Minister Thornton
British Museum

Leicester, Massachusetts,
Tuesday June 22d. 1852.

Dear Mr. Estlin,

I have now been nearly 3 weeks here, & have much enjoyed the stillness & pure air of our almost mountainous retreat, though it has not brought me, as yet, leisure or quiet. Some considerable repairs about my house, and the doing over again of work not properly done before, have consumed the larger part of my time, & left me for reading & writing not the time which I should like, & yet hope to find. This is a rainy day, for which I am thankful on many accounts – among which is, that I can sit down and acknowledge your very agreeable & valuable letter of May 21, which I rec.d June 3d, just as I was leaving Boston for this place.

I was very glad to get the Res.ns of the South Devon Conf. Union. They were plain and to the point, and Mr. Pyer's letter also was so frank & so whole, without the hesitation & qualification which neutralize so many testimonies against Slavery, that I sent it, together with the res.ns to the "Standard", where they have been published, as you will doubtless know before you get this. – I hope this Tribe receives the "Standard", which was ordered long ago, as you desired. – You have much reason to be encouraged in your Antislavery labours, when you can induce your Religious bodies to put forth such declarations as these of the S. Devon Union. The worst of it is, they get but little circulation in this country – I may say none – out of the Anti Slavery

journals. Of course the "Banner", "Nonconformist", & other journals come to this country - but chiefly (I have no doubt) to the Editors of the various "religious" papers, who invariably suppress these galling testimonies against themselves, their supporters, & their churches generally.] The Mission of Dr. Dyer (a man I do not remember to have ever heard the name of before) to England, too, has made a fine stir. There really does appear to be, among your evangelicals, a very deep & determined feeling not to fraternize with the pro-slavery, pseudo-Christians of the United States. I hope the feeling is extensive, and is spreading. The "Morning Advertiser" is doing an excellent work to this end. The day after the close of the N. Engd. A.S. Convention (a most admirable & encouraging series of meetings - I never attended any more so -) Mr. Garrison handed me a copy of the "Morng Adv." (which you had sent him, I think) containing the admirable leading article upon the anticipated visits of the American Pro-slavery Ministers, & the reception which sh^d be given them. It was fearless, and manly, and good every way. Oh! if we could have men, & not sheep, in our pulpits & editorial chairs; if we could only have men who would say that man-stealing, and woman-whipping, and child-murder, are crimes, & those who do them are criminals - to be dealt with & regarded as such (in a humane & Christian way, of course, and that way I take to be, plainly, courageously, & in the fear of God) - we could drive this accursed thing from before our face, and from the light of day. But the cowardice & corruption,

~~and~~ the treachery & guilt of our great men, in Church and in State, are awful. They perpetually astonish me. I cannot get used to the thing. I cannot understand it. — I can understand how men can be pirates, murderers, villains — cursing God, defying all laws divine & human — drowning all ~~other~~ reflections & doubts in violence and in intoxication. But how men can stand up, with the name of God on their lips, & professing to be ambassadors of Jesus Christ, set for the defence of the Gospel, and for the rescue of men from sin, and teach men to obey the Fugitive Slave Law and its kindred abominations, teach them to steel their hearts & feel no pity, & to do unto others just precisely the thing we would not have them do to us & to ours, — is a degree of desperation, & of depravity, which I cannot take in. The common assassin, highway robber and murderer, pirate on the high seas, slave-trader on the African Coast, is a virtuous and a harmless man compared to such. Oh! what detestable doctrines and sentiments have been, & yet continue to be, inculcated on our people, as the truths and duties of the Gospel itself. I wonder our people are as good as they are. Such a pulpit, such a ministry, such an administration of religion, is enough to paralyse all the good that ever lived in a human soul, and to nurture the evil only, & that continually. If Christianity were what Dr. Dewey & his fellows in all the denominations tell us it is, a Christian would be a pest & curse in society; ~~and~~ no honest & good man could be aught else than an infidel to it. Thank God, he never leaves

Himself without a witness in the human soul. Thank God, we do not need preachers, and seers to teach & tell us what He is, & what our duty are. Would we might have another Messiah, he would again put these false prophets in their true place, & say to them "Ye hypocrites - ye generation of vipers - devouring widows' houses, making long prayers for pretence - shutting up the kingdom of heaven - neither going in yourselves, & those who would go in, hindering" But if we had him, we should probably malign him first, & then put him to death. You must forgive my getting ~~up~~ stirred up, as I think of these men. If I did not get warm sometimes as I think of them, I should be afraid God had left me to be as cold, & unfeeling, & hardened as they. - But not a word about them, in this letter, except very coolly - if possible.

