

If you will excuse the system, & enclose a piece cut from an old newspaper, which will tell you what my favorite story has been for many years, besides those belonging more immediately to the ministry. It was written by a reading lawyer in that place.

Pittsford, Monroe Co. N.Y.

Sept. 4, 1857.

My Dear Marvin:

Well, better late than never.

I received your letter this morning; could hardly believe my eyes. To use a Yankee idiom, I "felt bad," right bad, for a long time, to receive nothing from you.

Yours was forwarded from Mid. Centre; I have been here for some months. This will make it the more difficult to attend the meeting of the American Board, there being some two hundred miles further to go. The increased cost of living so nigh the city; the buying of furniture; the expense of moving so far; the expenses of daughters at a distant school — all this will make the year come out with a tight pinch. My salary is only \$700, besides a don. of \$100 cash. Then again, since there is no great exciting question to come before the Board, I think it will hardly do for me to take so expensive a journey. Next year, if we

live so long, I shall probably be in more comfortable circumstances, & willing to go almost any where to see you.

Last fall, while going from N.Y. city to Newark, fell in with our old acquaintance Knight; he had seen you somewhere; could get little or no information out of him, except that your outward man is bigger than it was in '32. Fell in also with Fanshaw; had a good talk; a very pleasant man. Preached in 42d St. Chh, O. School, also in a Dutch chh & an O. School chh in Astoria, a suburb. A city minister waited on me over to Greenwood Cemetery ^{& all about;}; got acquainted with Dr. Peet, the very accomplished principal of the Deaf & Dumb Asylum; showed me his magnificent new \$350,000 building. Had a delightful time for a fortnight; you don't know what you lost by not being with me; thought of you several times; was grievously disappointed in not finding your name on the book at Newark.

Pittsford was settled earlier than Rochester; it is a place of wealth & refinement. My chh is a handsome

edifice; but there is no passage; the people are thinking of getting one; if they don't, I think of accepting a better offer about to be made me by a chh in the neighborhood. The upshot most likely will be, they will get one; with my \$800 & no rent, I can live well & lay up.

Find myself getting acquainted with the ministers of Rochester city; exchanged lately with one of them. "Plymouth chh", for its huge size, & the gorgeousness of its Gothic ornaments, reminds me of some of the cathedrals I saw in Europe. The population of Rochester ^{60,000} is probably more under the influence of evangelical preaching than that of any other city in the U.S. This whole region of Western N. York is admirable; the people unite N. Eng. refinement with Western enterprise; it is in fact a second edition of N. Eng. with improvements. The institutions for education are numerous & good. If there is a fault, it is the rage for showy living, fine carpets & furniture, fine houses & pianos, & all that sort of thing.

I have a great Bible Class, which I should like to show you; it is a curiosity; we were driven, by the crowd, out of our lecture room into the chh. The main principles

ave: No questions put by me; a deacon, or young man, or girl, or somebody, as I name them, reads a verse; I make remarks on it, being well prepared from Hengstenberg, Anderson, & all suitable critical apparatus; the remarks must be short, simple, & growing naturally from the passage; there must be no common place. The interest is great; "how new these ideas! the Bible is a new book!" I am convinced there are things in store for ministers they have not suspected; a simple talk on a chapter from a prepared mind (in distinction from that sleepy thing called expounding) has prodigious power over the mind of a congregation, especially if intelligent. This elaborate building of a discourse on a single text, we make too much of.

Nothing would please me better than to have you settled near me, & meet with me & others on Monday to criticise sermons. You might also use my library, one of the richest in Western N. York. I think of giving two or three lectures on Ancient Egypt this winter, to my own & neighboring peoples; Wilkinson cost me \$30 in India; this & other great works will furnish ample materials. I want to crowd out the vagabond lecturers, & take the whole thing into my own hands.

I have a son of 20 teaching in Virginia; a fine boy. — The piece Norwich Academy in last N. Englander pleased me much, especially what is said concerning gov't of the people; for, living so long among Eng. folks in the East has made me a less zealous American than I was when with you.

