

LETTERS TO
EMMA LAZARUS

IN THE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

EDITED BY
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COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



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LETTERS TO
EMMA LAZARUS
BY THE EDITOR

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Preface

The writers of the letters in this volume are nearly all familiar figures in literature, art, or the theatre and hardly stand in need of any formal introduction. The best account of Emma Lazarus is the brief sketch which her sister Josephine published in *The Century* for October, 1888, and reprinted, some weeks later, in Volume I of *The Poems*. At the present time, however, a renaissance of interest in this almost forgotten writer promises more than one biographical study of some length. Born in New York, July 22, 1849, of wealthy Jewish parents, she became a sensitive and reticent child, soon living mainly in a world of books. Her father, proud of her precocity, encouraged her literary aspirations. At fourteen she was writing verse, and at eighteen she had a book of her own in print. Later there were a few other slender volumes (which, like the first, are mentioned in the letters) and numerous contributions to periodicals. For years she kept to current literary models and themes, though there were times of despair when she took stock of her achievements, and even Emerson, whose reproofs were delivered with charming gentleness, gave her cause to doubt. Then, in 1882, came a sudden change. Troubled with the conviction that her literary career had been sterile, she was ready to listen to the suggestion from friends, like Stedman, that she should leave the old conventional subjects and try to write of her own people. But a powerful impelling force was the new outburst of anti-Jewish feeling in Europe, which stirred her racial loyalty. In later years her two visits abroad (1883 and 1885-1887) drew her back somewhat into earlier interests, but from 1882 till her death (November 19, 1887) she wrote mainly as laureate of the Jews. It was not, one feels, that she cared at all for any formal religion but that she cared much for freedom and social justice. She was a lesser Whittier, with a special cause to sing. And it was this last phase of her life that inspired Whittier to write of her to A. A. Marcus in January, 1884: "You have reason to be proud of her. She sings like Miriam & Deborah."

The letters to her reflect her literary enthusiasms and her ardor as a propagandist, but they show her a citizen of a larger world. It is easy to read in them her eager desire for recognition and for intellectual companionship. One recalls the comment on her which Thomas Went-

worth Higginson, skilled connoisseur of literary women, sent his sisters in 1872. Until lately, he said, she had never seen an author, and it was curious how mentally famished a person might be in the best society. Stedman thought her the natural companion of scholars and thinkers.

The texts given here preserve the original spelling and punctuation without any interpolated apologies. I regret that it is not possible to include the eight letters from Henry James to Emma Lazarus, which belong to the collection, as does also the one from Whittier to Marcus quoted above.

Special acknowledgments are due to Mrs. Humphreys Johnstone, of Venice, Italy, the donor of these letters, and to the heirs or literary executors who have granted permission to publish them, — to the Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association for the letters of Emerson and his wife and daughter, to Mr. Allerton Cushman 2nd for the letter of Charlotte Cushman, to Dr. Hans Lindau for the letters of Rudolf Lindau, to Mrs. George M. Gould for the letters of Edmund Clarence Stedman, to Mrs. Anna George de Mille for the letters of Henry George, to Signor Mario Salvini for the letters of Tommaso Salvini, to Mr. Henry James for the letter of William James, to Mrs. Waldo Story for the letter of William Wetmore Story, to Mr. Philip Gosse for the letters of Edmund Gosse, to Dr. Leonard Huxley for the letter of Henrietta Huxley, to the Dowager Lady Swaythling for the letter of Albert Edward W. Goldsmid, to Sir Robert Neville Henry Cunliffe for the letter of Eleanor Cunliffe, to Lady Bryce for the letters of James Bryce, to Mrs. John William Mackail for the letters of Georgiana Burne-Jones, to Mrs. Barrett Browning for the letter of Robert Browning, to the Earl of Carlisle for the letter of Maude Stanley, to Mr. Sydney C. Cockerell for the letters of William Morris, to Mr. James Burnett Lowell for the letters of James Russell Lowell, and to Mr. C. Grant La Farge for the letter of John La Farge. The late Dr. Clara Barrus authorized my use of the letters of John Burroughs. The D. Appleton-Century Company has given permission to reprint several excerpts which Emma Lazarus published in *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*.

