



*A Personal Account: The South, Slavery, the
Transcendentalists,
and the Abolitionist Movement through the eyes of*

Moncure Daniel Conway

EXCERPTS FROM: MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY.
AUTOBIOGRAPHY: MEMORIES AND EXPERIENCES.

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The lonely corner of the world where I was born (17 March, 1832) is in Stafford County, Virginia, about fifteen miles from Falmouth. [*He explains that his Conway ancestors*] settled in Charles County, Maryland, in 1708, [*and that one of his great-grandfather had come from*] near Dalkeith, Scotland [*and whose other son was*] Thomas Stone of Maryland, signer of the Declaration of Independence.

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The Moncures were of French origin, — the family, according to tradition, having been swept into Great Britain by the troubles following the Reformation, with which they sympathized. My great-great-grandfather, John Moncure, went to Virginia (1733) from County Kincardine, Scotland. . . .

The Virginia race is extensive, and has intermarried with most of the historic families of Virginia.

Virginia democracy forbade us to derive from our ancestors any dignity. But now and then a few fruits fell from the forbidden family tree in the shape of anecdotes or traditions, which I picked up. . . . The first of that family in America, William Stone, had come to Virginia, and was induced by Lord Baltimore to become the governor of Maryland, where he arrived in 1649. This selection was made because the Catholic Proprietary desired a Protestant governor free from prejudice against Catholics. Governor Stone's task was to open the doors

of Maryland to all religions. The Puritans flocked to Maryland; but Cromwell's commissioners, sent to Virginia, claimed Maryland, and in trying to defend the charter of the Proprietary (1655), Governor Stone was wounded and thrown into prison, and would have been executed, but "was after saved by the Enemies owne souldiers." . .

Sir Francis Galton's works on Heredity put before me in a new form the catechetical question, "Who made you"? Only when I was beginning to turn gray was any curiosity awakened in me to know how it was that I should carry the names of three large families into association with religious and political heresies unknown to my contemporary Virginians except as distant horrors. Who, then, made me?

When my unorthodoxy began to be conscious I reflected on an incident that occurred when I was about twelve. I was at the house of John Wheatley of Wheatleyville, Culpeper County, Virginia, whose wife was grandmother Conway's sister, when my grandparents came on a visit. To my grandfather, John Moncure Conway, everybody looked up; he was a scholar (graduate of William and Mary, 1800), and a serious man. While reading on the veranda my ear caught these words spoken by grandfather to his brother-in-law: "I cannot believe that the father of mankind would send any human being into this world knowing that he would be damned." I could hardly appreciate the remark, but it was marked in my memory, and also the

silence of devout uncle Wheatley. From this time I knew that in some way grandfather Conway had a religion different from that of others. He and grandmother never talked to me about religion, nor about keeping the Sabbath and saying my prayers. Although a vestryman of Aquia church (unused during his later years), he attended no church, nor were he and grandmother ever "confirmed." There was Methodist preaching in the court-house every Sunday, but grandfather never attended, and generally passed the morning in his office.

One Sunday when leaving his office for dinner he saw a gentleman angrily bundled out of the only inn in the place because he had devoted the morning to a walk instead of going to church he took the "Sabbath-breaker" to his house and entertained him several days. The guest was A. Bronson Alcott, the Emersonian philosopher, who told me the story.

In 1751 Denis Conway, deputy-sheriff of Northumberland County, Virginia, was fined for non-attendance at church. He gave no explanation for his abstention. . . .

I have found, too, that my maternal forebears, the Daniels, were not all orthodox. My mother's uncle, Walter Daniel, left a Bible in which there is in his writing a marginal note to Judges i, 19: "The Lord was with Judah; and he drove out the inhabitants of the hill country; for he could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley because they had chariots of iron." Uncle Walter adds: "Not omnipotent after all."

My great-great-grandfather, John Moncure, for twenty-six years rector of our parish (Overwharton), died in 1765, but left his legend which lasted over a hundred years. Descended, according to a tradition, from a Huguenot whose conscience led him from joyous France to the bleak hills of Calvinism and Scotland, he migrated to Virginia in youth as a teacher . . . He was a famous whist player. One Saturday evening when his game was interrupted by a deputation of farmers requesting that he would next day pray for rain, he promptly said, "Yes, I'll read

the prayer, but it isn't going to rain till the moon changes." Can I not pick my sceptical soul out of these old people?

I came also by my antislavery principles fairly. My great grandfather, Travers Daniel of "Crow's Nest," presiding justice of Stafford County, was an ardent emancipationist, and had not the laws of Virginia hampered the manumission of negroes in various ways, he would have liberated his slaves. He imported from England in his ship *The Crow* window curtains representing Granville Sharp striking chains from negroes, and displayed them around his house. Neighbours warned him that his slaves would be excited by the curtains and leave him, but he simply replied that it would be a relief. He died in 1824. My mother remembered the curtains.

Travers Daniel and General Wood married daughters of Rev. John Moncure, and no doubt had the sympathy of their father-in-law in antislavery work. General Wood was an eminent governor of Virginia, and from 1798 president of the Virginia "Society for promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and protecting those Illegally held in Bondage." This society was affiliated with the original society formed in Philadelphia under the presidency of Franklin just after publication, March 8, 1775, of Thomas Paine's plea for immediate emancipation.

Such was my pre-natal constitution. I was born of people opposed to slavery, and when in my twenty-second year my role seemed to many Virginians that of the Prodigal Son, it was the new proslavery Virginian who was the Prodigal, while my part was that of the father at home mourning for the wanderer.



My second year my father purchased a large farm and homestead two miles out of Falmouth called "Inglewood," and it is there that my remembrance begins. Through life it has remained with me as a "Lost Bower," and the only house I ever built (Bedford Park, London) bore that name. . . .

Before all the playmates I remember the

comely coffee-coloured face of my nurse, Maria Humstead, nearly always laughing, as if I were a joke. Her affection was boundless, and her notions of discipline undeveloped. "Come, Monc, 'fess your faults," and an outbreak of laughter, were all that met my infant mischief.

My more consecutive memories begin with a tragical day in 1838, when from the schoolhouse window we saw Inglewood wrapped in flames. My parents were at the house of a neighbour; the only member of our family in the house was my year-old sister, whom our nurse Maria deposited in a field remote from danger. The house was reduced to ashes.

We then moved into Falmouth, where my father bought the residence afterwards known as Conway House. It is a brick house fronting the Rappahannock, the largest residence in Falmouth. It was built by a Mr. Vass, of Dutch family, and the wall-paper in the drawing-room was a continuous scene in Rotterdam, with a canal in which women were washing clothes, children playing beside it, and barges plying on it. This decoration lasted until the house was used as a war hospital, 1862-65. . . .

The military heritage of the little town was displayed a hundred years after its foundation; it was the first place in Virginia to raise a company against Great Britain. Threescore years later the colonial belligerency survived only in parades of little boys in blue and white, with wooden guns, on the hill above our terraces. Alas, how many of them reached manhood only to be laid in the Confederate cemetery. . . .

Our region swarmed with those called "poor whites," largely descended, I always believe, from the convict and contract labourers imported from Great Britain in colonial times. Gradually supplanted by slaves, left without occupation, they "squatted" where they could and lived as they could. They became expert in fishing and hunting, and their skill in shooting made them good soldiers in the Confederate war. As concerned their means, they were more benefited by defeat than they could have been by triumph, — much more benefited than

were the poor negroes. With the abolition of unpaid labour their opportunity for employment returned. Moreover, many of the "gentry" became "poor whites" also, and that phrase is heard no more. It was always a phrase forbidden in genteel families, for these "poor whites" had votes, and I remember a campaign in which my father's candidate (Democratic) for the Legislature was nearly defeated because he (my father) had said, "The masses will follow their leaders."



At the time of my parents' marriage, May 28, 1829, the Episcopal Church was nearly defunct in our Overwharton parish. . . . The Methodists occupied the county, and preachers were sent by the Baltimore Conference. At the camp-meetings eloquent preachers from the cities assisted, and under one of these orators my father was "converted." His father was so shocked that a son should be carried away by what he regarded as vulgar fanaticism that a stormy scene ensued, and my father, who had barely reached his majority, left the paternal house. Grandfather speedily repented of his anger, but this touch of martyrdom brought to my father's side three of his sisters and two of his brothers. Thus it was that our family became Methodist, — the first of good social position in our region belonging to that sect. My mother gladly embraced the Arminian faith of the Methodists, and used to quote, with merry approval, the negro hymn, —

"I never foun' no peace nor res'
Till I jine the Methodess."



My parents, well read in Methodist theology, held strong views against fatalism, but there is a fatality also in the "free will" faith: it involves being constantly looked after. The Presbyterian children, whose conduct and destiny were already fixed, enjoyed more freedom than we who were every moment determining our eternal weal or woe. We were under a rigid regime: two sermons every Sunday besides Sunday-school; and only strictly religious reading permitted on that day, — even the fourth page of the "Christian Advocate" being prohibited because it was

literary and scientific. Our small affairs, actions, words, were ascribed everlasting importance, and we lived under the suspended sword of Judgment Day.

The basement of my father's house in Falmouth was fitted up for evening prayer-meetings, which were held there twice every week. They were usually conducted by the town tailor and local preacher, James Petty. I find the scene engraved in my memory, this fine intellectual father of mine, accustomed to preside over courts, and the refined elegantly dressed lady beside him, surrounded by poor, dusty, patched people, of whom some could hardly read. . . . They looked up to him with reverence, but in humility he surpassed them all. Somehow I to this day think of my handsome father's appearance as noblest when seated among those dingy and illiterate people.

THE rod was spared in our home, as well for servants as for the white children. My parents regarded coloured people as immortal souls, and we were trained to treat them with kindness. Every Sunday an hour was found for us — white and black children together — to be taught by my mother the catechism and listen to careful selections from the Bible. In some way this equal treatment of slaves got out, and some officious men came with a report that my mother was teaching negroes to read, which was illegal. It was not true, but it was prudent to avoid even the suspicion of such an offence in the house of a magistrate; so the mixed teaching ceased. But the cause was kept from me, and about that time I taught one of our slaves — Peter Humstead, about twenty — to read. Why he asked to have his lessons in the wood-cellar I did not understand. . . .

My mother's prayers were earnest and even eloquent. In the prayer-meetings in our basement she was always called on after my father to pray, and in his absence she conducted family prayers. Her voice was sympathetic and her command of language wonderful. . . .

The great function of the year was the

Methodist Camp-meeting. My father always had the largest tent in the selected forest, and for over a week there was a grand barbaric picnic. The tents were pitched around a large amphitheatre, where there were benches for several thousand, under arches of small lamps stretched between the trees. Immediately in front of the platform — on which sat a score of preachers — there was a large enclosure for the "mourners." There were three sermons daily, each followed by a prayer-meeting, but the great scene was at night, when there occurred a pitched battle with Satan to rescue souls. The loud excited singing of the throng was thrilling; the preachers walked about the platform, crying, "Now is the accepted time!" "Call upon him while he is near!" etc. Brethren went up the forest aisles, watching for any sign of emotion, any bowed head, and one after another "under conviction" was led up to the "throne of grace" to be welcomed by shouts of "Glory!" "Hallelujah!" Every now and then amid the loud pleadings of prayer there was a scream out of some terrified heart, some pale face falling back in swoon or trance, — the crowd of curious gazers pressing forward to see. My own curiosity often led me to go behind the platform: there the negroes received such crumbs of grace as fell from the white penitents' table. . . .

No cruelty to negroes occurred in the houses or on the farms of any families in which we were intimate. . . . Deeply engraved also on my memory is a small, prison-like building in the centre of Falmouth, known as "Captain Pickett's," where negroes were sent to be flogged. The captain was the town constable, and one of his functions was to whip negroes when their owners so ordered. I remember the captain silently walking up and down in front of his grim house, with his iron-grey hair and beard, never smiling, never uttering a word from his compressed lips. When I had left Falmouth, and thought of him as the local figure-head of an evil system, I heard of his suicide. . . .

Our Fourth-of-July orators talked grandly of the enormity of "taxation without representation," and the right of every man to "life, liberty,

and the pursuit of happiness;" but the bondage of millions of dusky human beings was never thought of as a thing even to be explained in those days. . . .

My most lasting education in all those years was in the law courts, and in listening to discussions of cases in our house. My opportunities were of the best. Two of my father's brothers were prominent lawyers, John Moncure and Eustace, and the latter became an eminent judge. My grandfather Conway, clerk of the county, had been educated for the bar. His eldest daughter married Richard Moncure, afterwards the Chief Justice of Virginia.

One judicial action of Chief Justice Moncure is of historical interest in connection with slavery. Our neighbour Mrs. Coalter bequeathed freedom to her numerous slaves. But after the clause of liberation the will said that if her negroes preferred to remain in slavery they might select their masters. The husband of the heir contended that the clause giving the slaves this choice, not legal in Virginia, invalidated the liberating clause. The case reached the Court of Appeals, and a majority of the court sustained the heir's contention ; the negroes — to whom Mrs. Coalter, as was proved had long promised freedom — remained in slavery until liberated by the war. Chief Justice Moncure vehemently pronounced the decision contrary to both law and equity. His minority opinion is now supported by every jurist in Virginia. The case was decided not long before the Secession, when the Southern people were infuriated, and to this feeling the injustice is generally ascribed. The outrageous wrong was reported in the Northern papers, and it is the more important that I should record here this protest of the Chief Justice.

I WAS sent to college too soon. My elder brother had gone to Dickinson College at Carlisle, and so desired to have me with him that I was taken from the academy. I had barely turned fifteen when I became a Sophomore, and four months later was advanced to the Junior

class. . . .

There was probably not an abolitionist among the students, and most of us perhaps were from slave States. . . .



My father's moderation and his theoretically antislavery principles were rapidly becoming old-fashioned.

My father and his younger brother Eustace had taken up opposite positions in the Methodist dispute about slavery, and a Southern Methodist church was built in Fredericksburg, uncle Eustace supplying the means. Personally the brothers were never estranged, and if they could have agreed on church politics the history of Methodism in Virginia might have been different; for Fredericksburg was the chief battlefield of the "wings," and my father and his brother were the lay leaders.

A few months after my graduation I was invited to attend a meeting in the law office of Thomas B. Barton, whose son William (afterwards judge) was the chief mover in the matter. The object of the gathering was the formation of a Southern Rights Association. Only about a dozen were present, but they were persons of large influence. Some asserted the right of secession, though no immediate action of the kind was advocated. I was flattered to be appointed secretary of the meeting. Extreme pro-southern resolutions were passed.

My father heard of this meeting, and a few days later, when we were riding together to Stafford Court House, asked me about it. I told him all that had occurred; he went on in silence for some moments, then said quietly, "Don't be the fool of those people! Slavery is a doomed institution."

How often I have remembered those words! Yet at the time they only mystified me. Slavery seemed to be as permanent a fact as the Rappahannock River; neither my father nor any of the Methodists were proposing to abolish slavery, and I was inclining to the view that the opposition to it was merely traditional.

He is studying law, and feeling empty:

O my poor dead self — aimless, morbid, passionately longing for it knew not what. (77)

An illness in April was followed by a return to Falmouth for a few weeks, and there I entered upon a spiritual crisis of whose import I was long unconscious. One bright morning I took up my old flint-lock gun and wandered down the left bank of the Rappahannock. In earlier years I had been fond of shooting, but had not touched a gun for nearly two years, and perhaps took it on this occasion to try and revive in myself some of the boyish spirit that had left me. For I was listless and unhappy. I had begun to feel a repugnance to the idea of being a county lawyer, and was interested only in literature. With my flint-lock I took along an old volume of “Blackwood’s Magazine.” At the top of the first hill below Falmouth . . . there is near the road a pretty spring, from which I drank, with a folded leaf for my cup, and sat down to look at the scenery. The road was little used, and I was rather startled by some rustling in the bushes. Two mulatto children had come to get water in their cans, — a boy and a girl of seven or eight years, — and, as befitted the warm day and their Arcadian age, both entirely naked. . . . I talked with them a little, found them rather bright, and, when they had disappeared, meditated more deeply than ever before on the condition of their race in America.