Now, Marvin, write me a long letter; no talk can come amiss; give yr history, likes, dislikes, tho'ts, opinions, & so on. But perhaps better wait till after Board, & tell me the impression.

I send an incredible quantity of love, & some to Mrs. Marvin if such a person there is. Yours very affectionately, A.N.

Pittsford, Monroe Co. N.York

Oct. 19, '57.

My Dear Marvin:

I rec'd your letter this morning. Many thanks for this acct of yourself, so minute, and in every way just what I wanted. You have no idea of the prodigious number of times I have tho't of you since our separation in N.York. Whether you were preaching as a Cong. minister, or Episcopal, or whether living any where in any capacity, I had no means of ascertaining, till I saw yr name on the little bit of paper accompanying the New Englander; my heart leaped for joy. I believe I am very peculiar in this respect; I live in the past more than others; my early acquaintances & friends, after 20 or 30 years, stand out before me as vividly as ever.

I will now give you a short history of my life since we parted; it is very different from yours. In the July of '35, set sail for Singapore, in the Indian Archipelago, in company with Rev. Wm. Arnis & Mrs. Arnis, Rev. J. Dickinson once pastor of the 1st Chh Norwich, & Mrs. North. Studied on the passage, a good deal, Galin, Lowth, &c. Arnis was an ignorant fellow, indifferent to bks, & a miserable preacher; treated him well, but was glad he was not to be in the

same mission with myself. Formed an intimate friendship with Dickinson (now in Middlefield, Ct.) this was of great use to me; he told me my faults, &c. &c. We both read at Singapore a great deal; we were enabled to do so by the custom, in that country, of distributing time rigidly; our evening walks for eight years together, naturally produced much discussion, & exchange of information from our different courses of reading. My reading was mostly historical & theological. Had much intercourse with educated foreigners, Scotch, English, German, Dutch; saw much of respectable Americans, such as naval officers, & scientific voyagers; Singapore is a great centre of interest of every kind; 30 languages are spoken; studied the Malay, "the Italian of the East," 8 years, which I now speak fluently. It is a wonderful place, an epitome of Southern & South Eastern Asia. In a colony of 20,000 Chinese, you see about as much of them as in China itself; then you see much of Armenians, Arabs, Jews, Parsees, Indo Portuguese, &c. &c. Buddhism, Paganism, Mahometanism, Popery, all flourish & have their religious establishments. Commerce is immensely rich. The plan of the American Board c'd not be carried out; a general seminary for the Archipelago races c'd not be established; the Mahometans were inaccessible, & the Govt. of Dutch India too was hostile; the opium war, at the same time, opened China for such of us as had studied Chinese; so the Mission was broken up. I received permission from Boston to take my choice among missions, China if I ~~chose~~ would. I chose Southern India,

being afraid of the Chinese language; I noticed those who studied it had many fits of despondency. Went across the Bay of Bengal, a stormy passage; landed on the Malabar Coast; saw the Eng. Missions in Travancore; went round the Southern end of the Ghauts, 300 miles to Madras; Mrs. N. died of cholera as soon as we arrived; sent my children home that year from Madras; staid, myself, in the Seminary at Madras 3 years teaching English mainly; this led me to search the Eng. classics for authorities concerning idioms; this digging into our own language was very profitable to me. Life in India is full of novelties; they never wax old. The mountain scenery; the great temples; the noble Englishmen; the strange adventures — of all these, the half has not been told you. The simple facts of my lectures, especially the wonders of Hindoo architecture & sculpture, seem to my people as a revelation of a new world. — The Pres. Com. fearing I might weary in India, & wishing some one to come home from that Mission to discuss policy with them, sent for me; wished me to return & remain in Seminary. I tho't it unwise to begin the Tamil so late in life; my children too were unwilling to part with me; told the Com. I tho't the money ought to be laid out on a younger man; & so the matter ended. — I then put into the Hebrew six months with all diligence, tho' I had studied it before; studied two years at Auburn Theol. Sem. went especially into bib. lit. tho' delighted & made over again by Hickok's theol. lectures, thro' the Senior course of which I went twice. —