The volume might not have been possible without the help of Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler and of Mrs. Alfred Meyer, of New York. It owes much to the staff of the Columbia University Library and particularly to Miss Isadore G. Mudge and to Dr. Charles C. Williamson.

The work of
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Italy. Others

New York
August, 1937

PREFACE

vii

The work of transcribing and translating the letters of Tommaso Salvini has been greatly aided by my sister Mrs. John Shapley, of Florence, Italy. Others, but chiefly my wife, have collaborated faithfully.

R. L. R.

New York
August, 1937

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LETTERS TO
EMMA LAZARUS
IN THE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

From Ralph Waldo Emerson

Emma Lazarus had met Emerson at the home of his old friend Samuel Gray Ward in New York, perhaps in December of 1866 and certainly before February 24, 1868. The first letter acknowledges the gift of a copy of her *Poems and Translations*, which is still extant and bears her inscription to him with the date February 12, 1868. This volume, written, as its subtitle declared, between the ages of fourteen and seventeen, gave her some standing as a literary prodigy. Emerson, always quick to discover promise in young authors, was easily persuaded to undertake the rôle of literary adviser and friendly critic. He became more enthusiastic as he read some of the verse that was to go into her second volume, *Admetus and Other Poems*, 1871, the title piece of which was dedicated to him. Then, as he read again, he found reasons to doubt. The correspondence was nearly at an end with the completion of "Admetus." A few years later, when *Parnassus* appeared without any of her verses which he had once praised, she was brokenhearted and wrote him a protest.

The friendship had, however, a better ending. It must have ended for all practical purposes in 1876, with the visit which the last letter of this series proposes — a visit which soon became a pleasant reality. There follows, as epilogue to Emerson's own epistolary record, the letter from his wife and his daughter Ellen written in September of that year.

Brief passages from the letters of February 24 and June 23, 1868, were printed by Emma Lazarus in *The Century* for July, 1882. A much fuller commentary may be found in *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*.

Concord

24 February 1868

My dear Miss Lazarus,

I have so happy recollections of the conversation at Mr Ward's, that I am glad to have them confirmed by the possession of your book & letter. The poems have important merits, & I observe that my poet gains in skill as the poems multiply, & she may at last confidently say, I have mastered the obstructions, I have learned the rules: henceforth I command the instrument, & now, every new thought & new emotion shall make the keys eloquent to my own & to every gentle ear. Few know what treasure that conquest brings, — what independence & royalty. Grief, passion, disaster, are only materials of Art, & I see a light under the feet of Fate herself. — Perhaps I like best the poems in Manuscript. Some of those in the book are too youthful, & some words & some rhymes inadmissible. "Elfrida" & "Bertha" are carefully

finished, & well told stories, but tragic & painful, — which I think a fault. You will count me whimsical, but I would never willingly begin a story with a sad end. Compensation for tragedy must be made in extraordinary power of thought, or grand strokes of poetry. But you shall instantly defy me, & send me a heartbreaking tale, so rich in fancy, so noble in sentiment that I shall prefer it to all the prosperities of time. I am so glad that you have kept your word to write to so ancient a critic, that I regret the more that you should have had to wait so long for a reply. But I was absent from home when your book arrived, & only now have found & read it.

Yours with all kind regards,
R. W. Emerson

Miss Emma Lazarus.

Concord, 14 April.
1868.