I then turned to my “Blackwood.” In the number for December, 1847, the first article was entitled “Emerson,” — a name previously unknown to me. The very first extract — it was from Emerson’s essay on History — fixed itself in me like an arrow: —

“It is remarkable that involuntarily we always read as superior beings. . . . All that Shakespeare says of the king, yonder slip of a boy that reads in the corner feels to be true of himself.”

Precisely what there was in these words to influence my life I cannot say. I have a vague

remembrance of sitting there beside the spring a long time meditating on Emerson’s use of the phrase “true of himself.” What “self” was this?

Whatever may have been the questionings, some revelation there was. a spiritual crisis, as I have said, — though it concerned only myself. Through a little rift I caught a glimpse of a vault beyond the familiar sky, from which flowed a spirit that was subtly imbreeding discontent in me, bereaving me of faith in myself, rendering me a mere source of anxiety to those around me. And what was I doing out there with a gun trying to kill happy little creatures of earth and sky? Was it for this I was born? . . . It was no fancy that now in my maturer life Emerson had set free in my heart a winged thought that sang a new song and soared — whither?

I went home and laid aside my gun, — never again to be touched. I thought again and again of those naked little mulattos at the spring, whose minds were no doubt as pretty as their bodies, but without a stitch of knowledge. I remembered how my mother had been warned not to teach coloured folk to read. I recognized on the streets debased faces of white people, their poverty of mind and body. (79)

□

(92) On my homeward way I passed a week in Washington. “Senator Hunter smuggled me into the Senate lobby so that I heard the great debate on the Boston riot.” [such lines in quotes are from his diaries] This was on February 18, 1851. Three days before, when the fugitive slave Shadrach was on trial in Boston, the case was postponed till next day, and at that moment about forty coloured men swarmed into the court-room, Shadrach became undistinguishable among them, and was spirited away to Canada. Not a blow was struck. “Nobody injured, nobody wronged, but simply a chattel transformed into a man,” wrote Garrison in the “Liberator,” but the incident caused excitement in Congress and was described as a “riot.” The new Fugitive Slave Law was beginning to bear its fatal fruits. Only a few months before I had been assisting at the banquet given at Warren-

ton to its author, Senator Mason, but now for the first time discovered that the new law was of serious importance. I shall never forget the wrath that shrivelled up the already wrinkled face of Henry Clay, nor his sharp voice, as he leaped forward and cried, "This outrage is the greater because it was by people not of our race, by persons who possess no part in our political system, and the question arises whether we shall have a government of white men or of blacks." [per the *Congressional Globe*] I was not antislavery, and did not doubt at the time it was a murderous attack on the court, but Clay's speech and manner grated on me . . . [T]he President, Fillmore, had ordered Commodore Read at Philadelphia to use all of his marine force if necessary to sustain the law . . . (93)

[Note that Fillmore was a Unitarian, too.]



What must be said of my first entrance on the ministry? It was on March 17, 1851, — my nineteenth birthday, — that I was appointed to Rockville Circuit, Maryland, one of the most important in the Baltimore [Methodist] Conference. (93)

There was excitement among our emotionally pious servants at my entering the ministry. On the eve of my departure one of these, Eliza Gwynn, came late in the evening and desired me to go out to her husband, Dunmore. He met me in a little porch and said, "Mars Monc," — but I will omit his dialect, — "I have had a vision. I saw you standing on a hill, and one came and blew a trumpet, and there came many people from the South; and another came a blew a trumpet, and a great number came from the North; and one sounded a third trumpet, and many came from the East; and a fourth trumpet, and a multitude from the West; and a host was around you, and to them all you spoke the word of the Lord."

. . . Out there under the stars these humble people, whom I had been pronouncing not quite human scientifically, pressed my hand, and invoked blessings on my head. I went off to my room, deeply moved. It was midnight. I so

entered on my Methodist ministry. The black man gave me the only consecration I ever received. (94)

Early next morning our hostler brought to the door the handsome chestnut horse which my father had purchased for me . . . My road lay past the homes of my near relatives . . . and I little dreamed that it was the beginning of a journey that would take me so very far away from them all.

. . . [T]he beautiful woods and roads of Montgomery County . . . were my study. I was wont to start off to my appointments early, in order that I might have no need to ride fast, and when clear of a village, take from my saddle-bags my Emerson, my Coleridge, or Newman, and throwing the reins on my horse's neck, read and read, or pause to think on some point.

I remember that in reading Emerson repeatedly I seemed never to read the same essay as before: whether it was the new morning, or that I had mentally travelled to a new point of view, there was always something I had not previously entered into. His thoughts were mother-thoughts, to use Balazs's word. Over the ideas were shining ideals that made the world beautiful to me; the woods and flowers and birds amid which I passed made a continuous chorus for all this poetry and wit and wisdom. And science also; from Emerson I derived facts about nature that filled me with wonder. (101)

Among Quakers:

. . . the softly feathered and imperceptible arrows that were going into my Methodism from the Quakers, in their homes even more than in this school. I found myself introduced to a circle of refined and cultivated ladies whose homes were cheerful, whose charities were constant, whose manners were attractive, whose virtues were recognized by their most orthodox neighbours; yet what I was preaching as the essentials of Christianity were unknown among them. These

beautiful homes were formed without terror of hell, without any cries of what shall we do to be saved? How had these lovely maidens and young men been trained to every virtue, to domestic affections and happiness? I never discussed theology with them; but their lives, their beautiful spirit, their homes, did away with my moral fears, and as the dogmas paled, creedless freedom began to flush with warm life. These good and sweet women, who said no word against my dogmas, unconsciously to themselves or me charmed me away from the dogmatic habitat. (107)

When I left the Baltimore Conference, the Quakers were given by many Methodists the discredit of having undermined my faith, but their only contribution to my new faith was in enabling me to judge the unorthodox tree by its fruits of culture and character. If theology were ever discussed by them, it was I who introduced the subject. (108)

More on his odyssey

How often have I had to ponder these words of Jesus, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Men do not forsake their God, he forsakes them. It is the God of the creeds that first forsakes us. More and more the dogmas come into collision with plain truth: every child's clear eyes contradict the guilty phantasy of inherited depravity, every compassionate sentiment abhors the notions of hell, and salvation by human sacrifice. Yet our tender associations, our affections, are intertwined with these falsities, and we cling to them till they forsake us. For more than a year I was like one flung from a foundered ship holding on to a raft till it went to pieces, then to a floating log till buffeted off, — to every stick, every straw. One after another the gods forsake us, — forsake our common sense, our reason, our justice, our humanity. (108)

Reaching out to Emerson 109-110

In my loneliness I stretched appealing hands to Emerson. After his death my friend Edward Emerson sent me my letters to his father, and the first is dated at Rockville, November 4, 1851. Without any conventional opening (how could I call my prophet "Dear Sir"!) my poor trembling letter begins with a request to know where the "Dial" can be purchased, and proceeds: —

I will here take the liberty of saying what nothing but a concern as deep as Eternity should make me say. I am a minister of the Christian Religion, — the only way for the world to reenter Paradise, in my earnest belief. I have just commenced that office at the call of the Holy Ghost, now in my twentieth year. About a year ago I commenced reading your writings. I have read them all and studied them sentence by sentence. I have shed many burning tears over them; because you gain my assent to Laws which, when I see how they would act on the affairs of life, I have not courage to practise. By the Law sin revives and I die. I sometimes feel as if you made for me a second Fall from which there is no redemption by any atonement.

To this there came a gracious response: —

CONCORD, MASS., 13TH NOVEMBER, 1851.

Dear Sir, — I fear you will not be able, except at some chance auction, to obtain any set of the "Dial." In fact, smaller editions were printed on the later and latest numbers, which increases the difficulty.

I am interested by our kind interest in my writings, but you have not let me sufficiently into your own habit of thought, to enable me to speak to it with much precision. But I believe what interests both you and me most of all things, and whether we know it or not, is the morals of intellect; in other words, that no man is worth his room in the world who is not commanded by a legitimate object of thought. The earth is full of frivolous people, who are bending their whole force and the force of nations on trifles, and these are baptized with every grand

and holy name, remaining, of course, totally inadequate to occupy any mind; and so sceptics are made. A true soul will disdain to be moved except by what natively commands it, though it should go sad and solitary in search of its master a thousand years. The few superior persons in each community are so by their steadiness to reality and their neglect of appearances. This is the euphrasy and rue that purge the intellect and ensure insight. Its full rewards are slow but sure; and yet I think it has its reward on the instant, inasmuch as simplicity and grandeur are always better than dapperness. But I will not spin out these saws farther, but hasten to thank you for your frank and friendly letter, and to wish you the best deliverance in that contest to which every soul must go alone. Yours, in all good hope,

R. W. EMERSON.

In Virginia, Methodist creed seemed to have at the core of it a strong connection between a conviction of the innate corruption of every heart on the one hand and the endorsement of slavery as a social system on the other, which is to say, in the end, that there is a profound and permanent need for human government. This religious system had been woven into the Southern psyche, and it had been woven into Conway's. He was the son of John Moncure Conway, an "old-school" slaveholder who professed to dislike slavery "in the abstract" but found it suited to his religious sense of human depravity. Now the younger Conway was reading Emerson and fraternizing with Quakers. His father threatened him with disinheritance.



(118f) On July 4 I preached in the Carlisle church where five years before I joined the church. . . . My subject was the "cloud no larger than a man's hand." . . . The turmoils in my mind, the increasing probability that I could not remain in the Methodist Church, and the inconceivableness of a freethinker's marriage with the daughter of a bishop and sister of [Dickinson College] President Emory, had kept me silent

for a year. . . . She had with fairness concluded that the affair between us was at an end, and her engagement with my friend, Asbury Morgan had just been announced. There was a subtle lightning in that cloud which struck something in me deeper than the dogmas with which I had been concerned. For some such experience came the motto of our family, *Fide et amore*. My old faith and first love crumbled together. The happier love came with a new temple, but Jehovah was not in it.

And already the foundation of the new temple was laid. That same sermon at Carlisle, then and there composed in my anguish, gave the first expression to a vision risen above all my own negations and the systems they denied. The small cloud was to prove its divine origin, not by theologies and sectarian triumphs, but by feeding hearts athirst and anhungered for love and righteousness . . . Why should I not raise my little cloud, assert the claims of a pure spiritual religion above all dogmas, and trust to its welcome by other famished hearts like mine?



On one occasion I was in extreme distress of mind, having to preach at a camp-meeting in the evening. Many distinguished preachers were present and among them my venerated friend Norval Wilson. I remember my long solitary walk in the woods trying to think what Christ was left me to preach about in the evening. I felt that Jesus was alive, that he was near me; and that he said, "Poor youth, there is but one thing for you to do, — give up all you have, even your loving friends, and follow your truth as I tried to follow mine, into loneliness and suffering, even unto death. But you are not strong enough for that. You can lament over a figure of romance, the minister without courage to suffer shame beside the woman he loves, branded with the scarlet letter, but you have not the strength even to take the hand of Truth which involves no infamy. Like a young man I met in Palestine, you will go away sorrowful." Alas, so it was. I said some bold things, but not boldly.

During that sermon I for the first time quite

broke down, and my tears prevented me from proceeding for a minute. . . .

I felt as if I had in my left hand the fabled sword that cleaved iron bars when I needed that sword which passed through a floating veil. I had to pierce hearts that really loved me. I felt Norval Wilson's embrace deeply, but no further words were spoken. He wept with me, then returned into the camp; and I remained where my place lay to the end — "without the camp."

My parents were much agitated by my avowal of doubts and my determination not to continue my ministry beyond the next Baltimore Conference — early in 1853. At the close of October my mental troubles and the distress of my parents began to break down my health, and I arranged for my appointments so as to pass a week with relatives in Baltimore.

To my surprise and delight both Hicksite Friends and Unitarians were holding their annual meetings in Baltimore at the time of my arrival.

In the conferences of the Unitarian Association the speaker who most impressed me was the Rev. Sylvester Judd of Augusta, Me. He was the apostle of a new idea among Unitarians, — the birthright church. My intimacy with the Quakers had made this idea familiar, and my ideal church was already one to which every child belonged. It was a joy to listen to Judd's pleading for the general adoption by ministers of the principle that children should be members of their congregations without need of christening, and their faith associated in every child's mind with its innocent gaieties.

At one of the Unitarian meetings I spoke to Dr. Burnap, who remembered our talk at Carlisle, and invited me to the collation usual on such occasions. Dr. Dewey was the guest of Dr. and Mrs. Burnap, and they invited me to dine with him. Dr. Burnap called for champagne in my honour. They were all cordial, and the two ministers arranged for an interview next day, when they advised me to enter the Harvard Divinity School.

When I returned to my circuit grievous tid-

ings met me. [*The beloved slave*] Becky was at the point of death! [Becky], who devoted her life to the comfort of the preachers, and while legally property owned us all — alas, she was prostrated by some fatal malady.

Becky was to me an ideal. She seemed to be there to let me and other teachers know what the pure African is capable of. Her quick intelligence, her humour, her humility and simplicity, candour, unselfishness, her perennial happiness, and indefinable qualities that I never knew in any white person, had made her to me a revelation. I was overwhelmed with grief. Becky had to console me.

A terrible confrontation was here! Whence was this death that struck down a happy and useful young woman, and wrought us all such misery?

In pouring out my heart at Becky's funeral I for the first time startled any congregation by a heretical thought. "My brethren," so says my diary, "many of them, were astonished at my preaching at Becky's funeral that death was not the result of sin. I had not dreamed of the unusualness of the thought with them. I was sorry I had said it. I maintained my point, albeit they were astonished at my doctrine."

Various incidents determined me to delay no longer my resignation. I remember one particularly. I had preached at Urbanna, my most cultured congregation, and as I was leaving a lady whispered gently, "Brother, you seemed to be speaking to us from the moon."

I might have suffered less had I confided to that dear friend the trouble I was in, but the pangs of my new birth were too severe. [123]

From December 15, 1852, when I reached the old home at Falmouth, to February 14, 1853, when I left for Cambridge, my old journal is a sort of herbarium of the thorns that pierced father, mother, and myself.

A cruel side of the situation was that my new steps had the appearance of being merely metaphysical. I was breaking my parents' hearts — so it seemed — on abstract and abstruse issues, while really I was aiming at a new world. But

this new world was of such a serious character, — the abolition of slavery to begin with — that any intimation of it only made the doctrinal heresies more painful.

Once more on Christmas Day I heard the angel singing in old St. George's, "Glad tidings of great joy I bring to you and all mankind;" once more I knelt with my parents on Watch Night and sang the covenant hymn, "Come let us anew our journey pursue;" and once more went out on New Year's Day — hiring-day — and wrote in my journal: —

I feel to-night somewhat sad. I find how little sympathy I have with the existing state of things. As I saw the slave-hiring to-day, I found out how much hatred I had of the institution — and how much contempt for the persons engaged in it. "You look," said a friend, "as if you were not in the world." I am not. My dear relatives and friends cannot sympathize with and encourage the deepest faith and reverence in my soul. O my Father, do thou love me in this time of fire.