Fearing larger pulpits, I took a smaller one. Married Miss Martha Bryan, younger sister of my first wife. After buying myself in an obscure ch^h several years & studying the secrets of sermonizing, I now find myself in this place, more happily situated & with a better reputation as a preacher, than I ever dared to hope. Have two daughters of 18 & 16, & 3 sons of 20, 14, & 6. Eldest boy teaching in Virginia. — With splendid health, I find myself as ambitious to improve as a young man. Next to the ^{higher} duties of the sacred ministry, my main ambition is in history ch^h & profane, & the composition & delivery of sermons, I mean their literary aspects. Elocution is a thing I have paid much attention to, not so much the quirkums of college boys, but a natural, free, impressive delivery. I have my own notions of style in writing; aim at simplicity & transparency, & avoid words of Latin origin; am fond of homely Eng. idioms, being careful not to go across the line into quaintness & vulgarity. My intercourse with Oxonians has been useful to me, more than the half a dozen systems of rhetoric I read so carefully. Intellectual philosophy I once had a passion for: Locke, Stuart, Brown, Cousin, Sir Wm. Hamilton, Morell, Hickok, &c. &c. but the charms of rhetoric & history have wearied me; I think the older men grow, the less they care for metaphysical studies, except indeed as a part of historical fact, Ritter, Schwegler, & the like. — Came by way of Holland & England; was 4 weeks in London; got many bk^s of value at second hand bk shops. Saw Winchester & Canterbury cathedrals, Windsor Castle, Eton School, Westminster Abbey, the Colosseum, the Tower, British Museum, St Paul's, & the other lions. In Amsterdam, the Dutch metropolis, I saw the famous pul-

ace, with its gorgeous halls & royal saloons; heard the big organ at Haarlem; saw Erasmus' statue at Rotterdam; the tombs of De Ruyter & Galen in the Amsterdam Cathedral, &c. &c. I marvel that the frivolous young folks of our cities can pass thro' Europe with so little feeling; one reason is, their ignorance of history; this is one of our great national defects. Can not begin to tell you what I saw in Europe; it is all unutterable. — Thus I have given you a poor & meagre outline of my adventures; when we stood & picked along side of Bull, Coombs, & those other poor wretches, & I was stung with a deep sense of degradation, I lit the tho't what pleasant things were about to open before me; especially when you left me to go to Vt, & I was in an agony of despondency & desolation. If I c'd have glanced into the latter half of the then future, I sh'd have wondered by what miracle such scenes c'd be bro't ^{before me.} ~~before me.~~ — My plans for winter can not speak much of; lately gave, before Teachers' Assn. of a neighboring county, a lec. on teaching geography, setting forth the influence of the physical features of a country on the character of the people, & other geographical treasures which boys ought not to be deprived of. Gave also a lec. on India, its cave temples, British Govt, Mahometan invasions, the Himmalehs, difference between Brahminism & Buddhism, great cities, &c. Returned missionaries appear to me to be ignorant of most things they ought to know, & to give meagre views. — Am thinking of a few lectures on Ancient Egypt, out of Wilkinson, Kenrick, & others. Have in my mind an exegesis of the Temptation in the 4th of Matthew, (built on Ezek. 8:1-3 & 40:2, & Rev. 21:10) for the Bibliotheca; but as I am fastidious in what I write for the press, feel too lazy to go at it.

