

David Webster

Leicester, Massachusetts,

Monday April 29. 1850.

Dear Mr. Estlin,

Your kind letter of February 8th is before me now, and reminds me; as it has done daily for more than a week, of my purpose to write to you by the steamer of Wednesday. I rec^d. it Feb. 26, more than 2 months ago; but determined, before writing, to await the arrival of the "Recovery, Capt. Lowther", which vessel was expected to sail about Feb. 1st. No tidings came of the vessel up to March 28th, on which day I left Boston with my family & came to Leicester, where I busied myself 4 or 5 days in getting them comfortably established again. About the 10th April the ship arrived. Before I could see the Captain - indeed before he had "hauled into the wharf", as the local phrase is, I was obliged to leave the city again for several days' absence; meanwhile my brother saw Capt. L., from whom he obtained the parcel you sent, and also the two sovereigns - all right, safe, & in excellent order. The parcel did not actually come into my hands until Friday Apr. 19th. I opened it in Boston, exhibited the "Reports" to some friends at home, and at the Anti-Slavery Office. I have had no opportunity yet (not having been in Boston since that day) to show the tables to Mr. Phillips who will prize them ^{as} highly, I am sure, ^{as any one I know, and} make a better use of them than I can. I have not determined what to do with these Tables; but I shall keep them in Boston, and, when not there myself, hope to find some place of deposit for them where they may be at once safe and open to the inspection of all who can use them to advantage. I deeply feel your kindness & the

* Mr. Phillips? she had not sailed till about Feb. 25.

pains you took to procure for me this very valuable series; and I feel that the best way to thank you will be to make them as useful as possible. I am much indebted too to your friend in London, Mr. Jardine, who seconded your wishes with so much heartiness & such entire success. The "Tables" are a study - for which I shall have, I expect, some time during the coming summer. — The other contents of the bundle I scarcely glanced at then - being in much haste - but transferred to my trunk & took them with me to Leicester that afternoon. On Saturday evening, Mrs. May & myself looked them over, - your daughter's very kind & pleasant note, the little books she sent to our children, the pamphlets, the notes of Mr. Jardine, the letter of Mr. Thinks to yourself (this gave me anything but pleasure - more bye & bye), &c. The little parcel for Ade, we chose not to open ourselves, but leave for her. We had left her behind us, in Boston, to complete her winter's term of schooling. — The next day - the 21st - after a day of pretty severe illness, my wife gave birth to a little girl - our fourth child - making our numbers two boys and two girls. This a season of no little anxiety was mercifully & happily terminated. The child is now 8 days old, & appears to be healthy & sound, and my wife though yet quite weak is recovering as fast, I think, as is desirable on the whole. — It was on account of this anticipated event that we came into the country so early, nearly a month earlier than we had done the 2 preceding seasons, & while it was yet quite cold & wintry. Our spring is very

backward - the grass is now just beginning to appear green in the fields. We have had more snow in April than during the whole previous winter. Our winter was unusually mild, & open; while from all accounts, the European winter was exceedingly severe, even as far to the South as Rome. - On Tuesday, the 23^d, Ade. came from Boston, and after her extacies at the presence of her little sister ~~were~~ had in a measure subsided, & she began to get sobered down to her daily occupations, I gave her your little packet; having first read together your descriptive note, which has made everything as intelligible & clear as possible, we proceeded to open & examine the little boxes, &c. It is a great curiosity; to me it is an entire novelty. I was not aware of the existence of this sort of bee; but Ade. says she has read an account of them (where she cannot read) though she did not understand how the cells were put together. Your dissection of a cell, with all the materials fairly laid out, & gummed down, & the specimens of ^{brier on} rose-leaves into which the bees had cut, make it all very plain, & very interesting & beautiful too. We have all been more than pleased with this gift of yours to Adeline, and I heartily thank you for it. It is not only handsome, but useful, & has set us all to looking into the Bee-history more fully. I have a work, published by Jegg, London, 1831 (I bought it that same year, in Cambridge) in 4 very neat 12mo. vols., pretty illustrated with wood-cupravings, which purports to be "Buffon's Nat. Hist. of the Globe & of Man; Beasts, Birds, Fishes, Reptiles, & Insects, -

Corrected & Enlarged by John Wright, M.L.S." It is not ^{at} all a scientific work, and perhaps not very valuable as a work of general reference. I have sometimes found it useful, though not very thorough or exact. If you know anything of the work, perhaps you will be kind enough to give me your opinion. I have consulted it on this particular point, and find that it despatches the whole matter of "the Leaf-cutting Bees" in 10 lines, and those so general & indefinite as to give no distinct idea; one might read it a dozen times, & know nothing of the actual structure of the cells, the arrangement of the leaves, the manner in which they are cut, &c. We have not yet dissected the one you sent for that special purpose, as I hope to procure for the business some more delicate instrument than any I have. — The pretty transparency your daughter so kindly sent to Ade. & Ed. still affords much entertainment to themselves & their young visitors, and your name & hers are repeated by them to well-known, familiar friends. —

The parcel & letter for Mr. Carpenter, I sent to ~~the~~ Gannett's. I do not know where he is now. I had a note from him about the middle of February, dated New York. He said he should be in Phil^a the first of March, and, after staying a short time there, expected to go Southward, & not be in Boston again till the latter part of May, the season of the Anniversary. I presume he is now on his Southern journey.