I am very glad you correspond occasionally with E. Quincy, as well as with Anne Weston. I do not think you could easily find two more agreeable & intelligent correspondents on this side the water. They are, as I need not tell you, very clear-sighted & well "posted up" on all antislavery matters. - Permit me to say that I hope you will never task yourself to write to any of us for, I know very well, that with all else you have to do, and are doing, the addition of your American correspondence is not a small labour. We are always glad to get your letters. Mr. Q. and Miss W. are very kind to show me sometimes what you write them, and it is quite as good to me, as if addressed directly to myself. -

I am very sorry that Mr Garrison has never taken any notice of that shameful attack upon his moral character in the "British Banner". He said the "Ban

would not admit it. Allowing that to be so, I do not think it a sufficient reason for his not meeting those vile charges. If the "Banner" did refuse, his defence would then go, with additional strength, into some other paper, — perhaps into the "Morng. Advertiser"; at least, it could be printed, after refusal, upon slips, & circulated far & wide. — I copied from your last letter what you ~~had~~ said about the great odium now attaching to his name in England, among the evangelical Christians, &c. and sent it to him, — hoping it would stir him up, to do something. But I fear the thing has been too long delayed. — What a shame it is — that such men, in such positions, as Dr. Campbell, should be able, or willing, to use their great influence and opportunities to circulate as facts the grossest falsehoods about men, who are struggling to build up the kingdom of righteousness, justice, mercy, against such fearful odds of the powers of darkness as we have to face in this country! And then such men as Lewis Tappan, & Asa Mahan of Oberlin, amongst us, join their infamous lies (that they may find favour with the majority, & be at ease in their Zion) to beat down a movement, which, they feel & know, is shaming & reproaching continually their lukewarmness & backsliding. But we must try to have patience. Surely we ought not to despair. God will not forsake his own cause, nor suffer it to be destroyed.

Whilst I have been writing the last few lines, the papers have brought the intelligence of Daniel Webster's utter defeat & demolition. The Whig Convention, to nominate their Presidential Candidate, (to be voted for next November), after a desperate struggle, balloting 53 times, have elected Genl. Winfield Scott their candidate. The Candidates have been Scott, Fillmore (the signer of the Fugitive Law, the present Presdt.),

and Webster. Webster has, at no time, had more than 32 votes - usually 28 or 29 - while Fillmore & Scott averaged about 130 each; - and thus they ran along till the 48th ballot, when Scott's No. began to rise, & on the 53d he rec'd. 159 - Fillmore falling to some 112, and Webster to 21! What a mortifying defeat, - after all his labours to get this nomination - his self debasement, his servility, his falsehood to all his early professions and promises. Gen. Scott is no better than either of the others, at heart; - at least we have no reason to think him so - he endorses the Compromise Measures, Fugitive Slave Law, & all; - but he has had no public connexion with any of these measures; whereas Webster & Fillmore were the two chief instruments & tools of their enactment. In these circumstances, Scott's nomination is to be considered a favorable sign. The defeat of Fillmore, and particularly of Webster, is an anti-slavery triumph. - So in the Democratic Convention, a few weeks since, Cass, Buchanan, Douglas, - all the politicians who had made themselves most noisy & conspicuous for the Fugitive Law, &c - were put aside, and a comparatively unknown man, one who had not been in political life for some 10 years or more, Franklin Pierce of N. Hampshire (a 4th rate General in the Mexican War), was selected as their Candidate. - These are certainly speaking lessons to our cringing, soulless politicians. - There is some progress - there is yet hope.