Some of my nice young folks, I hear, are thinking of getting me to give them a course of lectures on modern history, they taking notes, & ^{then} writing out in full, at home. The pay, in these hard times, wd be a temptation. I sh'd, of course, to get them into the marrow of the thing, have to give them all the steps in the process of modern civilisation, from the first invasions of the barbarians in 4th cent. all along down, turning aside in each period to get a peep at its great men. — The philosophy of each period wd be too high for them. If you will buy Maurice's Mediaeval Philosophy, Ancient Philosophy, & Philosophy of the First Six Centuries, 3 treatises reprinted from Ency. Metropol. say \$1 or 1.25 apiece, you will do well. Milman's Latin Christianity & his previous hist. of Christianity fr. Birth of Christ to Abolition of Paganism, are precious bks. — But we must not let such things steal away our hearts too much from preaching the Gospel.

Wd that you lived nigh me! I can not ask you to write often; I know it must be out of the question. But by & by, when you have a mind thereto, I shall rejoice to hear again from you. Love to Mrs. Marvin,

Hope you rec'd my
letter of Sep. 4.

Yours very affectionately,

A. North.

Pittsford, Monroe Co. N.Y.

Nov. 20, '57.

My Dear Marvin:

Though I confess I was not expecting a letter quite so soon, yet it gives me great pleasure to answer it. I can not help thinking how different all this from the fate of my first letter! I lamented & vexed myself that the friend I once loved so well, had become so greatly estranged; I then thought I wd behave well; there was a good reason for it in God's management of all my affairs. I now have my reward.

I am obliged to you for your information concerning young Hitchesok; he wrote to me from Winchendon thanking me for my discourse at his ordination; but he then supposed he was not to sail for some time. I wrote to him some advice about the choice of books for the passage; urged him to read on India especially, that he might not be so ignorant of that interesting country as our missionaries generally are. Some of them even live there for years without knowing the difference between Braminism & Boodhism. The most accessible bks on India are Murray's British India, 3 small vols. in Aspers' Fam. Library, Rp. Heber's Travels in India, Elphinstone's Hist. India, Gleig's do. Bayard Taylor's India, Duff's India, Mackenzie's Life in India. The great work of Mill, & Hamilton's Gazetteer, are not so accessible, but more important. Besides these, there are articles of great importance in Reviews & the Penny Cyclopaedia. If you ever come across Heber & Elph. I wd advise to secure them. Heber is a classic on this subject. Some of the big Boston libraries ought to have the Calcutta Quarterly.

Well, first the articles in the N. Englander. I began taking it in '53; so I have never seen the articles on McCheyne & Sources of our Population. The article on John Adams I read, knowing it to be yours; I tho't it barely good & decent, but nothing extra; indeed the plan you laid down, linking extracts with a few remarks, prevented much launching out of yourself. The article on Webster is very different. I read it at the time, not knowing it to be yours, & tho't it excellent. (The retribution of the young politicians on p. 612, I used as one of my illustrations in a sermon from "Whatsoever a man soweth," &c. i.e. the fact, worded in my own way.) I have now read it again; the general features, it appears to me, if I have succeeded in putting away the bias of friendship, are thorough knowledge of the subject; you had not to say something, but had something to say; hence fullness & meaning; no man can read it

without being impressed. ² The style I think excellent; there is no affectation or sophomoric ornament; the words generally, & the synonyms, are well chosen; the whole is neat, & almost transparent. Perhaps a very rigid criticism might find a little fault with an occasional leaking out of an unheated young man's wrath, more than is dignified, e.g. on p. 626, "abominable & inhuman." Inhuman alone is enough. I think I can see, in the nearly equal length of many consecutive sentences on the same page, that you have not paid sufficient attention to the projectile sentence in yr sermons; I know it is not important in this kind of writing before me; still I think the habit once formed in sermonizing, will be seen in other writing; it is an excellence in all writing. But these nicer qualities are appreciated by few, & do not usually come into an estimate of style. I am pleased to see, that there ^{are} none of the stereotyped expressions which have been used to death, even by many eminent men; all comes fresh out of yr own mint; hence there is a good degree of simplicity, that prima excellence. If I were to crowd all into two words, I ~~sd~~ say good sense & ability as to matter & mode of treatment, with accuracy & neatness in style. To write in this way is an abundant reward for years of hard labor. I can not give an opinion of the writer as I would, but only of this piece; I need to see sermons, & composition on other than subjects for Reviews, before I can make up my mind as to capabilities & defects of the man. — The article on N. Adams' bk has the same qualities of style, & shows ^{fr} sound judgment in selecting the assailable points. Congregationalism also is well judged & forcible. Be sure & send the sermons. The speech I have never seen; wd' no such paper. Fail not to send if you can find.

