

*From Ralph Waldo Emerson**December 2, 1847*

Manchester, 2 Dec. 1847.

Dear Henry,

Very welcome in the parcel was your letter, very precious your thoughts & tidings. It is one of the best things connected with my coming hither that you could & would keep the homestead, that fireplace shines all the brighter,—and has a certain permanent glimmer therefor. Thanks, evermore thanks for the kindness^e which I well discern to the *youths* of the house, to my darling little horseman of pewter, leather, wooden, rocking & what other breeds, destined, I hope, to ride Pegasus yet, and I hope not destined to be thrown,¹ to Edith who long ago drew from you verses which I carefully preserve^e,² & to Ellen who by speech & now by letter I find old enough to be companionable, & to choose & reward her own friends in her own fashions. She sends me a poem today, which I have read three times!— I believe, I must keep back all my communication on English topics until I get to London which is England. Everything centralizes, in this magnificent machine which England is. Manufacturer for the world she is become or becoming one complete tool or engine in herself.— Yesterday the *time* all over the kingdom was reduced to Greenwich time. At Liverpool, where I was, the clocks were put forward 12 minutes. This had become quite necessary on account of the railroads which bind the whole country into swiftest connexion, and require so much accurate interlocking, intersection, & simultaneous arrival, that the difference of time produced confusion.³ Every man in England carries a little book in his pocket called “Bradshaws Guide”, which contains time tables of every arrival & departure at every station on all the railroads of the kingdom.⁴ It is published anew on the first day of every month & costs sixpence. The proceeding effects of Electric telegraph will give a new importance to such arrangements.— But

lest I should not say what is needful, I will postpone England once for all,—and say that I am not of opinion that your book should be delayed a month. I should print it at once^e, nor do I think that you would incur any risk in doing so that you cannot well afford. It is very certain to have readers & debtors here as well as there. The Dial is absurdly well known here. We at home, I think, are always a little ashamed of it,—I am,—and yet here it is spoken of with the utmost gravity, & I do not laugh.— Carlyle writes me that he is reading Domesday Book.—⁵ You tell me in your letter one odious circumstance, which we will dismiss from remembrance henceforward. Charles Lane entreated me, in London, to ask you to forward his Dials to him, which must be done, if^a you consent, thus. Three bound vols are among his books in my library The 4th Vol is in unbound numbers at J Munroe & Co's⁶ shop received there in a parcel to my address a day or two before I sailed & which I forgot to carry to Concord It must be claimed without delay It is certainly there—was opened by me, & left. And they can enclose all 4 vols. to Chapman⁷ for me.— Well I am glad the Pleasaunce at Walden suffered no more but it is a great loss as it is which years will not repair.— I see that I have baulked you by the promise of a letter which ends in as good as none But I write with counted minutes & a miscellany of things before me.

Yours affectionately,
R. W. E.

Correspondent: See p. 53.

¹ Pegasus was a winged horse that sprang from Medusa's blood after Perseus slew her. He was the horse of the muses and thus associated with poetry. The hero Bellerophon was thrown from Pegasus when he attempted to ride to Olympus.

² Emerson copied the poem T addressed to Edith into his notebook (MH-H, MS Am 1280H [137], p. 95):

To Edith.

Thou little bud of being, Edith named,
With whom I've made acquaintance on this earth,
Who knowest me without impediment,

As flowers know the winds that stir their leaves,
 And rid'st upon my shoulders as the sphere,
 Turning on me thy sage reserved eye,
 Behind whose broad & charitable gaze
 Floats the still true & universal soul
 With the pure azure of the general day,
 Not yet a peopled & a vulgar town,
 Rather a pure untarnished country ground;
 For thou art whole, not yet begun to die,
 While men look on me with their shrivelled rays
 Streaming through some small chink of the broad sky;
 Pure youthful soul, thou hast begun to be,
 To cumulate thy sin & piety.

³ On December 1, 1847, the Railway Clearing House mandate to use Greenwich time at all stations in Great Britain went into effect. The Post Office and several railways had previously adopted "London time," which varied by twenty-three seconds from Greenwich time.

⁴ In 1839 George Bradshaw (1801-1853), a mapmaker, published a volume of railroad timetables that was supplemented each month by an updated schedule. In 1841 he developed a paper-bound monthly timetable, *Bradshaw's Monthly Railway Guide* (London: Bradshaw, 1841-1842).

⁵ On November 30, Carlyle told Emerson that he was "busy with William Conqueror's *Domesday Book* and with the commentaries of various blockheads on it" (*The Correspondence of Emerson and Carlyle*, ed. Joseph Slater [New York: Columbia University Press, 1964], p. 435).

⁶ James Munroe and Company.

⁷ John Chapman (1821-1894) began his career as a watchmaker; he later studied medicine and eventually became a publisher in London in 1844. Among other American and English authors, he published Emerson, James Martineau, and Herbert Spencer. He was the first to bring Mary Ann Evans (George Eliot) to the public's attention, publishing in 1846 her translation of David Friedrich Strauss's *Life of Jesus, Critically Examined*, the earliest English version of the work. In 1851 Chapman purchased the *Westminster Review* and Evans edited it behind the scenes for two years.

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ters of *Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Joel Myerson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 332-333

Editor's Notes

This letter is addressed "P Hibernia S / Henry D. Thoreau / Concord / Mass." and postmarked "PAID AT LIVERPOOL DEC 4 1847" and "BOSTON MS. SHIP DEC 25"

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Author's Alteration

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To Ralph Waldo Emerson

December 15, 1847

Concord Dec 15th 1847

Dear Friend,

You are not so far off but the affairs of *this* world still attach to you.¹ Perhaps it will be so when we are dead. Then^a look out.- Joshua R. Holman,² of Harvard,^{e,a} who says he lived a month with Lane at Fruitland's wishes to *hire* said Lane's farm for one or more years, and will pay \$125 rent, taking out of the same what is necessary for repairs-as, for a new bank-wall to the barn cellar, which he says is indispensable. Palmer is gone, Mrs Palmer is going.³ This is all that is known, or that is worth knowing.

Yes or No-
 What to do?

Hugh's plot begins to thicken.⁴ He stands thus. 80 dollars on one side-Walden field & house on the other. How to bring these together so as to make a garden & a palace.



1st let $\frac{10}{70}$ go over to unite the two last



$\frac{6}{64}$ for Wetherbee's⁵ rocks to found your palace on.