~~Mr.~~ I have informed Mr. Wallcut of the advisability of sending receipts to Eng. subscribers for their payments. I presume he will do so, in future. - I copied, or otherwise made up, several items from your last letter, for the "Standard", and I see Mr. Gay has made use of them. - I have not yet rec'd. any pamphlet from

Eng^d. upon which I have noticed so low a postage mark as P. I will bear it in mind, however, and let you know, if I do. — I do not know that I can answer your inquiry, as to the best way of sending money to Boston by post. Here we can always buy drafts on London, of any amount. Whether you can purchase such on America, I do not know. I should suppose you could; in which case, I think that would be as good a way as you could have.

I thank you for the pamphlet of R. Carpenter's letter. I will endeavour to have a suitable notice of them taken. I shall look for Mrs. Greer's pamphlet with interest. — Will you send me a copy of E. Quincy's letter, in reply to Scobat Tappan? R. D. Webb has very kindly ~~me~~ sent me his pamphlet, which I have read with great interest. — I thank you for the addition to your letter, on some medical points; but you did not send the recipe you promised. —

I have a sister now travelling in Europe. It is not likely you will see her, but possibly you may. She was in Rome, when we last heard from her, and was about starting Northward. She is with a party of relatives & friends — Mr. John Frothingham (merchant) of Montreal, his son Frederick (whom you have seen and most kindly befriended), his daughter Louisa, (a very pleasing, & simple hearted, good girl, whom I would much like to have (you see), & others. My sister, (Abby) is the youngest of my father's children — ~~nearly~~ 19 yrs. younger than myself — She is quite a bright, quick-witted, & smart young person. She grew up, under some

influences which I regarded as very unfavourable, & these she has not outgrown. She has been of the Ralph Waldo Emerson School, which generally feels rather above doing the hard work of this world – & seeks spiritualization, & whatever is allied (I cannot help saying it) to moonshine. Abby has, however, considerable good sense, as a substratum, and, though profoundly convinced that her knowledge & attainments are of an order quite beyond that which most folks can reach, yet I doubt not, learn (by this tour, in part) to estimate persons & things more rightly. She has no clear understanding of the Antislavery question, & feels but little interest in it; but she has tried to help it in various ways. She is quite agreeable company (when she pleases) and I hope you may see her; though I know nothing of what their course will be, when they return to England where they made almost no stop at first, desiring to be in Italy, before the season was too far advanced.

I hear today that Mr. Garrison is quite ill, – has an attack of what he considers erysipelas pain in his head from which he has often been a sufferer. I was at Worcester with him, at an A.S. meeting, only last Sat. & Sunday, 2 days ago. He did not appear quite well there; but I do not anticipate any decided illness. I hope it will not be serious.

We have a new labourer in our New England field – Miss Holley of Rochester, N.Y. You may remember to have heard of Dr. Horace Holley of Boston, (Rev. Mr. Peirpont's predecessor, at Hollis St. Church – Unitarian.) This lady is a niece of his; – she speaks with great feeling, her voice is clear & pathetic in its tones, – she has a richly-stored mind, and I think promises to be of great value to the cause.

Please give my very best regards to Miss Carthin, and tell her I shall depend upon a copy of the Report of the Bristol & Clifton Society. — I wish I were not writing the latter half of this letter in so great a hurry (it is mainly owing to the news of the Whig Nomination, which I could not well put aside till I had gone through with it) — for I would like to speak more fully about various matters — such as Geo. Thompson's position — R. D. Webb's pamphlet, &c. &c.

Pray do not overtask yourselves; for I want you to stand at your posts a great while yet, and supply the ammunition to those who must do the fighting part of the A.S. battle. I trust you will live to see clear & certain indications of the near triumph of Antislavery truth, if you do not see that triumph itself. — Whenever you can, either of you, write to any of us, without doing too much, we shall rejoice to hear.

Mrs. May desires her best love to both yourself & your daughter.

Believe me, Most truly Yours

Samuel May Jr.