In the same No. with the Webster piece, page 528, lines 12 to 15, counting from bottom, you see a small specimen of the projectile. Not merely are the sentences short, but there is a basis of earnest matter; on reading it, we feel that it might be talked off with feeling. The Webster piece can not be talked. It is purely essay, or scribal, if you will allow me to coin a word. Do not understand me to say that this particular style, so excellent for public speaking, must be used always, & every where; I only say, the entire absence of it seems to indicate that you don't drill yrself to it in preaching; if you did, it wd. escape from you here & there, in reviewing. You see, even in such writing, it occasionally appears to advantage. It is a fixed thing in rhetoric, you know, that simplicity is the highest excellence in general; the projectile tendency is the perfection of simplicity. I have not room to explain myself fully; you will catch the intent.

As to my printed productions, I have never published any thing in pamphlet

form; my newspaper pieces I have not kept; they are scattered to the four winds of heaven; all I know is, the editors were glad to get hold of them & called them excellent. If I had ambition that way, I suppose I might soon earn some reputation as a periodical scribbler; I have no time. — You ask about my mental revolution. After driving at mental philosophy a while, I began to perceive it ^{to be} unprofitable & selfish; the true use of it is to sharpen the mind for something else. A remark in the old Bib. Rep. 1833, Apr. 245, on the absurdity of preaching metaphysics, gave distinct expression to a feeling I had long found lurking in me, but I feared it was not orthodox. Burke, too, says: "No heart is so hard as that of a thorough bred metaphysician." And the reading of Isaac Taylor completely cured me. About those days I lit upon Robtson's View of Society in his preface to Charles V. The beauty of the style, & the grand views there presented, for ever married me to modern history, especially the paragraph beginning with the words "In the obscurity of the chaos," & ending with "began his reign", paragraph 14th from beginning. My whole soul seemed to rush forth & seize the fundamental idea of modern history. My reading for some years was very like the prowling of a hungry tiger; I tore to pieces & ate up all I could find that belonged to my great subject. — Meanwhile, my attention was turned toward rhetoric by several causes: I noticed the illiterate & confused manner in which most of our Amer. missionaries used words in their sermons & documents of business; this I suppose naturally arose from the habits induced by love of mental philosophy; I had been accustomed to discriminate. Displeasure at their inaccuracy in presence of Englishmen, & my vanity being pleased at their commendations of my own writing, stirred me up to study further. The remarks in Newman's Rhetoric on the beauty of an idiomatic style made a new man of me; I had absurdly tried to imitate Isaac Taylor, Foster, Cholmers, & that class. Dickinson, watchful & faithful friend, convinced me that my natural tendency is toward simplicity; I was delighted too with the childlike conversation of high born Englishmen — the homeliness of their phrases, yet scrupulously avoiding vulgarity. I also had to search the Eng. classics in teaching Asiatics; Cowper's Letters, Byron's Letters, & the like, afforded help. When I came to preach, I added the idea of the projectile sentence, & composing by the ear. This will give you a meagre outline of my history in this thing. My Index Resum, a very thick bk, contains an im-

