wretched one-sided productions as you, know nothing of the universal man; you may think yourself well off.

That baker,-Hecker, who used to live on two crackers a day I have not seen, nor Black, nor Vathek, nor Danedaz, nor Rynders, or any of Emerson's old cronies, excepting James, a little fat, rosy Swedenborgian amateur, with the look of a broker, & the brains & heart of a Pascal.-<sup>5</sup> W<sup>m</sup> Channing<sup>6</sup> I see nothing of him; he is the dupe of good feelings,<sup>7</sup> & I have all-too-many of these now.

I have seen something of your friends, Waldo, and Tappan,<sup>8</sup> & have also seen our good man "McKean", the keeper of that stupid place the "Mercantile Library". I have been able to find there no book which I should like to read.

Respecting the country about this city, there is a walk at Brooklyn rather pleasing, to ascend upon the high ground, & look at the distant Ocean. This, is a very agreeable sight. I have been four miles up the island in addition, where I saw, the bay; it looked very well, and appeared to be in good spirits.

I should be pleased to hear from Kamkatscha occasionally; my last advices from the Polar Bear are getting stale. In addition to this, I find that my Corresponding members at Van Dieman's land, have wandered into limbo.<sup>9</sup> I acknowledge that I have not lately corresponded very much with that section.

I hear occasionally from the World; everything seems to be promising in that quarter, business is flourishing, & the people are in good spirits. I feel convinced that the Earth has less claims to our regard, than formerly; these mild winters deserve a severe censure. But I am well aware that the Earth will talk about the necessity of routine, taxes, &c. On the whole, it is best not to complain without necessity.

Mumbo Jumbo<sup>10</sup> is recovering from his attack of sore

eyes, & will soon be out, in a pair of canvas trousers, scarlet jackets, & cocked hat. I understand he intends to demolish all the remaining species of Fetishism<sup>a</sup> at a meal; I think it is probable it will vomit him. I am sorry to say, that Roly-Poly has received intelligence of the death of his only daughter, Maria; this will be a terrible wound to his paternal heart.

I saw Teufelsdröck a few days since; he is wretchedly poor, has an attack of the colic, & expects to get better immediately. He said a few words to me, about you. Says he, that fellow Thoreau might be something, if he would only take a Journey through the "Everlasting No," thence for the North Pole. By God," said the old Clothes-bag "warming up," I should like to take that fellow out into the Everlasting No, & explode him like a bomb-shell; he would make a loud report. He needs the Blumine flower business; that would be his salvation. He is too dry, too confused, too chalky, too concrete. I want to get him into my fingers. It would be fun to see him pick himself up". I "camped" the old fellow in a majestic style.<sup>11</sup>

Does that execrable compound of Sawdust & Stagnation, Alcott still prose about nothing, & that nutmeg-grater of a Hosmer<sup>12</sup> yet shriek about nothing,—does anybody still think of coming to Concord to live, I mean new people? If they do, let them beware of you philosophers.

Ever yrs my dear Thoreau

WEC

*Correspondent:* See pp. 154-155.

<sup>1</sup> Channing's name for Emerson's land at Walden, where later that month T began cutting wood to build his house.

<sup>2</sup> Channing had gone to New York City in November 1844 to work on Horace Greeley's *New-York Daily Tribune*, where Margaret Fuller was to join him in December. Even less suited to city life than T, Channing lasted only a few months there; in mid-March 1845 he returned to Concord and bought a farm.

<sup>3</sup> Channing refers to the semaphore station on Telegraph Hill. T mentions visiting it in his July 21, 1843, letter to his sister Helen; see p. 210.

<sup>4</sup> Channing had not yet visited William Emerson's residence, the site of T's tutoring duties, on Staten Island. Waldo Emerson had asked his brother to invite Channing for a visit and William obliged. Channing, who could be pointedly antisocial, never went.