My dear Miss Lazarus,

You are very kind to write again, & it is good in these cold misplaced days to see your letters on my old desk. I shall not lose my faith in the return of spring. It is the more kind that you risk the wasting of time on such a shut-up dilatory correspondent. But on poetry there is so much to say, that I know not where to begin, & really wish to reply by a treatise of thirty sheets. I should like to be appointed your professor, you being required to attend the whole term. I should be very stern & exigent, & insist on large readings & writings, & from haughty points of view. For a true lover of poetry must fly wide for his game, & though the spirit of poetry is universal & is nearest, yet the successes of poets are scattered in all times & nations, & only in single passages, or single lines, or even words; nay, the best are sometimes in writers of prose. But I did not mean to begin my inaugural discourse on this note; but only sat down to say that I find I am coming to New York in the beginning of next week, & I rely on your giving me an hour, & on your being docile, & concealing all your impatience of your tutor, nay, on your inspiring him by telling him your own results.

In which good hope,
I rest yours faithfully,

R. W. Emerson

Miss Lazarus.

My dear Miss Emma

I am sorry to find
ride in the Park which
has been visiting her
urgent requests from
me, to come to her to
with other peremptory
If I shall stay longer
vitation.

My dear Miss Emma

The Postmaster
my note then deposited
brought its tardy expl
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for me to spend a nigh
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your sister should con
beneficent errand. I h
today to say this, & to
am a great philosopher
absorbing importance.

Miss Emma Lazarus.

My dear friend,

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rs with all kind regards,
 R. W. Emerson

Concord, 14 April.
 1868.

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 I shall not lose my faith
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 to begin my inaugural
 that I find I am coming
 & I rely on your giving
 ing all your impatience
 y telling him your own

R. W. Emerson

Thursday Evening
 23^d April

My dear Miss Emma,

I am sorry to find that I must lose for myself & my daughter the ride in the Park which you & your sister so kindly proposed. Ellen who has been visiting her friend Mrs Minturn in Staten Island brings so urgent requests from Mrs Frank Shaw who has very old claims on me, to come to her tomorrow, that I see I cannot combine such visit with other peremptory duties of tomorrow, without giving up the Park. If I shall stay longer than Monday, I shall ask you to repeat your invitation.

R. W. Emerson

Sunday
 25 W. 37th Street

My dear Miss Emma,

The Postmaster at Station G assured me on Friday morning that my note then deposited would reach your door at 11 o'clock. I hope it brought its tardy explanation to you during the day, & told you that I must give up the visit to the Park, because Mrs Frank Shaw had sent for me to spend a night at Staten Island with my daughter under circumstances which made it a command. I grieved to learn that you & your sister should come once — twice — in vain to my door, on your beneficent errand. I have not even been able to come to your house today to say this, & to say goodbye. So I hope you will imagine that I am a great philosopher lost in thought, or else that I have affairs of absorbing importance. Meantime I am sorry not to see you.

With great regard,
 R. W. Emerson

Miss Emma Lazarus.

Concord —
 3 May, 1868.

My dear friend,

I am delighted with your kindness, & I try to believe that it really covers up all my short-comings. I was sadly vexed that my visit to New York should have ended with so short an interview with yourself, to whom I had promised to be so frank & tedious. But we must

accept what the all-disposing Genius allows, without murmurs. It is a sufficient happiness to have the eye opened to the miracle of Nature, & the ear to that music which reports it, & which we call poetry; though this last is a grandly loose term, & covers all of suggestion, as well as of rhythmical success. But we live among hints from the gods, & are often more lifted & guided by a hint than by a course of study or of practice. These may make us solid & satisfactory, but the other is the light of all our day, & having seen it, we never can be quite mean. Did I add Marcus Antoninus to my rambling list of books, or do you already keep him on your table? Read Taine's little chapter about him, — "Nouveaux Essais de critique." You will no doubt find much you will not care for, but a few of his Antonine's sentences cannot be mended. And in literature as in life, I believe the units or atoms outvalue the masses. And of books there is another which, when you have read, you shall sit for a while & then write a poem, — The "Bhagvat Geeta," but read it in Charles Wilkins's translation. You will not thank me for lists of books, & yet here is another, which I read yesterday with great interest, — Mr J. P. Lesley's "Man's Origin & Destiny," — just now published in Philadelphia, & which has every attraction. But perhaps you are impatient of books, & I too would have you read haughtily, & call even your favorites to strict account, & not the less that you tell me you have honored mine. Certainly your letters will be welcome to me, if you dare risk the homilies I shall send you in reply. R. W. Emerson
Miss Emma Lazarus.

