

November 25, 1843

TO BENJAMIN PEIRCE

Peirce Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University

[November 25, 1843]¹

This part of my letter is intended exclusively for your own eye.²

P.S. I regret that on your way to Philad^a last summer you did not stop at Princeton. It would have given me much pleasure to have received you at our house and to have exhibited to you the objects of interest connected with our village. I have been engaged during my leisure time for some months past in a new series of experiments on induction and have been so fortunate as to develop some new and apparently interesting facts. I have just commenced to repeat the experiments of Melloni on radiant heat and thus far have succeeded beyond my expectation. I see by the papers that your colleague Professor Lovering has published a new vol on Natural Phil. I have not yet seen the book but intend to send for a copy.³ Do any of your faculty intend to be present at the meeting of savants at Washington? I do not like the plan of uniting science and party politics and I cannot acknowledge the right of the Political Gentlem[en] at Washington to call a meeting of the cultivators of science in our country.⁴

J H.

¹ From the postmark and internal evidence.

² The first part of the letter (not found) presumably concerned Bache's candidacy for the Coast Survey. A Harvard endorsement of December 8, 1843, signed by Peirce, Daniel Treadwell, Jared Sparks, Josiah Quincy, Asa Gray, Joseph Lovering, and John Pickering, is in the Bache Papers, Smithsonian Archives. Peirce wrote to Bache on November 28 to offer his support and to inform Bache that Josiah Quincy would write to John Quincy Adams. Bache Papers, Smithsonian Archives.

³ Perhaps Lovering's edition of John Farrar, comp., *Elements of Electricity, Magnetism, and Electro-Dynamics* . . . (Boston, 1842), although Henry had expressed an opinion of this work as early as February 1843. On February 23 (Bailey Papers, Boston Science Museum), John Torrey wrote J. W. Bailey:

Prof. Henry is very severe on him [Lovering] for his new edition of Farrar's books.

You know very well that Farrar in a small advertisement (not in the title page, nor on the lettered back of the volumes) admitted that the matter was translated from Biot. In the new edⁿ the advertisement is omitted, & Prof Farrar stands as the author.—But the text betrays the negligence (as I would rather call it) of Lovering—for he makes his friend speak of his ascending in a balloon with Gay Lussac!

⁴ The National Institute for the Promotion of Science was planning a "Scientific Convention" to be held in Washington in April 1844. Henry's comment typified the response of much of the scientific community, many of whom either declined the invitation or, like Henry, did not respond at all. See Sally Kohlstedt, "A Step Toward Scientific Self-Identity in the United States: The Failure of the National Institute, 1844," *Isis*, 1971, 62:339-362.