<sup>5</sup> Black may be Rebecca Gray Black. Vathek is probably John Wilhelm Vethake (1798-1876), son of Frederick Albertus and Maria Johanna Jansen Vethake. Vethake graduated from the Columbia Medical School in 1823. He married Sarah Brush (b. 1803?) in 1824 in Chillicothe, Ohio, where he practiced medicine before joining the faculty of Dickinson College in 1826. In 1827 he helped found the medical school of Washington College in Baltimore. Vethake, a Swedenborgian and one of the original "Loco-Foco" Democrats, knew Isaac Hecker, Charles Lane, Bronson Alcott, William Henry Channing, and Margaret Fuller. In two March 1843 numbers of Parke Godwin's *Pathfinder* (March 11, pp. 35-36; March 18, pp. 51-52), Vethake published "Femality" under the name "Vathek," a play on his own name and the title of a novel by William Beckford. The only two Rynders listed in the 1845 city directory were Isaiah Rynders (1804-1885), a U.S. marshal and Tammany politician who at one time led a mob against Garrison, and Theodore Rynders (1825?-1861), a bookbinder who became a policeman and a deputy marshal. Why Channing would mention either is not clear. James is Henry James Sr., and Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) was a French mathematician and philosopher best known for his posthumous *Pensées*.

<sup>6</sup> Ellery had visited his cousin William Henry Channing's church early in December 1844 but "was not vivified" ("Letters of William Ellery Channing the Younger" 1989, p. 211).

<sup>7</sup> Perhaps a modification of a question William Hazlitt poses in "On the Pleasure of Hating": "the dupe of friendship, and the fool of love; have I not reason to hate and to despise myself?" (*The Plain Speaker: Opinions on Books, Men, and Things*, 1:327).

<sup>8</sup> Though he never became close to Giles Waldo, Channing came to admire William Tappan. A few days after this letter he wrote Emerson: "With Tappan I have formed adamantine bonds, never to be broken" ("Letters of William Ellery Channing the Younger" 1990, p. 165).

<sup>9</sup> Kamkatscha is probably Channing's name for Concord; "Polar Bear" likely refers to Emerson, and Van Diemen's Land, an earlier name of Tasmania, to the Fruitlands community, which had broken up in January 1844.

<sup>10</sup> Very likely Channing's name for Greeley.

<sup>11</sup> Channing alludes to Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*: Teufelsdröckh is the name of the hero; "Everlasting No," "North Pole," "Clothes-

bag," and "Blumine" are all found in the book. To whom Channing refers, however, is unknown.

<sup>12</sup> Edmund Hosmer.

*Copy-text:* ALS (VtMiM, Channing W E/2)

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*Editor's Note*

This letter is addressed "Henry Thoreau / Concord. / Mass.", postmarked "BOSTON MASS MAR 5", and endorsed "W E. Channing".

*Author's Alteration*

Fetishism] Fetishes

*From Daniel Waldo Stevens*

*May 24, 1845*

Charlestown May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1845.

Dear Sir,

Permit me to ask a favor from you, although a stranger. It is this; I wish to have permission to reprint your translation of Prometheus Bound.<sup>1</sup> It appeared, as you will recollect, in the January number of the Dial, in 1843. It would be useless for me to pass any encomium on the merits of your translation since it corresponds in literal lines to the original, which needs no comment. Whether you conclude to confer the favor or not, I wish you would have the kindness to write to me as soon as convenient, for I wish to know soon.

Yours truly,  
D. W. Stevens

D. H. Thoreau Esq.<sup>2</sup>

*Correspondent:* Daniel Waldo Stevens (1820-1891), son of Isaac and Catharine Felton Stevens of Marlborough, Massachusetts, graduated from Harvard University in 1846 and from the Harvard Divinity School in 1848. In 1846 he married Caroline Partridge (1819-1849), daughter of Henry and Anna Partridge. Stevens was ordained in Mansfield in 1850.