Concord
June 23 1868

My dear Miss Lazarus,

I am sorry to have been so bad a correspondent lately, & to you to whom I did not mean to be wanting. For I prize your letters, & mean to reply, because they interest me. It is vain to say, Write on generously, whether I write or not — don't mind an old scholar's procrastinations. It were unreasonable to try you with such ingratitude, & no doubt, would break down even such goodness as yours. But I have happened to have some more than usual engagements lately. Then I understood your father to speak of going to Newport, this summer, & I fancied I might see you there with the leisure supposed to belong to such places, which would be better than much writing. Yet I must qualify this too, for I often think a little writing carries more of what I wish to know

than many interviews, by your reading, & there is no purpose of it faster in conversation. Sarah Clarke, of Newport, was in July. But if you are at Newport still. Books are a safe ground for what we really seek is not. You have found therein what I have never found what I have never so tyrannize over our solitude, making them very secondary conversation. Yes & I hold till our own thought rises much. I own this loftiness to my silent friends before the door.
But I have come to the

Miss Emma Lazarus.

My dear Miss Lazarus,

I received your letter with well to hold it as a bright memory, availing myself of it. I wish to thank you for his courtesy. I am here in Newport by way to Newport. But the study-chair will no doubt be the shining faces of Newport or books to praise, or perhaps Newport or let me find it.
And thus I remain

Miss Emma Lazarus.

It was a pity not to go to Newport to learn a little more of you

than many interviews, but as I had assumed to make suggestions for your reading, & there is no end to the library, it seemed we could dispose of it faster in conversation. And I have promised my friend Miss Sarah Clarke, of Newport, a visit of a few days in the second week of July. But if you are at East Haven, we must hold by the post office still. Books are a safe ground, & a long one, but still introductory only, for what we really seek is ever comparison of experiences — to know if you have found therein what alone I prize, or still better if you have found what I have never found, & yet is admirable to me also. Books so tyrannize over our solitude that we like to revenge ourselves by making them very secondary & merely convenient as hints & counters in conversation. Yes & I hold that we have never reached their best use until our own thought rises to such a pitch that we cannot afford to read much. I own this loftiness is rare & we must long be thankful to our silent friends before the day comes when we can honestly dismiss them.

But I have come to the end of my paper. Ever with friendliest regard,

R. W. Emerson

Miss Emma Lazarus.

Boston —

6 July, 1868 —

My dear Miss Lazarus,

I received your own & your father's friendly invitation, & like well to hold it as a bright contingency, but I own with no near hope of availing myself of it. I wish you would express to him my thanks for his courtesy. I am here in town awaiting the arrival of my wife on the way to Newport. But the inveterate gravitation of an old scribe to his study-chair will no doubt carry me quickly back even from the surf & the shining faces of Newport: So if you have any riddles for me to read, or books to praise, or poetry to uplift me you shall hold me by it at Newport or let me find it at Concord.

And thus I remain

Your friend,

R. W. Emerson

Miss Emma Lazarus.

Concord, July 28

It was a pity not to go to East Haven when I was on my travels, & learn a little more of you than much writing could tell me. So had I

been qualified for your ghostly counsellor in all emergences, & at least might have had a basis for letters, & could never as I may now write wide of the mark. But such a journey was quite out of my plans, & indeed not to be thought of then. Yet of course I mean to see you when I can easily, & shall not be in New York again, I hope, without a good conversation. Have you not read in Bohn's Plato the dialogue of "Theages," wherein Socrates gives his theory of what one can do for another in discourse, & what are the stern conditions? I think Socrates never appears more lovely. I am a heavy visiter, never go anywhere to stay, without sinning against my foresight, & being well punished. I must not forget that my friends at Newport were bountiful angels from whom one could almost expect his own reformation.

