

Leicester, Mass^{ts}
Jan. 12. 1862.

Dear Friend Webb;

I have been writing a somewhat long & particular note to Alfred, and must skim along more rapidly with this. — The box of J. B.'s life is safe to hand; but I haven't yet opened it, as a small balance (not over 3 or 4) remains unsold of the 100 which our Society purchased, and I wait to clear them off, before advertising these, — which ^{clearing off} I think I can very soon do; if in no other way I will get our friends to make a donation of them to some public libraries. — I shall keep the acct. of these 75 books separate from all others.

We have much comfort & satisfaction in the changed aspect of affairs in G. Britain — nor in ^{any} ~~the~~ change on the part of those who have been pro-slavery all along, — they remain as they have been. But the old, solid Antislavery feeling is stirring. I hope we may yet hear the unmistakable voice of the English people, the genuine roar of the British lion (so long asleep) at the infernal, blasphemous attempt, in the middle of the 19th Century, to build up a Slave Empire, & get England's friendship & alliance.

You may think & say, that ^{in G. Britain} this sentiment did not express itself before, because the North & the U. S. Govt. have not until recently taken an anti-slavery position. Allowing this to be literally & exactly true, (which it is not — witness the Suppression of the Slave Trade — Abolition in the District of Columbia — the prohibition of any more Slave States — the recommendation of Emancipation ^{to the Sl. holding States} & promise of Pecuniary Compensation) — but allowing it to be literally true, it does not touch the case; because, whatever the North did or did not do, there could be no mistake as to what the South was about; & what she meant to do, nor

that her purpose was to build up her new Confederacy upon Human Slavery. This was not a matter of conjecture, or of inference, or of argument. It was avowed by themselves, & by their Agents, & Officers, - though palpable enough without any such avowal. Notwithstanding all this, England has, in the most forcible & ready way in which it can be done, - short of an open alliance - ministered to, helped, & fed ~~the~~ ^{the Slaveholders'} rebellion, & their project of a Slaveholding Empire, from the first. This is a fact which can never be wiped out; just where the responsibility rests, cannot now be fully determined; but it will come to light, in time. I fervently trust the English people will fully exonerate themselves. Most nobly have the Lancashire people vindicated themselves & cleared their skirts - most nobly! The statement of their case as given by Mr. Bright at Birmingham is touching, in the extreme. More generous & disinterested conduct we ~~scarcely~~ ^{never} hear of. Nobly has Prof. Newman written to that hypocrite Gladstone. Well, too, did Bright rebuke him. Nobly did the speakers at the Lambeth (London) meeting bear their testimonies. And George Thompson from the first, has uttered no uncertain sound. You have thought me, ^(I suppose) one-sided, ~~biased~~ & unfair; but see what Prof. Newman says contrasting the Eng. Govt's course, in withholding supplies from Hungary, & in not withholding them from our Slaveholding rebels; ^{precedent-seeking} ~~and~~ you will hardly call him biased against the Eng. Govt. See, too, what Mr. Bright says of the affair of the "Alabama"; nothing more emphatic has ever been said in America; & surely nothing less creditable to the Eng. Govt, than its behavior in that case, can be easily imagined. It seems to me (tho' I am not a diplomatist, nor versed much in international law) that the U.S. Govt. ^{has} a good claim on the Brit. Govt.

for every shilling's worth destroyed by Semmes in that vessel,
~~and the vessel was destroyed by Semmes in that vessel,~~ Alfred
says, we have no idea how easy it is for "clever people to
evade the law", in England. Probably not, for I had supposed
it was comparatively difficult to do such things in England. If
the 'Alabama' affair is to rest on that ground, I do not see ~~how~~
that your govt. really has the superiority over ours, in point
of strength, &c, that has been always claimed for it. But
I greatly incline to believe, after all, that there ^{has been} ~~was~~ a very
intelligent winking at all this violation of treaty-obligations, &c,
on the part of the Brit. Govt., as there was so long, on the part
of our Govt., a most disgraceful & infamous indifference to, (& so
complicity with) the Slave Trade from our ports. - This is the
view which, ever since a year ago last September, I have
striven to set before my British friends; but which they
could not see. Now, I think, that Prof. Newman and
Mr. Bright fully bear me out, in all my humble efforts; -
not to refer to Prof. Cairnes, & Mill, & other previous writers.
My labour has been to show that, whatever the character of the Northern movement, the Southern side
was unmistakeably, & avowedly, for Slavery; & that still, & notwithstanding, England helped the Slavery side!
I shall look with interest for Prof. C.'s new edition -
the first was a powerful element thrown into the seething
cauldron. I trust the Manchester Meeting will prove
all that Alfred anticipates. If the English people speaks
out, as they did at Lambeth, at Birmingham, & have done in
Lancashire, we shall care comparatively little for the
Government, for we know their career will be checked.
Alfred seems truly warmed up in our cause, - 'almost
ready to come over & help us, had he been unmarried'. But
a wife will help keep him with you, - and I, for one,
should be sorry to deprive you all of his help & society at home,
even to bear a part in our struggle.

How truly you will rejoice with us in our President's
great Act of January 1st, 1863, — by which he
gives full and unconditional freedom to more
than Three Millions of Slaves. Henceforth they
are legally and Constitutionally free; & will be so
practically, just so far & fast as the Rebellion is
subdued. The rejoicings here are very great, &
very deep. But, on the other hand, the opposition to
the measure is bitter, and the newly-incorporated
Governor of New York is striving to lead off in measures
of resistance. This will, I must, soon come to a
head, and we shall know whether treason and
anarchy are to get the upper hand or not, at the
North. — But time is up.

Fowell Buxton's Son is acting a very shabby part —
he seems ignorant too. "The North let the South go in
peace"! Every word shows his profound incompetency to
speak a word on the question.

My boy Edward is still at Cairo, Illinois. He has
had to work excessively since he went there, & ran down
in flesh, in $2\frac{1}{2}$ months, from 138 to 117 lbs. This
frightened us, & him too I suspect; for he has reformer
matters, attends more to sleep, exercise, & says he has
recovered to 135 lbs. again.

P.S. — I just see the morning's
paper, bringing, per telegraph from
Halifax, an account of the meeting at
Manchester, Dec. 31. — Mayor presided; resolutions
lauding the policy of England — warmly commending
Pres. Lincoln, & urging him to go forward in his work of
restoring the Country, & freeing the Slaves; — letter from J. Stuart Mill; Mayor to send, in his private capacity, the resolutions to Presi

With sincere affection to you all,
Yours truly
Saml May Jr