

1856

Copy.

Mr. H. B. Stowe to Earl of Carlisle
and others.

The letter so long suppressed
by Joseph Sturge of Birmingham



Copy of a letter from Mrs. Stowe
To the Earl of Carlisle, the Earl of Shaftesbury, G. W.
Alexander Esq: Joseph Sturge Esq:

Gentlemen,

As you are the medium through which I received the contributions of England to the Anti-Slavery cause, it has appeared to me expedient for certain reasons, that I should submit to you some statements of the manner in which it has hitherto been employed.

In the outset let me crave your indulgence if I repeat what I have said to some of you before, that this trust on my part was wholly unsolicited. In the very feeble state in which I was while in England & on the Continent I should have deemed it a presumption to assume the least responsibility of the kind & in many cases where I was solicited to go to places with a view of stimulating contributions by my presence, or when Individuals have enquired of me if I wished to receive money intimating a willingness on their part to forward any purpose I had in view I have invariably replied that the raising of money was no part of my design & that I did not wish to assume the responsibility of the slightest solicitation. But when money was distinctly offered to me without condition, I felt that it was a providential indication that there would be exigencies in the cause for which it would be needed and therefore I did not feel at liberty to decline. I however stated in a letter to Mr. Sturge that if the offering was to have any value to me as an individual that it

was to be with the understanding that it was to be strictly mine
 as much as any portion of my private property & that I should
 be subject to account to no one but to God and to my conscience.
 The reasons for this were my foreseeing the extreme onerous and
 difficult task that it would be to dispense such a trust on any
 other condition. The Anti-Slavery cause in this country is
 broken into many factions each of whom differ very possibly
 by and earnestly as to measure & each of whom are from time
 to time sending agents to England & Scotland to enlist our
 friends there in their various controversies. To give therefore
 to one of these is considered by the other as at best a very un-
 wise & suspicious proceeding and to please them all would
 be impossible if any of them felt that they had the slightest
 right to be consulted. The principle which my husband
 and myself have acted upon in dispensing this fund is re-
 spect to the various parties in the Anti-Slavery field &
 wherever we saw any of them doing a work which we deemed
 important to the cause to assist them, let their party be what it
 might. We have maintained a strict neutrality as to all their
 personal feuds & bitterness seeking to unite where it was pos-
 sible where it was impossible craving on both sides to be allo-
 ed to differ & the right to dispose of our own according to our
 best judgements. We have always replied to any attempts to
 dictate to us the use we should make of the money, or to enquire
 into what we had done with it that it was strictly our own
private affair & that we should acknowledge the right of
 no one to take any account of it. To the enlightened and
 liberal Gentlemen however through whom as a committee
 we received this trust we should be glad to communicate
 a general outline of the manner in which it has hitherto
 been employed. The objects which we have endeavoured

to accomplish are.

I. The preparation and circulation of books and tracts.
About \$1566 have been expended in this manner.

II. Aid of papers and periodicals. For this has been expended \$745. We have impartially aided both Mr. Douglas' paper & the Anti-Slavery Standard notwithstanding the unhappy difference which has arisen between the Society of which the Standard is the organ & Mr. Douglas. The aid which we given to Mr. Douglas has been considerably more than that afforded to the Standard, because as a coloured man he has peculiar disabilities, we thought it no more than right that he should have also peculiar encouragements. To the Standard we made the subscription of \$50, while to Douglas' paper we furnished \$500 free of interest for four years which at the rate that our money is invested amounts to some more than \$30 the year. Besides this we have given at different times to that paper to the amount of \$35. I mention these facts particularly under this head, because a lady a particular friend of Mr. Douglas is now travelling in England who has as I understand expressed some dissatisfaction with the proportion in which Mr. Douglas is patronised & has given to some of my friends the impression that my contributions were principally directed to the aid of the American Anti Slavery Society.

III. The ransom of Slaves. As the means of promoting the Anti-Slavery cause this is of doubtful utility & it is more than probable that many masters who prey upon the sympathies of the northern people to increase the value of their slaves, but as considerable sums were given to the

⁴ fund with the express desire that the money might go in that direction, we have felt free to follow the bent of our own feelings to a considerable extent & have expended \$ 655 for this purpose. We have in the most part given in connection with others & the cases to which we have contributed have been generally those of uncommon hardship or of great merit on the part of the recipients. Closely connected with this subject are one the appropriations we have made in the aid of fugitives either on their way through the States or after their arrival in Canada. For this has been expended \$ 441.

VI. The encouragement of the free labour movement. For this we have appropriated \$ 615. And we think the time not far distant when this cause will prove one of the most powerful ones in its influence on slavery.

VII. Anti-Slavery Agencies & Lectures. This head includes a great deal of miscellaneous labour which is continually being performed for the cause in various departments. VIII. The promotion of education among the coloured people. For this has been expended \$ 23.

