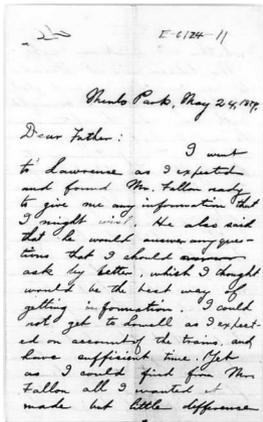


Francis Upton to
Elijah Upton



Dear Father:

I went to Lawrence as I expected and found Mr. Fallon¹ ready to give me any information that I might wish.² He also said that he would answer any questions that I should ~~answer~~ ask by letter,³ which I thought would be the best way of getting information. I could not get to Lowell as I expected on account of the trains, and have sufficient time. Yet as I could find from Mr. Fallon all I wanted it made but little difference whether I went or not.

Mr. Edison seemed pleased to see me back and glad of the information I brought with me. In the afternoon he and I had a long talk about matters pertaining to the light. The telephone system has been progressing since I left, and a large amount of work had been done.

The machine for lighting the North pole had been sent away and a large number of carbons had been prepared for the purpose.³ Mr. Fallon seemed to think that the electric light might be made in time to take the place of gas in mills. He said that the gas they used cost nearly as much as the water.

I went to lunch with him, and saw his place he is very deep in gardening.

I judge from certain indications that Edison hauled in some money last week from his telephone contract in England, as he has just ordered about 500 books,⁴ and my landlady said given \$1000 to his wife.⁵ He seemed to be in good spirits which looked as if he had some money in the bank, for he was dead broke when I left, for I heard him say so, and knew he had trouble to pay his pay-roll as he had over drawn his account. There is still a mint of money in telephones yet. I should like very much to have a share of it. Yet if the Electric light succeeds there is far more money in it and I feel sure that I shall have a share in that.

There is the same artist here now painting a picture of Mr. Edison that there was in Brunswick to fill the panels in the chapel. He comes^a from Scribner's Monthly to give them a head from which to engrave a portrait.⁶

With much love I am Your Son

Francis R. Upton

ALS, NjWOE, Upton (*TAEM* 95:529; *TAED* MU015). "Obscured last overwritten text.

1. Probably John Fallon, employed in an unknown capacity by the Everett Mills in Lawrence. Everett advertised a few years later that it employed more than 1,000 looms and a similar number of workers in producing 200,000 yards of cloth each week. *The Lawrence Directory* 1883, 111, 422.

2. The mills of Lawrence, Mass., had expanded greatly during the Civil War, making the city one of the world's leading textile centers by this time (Cameron 1993, 1–29). On 19 May, Upton had written Edison from his hometown of Peabody, about 15 miles distant, that "the agent of the largest mill in Lawrence says that his gas bill for one month last winter was \$30,000 (thirty thousand dollars) and that he would be glad to have your light tried in his mill." Upton suggested that on Friday, 23 May, he should "visit Lawrence and Lowell and make such inquiries as may be of value regarding the probable cost of a plant. As we can now at this date beat gas for lighting a mill I think it worth while to glance at the chance." Upton wrote again the same day that although he had been mistaken and the figure of \$30,000 referred to an entire year, "still that is a sum worth asking about." DF (*TAEM* 50:63, 65; *TAED* D7919ZAP, D7919ZAQ).

3. See Doc. 1706.

4. On 26 May, Edison ordered from Bernard Quaritch, a London book dealer, sets of seventeen periodicals and reports encompassing nearly 500 individual volumes. Most were journals of (chiefly British) scientific and technical societies. This order was evidently prepared from Quaritch's inventory and price sheet; the legible prices on Edison's copy of the order total approximately £140, the equivalent of about \$700. The same day, Edison requested seven books about mineralogy and mining in the Americas from the Scientific Publishing Co. in New York. Lbk. 4:350, 358 (*TAEM* 80:79–80; *TAED* LBo04350, LBo04358).

5. Like several other laboratory employees, Upton lived at the boarding house in Menlo Park operated by Sarah Jordan, a stepdaughter of Mary Edison's father (Jehl 1937–41, 512; *TAEB* 4:538). There is no record of a large sum given to Mary around this time.

6. *Scribner's Monthly Magazine* tried at the end of March to have Edison sit for a Mr. Chase, a New York artist, but nothing seems to have come of this. On 16 May, the magazine wrote a letter of introduction for Francis Lathrop to Edison, which Lathrop enclosed with his own letter the next day. Lathrop was a noted portraitist and muralist who had painted several panels in the chapel of Bowdoin College, Upton's alma mater, in Brunswick, Maine. *Scribner's* published an engraving made from his portrait with Edwin Fox's article on "Edison's System of Fast Telegraphy" in its October 1879 issue (18:840). On 25 May Alexander Graham Bell replied to a request from Edison (not found) "for my photograph for the Editor of Scribner's Monthly." Bell declined, citing his "very great personal objection to having my photograph published." Scribner's to TAE, 27 Mar. and 16 May 1879; Lathrop to TAE, 17 May 1879; Bell to TAE, 25 May 1879; all DF (*TAEM* 49:691, 701, 700, 238; *TAED* D7906ZAB, D7906ZAH, D7906ZAG, D7903ZEC); *ANB*, s.v. "Lathrop, Francis Augustus."