My new ideas on slavery, which I did not proclaim nor conceal, caused my father embarrassment. Holding really the old-fashioned views against slavery "in the abstract," he was by my "abolitionism" not only involved personally, but as the leading layman in the Baltimore Conference in Virginia, then in a struggle with the Methodist Church South involving property. The presidential campaign between Franklin Pierce and General Winfield Scott — then just ended — had particularly enlisted two of my uncles. Judge Eustace Conway . . . nominated Pierce in the Democratic Convention . . . During the campaign the proslavery philosophy made rapid advance. Beverly Wellford (now judge), a leading scholar and writer, who three years before held aloof from our Southern Rights Association, had become an extremist in advocacy of slavery and Southernism. . . . Alas, that a burden should be on me to become an antagonist of these beloved companions of my early youth! But ah, what sustaining visions shone beyond the portal so painfully entered! There lay America freed from chains, slavery,

strife; there mankind enlightened, woman emancipated, superstition no more sundering heart from heart, war ended, peace and brotherhood universal. O Morning and Night, serene on my portal, is not the time at hand when World-soul shall harmonize with Oversoul?

As the time approached for my going to Cambridge, my father, pointing to a volume, said to me, with emotion: "These books that you read and are now about to multiply affect my feeling as if you were giving yourself up to excessive brandy. I have considered my duty and reached this conclusion: I cannot conscientiously support you at Cambridge. So long as you stay in this house you are welcome to all I have, but I cannot assist what appears to me grievous error." These are nearly my father's words, and I replied that his position was just.

On February 14, 1853, before leaving home, I ordered my horse, took a short ride, then hitched him to a popular in front of our house. I then carried from the house my empty saddlebags and laid them on the saddle. This fine horse and the accoutrements, presented by my father for my [Methodist] circuit, I thus returned. Had he been at home he would have asked me to keep them, but it was characteristic of him, as of his father, to escape from partings. My mother watched all the proceedings of my leaving home with burning cheeks, and my parting from her and my sister, aged sixteen, and my two little brothers was very painful. It also affected me to part with our servants. They were not aware of my new view on slavery, but one, "aunt Nancy," had divined enough to tell me that her husband, Benjamin Williams, had fled to Boston. He did not belong to my father, from whom no servant ever fled. Aunt Nancy had arranged a means by which I could communicate with her.

In Philadelphia I . . . passed that evening with the Rev. Dr. **William Henry Furness** [minister of First Unitarian Church], with whom I had exchanged letters. It was an ideal home. Mrs. Furness was beautiful and gracious, and took an almost maternal interest in me on account of my entrance on a pilgrimage that re-

quired parting with relatives and associations. It was a household consecrated to truth, humanity, literature, and art

On February 25 I started for Boston. . . . On my way I heard that the Marlboro', in Washington Street, Boston, was a good hotel with moderate prices. My diary describes it as "a very orderly, pleasant, and orthodox place. They have prayers morning and night, at which a piano with æolian addition is used. The first thing that strikes me hereabouts is the extreme culture of music. After prayers there is singing till bedtime."

On the 26th I took Dr. Burnap's note of introduction to the historian, Rev. Dr. **Alexander Young**. He was cordial, kept me till the afternoon, then guided me to historic places, his conversation being a much needed instruction. He took me to visit an aged woman who remembered the excitement about the "Boston Tea Party." The young men in her parents' household had been in the riot.

(130f) Nearly a quarter of a century after this I saw some notes about myself by a Methodist preacher of Boston, printed in "Zion's Herald." He stated that he met me at the Marlboro' Hotel on my first Sunday in Boston, where I had just been to hear **Theodore Parker**. He stated that I was vexed by the sermon (I am referring to the article from memory), and intimated that he found me rather homesick for my old Methodism. I could hardly believe this, but find it confirmed in my note-book: "February 27. Went to hear Theodore Parker. His sermon was on Good and Evil Temper. Text, Prov. xv, 17, 'Better is a dinner of herbs,' etc. I don't like him at all, and wish I had worshipped at King's Chapel with Mr. Peabody, whom with his whole family I love."

As to my worry at the first sermon I heard in Boston, — that of Theodore Parker, — I was disturbed by the lack of anything in the Music Hall or in the secular music sympathetic with my lonely and forlorn heart.

In the afternoon I was consoled by hearing

at the Seamen's Bethel the famous Father Taylor. I had read the graphic description of him by Charles Dickens ("American Notes"), and had heard that Emerson was an admirer of Father Taylor. Some one told me that . . . in a circle of his ministerial brethren where Emerson was spoken of as leading youth to hell, Father Taylor remarked, "It may be that Emerson is going to hell, but of one thing I am certain: he will change the climate there, and emigration will set that way."

After listening to his sermon, — plain, practical, in no part sensational, — I approached Father Taylor and told him I had just left the Baltimore Conference. He . . . was at first severe about my leaving the Methodist Church. . . . I then knocked at the door of his heart with the name of Emerson, and it opened wide. Our talk became cordial. He told me, I think, that Emerson was a contributor to the Seamen's Bethel, and at any rate interested me in his account of Emerson as a man, and apart from his writings.

. . . There was something rather hard about Parker's manner at first that may have been due to very natural misgivings. Having found that he was the man most likely to help me fulfil aunt Nancy's commission, I carried a note of introduction to him from some antislavery friend at Cambridge, but even antislavery men might be mistaken. A Virginian asking the whereabouts of a negro might properly be met with hesitation, though it did not occur to me. I was courteously received in his large library, where he sat at his desk beneath his grandfather's old musket fixed to the wall. He took down the fugitive's name, etc., and said he would make inquiries, appointing a day for my return. For the rest he showed interest in my experiences, and spoke with such admiration of Emerson that I began to warm toward him. A few days later he went with me through the negro quarters, and I got still nearer to him. . . . At length we entered into the house of some intelligent coloured people, who saluted Parker with the greatest homage, which he received with pathetic humility. "This," he said, "is a Virginian,

but an honourable Virginian, who wishes to find one Benjamin Williams, who some time ago escaped from his master in Stafford County, Va., and for whom he has a message from his wife, Nancy Williams. I hope you will be able to discover Mr. Williams.”

After a brief consultation with others of the family, the man went out to bring some neighbours, and meanwhile I was quite overcome by the pleasant conversation of Parker with the humble women around him. He spoke sweetly and graciously to young and old. It was all beautiful and touching, and I was ashamed that I had disliked him. (133)

To CONCORD! (134)

May 3, 1853, is a date under which I wrote a couplet from Emerson’s “Woodnotes,” —

’Twas one of the charmed days
When the genius of God doth flow.

— for on that day I first met **Emerson**. Dr. Palfrey, on finding in our conversations that it was Emerson who had touched me in my sleep in Virginia, advised me to visit him. I felt shy about invading the “spot that is sacred to thought and God,” but he urged me to go and gave me a letter to Emerson. I knew too well the importance of a morning to go straight to Emerson’s house, and inquired the way to the Old Manse. It was a fortunate excursion. The man I most wished to meet was Emerson; the man I most wished to see was **Hawthorne**. He no longer resided at the Old Manse, but as I was gazing from the road down the archway of ash-trees at the house whose “mosses” his genius had made spiritual moss-roses, out stepped the magician himself. It has been a conceit of mine that I had never seen a portrait of Hawthorne, but recognized him as one I had seen in dreams he had evoked. At any rate, I knew it was my Prospero. Who else could have those soft-flashing unsearchable eyes, that *beaute du diable* at middle age? He did not observe me, and as I slowly followed him toward the village, doubts

were awakened by the elegance and even smartness of his dress. . . . Hawthorne was making calls before his departure for Europe.

I felt so timid about calling on Emerson — it appeared such a one-sided affair — that I once turned my steps toward the railway station. But soon after twelve I knocked at Emerson’s door, and sent in Dr. Palfrey’s letter, with a request that I might call on him during the afternoon. The children came to say that their father was out, but would return to dinner at one, and their mother wished me to remain. The three children entertained me pleasantly, mainly in the bower that **Alcott** had built in the front garden. I was presently sent for.

Emerson met me at the front door, welcome beaming in his eyes, and took me into his library. He remembered receiving a letter from me two or three years before. On learning that I was at the Divinity School and had come to Concord simply to see him, he called from his library door, “Queeny!” Mrs. Emerson came, and I was invited to remain some days. I had, however, to return to college that evening, and though I begged that his day should not be long interfered with, he insisted on my passing the afternoon with him. When we were alone, Emerson inquired about the experiences that had led me away from my Methodism, and about my friendships. “The gods,” he said, “generally provide the young thinker with friends.” When I told him how deeply words of his, met by chance in an English magazine, had moved me while I was a law student in Virginia, he said, “When the mind has reached a certain stage it may be sometimes crystallized by a slight touch.” . . . He then began to talk about the Quakers and their inner light. He had formed a near friendship with **Mary Rotch** of New Bedford. “Mary Rotch told us that her little girl one day asked if she might do something. She replied, ‘What does the voice in thee say?’ The child went off, and after a time returned to say, ‘Mother, the little voice says, no.’ That,” said Emerson, “starts the tears to one’s eyes.”

The children presently came in, — Ellen, Edward, and Edith. They were all pretty, and

came up to their father with their several reports on the incidents of the morning. . . .

The dinner was early; the children were with us, and the talk was the most homelike and merry that I had known for a long time. When the children were gone Mrs. Emerson told me that they had been christened. "Husband was not willing the children should be christened in the formal way, but said he would offer no objection when I could find a minister as pure and good as the children. That was reasonable, and we waited some time; but when **William Henry Channing** came on a visit to us, we agreed that he was good enough to christen our children."

While Emerson was preparing for the walk, I looked about the library. [description follows, 137] . . . There were four long shelves completely occupied, he said, by his MSS., of which there must have been enough to furnish a score of printed volumes.

Our walk was around Walden Pond, on both sides of which Emerson owned land. Our conversation related to the religious ferment of the time. He said that the Unitarian churches were stated to be no longer producing ministers equal to their forerunners, but were more and more finding their best men in those coming from orthodox churches. That was a symptom. Those from other churches, having gone through experiences and reached personal convictions strong enough to break with their past, would of course have some enthusiasm for their new faith. But the Unitarians might take note of that intimation that individual growth and experience are essential for the religious teacher. I mentioned Theodore Parker, and he said, "It is a comfort to remember that there is one sane voice amid the religious and political affairs of the country." I said I could not understand how I could have tolerated those dogmas of inherited depravity, blood atonement, eternal damnation for Adam's sin, and the rest. He said, "I cannot feel interested in Christianity; it seems deplorable that there should be a tendency to creeds that would take men back to the chimpanzee." . . . (137)

I mentioned a task set me at the Divinity School, to write an essay on Eschatology, and Emerson said, "An actually existent fly is more important than a possibly existent angel." Again presently: "The old artist said, *Pingo in eternitatem*; this *eternitatem* for which I paint is not in past or future, but is the height of every living hour."

When we were in a byway among the bushes, Emerson suddenly stopped and exclaimed, "Ah! there is one of the gods of the wood!" I looked and saw nothing; then turned to him and followed his glance, but still beheld nothing unusual. . . . "Did you see it?" he said, now moving on. "no, I saw nothing — what was it?" "No matter, he said gently. . . . I was a little piqued, but said no more, and very soon was listening to talk that made my Eschatology seem ridiculous. Perhaps the sylvan god I had missed was a pretty snake, a squirrel, or other little note in the symphony of nature.

My instruction in the supremacy of the present hour began not so much in Emerson's words as in himself. Standing beside the ruin of the shanty Thoreau built with his own hands, and lived in for a year at a cost of twenty-eight dollars, twelve and a half cents, Emerson appeared an incarnation of the wondrous day he was giving me.

My enthusiasm for **Margaret Fuller Ossoli**, excited by her "Memoirs," led Emerson in parting to give me a copy of her "Woman in the Nineteenth Century," — an English edition she had sent him from London, with her initials in it. At my request he added his own name and the date.

That evening I sat in my room in Divinity Hall (No. 34) as one enriched, and wrote: "May 3. The most memorable day of my life: spent with Ralph Waldo Emerson!" (139)

*Chapter XII, in the which some
Concord-y things happen. 140ff.
A Henry turns up.*

Emerson introduced me to his friends. First of all he took me to **Henry Thoreau**, who lived in the village with his parents and his sister. The kindly and silent pencil-maker, his father, John Thoreau, was French in appearance, and Henry resembled him physically; but neither parent impressed me as possessing mental qualities that could account for such a rare spirit as Henry. He was thirty-six when I met him. He received me pleasantly, and asked what we were studying at Cambridge. I answered, "The Scriptures." "Which?" he asked. Emerson said, "You will find our Thoreau a sad pagan." Thoreau had long been a reverent reader of Oriental scriptures, and showed me his bibles, translated from various languages into French and English.

He invited me to come next day for a walk, but in the morning I found the Thoreaus agitated by the arrival of a coloured fugitive from Virginia, who had come to their door at daybreak. Thoreau took me to a room where his excellent sister, Sophia, was ministering to the fugitive, who recognized me as one he had seen. He was alarmed, but his fears passed into delight when after talking with him about our county I certified his genuineness. I observed the tender and lowly devotion of Thoreau to the African. He now and then drew near to the trembling man, and with a cheerful voice bade him feel at home, and have no fear that any power should again wrong him. That whole day he mounted guard over the fugitive, for it was a slave-hunting time. But the guard had no weapon, and probably there was no such thing in the house.

The next day the fugitive was got off to Canada, and I enjoyed my first walk with Thoreau. He was a unique man in every way. He was short of stature, well built; every moment was full of courage and repose; his eyes were very large, and bright, as if caught from the sky. "His nose is like the prow of a ship," said Emerson one day. He had the look of the huntsman of Emerson's quatrain: —

He took the colour of his vest
From rabbit's coat and grouse's breast;
For as the wild winds lurk and hide,
So walks the huntsman unespied.

The cruellest weapons, however, which this huntsman took with him were lenses and an old book in which to press plants. He was not talkative, but his occasional monologues were extraordinary. I remember being surprised at every step with revelations of laws and significant attributes in common things — as a relation between different kinds of grass and the geological characters beneath them, the variety and grouping of pine-needles and the effect of these differences on the sounds they yield when struck by the wind, and the varieties of taste represented by grasses and common herbs when applied to the tongue. "He offered me a peculiar grass to chew for an instant, saying, "It is a little sharp, but an experience." Deep in the woods his face shone with a new light. He had a mental calendar for the flora of the neighbourhood, and would go some distance around to visit some floral friend. . . .

Thoreau ate no meat . . . On our first walk I told him the delight with which I read his book, "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers." He said that the whole edition remained on the shelf of his publisher, who wished to get rid of them. If he could not succeed in giving them away they would probably be sold as old paper. I got from him valuable hints about reading. . . . He was an exact Greek scholar. Of moderns he praised Wordsworth, Coleridge, and, to a less extent, Carlyle and Goethe. . . .

It was a quiet joke in Concord that Thoreau resembled Emerson in expression, and in tones of voice. He had grown up from boyhood under Emerson's influence, had listened to his lectures and his conversations, and little by little had grown this resemblance. . . . Thoreau was an imitator of no mortal; but Emerson had long been a part of the very atmosphere of Concord, and it was as if this element had deposited on Thoreau a mystical moss.

