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claim for myself any thing on account of what I had done, I should not have thought of publishing this statement had I not been obliged to do so by the article in your paper.⁵

Very respectfully yours, &c.
JOSEPH HENRY.

January 26, above) and Benjamin Peirce of Cambridge, Massachusetts (December 30, 1845, above).

⁵ In their preface to this letter, the editors of the *Evening Post* denied having stated that Henry was the discoverer of the magneto-

optical effect, "and merely mentioned the rumor incidentally, in order that it might be either contradicted or confirmed." Both Henry and Faraday, the paper supposed, would have acknowledged the original work of the other.

EXCERPT, DIARY OF JOHN R. BUHLER

General Manuscript Collection, Firestone Library, Princeton University

Tuesday. March. 3rd [1846].

... Had a long conversation with Prof. HENRY at the Bookstore this morning on *Physics & Metaphysics*!!! He gave me his opinion of Mr. LORD¹—says he isn't a Poet, but a Metaphysician—has fine talents but has been petted up too much by the partiality of his friends—he is a great disciple of KANT &c.

I had just bought a copy of KEATS. He wrote in the back of it a reference to an article in BRANDE² which he told me I must read—also made me buy "*Cosmos*,"³ & told me to tell Jno. Scott⁴ to get it & read it. "The Author of

¹ William Wilberforce Lord (1819–1907, DAB), a Fellow of the college. Lord was a graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary and in 1845 published a book, *Poems*, which had elicited critical response from the literary community. While a Fellow at Princeton, he gave a popular subscription course of eight lectures in poetry. He later taught at Amherst, served in the Episcopal Church in the South, and was a Confederate chaplain in the First Mississippi Brigade in the Civil War. In 1851, he published a verse epic, *Christ in Hades*; his later career was more pastoral than literary.

Lord was apparently appointed Fellow by action of the Board of Trustees. He received a stipend of \$400 and had no fixed duties. His position was not a regular one at Princeton; no other "Fellows" appear in the college catalogues for the 1840s and early 1850s. However, occasionally "Resident Graduates" were listed, who might be distinguished on the basis of only having the Bachelor's and not the Master's degree, as did Lord. On Lord's tenure

at Princeton, see the John R. Buhler diary, March 13 and April 2, 1846, Firestone Library, Princeton University.

² Brande's *Encyclopaedia*, or, more precisely, *A Dictionary of Science, Literature, and Art*, ed. W. T. Brande, an English book of which the New York edition of 1843 is in the Henry Library. In light of the ensuing discussion, Henry probably referred Buhler to the article on geology (pp. 494–513). Much longer than most of the articles, it dealt with processes of geological transformation similar to those discussed in Humboldt's *Cosmos*.

³ Either of the first two American editions of Alexander von Humboldt's *Cosmos: Sketches of a Physical Description of the Universe*, published in New York by Harper and Brothers in 1844 and 1845.

⁴ John Turnbull Scott, Princeton Class of 1845, a resident of Natchez, Buhler's home town, and later a medical doctor. *Princeton Catalogue*, p. 168; *Princeton Annual Catalogue*, 1845.

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the "*Vestiges of Creation*";⁵ said he, understands the mere Literature of Science. Baron HUMBOLDT comprehends the Science of Science!"⁶

He is a splendid old fellow to talk with—he affects no superiority over the smallest, is free & familiar & social—but "for a' that", there is that about him—an indescribable *Je ne sais quoi*—which excites within one, an emotion akin to Awe! I always feel as if I were in the presence of a Superior Being—ininitely far above *me* or my hopes of future being. He amused me in his talk about the *German Metaphysics*, by his manner of telling a story of a

Dutch Savan & Yankee Numskull.

The Philosopher had been talking *Transcendentalism* to a Beotian⁷ headed Yankee who couldnt coincide with him for sheer lack of comprehension. At last, after exhausting every endeavor at elucidation, he exclaimed in despair—"GOT forgive Christopher Columbus for discovering America!!!"

Telling him Jno's opinion of the un-get-over-ability of the *Theory of Development* in confuting it, he remarked that it lacked even originality. . . .⁸

⁵ Robert Chambers's *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (London, 1844). The Henry Library contains the second American edition of the anonymous work, published in New York in 1845. Heavily geological in outlook, the book proposed a naturalistic account of the development of plant and animal life.

⁶ Henry's comment referred to Chambers's extensive use of quoted material and references to secondary literature—he was a publisher, not a naturalist—as well as to the impression, not unique to Henry, that the arguments for evolutionary natural history that Chambers espoused were more fanciful than factual. The explorer Humboldt had impeccable scientific credentials. His writing attempted to show the interconnectedness of nature without necessarily throwing the material into a developmental or evolutionary framework. This lack of hasty generalization and reliance on careful observation would have seemed to Henry more "scientific" and less "literary."

⁷ The inhabitants of the Greek province of Boeotia were proverbially noted for their stupidity. *Oxford English Dictionary*.

⁸ A continuation of the discussion of the

Vestiges.

Henry was not alone in thinking that Chambers's evolutionary theories lacked a scientific basis. His late colleague at Princeton, Albert B. Dod, Professor of Mathematics, questioned the scientific soundness of *Vestiges* in the *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* (1845, 17:505-557). Asa Gray thought the book an unlearned exposition of discredited theories, whose author "professes to possess only a superficial acquaintanceship with any branch of science whatever" (quoted in A. Hunter Dupree, *Asa Gray* [1959; reprint edition, New York, 1968], p. 147). Other American thinkers were equally skeptical, on both scientific and theological grounds. They referred to the work as a "mere guess," and a "rabid tirade," and characterized its author as "signally fail[ing] in his solution" to the problem of a naturalistic account of creation. These examples and others are detailed in Ronald L. Numbers, *Creation by Natural Law: Laplace's Nebular Hypothesis in American Thought* (Seattle, 1977), especially pp. 31-35. For further discussion of the *Vestiges* and Henry's reaction to it, see above, Henry to Lewis R. Gibbes, May 31, 1845, note 4.