Your friend,

R. W. Emerson

Miss Emma Lazarus.

Concord, Sept. 18, 1868

I know too well the value of having a sensible soul to speak to & to hear from now & then, than that I should by pre-occupations & too long intervals lose the right of challenge & reply. It is true that, like other ancients, I have relation to a good many persons, &, for one reason or another, much more writing to do than I like. And as you are young & hold so facile a pen, you must write long letters & I the notes. I went to New York in the last week to visit my brother who was very ill — I did not know how long I might stay, — & fancied even that your family might now be returning thither — So I should have seen you. But I had a sad surprise in my brother's sudden change & death, & the next day with his sons we brought his body home to this town.

Thanks for your note from your cottage, & your praise of Autumn. To the poet every month & every day is the best in the year, & though the activity & the use is less, I do not know that the sensibility to Nature diminishes with age. But I shall be glad to read in verse or in prose the new thoughts she has brought you. But I was only to write you now that I had received your letter.

With kind remembrances to your father & your sister, Yours,

R. W. Emerson

Miss Emma Lazarus.

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heroes & woman
a little at a time
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My dear friend,

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Miss Emma Laz

My dear friend,

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to say that I me
two, & rely on se
next week.

The new poe
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I have to offer
you can throw

Concord

28 October

I have noble friends — they send me high poetry — pictures of gods heroes & woman bravely & adequately drawn. I read slowly & thankfully a little at a time — (— for I am a prisoner to my task in these days —) and when I have read all the poem I shall tell you what I find. R. W. E

Concord

19 November 1868

My dear friend,

I write immediately on closing my first entire reading of "Admetus," to say, All Hail! You have written a noble poem, which I cannot enough praise. You have hid yourself from me until now, for the merits of the preceding poems did not unfold this fulness & high equality of power. I shall not stop to criticise, more than to say that it is too good than that the reader should feel himself *detained* by speeches a line too long. And the only suggestion I dare offer is that you shall read for the tone of Teutonic humanity Act III. Scene 1. of "Measure for Measure," as the only corrective of your classic sympathies. I think I shall return the treasured sheets by tomorrow's mail, secure that the eternal Apollo & the placated Fates will guard them to you.

R. W. Emerson

Miss Emma Lazarus.

Buffalo

20 January 1869

My dear friend,

I have your last note, as I had already one, — unanswered both, — accusing thus my incapacity, — would it were only in this, — to many happiest duties. Thanks for your hospitable will & proposition, — but I am the worst of guests, & never or rarely come. Yet I write now to say that I mean to be in New York on the 23^d instant, for a day or two, & rely on seeing you; so you must not go to Washington or to Rome next week.

The new poem that was to come to me has never arrived, & the only help left is a personal inquisition. I do not know but the sole advice I have to offer is a pounding on the old string, namely, that though you can throw yourself so heartily into the old world of Memory, the

high success must ever be to penetrate unto & show the celestial element in the despised Present, & detect the deity that still challenges you under all the gross & vulgar masks.

R. W. Emerson

Miss Emma Lazarus.

Concord
14 March 1869

My dear friend,

I have the new sheets safely, and the "Masque" also safe, & am sensible of the large trust you put in me; and yet they lie untouched, for the present, & you have had no word from me since I saw you. I hope your patience will still prove perfect, for my preoccupations are not yet over, though this week puts an end to a part of them. I will not annoy you by counting their number or varieties, & only write to assure you of the security of the manuscripts & the good will of your friend R. W. Emerson

Miss Emma Lazarus.