men's mass of collections on all subjects, each two or three lines, a line, half a line. My favorite authors are F. Taylor, Alison, James Douglass, Mc Intosh, Whately, Carlyle, Sir James Stephen, & perhaps twenty others; translated ones, Hegensberg, Ranke, Guizot, Sismondi. I believe in bathing all over in great men's thoughts, & wetting myself from head to foot. In preaching or writing, I suppose this is a very great advantage; you view things from unexpected stand-points; yet all is simple & natural. — If you ask about my likes & dislikes, I hate two things: High Calvinism & unchecked democracy. A Scotch High Calvinistic bigot I abhor; yet I believe in N. Eng. moderate Calvinism. Augustine conceived his system not from a natural exegesis, but from his social position; Calvin did the same; their hateful distorted views have been handed down. Astronomers tell us the tail of a comet is so excessively rarefied, we may be in it & not know it; so multitudes are in the tail of the comet of Calvinism which shot across the path of the chh, while the Moravians came down thro' another channel of ^{more genuine} N. Test. theology, & so exemplify all that is lovely & Christ-like. The metaphorical preaching of N. Eng. I dislike; I think we have given the O. School folks occasion to find fault; yet O. School-ism I dislike. Presbyterianism I fear is a Scotch importation; New School folks are in an unnatural position perhaps; on these subjects I rarely talk. — In politics I am an English whig, i.e. I believe in a balance, perhaps nearly a tory. The fundamental maxim of this country, that ignorant men all understand the profoundest science in the world, that of government, I don't believe; feel sure it is breeding terrible calamities for the future; democracy is like a cog-wheel with a catch; you may turn just as you please one way, but not a single cog the other; the democracy never give back any thing. What an incredible absurdity the choosing of a judge by popular vote! — But these are subjects too large for a letter; I only give hints for yr amusement & wonderment. I also dislike the American notion that we are a new & magnificent development of the human race; it arises from ignorance of the past. Europeans look upon us as common vulgar sinners, subject to the same tendency to corruption, & the same divine laws of chastisement & vengeance with others. In all, or nearly all, 4th of July orations & college commencement addresses for 50 years past, we have boasted the perfection of our institutions; we shall have our belly full of them before we get through. — I fear, now, after this honest exposure of my secret thoughts, you won't love me any more, N. Englander as you be.

But how strongly soever you may disagree with me in these things,

we shall agree in things pertaining to the Christian ministry. I have nothing to object to yr list of qualifications of a minister. It is vastly important that, like ky Saul, he be head & shoulders above his people; they must see & feel that he thinks in a region above them; at the same time he must be perfectly kind, & take interest in their things. Visiting is very important. What you say concerning imagination, I assent to. As to my own, I think it more active now than ever; I regret I have not three times as much; it is of very great importance. One thing I think hurts multitudes of preachers more than they can be made to understand, viz. common place; it should be carefully avoided. A single bit of it, especially in the introduction to a sermon, is poison. A fresh discourse, manifestly growing out of the text, the sentences made for delivery, has great power over the public mind. A passion for Biblical study is beyond all price; there is no acquisition I more desire, than a harmony of the Gospels, with the different scenes of Christ's life in chronol. order, suitably enlivened with bible geography & antiquities — this, fixed in the mind, is an inexhaustible source of the freshness I speak of; Nehemiah Adams understands this better than the execrable iniquities of the South. Nothing so elevates a minister in the mind of the people as their perceiving that he is under the impulse of a high & sacred enthusiasm; to combine this with his regular official plodding for years together — how hard is ~~that~~ it!

The contest in Congress this winter I hope to watch closely; don't like to spend much time on it; Greeley's Weekly I think will give the facts well enough. The conduct of our detestable Northern democrats is very like the sword form that hung over Jerusalem. I am firm in the belief that awful times are coming, blood, confusion, & fight. — But I must go to my work; it is Saturday morning. Hebrew poetry will be the Bible Class subject, as found in 15th Exodus. The class is a congregation; I stand under pulpit & remark on each verse as they read aloud. A year has not abated the interest.

Much love to yourself & Mrs. Mason.

Next time you write, tell me what yr signature is, in the Independent.

Yours very affectionately

A. North.