During that halcyon summer I read the Oriental books in Emerson's library, for he not only

advised me in my studies but insisted on lending me books. (-143)



I made the acquaintance of several elderly persons in Concord who told me incidents related by their grandparents concerning the Concord fight of April 19, 1775, but I was too much interested in the heroes of 1853 to care much for those of the old Revolution. One day Emerson pointed out to me across the street the venerable Hon. Samuel Hoar and his daughter Elizabeth, and told me the story of their visit to Charleston, S.C. (1844), the eminent lawyer being commissioned by his State to plead for the release of Massachusetts seamen seized from ships and imprisoned there because of their colour. Amid threats of violence the lawyer and his daughter were driven out of Charleston unheard. I had not known this, and thenceforth bowed low whenever I passed the old lawyer. . . . “he is a saint,” said Emerson as the old gentleman passed one day; “He no longer dwells with us down on earth.” (144f)



Mrs. Ripley, the widow of Rev. Samuel Ripley, a kinsman of Emerson, occupied the famous “Old Manse.” . . . She was a fine botanist. A legend ran that Professor Gray called on her and found her instructing a student in differential calculus, correcting the Greek translation of an other, and at the same time shelling peas, and rocking her grandchild’s cradle with her foot. But never was lady more simple and unostentatious. In her sixty-third year she was handsome, and her intelligent interest extended from her fruit-trees and poultry to the profoundest problems of her time. (146)

Andrews Norton:

. . . [A]s most of the old Unitarians idolized Daniel Webster and opposed the abolitionists, I supposed that the “aristocratic” doctor [arch conservative Unitarian theologian Andrews Norton] was on that side too. To my surprise he

said early in our conversation that the majority of the Washington politicians seemed to ignore not only the principles of freedom but even all sense of honour. No compacts were respected and truth was disregarded. Those who refer to the history of the slave power at that time, and its steady corruption of Northern congressmen, will recognize the weight of Dr. Norton’s words.

. . .

When Professor Charles Norton was bravely denouncing in 1898 the “inglorious war” which the United States was about to wage against helpless Spain, I gave an address in Boston, before the **Free Religious Association**, in which I related the above anecdote of his father. I afterwards received a letter from Professor Norton telling me that it had been the custom of his father [Professor Andrews Norton] in their family prayers to utter a special petition against the influence of Theodore Parker’s unbelief. But one day he read a report of a sermon delivered by Parker in Boston on the betrayal of freedom by Webster, and from that time there was no more about Parker in the family prayers. (160f)

Parker again

Admirers of Theodore Parker sometimes claimed that he was the typical flower out of the prickly Puritan stem. And after I had come to find that no opportunity of hearing him must be lost, there appeared to me some truth in this. When he sat in front of the organ while the choir was singing, there was a certain severity about his thin lips, a sternness and pallor on his face and bald head, which suggested the aspect of the Puritan; when he opened his lips his gentle voice wafted to us lilies and roses.

In nearly every sermon of Parker’s there was some delicately humourous passage which sent a smile or even a ripple of laughter through his eager assembly, but it was only some great inhumanity or injustice that brought forth his sarcasm, and that raised no smile. (162)

While I loved Theodore Parker and honoured him as the standard-bearer of religious liberty, and derived instruction from his discourses, I received no important aid from his philosophy or this theology. Indeed, none of our class in the Divinity School adopted “Parkerism,” but we all felt — and I suspect our professors felt — that Parker was defending our right to enter on an unfettered ministry. We unanimously resolved to ask him to give the sermon at our graduation. When one or two of us conveyed to Parker this invitation, we were received in his library, where he sat at his desk. The conspicuous musket borne by his grandfather at Lexington was in curious contrast with the tenderness which this captain in a nobler revolution displayed for his antagonists. He was moved by our invitation, and after some moments of silence said, “I should rejoice to do it; but the professors have already been embarrassed at the reputation of your class for radicalism, and this would embarrass them further; get some one less notorious.” . . . After us came a class which without consulting Parker invited him to deliver their address. The Faculty having refused consent, and the young men to elect another, the address that year was an eloquent silence.

Parker really brought a sort of judgment day among the Unitarians, many of whom were not conscious of the extent to which they had deviated from the old standards. He told me that Dr. **Convers Francis**, our professor of ecclesiastical history, had visited him after his first heretical manifesto, and the following colloquy took place:

-
- F. “I cannot go along with you, Parker.”
P. “What’s the trouble?”
F. “Oh, you reject the supernatural in Christianity.”
P. “Do you believe in it?”
F. “Certainly.”
P. “Do you believe that the fish came up with a penny in its mouth?”
F. “Well, no, not that.”
P. “Do you believe that a fig-tree withered because Jesus cursed it?”
F. “Certainly not.”

P. “Do you believe that a man was brought to life four days after his death?”

F. “I do not.”

P. “Will you please select some particular miracle in the New Testament which you do believe?”

F. “Oh, I accept the supernatural element.”

With that, said Parker, Dr. Francis went off. And how many preachers are in that condition?

Dr. Francis was a florid old gentleman, good-natured, tolerant, mystical, and, but for the extent to which his functions had wrapped him in bandages, might have been progressive. He was the brother of Mrs. **Lydia Maria Child**, whose “Progress of Religious Ideas” was perhaps the earliest attempt to gather together the spiritual expressions of all the races of mankind. We all liked Dr. Francis personally, and derived benefit from his encyclopaedic information about the Church and the Fathers, though he was not able to kindle this ancient coal with any present fire, so that we might receive light and warmth from it.

The typical old-fashioned Unitarian was Dr. **Ezra Styles Gannett**, whose fire and vigorous thought made him eloquent. He lived long enough to be the last of the able and learned believers inspired by Unitarian Christianity. (166)



My own enthusiasm for Emerson unexpectedly gave rise to an incident that caused excitement in the right wing. It was Emerson’s custom to give one of the winter courses of lectures in Concord, and having ascertained the date I persuaded two students to join me in hiring a sleigh to take us out to Concord (twenty miles) and bring us back to Cambridge the same evening. . . . The snow was deep and hard enough for perfect sleighing, the thermometer below zero, but our hearts were warm enough to make us forget the weather until on reaching Concord Town Hall we found it closed. We drove to Emerson’s house and learned that his

lecture had been indefinitely postponed. Emerson was surprised and touched, that young men should in such weather make a journey of forty miles, with the necessity of rising betimes next day, to listen to one of his lectures. He and his wife detained us with utmost hospitality, gave us refreshments, and after listening to his conversation we went off with a sense of happiest disappointment. No public lecture could have equalled that evening with Emerson.

But with his characteristic humility Emerson was unconscious of the riches his conversation had bestowed, and thought only of our disappointment . . . Consequently he wrote to me that if I could arrange an afternoon he would read a lecture in my room. . . . Emerson's paper was on Poetry; it was read to us on a Saturday afternoon when no regular teaching was going on, and only two of the listeners were divinity students. Our professors were perfectly satisfied by my narrative of the circumstances. But Huntington, with whom I also conversed, was convinced that the school was steeped in unbelief, resulting from a general "decline of moral earnestness." . . . I was not surprised to hear that he had abandoned Unitarianism . . .

When Emerson wrote me that he would read a lecture in my room, I concluded that it was an occasion of which I ought to make the most. My own room was plainly furnished; and I proposed to my dear friend Loammi Ware that the company should assemble in his room, the most elegant in Divinity Hall. There were present Mr. and Mrs. Longfellow, Arthur Hugh Clough, **J. R. Lowell**, Mrs. Charles Lowell, J.S. Dwight, Charles E. Norton and his sisters Jane and Grace, **Frank B. Sanborn**, L. G. Ware, Henry G. Denny, and the musical artist Otto Dresel. The impression on us was profound. It was a sort of epic that we should be gathered around this poet who fulfilled before us one of the sentences he uttered, "In poetry we require the miracle." When Emerson finished there was deep silence. Presently Otto Dresel moved to the piano and performed several of Mendelssohn's "Songs without Words." These were the only words possible. (167f)

(170) As Franz von Baader said, repelled light returns in lightning.

(170) As a rationalist I advocated changes; and as a freethinker I still recognize that there was something offensive in the attention learned men were giving to ancient and remote times and places, and to metaphysics, when their own time and country were in sore need of every available fibre of strength. But long experience and historical studies have shown me another side of the situation. The Unitarians had inherited the old churches; and the hard literature and tyranny of those old Calvinists were done away with in the only genuine way, — by evolution instead of revolution. The only security against reversion in human evolution is that some continuity shall be preserved with all that was humane in preceding forms or capable of a human interpretation.

(171) We would have been wiser if we had realized then, as we did later, that there was an Emerson in every leading preacher's breast. Frank Sanborn told me that Emerson and Henry Ward Beecher happened to meet at some hotel and were dining together. "Mr. Emerson," said Beecher, "do you think a man eating these meats could tell what grasses the animals fed on?" "No," said Emerson. "I'm glad to hear it," said Beecher, "for I've been feeding on you a long time and I'm glad my people don't know it."

(172) After all, the conservative ministers were not quite wrong in their apprehension that Emerson had become a teacher at the Divinity School; only it would have been more exact to say, in the whole college. Charles Norton, Sanborn, Eliot, Horace Furness — to name those of whom I knew something — were really children of Emerson, perhaps more truly than some of us who found him an especially religious inspirer. . . . But love of Emerson never perished in any heart that knew him . . .

Anthony Burns (175)

But just then an event occurred which held momentous results for me. In May, 1854, the fugitive slave **Anthony Burns** was arrested in Boston, and the city was thrown into excitement. Anthony was from our county, and about twenty. His owner, **Captain Suttle**, and William Brent, both well known to me, had come to Boston and Burns was discovered. The city swarmed with an angry multitude; but the new **Fugitive Slave Law** was now in force, and the President ordered a regiment to suppress any attempt at rescue. Around the court-house were stretched chains under which the judges and lawyers had to bend on entering.

The Southern students at Cambridge assembled to offer their sympathy to the owner of Burns. I was notified, but replied that my sympathies were with the fugitive.

On the Sunday after the arrest I was in the vast congregation of Theodore Parker. A notice had been sent to all the churches asking their prayers that the fugitive might be delivered. Parker began his services by reading this notice, then quietly laid it aside with the remark, "I have no intention of asking God to do our work." His prayer was for moral courage to the people and not for the fugitive's rescue. His sermon came as if from his cherished heirloom, his grandfather's musket in the Revolution.

□

(183) The passage through Congress of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill (May 30, 1854), repealing the "Missouri Compromise," made a *casus belli* between slavery and freedom, and this was almost simultaneous with the triumphant parade through Boston of the slave-hunters carrying Anthony Burns back into slavery. . . . The antislavery leader, **Garrison**, was a **non-resistant**, but the possession of every branch of the government by the slave power, and its domination over all the State laws protecting personal liberty, mingled with the moral issue the patriotic sentiment of independence which had confronted George III. The young Unitar-

ian minister at Worcester, **Wentworth Higginson**, was eloquent though always calm, and his wound received in the attempted rescue of Anthony Burns was also eloquent. The impending struggle for freedom in Kansas was revealing the weakness of the non-resistant wing of the Antislavery Society. On July 4, 1854, the annual gathering of the abolitionists in Framingham Grove occurred. As a studious observer of the movement that so deeply concerned me personally, I attended. My brief speech was a plea for peaceful separation of North and South after the manner of Abraham and Lot. I dreaded the angry passions rising on both sides more than slavery.

There were several striking incidents at this Framingham gathering.

A very aged negro woman named "**Sojourner Truth**," lank, shrivelled, but picturesque, slowly mounted to the platform, amid general applause, and sat silently listening to the speeches. After some stormy speaker a young Southerner rose in the audience and began to talk fiercely. There were cries of "Platform," and Garrison, who presided, invited the youth to come up and speak freely. The young man complied, and in the course of his defence of slavery and affirming his sincerity, twice exclaimed, "As God is my witness!" "Young man," cried Sojourner Truth, "I don't believe God Almighty ever hearn tell of you!" Her shrill voice sounded through the grove like a bugle; shouts of laughter responded, and the poor Southerner could not recover from that only interruption.

Thoreau had come all the way from Concord for this meeting. It was a rare thing for him to attend any meeting outside of Concord, and though he sometimes lectured in the Lyceum there, he had probably never spoken on a platform. He was now clamoured for and made a brief and quaint speech. He began with the simple words, "You have my sympathy; it is all I have to give you, but you may find it important to you." It was impossible to associate egotism with Thoreau; we all felt that the time and trouble he had taken at the crisis to

proclaim his sympathy with the “Disunionists” was indeed important. He was there a representative of Concord, (begin 185) of science and letter, which could not quietly pursue their tasks while slavery was trampling down the rights of mankind. Alluding to the Boston commissioner who had surrendered Anthony Burns, Edward G. Loring, Thoreau said, “The fugitive’s case was already decided by God, — not Edward G. God, but simple God.” This was said with such serene unconsciousness of anything shocking in it that we were but mildly startled.

William Lloyd Garrison made that July 4 a Judgment Day. He read the Declaration of Independence, then contrasted its principles with the Fugitive Slave Law, the judgment of Loring surrendering Anthony Burns, and a charge of United States Judge Curtis on the “treasonable” attempt to rescue Burns. Lighting matches, he burned successively these documents, after each crying, “And let all the people say Amen!” The Amens were loudly given, but at last Garrison uplifted a copy of the Constitution of the United States, and read its compromises with slavery and the slave trade; he then declared it the source of all the other atrocities, the original “covenant with death and agreement with hell,” and held it up burning until the last ash must have singed his fingers. “So perish all compromises with tyranny!” he cried, “and let all the people say Amen!” There were mingled “Amens” and hisses, and some voices of protest; but there stood the adamant judge parting to right and left the leaders of the people, constitutionalists, free-soilers, and abolitionists.

That day I distinctly recognized that the antislavery cause was a religion; that Garrison was a successor of the inspired axe-bearers, — John the Baptizer, Luther, Wesley, George Fox. But as I could not work with Lutheran, Methodist, or Quaker, I could not join the Antislavery Society. There was a Calvinistic accent in that creed about the “covenant with death and agreement with hell.” . . . (begin 186) I also believed that slavery was to be abolished by the union of all hearts and minds opposed to it, — those who believed emancipation potential in the Constitu-

tion, as well as the Constitution burners.

I had some conversation with Rev. **Samuel J. May** on this subject . . . I remember my friend May . . . saying that Garrison’s vehemence was not against the Southerners, but the Northern allies of slavery. “I remember,” said May, “being with him at a meeting, and saying, ‘Mr. Garrison, you are too excited, you are on fire!’ Garrison answered, ‘I have need to be on fire, for I have icebergs around me to melt!’”

He heads off for Washington and the Unitarian Church there. He refuses to support the fast day called by the town council, asking churches to open for the day of fasting and prayer to beseech God to withdraw the terrible plague of yellow fever. His response (9/21/55) included:

Feeling that we cannot assemble on that day to “acknowledge the hand of the Almighty,” and “call for His merciful deliverance” from His own hand; nor assist in rendering persons less able to give for the relief of the sufferers, by loss of a day’s wages; nor bear our testimony, however feeble, in favour of a sanctity which deprives the people of thirty or forty thousand dollars, that the Council may have its conscience soothed by a day’s crying of “Lord! Lord!” for its refusal to appropriate five or even one thousand dollars for the sufferers; nor petition Him to do the work of our board in averting “from us such terrible calamity,” we shall not open our church on that day. (197)

(198) The most important result of this incident was its revelation that my congregation was essentially rationalistic, and that leading citizens of Washington by no means shared the vulgar superstitions.

(200) Never was there a fairer sky above a young minister, and I was for a time able to ignore a small cloud in it. This cloud might be symbolized by one pew, more finely cushioned than the rest. It was that in which **President Fillmore** had sat, — undisturbed by any allusion from the pulpit to his having signed the Fugitive Slave Bill.