Concord
April 26, 1869

My dear Miss Lazarus

I have been looking in these weeks for a letter from you renouncing & denouncing me as a person incapable of all friendship, contumacious, & in sum, a borrower of precious manuscripts which he neither publishes nor restores nor accounts for. Not having received such a letter, your patience & magnanimity rise daily to my wonder, & at last, to my rebuke: And though by no means ready to send you my final Report on the duties with which I was charged, I will at least assure you that both the Manuscripts are safe, & by no means forgotten by me. It has happened to me this winter & spring to accept a succession of tasks public & private more numerous & more exacting of time than in any season I remember, so that I have been forced to postpone all correspondence & all reading not imperative. I am not yet quite out of these bonds, but with rising hopes of escape.

I believe I must not enter now, — as I was just turning this page to do, — on the poems — but will only ask leave, as committees do, for a longer day which yet shall soon arrive.

Ever your friend,
R. W. Emerson

Miss Emma Lazarus.

My dear friend,
O yes, th
upstairs & read it
returned from Fa
the poetry, but th
in America, & I sh
(Lt. Col.) W. H.
she highly esteem
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Miss Emma Laza
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My dear Miss Laz
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Concord

June 7

My dear friend,

O yes, the "Heroes" is good to write & to read. I carried it upstairs & read it to my wife, & to my daughter Ellen who has just now returned from Fayal. Ellen said, "You know that I don't know about the poetry, but the word is true, and it is the first time it has been said in America, & I shall send it as a sop to poor Will & Charles," meaning (Lt. Col.) W. H. Forbes & (Captain) Charles Emerson, both of whom she highly esteems. The tone & sentiment of the poem are noble, & the voice falters in reading it aloud. And yet Mr Lowell is right, if by rough judgment he can drive you to a severer pruning of your verses, & mainly to a severer ear. This poem is so free of fault, however, that you can well afford to put the 10th stanza into the smelting-pot again, & save the stanza, which is essential, by mending its melody. Did you ever read such a word as "'gainst" in Tennyson? here it occurs twice in this stanza: then "intense" is a dangerous word which we avoid in conversation for its flatness, — but that is venial: but the verse fails by absence of all force & melody in the last line. You must change that & its correspondent rhyme. Having made this rude beginning, is there not hope that I may now presently arrive at the older & more peremptory duty of restoring to you "Admetus" & the "Masque," with notes?

Yours ever,

R. W. Emerson

Miss Emma Lazarus.

To explain, I will venture to sketch what I think the ear requires of stronger accent, though I have not at this moment time or facility to attempt a clean verse. —

The selfsame men, with like audacious port,
And with as stout endurance struggle on, —
As sturdy & as valiant in the street,
As faced the blazing fort.

Concord —

July 9, 1869.

My dear Miss Lazarus,

I ought long ago to have taken a decided part either to work out my criticism on your poems — as I doubted not at first to do, — or to

have sent them back, & committed them to your own. But I still believed that my preoccupations were temporary, & the freedom would presently return — which does not return. I think I have never had so many tasks as in the last twelvemonth, and just now some revolutions at Cambridge have embarrassed me more than ever with time-taking duties, so that — added to the old ones — my rainbow leisures are thrust far forward quite or almost out of sight. For Admetus, I had fully intended to use your consent & carry it to Mr Fields for the "Atlantic." But on reading it over carefully, I found that what had so strongly impressed me on the first reading was the dignity & pathos of the story as you have told it, which still charms me. But the execution in details is not equal to this merit or to the need. You permit feeble lines & feeble words. Thus you write words which you can never have spoken. Please now to articulate the word "smileless," — which you have used twice at no long interval. You must cut out all the lines & words you can spare & thus add force I have kept the poem so long that you will have forgotten it much, & will read it with fresh eyes. The dialogue of Hyperion & the Fates is not good enough. Cut down every thing that does not delight you to the least possible. I have marked a few heedless words. "Doubt" does not "ravage" nor be "revenged"

But I hate to pick & spy, & only wish to insist that, after reading Shakspeare for fifteen minutes, you shall read in this MS. a page or two to see what you can spare.

My present thought being that it would not be fair to yourself to offer it to the Atlantic until after your careful revision.

