

Boston, April 24, 1868.

Dear friend Rich.^d Webb;

I was very glad to hear that the volume - E. Q.'s Life of his father - reached you duly & safely. I trust you have been able to find time for its perusal, & that you have enjoyed it. It has met rather more than the usual degree of favor here, and has gone through a number of editions. E. Q. took great pains with it, and conscientiously worked out the whole. — I have been a wretched

correspondent for some years past; — not in your case alone, but ~~of~~ ⁱⁿ many others. My intentions have all the time been good, — rather, my hopes. I have hoped for more time, — hoped to feel more disposed to write. The plain truth is that the very considerable amount of writing I have had to do, for one and another object, in that time, has wearied me so often, that I have got rather a disinclination to any but absolutely necessary use of the pen. Surely, if I could have

made any exception, it w^d have been in the case of Mary Estlin and yourself; — to both of whom I feel so largely indebted, not for letters merely, but for such years of faithful friendship & co-operation, as are rare in this world's experiences. — I hope you are

~~disposed~~ ^{and determined} feeling able to come over and see us this season. By the latter part of May we are liable to have pleasant weather; & early in June, are quite certain to have it. My house shall be your home, for as long as you please to make it so; and I trust to be able to go about somewhat with you, and you may assure your daughters & your sons that we will try to take the best care of you.

Our town is easily reached from Boston, where I should come to meet you, if you came first here, or to Portland. But it is likely you would sail for New York, as nearly all lines of passenger steamers go there now, - N. Yk. quite swallowing up the business done by Ocean-steamships. And if you came to N. Yk., you would first see (I suppose) Oliver Johnson, Wendell P. Garrison, A. M. Powell, S. H. Gay, &c. When ready to come to Leicester, they would see you to the Express Train for Boston, leaving at 8 A.M., which would set you down at Worcester at about 3.30 p.m. - six miles from my house. At that station I should wish to meet you, & transport you & your belongings to the range of hills on which Leicester stands. ^{Early} time will be a very nice time for you to arrive here. Summer then speeds forward at an accelerated pace, and we could make it pleasant to you, I am pretty sure, to spend a while in our "rural district". I hear that Sarah Pugh is expecting Mary E. over in course of the month of May. Of course she will come and see us at Leicester, she and Sarah Pugh too; and if we could arrange it to have you all there together, I think we would have some talks & times worthy of the best old "antislavery" days. Many on American soil will rejoice to give both you and Mary a welcome - the right hand of fellowship & our heartiest blessings for all you have been & done, in the long struggle for Right & Justice here. We will do whatever we can, to bring you to see as many as possible of them. Sad, sad fact that you

Come to find alienation, where there should be only mutual good will, mutual respect & confidence. It is of little avail to ask where the fault is. I am well convinced, for myself, where it is. But I might not convince another. We ought to be able to differ, without reproaching & accusing one another. But it is otherwise. Of course, this fact has borne upon all my correspondence with friends abroad. I cannot write with all my ~~customary~~ former perfect good ^{to friends abroad,} understanding when I know this division exists at home, and I know they know it. It is not that I doubt their ^{good} will to me, nor their perfect readiness to acknowledge my right, in acting as I have ^{acted,} even when their own opinion differs from mine. But I feel the fact of such division as a dishonor, resting on us all, - whether we are, or are not, personally responsible for its existence. - But I hope this will not cast a shade on your visit, - or more than a temporary one; - for I am sure it is a thing you cannot be indifferent to.

But you can go in & out, to & fro, among one and another, - one family & another, - and find nothing but affection and gratitude for yourselves, & those whom you represent. And few, if any, will be so inconsiderate as to bring up to your notice these differences. - - My family have been spending the winter - since Dec^r. 1st in Boston & the vicinity; and now we are re-commencing our life in Leicester again. Our house has been closed; but I have twice been up to look to it, and both times spent several days in it, and I shall rejoice to get back. I wish I could assemble all my family there to see you - but that will not be possible.

My dearest daughter is now in Leicester - just now not very well. She will soon be "all right" again we trust, & she will give you the heartiest welcome. My younger daughter will be at home from school about July 1st. My younger son will spend about a week with us, probably, at some time during the summer. But Edward, - our Navy Officer, - if we see him ^{well} by next November, I suppose we must regard ourselves as highly favored. He was cruising in the North Pacific, when last heard from, and Honolulu his port of rendezvous, as it has been for about a year. Next November he will have been 2 1/2 years on the cruise, - which is now deemed full average. - My wife's health is very good now.

But it is true I offered my congratulations - for such is regarded a friend's duty - upon the betrothal and ~~approach~~ marriage of your daughter. In one sense, it is no subject of congratulation, that a dear daughter is to be taken from our home & sight. But when we remember that their happiness & their future shall be our highest regard, then a good & suitable life-connection is surely the fittest thing of all for congratulations. There seems a great harmony as to age, character, &c. and the things you mention of Mr. Steele seem to me fairly to indicate him an upright, honorable, & prudent man, - one who seeks a wife for what she is, & will be to him, & not for what she brings. I hope it will be a connection upon which you all may long look with gladness. I dare say they are married by this, & on their way to India. What a long journey for Anne, to be sure! I hope she will bear the long voyage well. I know well how you will wait for, & jump to meet, the first letters from her. - And Richard has been at home too! - If I talk with you, give him my kindest remembrance, & that he'd be glad to see him here, again. - Garrison is pretty well now, - Mrs. G. I think, in a rather critical state. Fanny is expected home in about a month. - I trust, before you leave for America, you will hear that Andrew Johnson has been

Consisted of high crimes and deposted from office. - most affectionately, Henry, with regards to all of yours, J. May Jr.