[By now Fillmore has been succeeded by Pierce]

He describes Senator Seward (208), Sen. Hale (209), and Sen. Sumner (209f). Then on to Walt Whitman (215ff).

(209) **John P. Hale**, senator from New Hampshire, was a solid handsome man, with clear-cut features, a good voice, and a lucid, vivacious way of speaking. . . . He once spoke of the enslaved and despised African “who yet bears within him a nature destined to run parallel to the eternity of God.” He had much reputation as a humourist. Hale was, I think, the most popular of the anti-slavery senators among the Southerners. But he warned them solemnly that they were trying to carry slavery through an age to which it did not belong. “You cannot steer an iceberg through the tropics. The warm sun will shine on it and melt it; the rains will fall on it and melt it; the winds will beat on it and melt it.”



A compelling story about a young member of the Washington church: Moncure is 23 or 24 and this 18-year-old, Gerald FitzGerald, (221f) “very handsome, not to say beautiful; he was intellectually brilliant without conceit; he had a charming voice, fine humour, — every quality that might make a successful minister. So it was arranged the he should study at the Divinity School, Cambridge.

Then came on the war, — that damnable double-tongued war that lured the best youth to their graves with promises now broken. Just on the threshold of a career already radiant Gerald uplifted the ensign of liberation of both the negro and the nation from slavery, and went forth as a foot-soldier. . . . None of us ever saw Gerald again. Two soldiers reported that they found him dying of a wound on the field and bore him to the shade of a tree. . . . In these last years I have felt it some compensation that the noble youth died with the full assurance that the

fair ideal America, and peace never to be broken, would arise out of the blood he had shed, — his own, and the blood of adversaries just as brave. Knowing well Gerald’s sensitive heart, I feel sure that even had he returned from the work of slaughter he could never have smiled in the old way. Had he lived to this day he would find himself amid phantoms asking, “Was it well then to shed our blood in order that the negro might be freely lynched, and North and South united to lynch also Spaniard, Filipino, and Chinaman?”

. . . For you no tears, no heartbreaks, no harrowing reflection that your chivalry was in vain, and the war mere manslaughter! These are for me, who found you a happy youth clinging to me with boyish affection, and from my pulpit helped to lay on you the burden of the world.

Then he shows the folly of Webster, and asserts that it was in fact the Fugitive Slave Law that brought on the Civil War. There is a model letter to an honored politician on 226f: Philadelphia Unitarian minister Furness to Webster:

DEAR SIR, — Will you pardon this intrusion and the boldness implied in these lines? I deprecate the appearance of undertaking to offer counsel to one whom I regard with such sincere admiration. But I must bear the folly of the presumption, for I cannot resist the impulse that I have long felt to express to you, sir, my deep conviction that if **Daniel Webster** would only throw that great nature which God has given him into the divine cause of human freedom, his fellow citizens, his fellow men, would witness such a demonstration of personal power as it is seldom given to the world to see. And yet no one would be more surprised than he. You have given us evidence which has filled us all with pride that you were made for great things, for far greater things than any office, but we do not know, sir, how much you are capable of. You do not know yourself, nor in the eternal nature of things can you ever know until, with a devotion that makes no stipulations for yourself, you give your whole might and mind to the right. You once said of a professional friend that “when his case was stat-

ed, it was argued.” There was no man of whom this can be said with more entire truth than of yourself. If, taking liberty for your light, you cast your broad glance over the history of state and of country; if seeing, as many think, as you yourself could not help seeing, how slavery has *interfered* and is interfering, not with the property, but with the rights, the hearts of free men, you were then to tell the country in that grand and simple way in which no man living resembles you, what you see, *stating the great case* so that it would be argued once for all and forever, you would not only render the whole country, North and South, the greatest possible service, but you would find a compensation in yourself which even your great power could not begin to compute. The service of great principles is not a white more beneficent in its results to others than in its influence on those who undertake it. They may possibly witness no results to others. They may subject themselves to personal inconvenience, to suffering, but the redeeming, ennobling effect on themselves they cannot miss. We have seen again and again how it transfigures ordinary men. What then must be its effect on one whom Nature has made great.

But I will not trespass any further. Accept, I pray you, sir, these few words as an expression of the heartiest personal interest of

Yours faithfully and respectfully,,

W. H. FURNESS.

[I:227] To this came the following reply: —

MY DEAR SIR, — I was a good deal moved, I confess, by reading your letter of the 9th of January. Having great regard for your talents and character, I could not feel indifferent to what you said when you intimated that there was or might be in me a power to do good not yet exercised or developed. It may be so; but I fear, my dear sir, that you overrate not my desire but my power to be useful in my day and generation. From my earliest youth I have regarded slavery as a great moral and political evil. I think it unjust, repugnant to the natural equality of mankind, founded only in superior power, a standing and permanent conquest of the stronger over the weaker. . . .

But now, my dear sir, what can be done by me, who act only a part in political life, and who

have no power over the subject of slavery as it exists in the States of the Union? . . . In my opinion it is the mild influences of Christianity, the softening and melting power of the Sun of Righteousness, and not the storms and tempests of heated controversy, that are, in the course of these events, which an All-wise Providence overrules, to dissolve the iron fetters by which man is made the slave of man. . . . In 2000 years the doctrines and the miracles of Jesus Christ have converted but a small portion of the human race, and among Christians even many gross and obvious errors, like this of the lawfulness of slavery, have still held their ground. But what are 2000 years in the great work of the progress of the regeneration and redemption of mankind? . . .

DANIEL WEBSTER.

Twenty days after writing this letter Webster made the fatal speech. I heard Emerson ascribe it to his “profound selfishness,” but it could not have been very profound, for it was plainly inevitable that it would be universally regarded as a bid for the presidential nomination; and he could not fail to lose the confidence of both South and North. But the above letter to Dr. Furness suggests that more creditable motives may have animated the surrender to slavery. He speaks of “bloodshed and civil war.” Nobody in February, 1850, was suggesting openly such dire possibilities, but there is reason to think that some leading Southerners were privately hinting them, and they may have terrified Webster, who idolized the Union. However that may be, he gave the fatal blow to his idol.

It was the Fugitive Slave Law that began the war. It could not have passed if Webster had refused his support. There was a fable in Washington that Webster and Clay were leaving a dinner party, both tipsy; Clay fell on the pavement and Webster said: “Old fellow, I can’t pick you up, but I will lie down by you.” I always suspected that the story was invented at the time when the two most famous senators in the nation were seen side by side turning the whole government into a slave-catching institution. The anti-slavery men at the North were then few, but one of them was a more eloquent

man than Daniel Webster; namely, **Wendell Phillips**, who held up before the people of Massachusetts the senator of whom they were so proud as himself a slave and bought and sold in the South. But that shame passed out of sight before the horrors of the slave-hunting era. This brought slavery in its most odious form to the door of every family. . . .

The real issue could not be compromised in the country, but in my church it was compromised. After Daniel Webster's body was mouldering in the grave his soul had marched on in some eloquent Unitarian preachers, — notably in Dr. Dewey, who had said that rather than divide the Union he would "send his mother into slavery, ten thousand times rather go himself." He was a personal friend of Webster, and possibly had in mind the "bloodshed and civil war," which frightened his idolized friend. He had been the favourite preacher in my Washington church, where the prevailing sentiment was that expressed in Webster's letter to Furness. . . .

Very soon the disunion which Webster's sacrificial Unionism had fostered in the North was transferred to the Capitol. Congress met in December, 1855, amid fatal conditions. During the two months' struggle for the speakership I was often in the House of Representatives and felt that the evenly balanced forces represented a new North and a new South that had no respect for each other; that the hostility between them was not political but religious; and that they could not meet except for an exchange of affronts because the real issue could not be discussed. The Constitution having decided that "Uncle Tom" should remain "held to service," the antislavery religion and the proslavery religion had no governmental tribunal before which it could be settled whether he should be free, but must fight a duel of "ayes and noes" as to whether he should be a slave in one locality or in another. The mere political view of slavery which framed the Constitution of 1787 and the compromise of 1850 had suppressed the moral issue with the pulpit plea, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's;" but now a generation

had arrived in both North and South which declared "The negro does not belong to Cæsar but to God!" "God by his providence and by his word has decreed the negro's slavery," said the New South. "God by our conscience and the Declaration of Independence demands his freedom," said the New North. These voices I heard behind the combatants disputing about the superficial incidents of their *impasse*, — still small voices, as yet audible only in the distance, North and South, — but thunder-laden for the meeting of their rival gods face to face.

What the antislavery men in Congress did not realize was that there was a genuine proslavery religion, and that a defeat in Congress could not affect it otherwise than to render it more fanatical. As a Virginian I knew this; and I knew also that there could be no peace until the antislavery conscience was free from all complicity with slavery. Moreover, the very fact that the Constitution foreclosed direct practical action against slavery where it existed rendered it imperative that every unofficial antislavery man should deal with the subject. So far as slavery was concerned I had not failed to "bear my testimony," but in the beginning of 1856 the path before me was complicated by a conviction that the tendencies were towards war, — which I abhorred more than slavery, — and by reaching the conclusion that perpetual discord, if not war, could be escaped only by separation of North and South.

There was no disunionist in my congregation, none in Congress, probably not one in Washington except myself. Any utterance of that kind could not hope to find a responsive chord in any breast. I wrestled with my conscience, and knew that the task it demanded would lame me; but it was stern: for this work I had been nurtured in the South and then developed out of it.

Having written the discourse I submitted it to one person only, — Daniel R. Goodloe, the antislavery exile from North Carolina, an author of ability and judgment. He was a member of my church, and his satisfaction with

the sermon encouraged me. The deadlock in Congress still appeared hopeless on January 27, 1856, when the sermon was delivered, and a large number of congressmen had been attracted by the subject as announced: "The One Path; or, the Duties of North and South." It was at once printed in Washington as a pamphlet and had a wide circulation.

A large number of members of Congress also heard this sermon, among them the Hon. **Horace Greeley** of the **New York "Tribune."** Horace Greeley had a way of closing his eyes when listening to any speech, and there was a story that some senator passed on the word "Wake up, Greeley!" But the editor was quite awake, and the same day telegraphed to the "Tribune" a brief résumé of the sermon, adding: "As Mr. Conway is a native of Virginia, and has spent nearly all his days in slaveholding communities, it will hardly be pretended that *he* does not know what slavery is. His discourse was very able as well as fearless, and was heard with profound interest by a most intelligent congregation. Mr. Conway expects to lose his pastorship because of it. . . ."

Two days later Horace Greeley was assaulted by Congressman Rust of Arkansas as he was leaving the Capitol. . . . Although the wounds received by Horace Greeley from Congressman Rust were not so serious as they might have been had the assailant been sober, they kept the editor indoors for a time, and I used to call on him. . . .

The committee of the church, however, in their annual (February) report, deeply deplored my discussing "in the pulpit a much vexed and angrily contested political question, and this too at a season of great political excitement." . . .

I find by a letter in the New York "Tribune" of May 29, dated at Longwood, Chester County, Pa., May 22, that on that day I addressed the Progressive Friends at their annual meeting. The letter says: "Lastly, I may mention a brave and manly speech upon slavery, by the Rev. Moncure D. Conway. Manifesting all possible charity toward the slaveholder, he nevertheless

denounced the system, and pledged his endeavor against it in bold and refreshing terms."

I had indeed taken it as my special task to plead for a more sympathetic consideration among antislavery people for the slaveholders suffering under their heritage. . . . But alas, about the very hour of May 22 (1856), when I was pleading for tenderness toward the slaveholders, one of their representatives was raining blows on the head of a foremost champion of freedom, **Senator Sumner!**

About this time the first convention of the newly organized Republican party met in Philadelphia. It nominated John C. Fremont for the presidency, on the simple issue of freeing the national government from all connection with slavery.

On arriving in Washington I found the atmosphere charged with excitement. Fashionable society was making Brooks [the congressman who assaulted Sumner] a hero. After his trial in the municipal court, which inflicted a moderate fine, he was received in the corridor by numerous ladies with kisses. I hastened to the room of Senator Sumner. He was confined to his bed, and I often visited him and read to him. It was most sad to see this great strong man suffering so much by withdrawal from the Senate in a great national crisis that he hardly thought of his physical pains, at times severe. [I:238]

(241) Meanwhile in my own society at Washington a sort of secession had been going on for some months. The alarmed members had not given up their pews, but a considerable number had ceased to attend, while antislavery people had (242) joined us, and these made more than half of the congregation that listened to the sermon of July 6. When my discourses had ended that morning I gave out the hymn as usual, and the organist played the tune, but the choir did not sing. Harmony had left the old church forever. The assembly sat for some moments in weird silence. I uttered a benediction from my heart, after which most of them slowly moved

out, while others pressed up to grasp my hand. . . . The committee summoned a meeting of the congregation for July 13, and submitted to it the question “whether he who thus persists in this desecration of his pulpit shall continue in the exercise of his function as pastor, under its authority and with its sanction.”

He has a solid majority there, but the meeting refers the question to a special committee and church is suspended til October, when the adjourned meeting was also resumed. But too many of his friends were still on vacation and he lost by 5 votes. He'd collected a good bit of money for repairs to the building — from northern friends and to support an antislavery church. Now he couldn't turn the money over to First Unitarian. Emerson, for one, would have nothing of it. He says they all continued to treat him with affection. They were using an old hall adjoining the church, which hadn't been repaired. Many want him to start a new church. William Henry Channing is now preaching in London and in an August 13, 1856 letter he suggests to Conway that Conway rethink dissolution of the Union. No, says Channing. How I wish I could be in Washington now, because if the north so cherishes the Union, then the battle is to be over whether the Union is free or slave. If there is to be a war, well —

(245) The real question at issue then — forced upon the freemen of the United States of America — is, “slavery extension or slavery abolition throughout the length and breadth of the land.” All concealment is thrown away. All compromises are gone forever. We must come to a settlement of the question once for all. Are we to yield to the slave oligarchy? Are we to leave the Union or are we to subdue the “faction”? We are not to yield one hair's breadth to their preposterous claim of “balance of power,” — meaning, thereby, submission to their usurped rule. If anybody leaves the Union, it must be the slaveholders. And if they remain they must agree to change their institutions, necessary time and aid for so long being ensured. . . . Dissolution of the Union involves war inevitably

without thereby necessarily destroying slavery. If there must be war then, let it be for the abolition of slavery within the Union.

He's still there. The hall is overcrowded with those who still come to hear him, and the crowd now includes a large number of Congressmen. He decides to appeal to the leaders of the congregation concerning a new approach: they really oppose slavery, after all. He will stop preaching dissolution of the Union and instead preach a free Union. Will they buy it? But — that's not the proposal! The proposal is to take the new approach to slavery AND the new minister W.H. Channing! He prepares to leave; Channing agreed to come. He's been invited to Cincinnati. He leaves them in October with these words, quite amazingly:

(248) And now I am content. I leave it there. It is not so much whether the real voice of our church here be vocal or silent — I know that the standard, where I leave it, is for Truth, Justice, Humanity, Freedom, and Endless Seeking. And as I give it back into his hand who entrusted me with it for a brief space, above all hard thoughts which you may have, above all misunderstandings, I hear one voice, which is enough: “It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

(249) I had no public ambition; though I occasionally attended the levees of eminent official men, I generally came away remembering the words Emerson wrote me years before, “The earth is full of frivolous people who are bending their whole force and the force of nations on trifles.” I did not envy them; I would not have exchanged my dear little study on Sixth Street for the White House.

And now it was all gone!