For the Masque, — I had it in mind when I first brought it home to indicate some capital scraps of pastoral poetry in Ben Jonson, to show you what a realism those English brains attained when gazing at flowers & pheasants.

I think the best pastoral is Shakspeare's "Winter's Tale." You will think it cheap to say these proverbs. Who could n't conjure with Shakspeare's name?

And now that I may pour out all my vitriol at once, I will add that I received the poem on Thoreau, but that I do not think it cost you any day-dawn, or midnight oil. But the poem to the *Heroes* keeps all its value.

On the whole, in this cynicism of mine, & on this suggestion of yours, I decide to inclose the two Manuscripts to you by mail today, & I am

not without
about them w

Miss E. Lazar

My dear Miss

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Miss Lazarus

My dear M

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If I never

Miss Emma

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st that, after reading
 n this MS. a page or

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st brought it home to
 in Ben Jonson, to
 ained when gazing at

ter's Tale." You will
 't conjure with Shak-

once, I will add that
 not think it cost you
 the *Heroes* keeps all

s suggestion of yours,
 y mail today, & I am

not without hope that I may find an opportunity to talk with you
 about them when you have forgiven me my bilious mood. Your friend,

R W Emerson

Miss E. Lazarus.

Concord, 23 Aug^t 1869

My dear Miss Lazarus,

I have but one serious objection to your kind proposal to grace me
 with the dedication of the poem, & that is, that I wish to praise the
 poem to all good readers whom I know; but if I am honored with the
 dedication my mouth is estopped. Is it not a pity that I do not live
 nearer New York, I should so like to play the rhetorical tutor, & praise
 a little the good & impale the bad lines, & put offending words & sylla-
 bles on the rack in your verses. But you will print "Admetus," & I
 infer you will print it by itself. I have not said a word lately about the
 "Atlantic," because Fields went to Europe whilst I was getting ready
 my scissors & sandpaper, & has left Howels in charge, whom I scarcely
 know. Yet, if you desire to print it in the "Atlantic," I will carry it to
 him: in that case, of course, without dedications.

Your friend,

R. W. Emerson

Miss Lazarus

Concord, Oct. 6, 1869

My dear Miss Lazarus,

Mr Howells declines printing the poem, & leaves us only the
 doubt whether he or we are in the wrong. I should have printed it
 thankfully & proudly. We must believe that his Atlantic portfolio is
 very rich in poetry in these months, & shall frankly own it if Sparta hath
 worthier daughters. I am at a loss to find the imitation of Tennyson &
 Morris that the editor remarks. I am glad you had the courage & dili-
 gence to condense the piece, and now the more, that our Aristarchus
 still finds you too expansive. One of the things I owe to India is the
 proverb of the Pundits, "that an author rejoiceth in the economizing
 of half a short vowel as much as in the birth of a son." You can well
 afford to receive back the fable, but when will the Atlantic give me one
 as noble?

If I never write, pity me still as an anxious worker.

R. W. Emerson

Miss Emma Lazarus.

Wednesday Eve

Oct. 6

You will see how aged I grow in that I left the now inclosed letter out of my envelope this P M, though I wrote only for that end.

Admetus will follow as soon as I get as far as the Post Office for a suitable envelope.

Concord

30 December 1869

Dear Miss Lazarus,

I am glad to hear from you again, & such good news — that the muse is propitious, & abundant in her gifts. I wish I deserved the share you offer me in letting me read what is given. But I am at present still a "man forbid," perhaps more utterly selfish & helpless than ever, — endeavoring for many weeks past & shall be for weeks to come to print a book which halts at each chapter, & requires more faculty to finish it as I wish than I can command. Nor do I foresee any early leisure, as the "University Lectures" in which I am to take a serious part are grimly awaiting my first liberty. So think as kindly as you can of your friend. Meantime do not, I pray you, lose a good line which Night or Morning offers you, & do not spare a weak one.

With kind regards

Ever yours,

R. W. Emerson

Miss Emma Lazarus.