This I consider on the whole the most efficient of all the means to be used against the system of slavery. The grand argument for slavery is that this race is fit for nothing higher. Examples therefore of cultivated & intelligent persons in all departments of learning literature and art are particularly valuable in most of our case. In coincidence with this is the providential fact that there appears to be at this time a very peculiar development of talent rising in the race. There are eloquent speakers, pleasing writers

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lecturers both male & female, singers & dramatic readers
coming into notice from this class, & it has been our
privilege through this fund to contribute to the assis-
tance of many such. But the educational Institution
on which we have concentrated & mean to concen-
trate still further most of our patronage is Miss
Miner's school for coloured girls at our National
capital. Our reasons for selecting this were first that
being under the immediate eye of a slave-holding
population, it would be demonstrating the point
we wish to establish in the most conspicuous &
noticeable manner. Secondly that it has been
undertaken by a woman whose talents for, & interests
in the work are so remarkable, that they might be
considered almost inspiration. Under the care of this
woman the school has attained to a fair footing in
Washington in defiance of the most bitter threats &
persecutions as first endured. A class of colored
young ladies in this School has already passed
thro' a course of education, equal to that of young ladies
in our first boarding schools and designed to give
them still higher advantages at certain institutions
in the North in order that they may be thoroughly
fitted for teachers. We are now endeavouring to raise
money sufficient to erect a large & elegant building
for this institution in order that it may have a
permanent power. It is to this school that I shall
look as the most conspicuous monument of what
has been effected by this fund, for though many
benevolent people have assisted largely yet the con-
tributions from this fund which we have been able

from time to time to collect have been so ready & seasonable that I think we may safely attribute a large share of its prosperity to them. It is our intention to enlarge the contributions as soon as a Board of Trustees shall be incorporated of whom Professor Stowe is to be one. Under this head I would willingly add a few words on another subject. A project has been suggested by Mr. Douglas of forming a manual labour school for the teaching of trades coloured boys. The plan was first laid before me & Mr. Douglas before my going to England & I listened to it with much interest. On inquiring into the scheme afterwards with a view to test its practicability, we became convinced that there was not such likelihood of success as to justify in risking any thing upon it, all the manual labour schools we have yet heard of even among the whites have been failures, & we do not think the coloured population of our country has yet sufficiently advanced to carry it through successfully. I make particular mention of this because at a coloured convention some members very indiscreetly think made public complaint of my declining to do this enterprise, which was repeated triumphantly in some Southern papers, & for ought I know may have occasioned reports to be circulated in England. I would also like to add a few words upon another topic because I infer from letters written by some of my friends in England that their minds may have been disturbed upon it. I mean my old relation to

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old American Anti-Slavery Society of which Mr. 7
Garrison is the head. I have before stated our our intention
to know no party in the Anti-Slavery cause, but heartily
to cooperate in anything which we deem calculated to
advance it by whomsoever undertaken. It so happened
that our residence brings us nearer to some of the leading
members of the old Anti-Slavery party than any other
& we have had often occasion to avail ourselves of their
ready assistance in carrying many of our purposes.
We had never joined the Society nor identified
ourselves with their party for the simple reason
that there were many things about them with which
we could not harmonize. But it is no more than
justice to them to say that the acquaintance we have
had with them from time to time has been
productive on our part of the greatest esteem &
confidence. I do not know where I could find a
given number of men & women more high princi-
pled, more talented, more disinterested & self-
sacrificing than the executive committee of that Society.
They have never solicited money from us, they have
always been ready to give us assistance to the utmost
of their power. They have been willing to do all the
hard work of interprises where others were to
appear as the prominent performers to be made
anything or nothing of as the case might be. As a
class we think they have some serious faults, but
it seems to me in this world, faults are incidental
to great virtues as shadow is to light. I should be
doing injustice to these persons if I did not thus
speak. It is a solemn conviction to which I

have arrived from the force of observation & experience
in spite of a very strong previous prejudice. We have
frequently been expostulated with for cooperating on
the ground that they were infidels. In the first place
this is not universally the case with them but if it
were consider that in efforts for doing good to human
we are not to inquire into the private sentiments of
individuals who are willing to help us. If an infidel
will assist us to extinguish a burning house or to clothe
an orphan child we know no reason why we should not
unite with them in that particular work, & when an
infidel will do good works which the Christian refuses
to do which is the one who disgraces. Christian America
has its root in the inertness of the Christian commu-
nity in regard to their duty & that the best way
to put an end to it is for Christians to show a
willingness to unite anything which is good. In
regard to the financial disposition of the fund
it may be well to say that Professor Stowe has
invested it by the advice of judicious business men
& that it has brought in an income of 9 to 12 per
cent & that with the exception of \$2000 which has
become temporarily unproductive that our
investments have all been remarkably fortunate.
Also a part that a part of the \$10000 spent, is lent
with the understanding that the individuals if
successful in future are to return it to the fund
& we are quite confident they will do so.

I must crave your forbearance in addressing
to you so long a letter but it seemed to me that
that as the representation of those from whom

This trust was received it would be gratifying to
have you made acquainted with the course that
has been pursued with regard to it.

As I have been much annoyed by the publication
of portions of letters which I had written confi-
dentially, allow me to say that I should decidedly
object to this letter appearing in any form before
the public as from me. Should any one of you
feel disposed to give a short resume of its contents
as coming from yourselves I should not object. There
may be a propriety that those who have contributed
should receive in this way some general idea of
what has been done.

I am with sincerest respects

Very truly yours

H. B. Stowe.

From the Earl of Shaftesbury to Mrs Sturge.

Madam,

I have to make many apologies for my delay in answering your note with its enclosure from Mrs Stowe. Mrs Stowe's statements are to my mind satisfactory & I trust that the disposal of the fund will be left exclusively to her discretion.

I am Madam

Your obedient servant
Shaftesbury

Febr. 12th 1856

From the Earl of Carlisle to Joseph Sturge

Dear Sir

I return the enclosed with many thanks. The perusal gives additional ground for justification of being connected in any degree with such proceedings and such agents.

Believe me

Your very faithful servant

Dublin Castle

Carlisle

Febr. 27th 1856.

Forwarded to America, March 1857.

Received, not until, Nov. 11, 1857.