More bad news. It doesn't work out with Channing who demands financial security they can't offer and instead:

“I had the sorrow of receiving from my friend Daniel Goodloe accounts of reactionary sermons by a Mr. Lunt and then a Mr. Heyer, which had driven nearly all of my friends from the church.”

Conway, Sumner, and Lincoln

[I:340]

The Republic of Haiti sent messenger to Washington to request permission to send an ambassador. The Secretary of State, after some evasion, answered, “The fact is, Washington cannot receive a black minister.”

There arose before me as if in letters of flame:

—

The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner.

And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder.

Then I set myself to write the little book entitled “The Rejected Stone: Or Insurrection vs. Resurrection in America. By a Native of Virginia.”

The response to my book was astonishing. It was reviewed by the whole press, and in every case with earnestness. The protests were comparatively few. I cannot remember whether any stratagem was intended in withholding my name, but if so it was ineffectual; the name of the “Virginian” was shouted on all sides. I received sympathetic letters from eminent men and women, among these one from Senator Sumner, saying that he had sent the book to the President, who told him soon after that he was reading it with interest.

It was I believe to the President himself that the book owed much of its success. It appeared early in October, 1861, just after the President had canceled the proclamation of General Frémont in Missouri declaring that the property of those found in arms against the united States

should be confiscated, “and their slaves, if they have any, are hereby declared freemen.” this proclamation from a general who had been the first Republican candidate for the presidency was issued August 30, and sent a thrill of joy throughout the North. The President believed it contrary to an Act of Congress of August 6, which warranted only confiscation, but not a determination of the future condition of the property seized. General Frémont contended that if the slaves were confiscated they must either be free or the United States must enslave them. In their correspondence, which was private, Frémont refused to modify his proclamation, as requested, and the burden was thrown on the President.

The effect of Frémont’s proclamation in the Southwest was instantaneous, and justified all that I had predicted as the result of such a declaration by the President [*note what he’s saying—Frémont’s declaration did in a smaller realm what the same sort of declaration by Lincoln would have, in MDC’s estimation, done on a wide scale, the sort advocated by MDC.*] That proclamation of freedom was echoed from plantation to plantation all along the Mississippi, Tennessee, and Red rivers, insomuch that the panic of the sham loyalists was felt at the Capitol, and the first straight blow at our dragon revoked. But even this was not enough; Frémont was in himself a proclamation of liberation, and on October 24 he was removed.

This was a staggering blow. . . .

My old church edifice in Washington, used as a storehouse of ammunition at the outbreak of war, became a hospital after the Bull Run disaster. The congregation was by this time entirely converted to antislavery opinions, and would have welcomed me back again. But I would have brought them into trouble again by denouncing the administration and its slave-guarding generals. So they called my friend W. H. Channing, who united with his hatred of slavery a faith in military methods which I had not.

I received a letter from Channing, dated at

Washington, January 13, 1862, in which he said:

I shall depend upon your preaching for me whenever you come. It will be an excellent opportunity to reknit the old friendly ties between you and the congregation and to reestablish relationship with your many acquaintances in Washington. . . . Thus far the prospect is good and continually improving of reorganizing a large and strong society here. The reason is at length ripe for such a movement. And *unless the nation is broken up*, — which Providence forbid in mercy, — next summer's solstice will shine down upon a healthy growth of the Tree of Life, well rooted and crowned with swelling fruit. . . .

Having to visit Washington in January, 1862, I had the happiness of finding myself once more in cordial relations with my old friends. The antislavery feeling in Congress, in the absence of Southern members, and in the city had grown strong enough to institute a course of lectures by prominent men from all parts of the country on the national crisis. The lectures were given in the theatre in the Smithsonian Institution. My own lecture was given on January 17, and was attended by secretary Chase and other leading statesmen. The title of my lecture, "The Golden Hour," was derived from an old journal which contained this pretended advertisement: "*Lost*. — Yesterday, somewhere between sunrise and sunset, a Golden Hour, set with sixty diamond minutes."

The Golden Hour of the nation was that in which for the first time in its history **the murderous madness of slavery had unsealed the constitutional war power to eradicate forever that root of all our evils.**

Senator Sumner suggested that I should call on **the President**. I had misgivings because of my public animadversions in Cincinnati on his removal of Frémont, but Sumner prepared the way for a call by Channing and myself, the hour of 8 a.m. being fixed by the President. When we arrived at the White House a woman with a little child was waiting in the anteroom. She now and then wept, but said nothing. The Pres-

ident saw her first, and she came out radiant. We conjectured that some prisoner was that day released. The President received us graciously. [it goes on, 345f, to describe the visit.]

After the description of the visit, this: (346f)

I left the White House with a feeling of depression. It was plain to me that the Union would be preserved at whatever cost; also, that though the President felt that slavery should end, he had no notion of any other means of preserving the Union except military force. The idea that peace could be secured by proclaiming freedom seemed to him, I think, a mere religious faith. I had no opportunity of repeating the arguments of my lecture, "The Golden Hour," and determined to recast it with especial reference to our conversation and publish it.

Having to lecture before the Emancipation League in Boston, I went on to that city. It was my first visit to Boston since the appearance of "The Rejected Stone," and the literary men had prepared for me a great honour. This was a grand dinner at the Parker House. About thirty were present, among them Emerson, Holmes, Lowell, Whipple, and a number of Harvard professors, James T. Fields being at the head of the table.

He finds his father's slaves after they escape and escorts them North:

I:354ff

The Western Unitarian Conference met in May, 1862, at Detroit, and I went there for the purpose of offering the following resolution: "That in this conflict the watchword of our nation and our church and our government should be, *Mercy to the South; death to slavery!*" The resolution, unanimously adopted, was supported with enthusiasm, Robert Collyer's speech being especially powerful. . . .

On my return to Cincinnati, I found letters indicating the purpose of prominent men in Boston to start in that city a journal to advocate immediate emancipation. I was asked whether I

would edit such a paper, and after much consideration my wife and I concluded on acceptance. My wife was giving to the hospitals all the time she could spare from our two children. The strain on her was severe. I also was beginning to drag my harness. I did not, however, resign my pulpit, but asked for a six months' absence. On June 29, 1862, I gave my parting discourse.

Before leaving for the East we went to pass some weeks with our intimate friends, Mr. and Mrs. Oriel Eaton, at their summer cottage, Yellow Springs. I found there enough repose even to indulge myself in an occasional game of chess, Dr. Philip Meredith, president of the Chess Club, being within a mile of us. One day, however, when we were in the middle of a game I was sent for in haste by my wife. A note had arrived from my mother saying that two of my father's slaves had reached Washington, but most of them were wandering helplessly in Stafford within the lines of the Northern army. I started the same evening, and after a wearisome journey of nearly three days on irregular trains crowded with soldiers reached Washington. After some searching I found those I was looking for, — Dunmore Gwinn and his wife. They had set up a small candy-shop in Georgetown, taken in washing, and saved sixty dollars.

It had been long since tidings concerning my relatives in Virginia had reached me. A small parcel containing an old china cup and saucer and a silver spoon had been sent me from Washington at the request of a Union soldier who had saved them from the wreck of things in Conway House, Falmouth. These relics are connected with a curious incident. When the Union army under General McDowell entered Falmouth they found the village deserted by the whites. My father was in Fredericksburg, and my two brothers far away in the Confederate ranks. The house was left empty and locked up, the house servants remaining in their abode in the back yard. Yet as the Union soldiers were filing past a shot was fired from a window of Conway House, or from a corner of its yard, and a soldier wounded. It was never known who fired the shot; our negroes assured me that

the house was locked and watched. The Union soldiers, alarmed and enraged, battered down the doors, and, finding no one, began vengeance on the furniture. It happened, however, that in my mother's bedroom was hung a portrait of myself, and this caught the eye of a youth who had known me in Washington. He cried to his furious comrades to stop. The servants were called in, and were much relieved when they found it was to speak of my portrait. Old Eliza cried, "It's mars' Monc the preacher, as good abolitionist as any of you!"

. . . The house was brick, and the largest in Falmouth; it was made a hospital, and the seriously wounded soldier was its first inmate. . . . It was in Conway House hospital that **Walt Whitman**, for a time, nursed the suffering soldiers.

The negroes who were included in the lines of the Union armies by their advance had learned that they were not so made free; but they had given our government undeserved credit by their belief that all of them who did some service to our soldiers, however little, — blacking boots, washing clothes, etc., — would be free. None of our negroes had followed Dunmore Gwinn and his wife to Georgetown. I therefore resolved to go to Falmouth, if possible, and bring them all away. I consulted my old friend Secretary Chase, and formed a plan of settling our negroes at Yellow Springs, where I had friends.

Secretary Chase took me to see Secretary of War Stanton. I found him hard and narrow-minded. He said they did not want any more negroes in the District; and when I said that I would merely take them through the District, he said that the military situation in Stafford was too critical for him to give me the permit. I then visited President Lincoln and stated the entire case. He sympathized with my purpose and recognized that I had a right to look after my father's slaves. He warned me, however, of the personal danger in such a journey. I told him that I had considered that matter, and would be cautious; I also promised to be prudent in not connecting him or the administration with the

affair. I simply needed practical suggestions as to the best means of doing a thing which, for the rest, would really relieve his officers in Virginia and ultimately the District from the care of fifty or sixty coloured people. The President advised me to call on General Wadsworth. I think he must have communicated with the general, for next day when I appealed to Wadsworth, in company with W. H. Channing, who determined to accompany me to Falmouth, he did not hesitate to give us the necessary orders.

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DISTRICT OF
WASHINGTON, WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Rev'd Mr. Conway will be allowed to go to Falmouth and return on Government Boat and R. R. train.

W. J. WADSWORTH, BRIG. GEN'L.

We were both staying at the house of our friends Mrs. Walter Johnson and her sister Miss Donaldson, always the antislavery saints of the Unitarian society. We had arranged to start at daybreak the next day. But during the evening I began to feel that my plans were too immature. If, as was probable, our negroes were in separate localities and far away from Falmouth, how could they be reached and collected — how could they be brought up to Washington? General Wadsworth's permit said nothing about negroes. I had provided myself with money, but might need the aid of Stafford negroes. But it had been many years since I had known the negroes there, and they might suspect any white man searching for coloured people.

After I had gone to bed I was seized with an impulse to consult an old mulatto whom I had known in boyhood and who now resided in the farthest suburb of Georgetown. He had helped many a slave to escape, and probably knew the principal negroes between Georgetown and Falmouth. He would be able to give me their names and some advice about my expedition. But the distance was five miles, and I was baffled by a terrible storm. I waited long for it to abate, but it only seemed to increase. I determined, however, to go, and without disturbing any one crept out into the darkness at about eleven

o'clock. The thunder and lightning were fierce, the rain fell in torrents, the wind rendered an umbrella useless, the streets were flooded. As I approached Georgetown bridge the lights were few, but I knew every foot of the road leading to my old Methodist circuit. When I had got through Georgetown to the line of negro cabins a new difficulty confronted me; they were all dark — it was after midnight — and I could not identify the shanty sought. At length, however, I saw a glimmer of light in one little window, and to that I went. As I approached the door I heard negro voices within singing a hymn. When I knocked the voices ceased; there was perfect silence. On another knock a voice demanded, "Who is that?" I answered, "A friend! Moncure Conway." There was a wild shout, the door flew open, and there I found all my father's negroes.¹

They had just arrived, most of them in the storm. Through a weary way of near sixty miles they had been dragging themselves and their little ones, their coverlets and boxes. They were crammed into the two ground rooms, the children sleeping wherever they could find a place for their weary heads, and several mothers had babes at their breasts. The latest comers were wet. The elements had pursued them like bloodhounds; they were tossed about by destiny, but still able to raise their song in the night.

Many years had parted me from them, but when I entered all knew me on the instant. Old Maria, who had nursed me when I was a child, sprang forward and folded me in her arms as if I were still an infant. They pressed around me with their children, and clung to me as to a lifeboat in their storm. Far into the night we sat together; and they listened with glistening eyes as I told them of the region to which I meant to take them, where never should they

feel oppression,

Never hear of war again.

Thus I was saved the danger and expense of going down into Stafford. But for all the gladness of the night, my troubles had scarcely begun. It was yet a question whether negroes

situated like these were free to go North; for every coloured person taken over them the railroads exacted a bond of \$3000, with security, for fear they might be sued by an owner for taking off his property. And there was still a potential proslavery and Confederate mob in Baltimore, through which at the time a journey to Ohio must be made. In Baltimore passengers going west were taken in omnibuses through many streets to another station. General Wadsworth, military governor of the district, was ready to see me safely (360) on the road to Baltimore, but could not guarantee me transit through that city. Senator Sumner got together several congressmen to consult on the matter, and one of them — Giddings, I think — said the only safe way was for me to take a cowhide and drive the negroes through the Baltimore streets! But though such a ruse might, as he humorously said, bring all white Baltimore to my feet, it was suggested that it might have the reverse effect on the excited negroes there. Though my father was a Confederate, there was as yet no legal process by which the title of his slaves to freedom could be perfected. I was thus, in the eye of the law, a slaveholder! . . .

At last we started out from Washington, a concourse of coloured people attending us. The terrors did not fail us when we were set down in the streets of Baltimore, with a small world of baggage and far from the other station. There were no arrangements to take any but white people from station to station. The sensation we caused was immediate; hundreds of negroes of all ages surrounded us, and became so mixed up with mine, especially the children, that it was hard to distinguish them. For a few moments there was danger from these negroes. There had been rumours of Washington slaveholders hurrying their slaves into Maryland to evade the new Act of Emancipation in the District; and my Virginian physique being unmistakable, the dusky folk muttered and hissed around me and impeded my efforts. But some signs passed from my “contrabands” which suddenly transformed the angry crowd into friends; they were presently conveying us with our baggage

in wagons, making a procession across the city. But the procession was too triumphal. It excited attention in every street, and when we reached the station we had an ugly crowd of whites to confront.

Alas, there was no westward train for three mortal hours! I took the negroes into the regular waiting-room, so completely had I forgotten the customs of slave States. Of course the railroad officials drove us angrily out. I asked for *some* room; they had “no room for niggers.” I offered to pay for one, but could not get it. I asked to be permitted to take them into a car, but was told that the gate would not be unlocked for two hours. Meanwhile we were in the street, and the crowd of whites was increasing every moment; and they saw, by the delight of the blacks, that it was an abolition movement. Uglier and uglier they became, glaring at me, and annoying the negroes under my protection until I had to restrain my men from resentment. I implored my people to be patient, and pointed out to the police the threatening aspect of affairs; but these sneeringly said it was my own affair, not theirs. Nevertheless, I took a bit of paper from my pocket, and I declared it would take the negroes through though it should bring the guns of Fort McHenry on the city. This imposing utterance had evident effect on some in the crowd. Yet they persisted in worrying my negroes, and, when I interfered, several called me “a damned abolitionist, who had brought on the war.”

At length, much to my relief, the ticket-agent appeared at his window. I saw that, like the other officials, he was angry, but he was a fine-looking Marylander. He turned into flint as I approached; and when I asked the price of tickets, he said sharply, “I can’t let those negroes go on this road at any price.” I knew that he would have to let them go, but knew also that he could make things very uncomfortable for us. I silently presented my military order to the disagreeable and handsome agent, and he began to read it. He had read but two or three words of it when he looked up with astonishment, and said, “The paper says these are your father’s slaves.”

“They are,” I replied. “Why, sir, they would bring a good deal of money in Baltimore.” “Possibly,” I replied. Whereupon (moved probably by supposing that I was making a great sacrifice) he said, “By God, you shall have every car on this road if you want it!” Then having sold me the tickets, he gave his ticket-selling to a subordinate, and went out to secure us a car to ourselves; and from that moment the imprecations around us sank, and our way was made smooth.