Concord, 23 April,

1870

Dear Miss Lazarus,

I send back the Orpheus with great humiliation. I told you in advance I was not to be trusted for any reading for months, & I have found my bondage worse than I then thought, nor shall I escape out of it for six weeks yet I have read a few pages of the MS. & shall have much to say to you, I see, about poetry. I do not like to wait long to say it but dare not begin tonight. I received also your overestimate of the little book of "Society &c which would blush if it could & were not too red. Continue to esteem & forgive me my many shortcomings.

Ever your friend,

R. W. Emerson

Miss Emma Lazarus.

My dear friend

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Miss Emma

My dear friend

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Concord, August 19, 1870

My dear friend,

I have not known how to write to you since I received your painful note. I had seen the bulletin in the journals without a suspicion that it touched any friend of mine. You know how the eye learns to rush over these records of outrages which we cannot hinder or in any manner repair. Your letter was a dreadful surprise I think very sadly of the desolation which this shock must bring to your peaceful house & to yourself. I can easily see that this ghastly incident will for a long time refuse to be forgotten or hidden or veiled. It will force seriousness & searching insights into the common day which can hide such grim contingences in the current of life which flowed so softly. One can hardly help giving a self application to a terror that thunders like this. Life is serious: Only principles, — nothing less than relations to heaven itself can keep our serenity amid these horrors. I know how we hate & shun the dismal. It seems rather to lead *from* than *to* thought, & so wastes the Soul. But that doleful tract is part also of the Universe, & if patiently watched, grows translucent presently, & its news is at last good.

But I ought not to add words. In the presence of dismaying events we must be as self-collected & sane as we can, & await the return of the Divine Soul which will not forget us in these extremes. Perhaps the best facts in history are the triumphs of the will of the sufferer in fiercest pain. In my childhood my ear was filled with such examples by my guardian Aunt: but in my stagnant life they have been only pictures. Perhaps each of us is to pass somewhere through each experience once. I shall gladly hear from you when you are at liberty to write. Meantime, I beg you to offer my respect & sympathy to your parents & sisters.

Your friend,

R. W. Emerson

Miss Emma Lazarus.

Concord

27 January, 1871.

My dear friend,

I am too well-pleased with your kind & honoring purpose to raise any farther objection to it, since you retain it so steadfastly. It will not, I fear, add any favor to the poem out of a limited circle, and I think the poem has an elevation of of character & sentiment that will

commend it to good readers, in spite of my praise of it. I am very glad it is to appear in an independent form, & I shall not fail to call the attention of many persons to it, whom I think fit & desirable readers. You will forgive my slow reply to your note, since I was absent from home, when your note came, & found some imperative duties awaiting me on my first return, as yet but half discharged. I still hope for days of freedom for correspondence & even for conversation with my friends: So you shall not quite renounce me. With all kind regards,

R. W. Emerson

Miss Emma Lazarus.

Concord

July 22,

My dear Miss Lazarus,

I send you warm thanks for your kind letter & invitation; — but an old man fears most his best friends. It is not them that he is willing to distress with his perpetual forgetfulness of the right word for the name of book or fact or person he is eager to recall, but which refuses to come. I have grown silent to my own household under this vexation, & cannot afflict dear friends with my tied tongue. Happily this embargo does not reach to the eyes, and I read with unbroken pleasure. My daughter Ellen thanks you for kind invitation but is home-bound in these months. No, the right way for you to help us is that you, who, I believe, never have entered Massachusetts, should come & spend a week in Concord, & correct our village narrowness. My Wife joins me heartily in this request. Now to give it practicable form, — I learn from Ellen that I am bound with cords to go to my daughter Edith Forbes, at Naushon Island, in the second week of August, where they claim of us some ten days — other limitations know I none, & the fourth week of August you might persuade Newport to spare you. With very kind regards to your father & your family,

Your friend,

R. W. Emerson

Miss Emma Lazarus.

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