It was late in the evening when we started, and we were to travel all night. I observed that the negroes would neither talk nor sleep. The mothers had put their children to sleep, but were themselves holding a silent watch. They were yet in a slave State, and every station at which the train paused was a possible danger. At last, when the name of a certain wooding-up station was called out, I observed that every eye danced, every tongue was loosened, and after some singing they all dropped off to sleep. It was not until the next day that I learned that the station which had wrought such a transformation was the dividing line between the slave and the free States. How they knew it I cannot divine; it was a small place, but there the shadow of slavery ended.

[passage ends 362].

Conway settles in Concord.

[I:365]

We went at once to reside at Concord, in a house just vacated by Rev. Mr. Frost. . . . We were happy in Concord. I had made the acquaintance of most people in it during my college days, and my wife was received cordially. Some she already knew; Mrs. Horace Mann she had known at Yellow Springs during her husband’s presidency at Antioch College. Emerson had been with us several times in Cincinnati, and we had entertained there **Bronson Alcott**. Mrs. Mann, who had long had warm friendship for my wife, was living in Concord with her sister, **Elizabeth Peabody**, the other sister being Mrs. Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Another literary resident was **William Ellery Channing**, nephew of the famous preacher whose name he bore. There was something forbidding about the man, — at any rate when we met, — so our acquaintance was slight. I would have been glad to see more of his wife, and to converse with her about her sister, the famous Margaret Fuller Ossoli, whose writings were precious to me. He appeared to be a recluse in the village, his most intimate friend being Frank Sanborn, who has written his biography.

We were rather disappointed at finding the best people in Concord so conservative in religious ideas. Although Emerson never attended it himself, he reserved a pew in the Unitarian church for his family. . . . [I:366]

The “Commonwealth” began with September, 1862. Frank B. Sanborn was associated with me in editing it. We were friends at Harvard, and he was the only student there who held Emerson in a reverence equal to my own. After graduation he had settled at Concord, and we were in constant communication. We had a vigorous antislavery governor of Massachusetts, **John A. Andrew**, who had protested against the use of soldiers from his State to return fugitive slaves. The “Commonwealth” was recognized as a sort of organ of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in its relation to the national crisis. There was no rivalry nor friction between our paper and the “Liberator.” That paper was edited by Mr. Garrison with great vigour, but he recognized clearly the advantage of starting a new journal. Sanborn and I were often in consultation with him and Wendell Phillips.

The “Commonwealth” paid attention to literature, and several young writers made their debuts in our paper. Among these was Louisa Alcott, who had gone to nurse soldiers in a hospital at Washington. The series of her “Hospital Sketches” showed every variety of ability, and excited much attention. Julia Ward Howe wrote for us, and her powers as a humourist were revealed in a parody of “Excelsior.” When General McClellan had become chieftain of the reactionary, who were parading him in the North-

ern cities as the coming President, great preparations were made for the pageant in Boston; but during that day the rain descended steadily, and nothing was seen but several hundred umbrellas passing along Washington Street. Next day the "Commonwealth" printed Mrs. Howe's parody, "Expluvior!"

After the President's preliminary proclamation of September 22 we had enough to do. The long warming had the effect of giving the border seceders time to dispose of their slaves farther South, and it also gave time for an outcry of their sympathizers that the President meant to excite a massacre of whites in the South. This outcry was echoed in England, where some excellent men, among them Dr. Martineau, denounced the proclamation. This baseless alarm recruited the political corps gathering around McClellan. There was danger, too, that the President might yield to the increasing pressure brought upon him to retreat from the proclamation, in which were clauses rendering such retreat possible. As the year 1862 drew toward its close, that pressure became severe, and on the one hand we of the antislavery side did not fail with pen and voice to hold the administration to its pledge.

Between the President's promise of September 22, 1862, and the New Year, we were in the exaltation of a new religion, all the more potent because indefinable. All the great minds and hearts at Boston, Cambridge, and Concord, however aloof from our agitation formerly, were now aglow with it, — even Nathaniel Hawthorne having concluded, as he wrote to his friend Horatio Bridge, that the annihilation of slavery "may be a wise object, and offer a tangible result, and the only one which is consistent with a future union between North and South." Oliver Wendell Holmes had warned the South, "There are battles with Fate that can never be won. . . ."

A grand jubilee concert in celebration of Emancipation was arranged for New Year's Day in Boston Music Hall. Theodore Parker's "Fraternity" assembled in that hall . . .

An engagement to lecture at Rochester, N.Y., on January 2, prevented my remaining for the celebration in the Music Hall, where Emerson's fine "Boston Hymn" was to be followed by Beethoven's "Fifth Symphony," — of which Margaret Fuller once wrote, "In it innumerable spirits seem to demand the crisis of their existence." . . .

On the eve of New Year's Day, 1863, we made up a little party . . . to attend Watch Night in the African church. Young William Lloyd Garrison and his sister Fanny . . . were with us. We arrived about half-past eleven, and though the church was much crowded, the Garrisons were recognized and good places found for us, — the only whites present. In opening the meeting the black preacher said, in words whose eloquent shortcomings I cannot reproduce: "Brethren and sisters, the President of the United States has promised that, if the Confederates do not lay down their arms, he will free all their slaves tomorrow. They have not laid down their arms. To-morrow will be the day of liberty to the oppressed. But we all know that evil powers are around the President. While we sit here they are trying to make him break his word. But we have come this Watch Night to watch and see that he does not break his word. Brethren, the bad influence near the President to-night is stronger than Copperheads. The old serpent is abroad to-night, with all his emissaries, in great power. His wrath is great, because he knows his hour is near. He will be in this church this evening. As midnight comes on we shall hear his rage. But, brethren and sisters, don't be alarmed. Our prayers will prevail. His head will be bruised. His back will be broke. He will go raging back to hell, and God Almighty's New Year will make the United States a true land of freedom."

The sensation caused by these words was profound. They were interrupted by frequent cries of "Glory!" and there were tears of joy. But the excitement that followed was indescribable. A few minutes before midnight the congregation were requested to kneel, which we all did, and prayer succeeded prayer with increasing

fervour and amid shouts of rapture. Presently a loud prolonged hiss was heard. There were cries, "He's here! he's here!" Then came a volley of hisses; they proceeded from every part of the house, — hisses so entirely like those of huge serpents that the strongest nerves were shaken; above them rose the preacher's prayer, gradually becoming a wild incantation, and ecstatic ejaculations became so universal that it was a marvel what voices were left to make the hisses. Finally the strokes of midnight sounded, and immediately the hisses diminished and gradually died away as if outside the building. Then the New Year of jubilee that was to bring freedom to millions of slaves was ushered in by the chorus of all present singing a hymn of victory. . . .

We all joined hands, standing up, and Fanny Garrison (who was beside me) and I sang with ecstasy, until our voices broke with the overpowering emotion.

The noble face of our old pioneer Garrison had always been as a pillar of fire that no trouble could ever turn to cloud; and this happy spirit was transmitted to his children. Fanny's radiant face seemed to bring that of her father — on duty elsewhere that night — into the African church.

New Year's Day, 1863, was glorious with sunshine, but it did not bring us the expected proclamation. At five o'clock in the afternoon I arrived at Albany. Our enemy Seymour had just been inaugurated governor of New York . . . After a night's journey I reached Rochester at eight next morning, and there read the President's disappointing proclamation. Still the edict of liberation for more than three million slaves was enough to add a happy climax to my lecture in the magnificent Corinthian Hall, which was crowded.

From Rochester I went on to Syracuse, where I preached for my friend Samuel J. May, and visited the Sedgwicks. . . .

On my journey home I encountered a good many noisy "Copperheads." One old Democrat, seated near me in the car, attracted general attention by swearing at me as one of the

abolitionists who had "got us into this fix," and talked of our military defeats. I asked him if he had not heard of the victory. "What victory? Vicksburg?" "No, at Washington." "No; what was it?" "Three millions of slaves free!" The old fellow jumped up and moved away swearing, amid general laughter.

In those dramatic hisses and that song of victory in the African Watch Night I heard the ancient burden of Ezekiel against Pharaoh, the great dragon, "I will put a hook in thy jaws," and the burden of Isaiah against "Leviathan that crooked serpent." Here were renewed the voices of those African slaves now pictured with their chains on the ruined walls of Egypt; and we white visitors who had mingled our tears with those humble negroes had gone home feeling that we had witnessed the final combat between Jesus and Satan in America. And in the proclamation, although partial, a victorious sun appeared about to rise upon the New World of free and equal men. But when our ecstasy had passed, some of us perceived that while freedom had got a paper proclamation, the cannon-ball proclamation had gone to slavery. The antislavery generals were in the North; the military posts where slaves might become free were under military generals or governors notoriously hostile to emancipation. The three generals who had proclaimed freedom to the slaves in their departments — Frémont, Phelps, and Hunter — had all been removed, and to the slaves these removals were pro-slavery proclamations which they understood, while this of the New Year they could not read even if it were allowed to reach them. . . . [I:375]

It soon appeared that our combat with slavery, so far from being ended, had to be renewed. The President had appointed as "military Governor," in so much of North Carolina as his forces occupied, an old politician of that State named Stanly. There had long been a number of North Carolinians opposed to slavery, and pursuant to the President's proclamation these formed an association to promote its peaceful

application to their State. But the President's representative, Stanly, went on denouncing abolitionists as strenuously as if the President's proclamation had been a proslavery document, and thwarted the association so bitterly that they appealed to the nation against him, declaring that he was repressing all their efforts to give practical effect to the President's edict of freedom.

This and similar facts in the South determined the antislavery people in Boston to send a delegation to the President. This delegation consisted of Wendell Phillips, Dr. S. G. Howe, Francis W. Bird, George L. Stearns, J. H. Stephenson, Elizur Wright, the Hon. Oakes Ames, and myself. We arrived at Washington January 23, 1863, and stopped at Willard's Hotel . . . On the following evening, Saturday, we repaired to the White House by appointment. The President, however, called out by the Secretary of War (Stanton), could not see us, but left a request for us to come the following evening. In the mean time Wendell Phillips had managed to secure an interview with Mrs. Lincoln, which had put him in good spirits; for he found her by no means friendly to our Mephistopheles, Secretary Seward.

It had been arranged that I should preach before the Senate, of which W. H. Channing was now the chaplain. The Unitarians who six years before had voted my dismissal were now sympathetic listeners to my discourse in the Senate. For this great opportunity I had prepared with care. I conversed with my old adherents, with leading congressmen, and also visited some negroes.

It was estimated that nearly two thousand were present in the senate chamber on Sunday morning, January 25. . . .

In the evening of that same Sunday we were ushered into the President's business-room, accompanied by Senator Wilson of Massachusetts. Lincoln entered laughing, and said that in the morning one of his children told him the cat had kittens, and as he was entering another told him the dog had pups, so the White House was in a prolific state. The hilarity disturbed us, but

it was pathetic to see the change in the President's face when he resumed his burden. Senator Wilson began introducing us severally, but the President knew perfectly who we were, and requested us to be seated.

The conversation was introduced by Wendell Phillips, who with characteristic courtesy expressed our joy at the proclamation, and asked him how it seemed to be working. The President said he had not expected much from it at first, and so had not been disappointed; he hoped something would come of it after a while. Phillips then alluded to the deadly hostility which the proclamation had naturally excited in proslavery quarters, and gently hinted that the Northern people, now generally antislavery, were not satisfied that it was being honestly carried out by the nation's agents and generals in the South. "My own impression, Mr. Phillips," said the President, "is that the masses of the country generally are only dissatisfied at our lack of military successes. Defeat and failure in the field make everything seem wrong." His face was clouded, and his next words were somewhat bitter: "Most of us here present have been long working in minorities, and may have got into the habit of being dissatisfied." Several of us having deprecated this, the President said, "At any rate, it has been very rare that an opportunity of 'running' this administration has been lost." To this Mr. Phillips answered in his sweetest voice: "If we see this administration earnestly working to free the country from slavery and its rebellion, we will show you how we can 'run' it into another four years of power." The President's good humour was somewhat restored, and he said: "Oh, Mr. Phillips, I have ceased to have any personal feeling or expectation in that matter, — I do not say I never had any, — so abused and borne upon as I have been." "Nevertheless what I have said is true," replied Phillips, who then went on to submit our complaint against Military Governor Stanly in North Carolina, urging the necessity of having in such positions men who were heart and soul in favour of his (the President's) declared policy of emancipation. The facts communicated to us

from North Carolina were also submitted. The President did not deny them. He only said that Stanly was in Washington when the proclamation of September 22 was issued, and then said he “could stand that.” “Stand it!” exclaimed one of our number. “Might the nation not expect in such a place a man who can not merely stand its President’s policy but rejoice in it?” This vexed the President a little, and he said: “Well, gentlemen, I have got the responsibility of this thing and must keep it.” “Yes, Mr. President,” interposed Phillips, “but you must be patient with us, for if the ship goes down it doesn’t carry down you alone: we are all in it.” “Well, gentlemen,” said the President, bowing pleasantly to Phillips, “whom would you put in Stanly’s place?” Some one asked if it would not be better to have nobody than an active opponent of the President’s avowed policy. Another suggested Frémont, then without command, he being the natural representative of a proclamation of emancipation which he had anticipated in Missouri. “I have great respect for General Frémont and his abilities,” said the President slowly, “but the fact is that the pioneer in any movement is not generally the best man to carry that movement to a successful issue. It was so in old times — wasn’t it?” he continued, with a smile. “Moses began the emancipation of the Jews, but didn’t take Israel to the Promised Land after all. He had to make way for Joshua to complete the work. It looks as if the first reformer of a thing has to meet such a hard opposition and gets so battered and bespattered, that afterwards, when people find they have to accept his reform, they will accept it more easily from another man.”

[I:380]

In London to stay [I:434]

On September 17 [1863] we found rooms at 16 Landsdowne Terrace, Regent’s Park. When my library came I found that the customs at Liverpool had seized the American edition

of Carlyle’s “German Romance,” beloved volumes bought in youth. Carlyle wrote them a request and the books were restored. But where now were my visions of Venice? The preacher had revived in me. My first discourse in South Place, September 13, had elicited from the small congregation a response which determined my future.

William Johnstone Fox, M.P., who for forty years had made the South Place pulpit famous, had for some years been in retirement. The society had vainly endeavoured to find a minister to carry on his work in the same rationalistic spirit, and had been brought to the verge of dissolution by their last preacher. In the June of that year, 1863, the society’s committee reported:—

Now we have a comparatively empty chapel; and it would be strange, indeed, in this age of free inquiry, and in this free church of ours, if it were not so, seeing that for the last five years we have had scarcely any other source of religion opened to us but records of the past as contained in the Bible. The daily heroisms of our own time, the martyrdoms of old, the great spirits of all countries and of all climes, have ceased to be called in to our assistance; and from our pulpit the rocks and the heavens no longer sing their grand hymn of devotion and praise.

On this report a meeting was summoned, and it would have closed the chapel but for the suggestion of P.A. Taylor, M.P., that I should be heard. My first sermon showed them that I was the reverse of a reactionist, and my second was attended by some old radicals who had rarely appeared in the chapel since Fox’s time. But I did not preach as a candidate for the pulpit. I was still receiving letters from America, where my best friends — Phillips, Sanborn, Stearns, Bird — were consulting as to whether they should demand my return. I therefore gave no definite replies to suggestions of a permanent settlement at South Place. As the weeks went on, however, it became plain that I could not enter with zeal into the struggle in America. The presidential campaign had divided the anti-slavery people — one part following Phillips in his effort to

elect Frémont, the other following Garrison in his adherence to Lincoln, — and the situation was embroiled. As Phillips had written in my defence, and as I had expressed my distrust of Lincoln, my return to America would be a signal for a revival of denunciations of my Mason correspondence for the purpose of attacking Frémont. And it would have damaged him, because I could not again have apologized for my proposal to concede secession in exchange for emancipation by the South. Although the only hope for even a distant benefit to the slave had seemed to travel with the Northern arms, the war became increasingly abhorrent to me. It was monstrous that the Southern negro should be forced into a conflict wherein he was the only innocent party. To this both wings of the abolitionist group were consenting, and even held it an advance towards freedom instead of to a new slavery, that the Southern negroes should be organized separately from whites to fight their former masters, into whose hands they must fall whatever the result of the war. In America I should stand almost alone. Even Emerson had come to respect war, and accepted from the President appointment as a Visitor to West Point (1863). My friend Judge Conway had lost his seat in Congress on account of his pleadings for peace: he had met my wife, and sent word to me that the rage for war had become universal and that I was well out of it. [I:436]



[II:39] I had been preaching at South Place pretty regularly for five months before my regular ministry began, February, 1864. The society had originated under the American apostle of universalism, **Elhanan Winchester**, during the French Revolution, which he interpreted by the Book of Revelation, and the society now passed to another American who had come over to interpret the new revolution in America. During its threescore years and ten the society had passed from Winchester's rudimentary universalism through phases of faith leading to

the humanized theism of **W. J. Fox**. In rewriting my old discourses I discovered how conservative my theology had been in Cincinnati, even when the seceders went off to found their "Church of the Redeemer." At South Place the old sacramental vessels were preserved only as relics, the communion-table was used only for the flowers set there every Sunday: one relic, the fine gown worn even by W. J. Fox, I was the first to discard. There was a pleasant vestry in which was always placed a decanter of port or sherry for the preacher's refreshment. The high "pepper box" pulpit and the straight-backed pews remained until 1876, when the whole interior was renovated. It is a building of excellent acoustical qualities with deep galleries, and can seat nearly a thousand.

[II:44] I received a letter from Horace Greeley, dated April 17, 1864, reproaching me sharply for not returning to join in the presidential campaign. . . . but I was engaged as a regular London correspondent of the "Tribune."

The cause in which I was interested was liberty; I would not have advocated bloodshed even for emancipation, though anxious since war had come that it should be the means of destroying slavery. I would have considered the Union apart from emancipation not worth one man's blood. I was thus too different from other Americans — even from my antislavery colleagues — to be directly useful in the republican campaign. I had no faith that war could achieve any permanent benefit to white, or black, or to any nation, while the President and the people recognized only the military method of pacification and emancipation. There was thus no place for me in militant America.

London had cordially offered me what my native country had not — a field for the exercise of the ministry for which my strange pilgrimage from slaveholding Virginia and Methodism to freedom and rationalism had trained me. So, despite Horace Greeley's reproach, reason bade me stay where I was wanted for tasks to which I felt that I could bring some competency. So

it was that, having gone to England for a few months, I remained more than thirty years.

Unitarianism in England possessed characteristics which promised better for a free lance than the more organized denomination in America. . . .

I find among my notes one dated October 26, 1864: —

Went to the Unitarian Ministerial Conference at Mr. Ireson's church, Islington. Mr. [James] Martineau opened the topic after tea: it was, how far the phrases applied to Christ in the New Testament — e.g., Lord, Saviour, Prince, etc. — were really characteristic of Christ, and had any meaning for us now. . . . It was very sweeping.

The last sermon I had heard in America was from Ralph Waldo Emerson.

After Theodore Parker went silent his society in Boston listened to Emerson whenever he could be secured. When he was to give the Sunday discourse the hall was crowded with the most cultured people in Boston and its suburbs, and some came from Salem, Lynn, Concord. Familiar as I was with his lyceum lectures, they could not with all their charm prepare me for this inspiration, this fountain of spiritual power, this pathos. And this was the man who was lost to the pulpit because the Unitarian Church preferred the sacramental symbols of a broken body and shed blood in ancient Judea to the living spirit rising above all symbols! Great as Emerson was in literature, his hereditary and natural place was in the pulpit . . .

The Death of Lincoln, and an assessment

[II, 86]

How slight was the excitement caused by the death of either Cobden or Palmerston compared with all which filled Great Britain when President Lincoln fell. The fete of victory in America had extended to England, and at Aubry House there was a grand dinner company. John Bright was present, — probably his first appearance in company after the death of Cobden. Before the dinner had ended the butler came in and whispered to Peter Taylor, who sprang to

his feet and said the newsboys were crying the murder of Lincoln. We all arose, the gentlemen rushing to the street to get the papers. It was between nine and ten in the evening when we received confirmation of the appalling news.

[87] . . . I had high hopes that **Andrew Johnson**, who had shown some strength of character, might prove a better President to carry out emancipation than Lincoln, for Lincoln had fallen on the very day when he had celebrated the fall of the Confederacy by repeating promises, to the white South alone, that filled anti-slavery people with anxiety. There was fear that we should find him thereafter ready to amnesty slavery itself.

Abraham Lincoln, ten years before his election to the presidency, was for a short time in Congress. His brief career there was marked by one proposal and one utterance. The proposal was that there should be added to a measure for abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia a provision for the rendition to their owners of slaves escaping into the District, which otherwise might be crowded with negroes seeking asylum there. He was the same man when he said to our deputation: "Suppose I should put in the South these antislavery generals and governors; what could they do with the slaves that would come to them?" . . .

[T]he very State that fired on Fort Sumter had candidly indicated to the new President, before that event, how both secession and oppression could be vanquished without war. Representative Ashmore of South Carolina said in Congress: "The South can sustain more men in the field than the North. Her four millions of slaves alone will enable her to support an army of half a million."

[88] President Lincoln had only to use the war power thrust into his hand by slavery to proclaim those four millions free; the boasted commissariat of the Southern army would have existed no longer when every Northern camp was the slave's asylum; slavery, the *teterrima causa*, would have needed every Southern white to guard it. Repeatedly was this urged on the

President, along with the fact that every loyalist's slave might be paid for with a month's cost of war..

In his message to Congress, December, 1863, the President said: "Of those who were slaves at the beginning of the rebellion full 100,000 are now in the United States military service, about half of which number actually bear arms in the ranks, — thus giving the double advantage of *taking so much labor from the insurgent cause,*" etc. The President had precisely the same right to take 4,000,000 of black labourers from the insurgent cause as 100,000, with the million-fold "advantage" of preventing the war altogether. After 300,000 soldiers had been slaughtered, thousands of families draped in mourning, commerce by land and sea paralyzed, hostility towards England and France engendered, thousands of fugitive slaves thrust back into slavery, and billions of money wasted, the President came no nearer meeting oppression with liberty than to put his livery on 100,000 negroes, set them to cut the throats of their former masters, and sow new seeds of race hatred.

. . . Even when it was plain that the war was being waged by the President, not for liberty, but solely for the Union, the probabilities that it would somehow eradicate the root of discord [89] from the nation, rendered it necessary to support the Northern side, there being no prospect of stopping the war. But . . . in 1864 it became clear that the war which we were trying to turn against slavery was protecting it. Habeas corpus was suspended; free speech suppressed; men were drafted and torn from their families by violence to fight the South; slaves were armed and put on much less than the pay given white soldiers; and in 1864 the first attempt to reconstruct a rebel State — Louisiana — was by forcing the loyal negroes to work for their old masters (all rebels), albeit for paltry wages. The disloyal whites were to have suffrage, but not the blacks. The prospect was that in all the reconstructed States slavery was to return as serfdom.

Most of the letters received from my American friends were full of despair, and one from

Senator Sumner was pathetic.

WASHINGTON, JULY 30 (1865).

DEAR MR. CONWAY, — If I have not written to you before it was because my engagements left me no time, and now that Congress has closed I can do little more than make my apologies.

I thank you for your vigilant testimony to the good cause, which has suffered infinitely, first, through the terrible tergiversation [evasions, equivocations, apostasy] of the President, and secondly, through the imbecility of Congress, which shrank from a contest on principle. If Congress had willed it, we could have carried a bill for *political* rights as well as for *civil* rights and on precisely the same argument, — that it was needful in the enforcement of the prohibition of slavery. I tried hard, but could not bring Congress to this duty, but I do not give it up.

The President is singularly reticent, but his prejudices are strong. With Seward as counselor, nobody can tell what he will forbear. His policy has been arrested by Congress, but this has been by a deadlock rather than by establishing a contrary system. Meanwhile all true Unionists from the South testify alike. Unless something is done they will be constrained to leave their homes. . . .

[90] I have succeeded during this term in creating a commission for the revision and consolidation of the statutes of the United States. I have also carried through the Senate bills, that have already passed the House, for the introduction of the metric system of weights and measures. Add to these, I stopped in the Senate their bad Banks Bill repealing our neutrality statute, after it had passed the House *unanimously*. These are incidents of the service which I mention with personal satisfaction. And now for the future! God is with us. I shall fight the battle to the end. You will also.

Very sincerely yours,

CHARLES SUMNER.

After all, the metric system was never adopted. But what mattered such things at a moment when the United States was being driven daily towards the fearful precipice? The pathos of Sumner's letter was the evidence in it that he had been excluded from the arena. All he could now say was, "God is with us."

[93] . . . Speaking of Johnson, Sumner says: “But God is stronger than the President.” “We shall prevail.” “And what a country we shall have!”

What a country! Poor Sumner presently found himself in a country that degraded him in the Senate, degraded him in his own State, and death alone saved him from witnessing the fulfilment of his worst fear, — uttered beside the fresh grave of Lincoln, — “Alas! for the dead who have given themselves so bravely to their country; alas! for the living who have been left to mourn the dead, — if any relic of slavery [94] is allowed to continue; especially if this bloody impostor, defeated in the pretension of property in man, is allowed to perpetuate an *Oligarchy of the skin*.”

While recognizing Abraham Lincoln’s strong personality and high good qualities, I cannot participate in his canonization. The mass of mankind see in all great historic events the hand of God. Having no such faith, I see in the Union war a great catastrophe. President Lincoln, in disregard of the anti-coercion sentiment of press and pulpit, and without consulting Congress, assumed the individual responsibility of sending a half million men to their graves for the sake of a flag. . . . “In accepting the challenge at Fort Sumter,” as Sumner rightly phrased it, Abraham Lincoln decided that the fate of his country should be determined by powder and shot. In the canonization of Lincoln there lurks a consecration of the sword. The method of slaughter is credited with having abolished slavery. But by the same method [John Wilkes] Booth placed in the presidential chair a tipsy tailor from Tennessee, who founded in the South a reign of terror over the negro race, — which has suffered more physically since the war began than under the previous century of slavery. And the white race has suffered in character to such an extent that our presidential Father Abraham — who persisted in sacrificing his Isaacs instead of the brute caught in the thicket by its horns — could he revisit his country and find us giving up coloured citizens to be freely slain and burned, their blood and

ashes still cementing the Union, would feel himself a pilgrim sojourning in a strange land on his way to seek the land of his promise.

Alas! — the promises of the Sword are always broken! Always!

Carlyle

Chapter XXXIII

[II: 95ff]

Easter Sunday, April 1, 1866, I travelled all night to witness Carlyle’s installation as Lord Rector of Edinburgh University next day. The sleeping-car was then unknown, the night was bitter and snowy, and the journey dismal. The first man I met in Edinburgh was Professor Tyndall, who said he believed we two and Huxley were the only men who had undertaken the hard journey to hear Carlyle. Taking my hand he said, “This is the real kind of tie between America and England. Carlyle belongs equally to both.”

No reader in the twentieth century can realize the impression made by Carlyle that day. There is no longer the clear historic background behind that figure, — the weary trials, the poverty and want, the long, lonely studies, through which the little boy of fourteen climbed on to a youthful condition still more rugged, and finally, despite his alienation of pulpit and populace, gained this height. As Carlyle entered the university theatre there walked beside him the venerable Sir David Brewster, fourteen years his senior, who first recognized his ability and gave him literary employment. The one now Principal, the other Lord Rector, they moved forward in their gold-laced robes, while professors, students, ladies stood up cheering, waving hats, handkerchiefs, programmes in ecstasy. Near me sat Huxley, and not far away Tyndall, — in whose eyes I saw tears unless my own dim eyes deceived me. Carlyle sat there during the preliminaries, scanning the faces before him, among which were a score that would bring to him [96] memories of this or that quiet retreat in Scotland known in youth or boyhood.

Before he began his address, Carlyle shook himself free of the gold lace gown and laid it on the back of a chair. This movement excited audible mirth in the audience, and the face of the old Principal beamed. For myself I saw in the act the biographer of Cromwell saying, "Take away that bauble!" No stage actor could with more art have indicated that the conventionalities were about to be laid aside. I had, as I thought, seen and heard Carlyle in every mood and expression, but now discovered what immeasurable resources lay in this man: the grand sincerity, the drolleries, the auroral flashes of mystical intimation, the lightnings of scorn for things low and base — all of these severally taking on physiognomical expression in word, tone, movement of the head, colour of the face, brought before us a being whose physical form was a transparency of his thought and feeling.

When Carlyle sat down there was an audible motion, as of breath long held, by all present; then a cry from the students, an exultation; they rose up, all arose, waving their arms excitedly; some pressed forward, as if wishing to embrace him, or to clasp his knees; others were weeping: what had been heard that day was more than could be reported; it was the ineffable spirit that went forth from the depths of a great heart and from the ages stored up in it, and deep answered unto deep.

When Carlyle came out, a carriage was waiting to take him . . . but he begged to be allowed to walk. Carlyle had known I was going to Edinburgh, and on arrival I found a note from him asking me to wait for him at the door of the theatre; I was there, and he desired me to see after the newspaper report. . . .

[II:97] The scene I had witnessed was more phenomenal than I could at once take in. It was the revelation of a kind of eloquence and spiritual affluence which set me dreaming. What had the pulpit lost by putting up dogmas that barred

Carlyle away from the career in which he might have illumined all Christendom! The three men who chiefly moulded the thought of their generation in England and America were all trained for the pulpit — Darwin, Carlyle, Emerson: they were all shut out of it by their intellectual honesty and the inability of the churches to recognize the superiority of a great living oracle to the creeds of defunct crania.

I find the following in my note-book: —

April 4. Evening at Erskine's dinner. Present: Thomas Carlyle and Dr. John Carlyle; [etcetera] . . . Presently he came to the far end of the room where I was, and said, "Oh, dear, — I haven't any rest at all — I wish I was through with it. . . . I am always in company and see nobody preferable to vacuity: 'Please sir, please madam; might I exchange you for nothing at all!'" (A laugh that seemed to do him good.) "I am going up to the smoking-room they've provided me with — will you come with me?" At the top of the house, the long pipe lighted, Carlyle stretched himself in his favourite home-position on the floor, and began a slow running talk. . . .

103 "The other day I was staying with some people who talked about the 'Idylls of the King,' which seemed idle enough; so I took up Emerson's 'English Traits,' and soon found myself lost to everything else, — wandering amid all manner of sparkling crystals and wonderful luminous vistas; and it really appeared marvelous how many people can read what they sometimes do with such books on their shelves. Emerson has gone a different direction from any in which I can see my way to go; but words cannot tell how I prize the old friendship formed there on Craigenputtock Hill, or how deeply I have felt in all he has written the same aspiring intelligence which shone about us when he came as a young man, and left with us a memory always cherished."