I shall attend to your wishes as to your subscription to the "Liberator"; but your account with it stands better than you seem to suppose. You ask me to pay "for last year & the current one". Mr. Wallcut informs me that "Mr. Estlin has paid up to Vol. 20: No. 6, - Feb. 5, 1850". Consequently you are owing only for the present year. The £2., exchanged, will grow (say) \$9.68, or \$4.84 each; deducting \$2.50 for 1 year's subscription, there will remain of your money, in my hands, \$7.18 cts. — the note from Mr. Carpenter (rec^d. 14 Feb. last) he sent me one pound sterling ^{on your acc't,} which I appropriated according to your directions previously received, viz. For account of the

Bureau, 9s. 2^d; & for subscription to the "Liberator"
10^s. 10^d.

You inquire about postage on papers sent to Transatlantic subscribers. Mr. Wallcut says "The charge for postage is 2 cents on each paper, or 26 cents per quarter. In addition, our friends are charged 1^p. or 2cts. each paper on their side the water." This is to be sure quite an inroad on the subscription-price; but the money that sends 75 to 100 copies of the Liberator to Gt. Britain & Ireland is well laid out, ^{even} if we looked at it only in a financial view. — I am glad, I am grateful, that you regard the "Liberator" with so much interest. I feel for it and its Editor a strong, warm, unabated respect, & gratitude. It has been a good friend & a teacher to me personally. It has been such a noble, fearless, unhesitating, unwavering friend to the friends of this Mock Republic and Land of Heaven-defying, hypocritical "Religion," that I feel nothing but the almighty power of God's truth & righteousness could have borne it through such floods & fiery tempests. I have never had the power to describe fitly the nature of the contest which "Anti-Slavery" in this land has had to wage. We can get some idea of it, when we see how many really stout hearts have quailed before it, been swept from their feet, & hurried out of sight — when we look around, & see how many good & honest men are compelled to a dead, ~~the~~ terrified silence on the subject, & submit themselves to be nosed about, or brow-beaten, by a few obstinate sectarian leaders, whose motives I need not stop now to analyse, but whose alliances & affinities are all with the Slaveholders, their defenders & apologists, & whose aid is never withheld from the Slaveholders' cherished schemes. Are such the servants of God, & the Ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ? Never.

Tuesday April 30.

A recent illustration of this time-serving, pro-slavery, godless spirit in those who sit in the high places of theological instruction & 'religious influence' amongst us has excited rather more than usual attention. I must premise a few words: You have, of course seen accounts of Mr. Webster's recent Speech in the U. S. Senate; perhaps have read it. Mr. Webster's eminent abilities, the fact that he has not been on the most cordial terms with the present administration, the hope, rather than the expectation, that, as the representative of the State of Massachusetts, he would take a really high position in this controversy about opening or forever closing ^{to Slavery} the New Territories (wrested from Mexico), caused the whole Country to await with a deep interest & even anxiousness his forthcoming speech. - To show a little what this feeling was, I will mention to you an incident told me by my Cousin, Mr. S. J. May: Some weeks previous to Mr. Webster's speech, the Rev. Mr. Furness of Phil^a. (you will recognise his name as that of the Unitarian Minister there) wrote to Mr. Webster, apprising him of the intense interest felt in the decision of the great question, & earnestly entreating him to take the highest stand for Justice & freedom, and reminding him of the glorious opportunity given to him - such as seldom falls to any man - of almost determining the decision of the entire question of the growth or downfall of Slavery in this Country forever. Mr. Webster replied immediately, in courteous terms, thanking Mr. Furness for his letter, but saying nothing that ~~gave~~ ^{had} the least appearance of a moral pulsation, & intimating that the question could not be settled in the way Mr. Furness desired. So troubled & wounded by the reply was Mr. F., that he immediately wrote ^{to Mr. Webster} ~~him~~ a second letter, reviewing the ground, & urging anew every consideration which he thought could have weight with an honest & liberty-loving man, to induce him to strike for Freedom & against Slavery. But he heard no more from Mr. Webster. At length the speech came; and men stood aghast. Even the Abolitionists, who had noted so many instances of Daniel Webster's severity to the Slaveholders the last 15 years, were not generally prepared for so abject a prostration! Not one word in opposition to the extension of Slavery - not one resolute, genuine word. On the contrary, the positive declaration, made & repeated, that if the proposition to exclude Slavery from the new Territory were then before them

Webster the spirit generally to go for it with slavery!

* This Bill Mr. W. declared himself ready to support, in all its provisions, to its fullest extent, and pledged the North generally to go for it with alacrity.

for decision, he would vote against it. - Then he went out of his way, to announce his opinion that four new Slaveholding States might be carved out of Texas, whenever the population was sufficient, and that Congress was under a solemn bond & contract to admit them into the Union. - Then he pledged himself to go for a new law, which had been proposed by Mr. Mason of Virginia, to make the delivery & return of Fugitive Slaves more certain, & to punish with double fines and with imprisonment (the latter a new penalty for the crime in question) the man who should aid a fugitive in escaping, or administer ~~to him~~ as such to his necessities. The bill makes every petty United States Officer all over the land, (including all the Postmasters in it), a magistrate & judge suitable to determine this question ~~of~~ whether a human being dragged into his presence shall or shall not be sent into slavery, on the oath or affidavit of some person who presumes to claim that being as his property. * This last thing has roused the North - not one tithe, not one-hundredth part, what any unprejudiced person would expect, but still has roused it - more than anything else that has happened perhaps in the whole history of the Anti-Slavery struggle. Papers and men that had never lifted a word against Mr. Webster dissented, & remonstrated. To such a pitch of villainy they could not be dragged. So extensive was this feeling throughout Massachusetts, & even in Boston, where the most unmitigated forms of pro-slavery present themselves everywhere, that it was deemed necessary to get up a letter to Daniel Webster, approving & endorsing his doctrines. This was done. Who wrote the letter has not yet been discovered; but it thanks Daniel Webster for "recalling the North to its duties under the Constitution"; it says that he has "pointed out the path of duty, has convincing the underhanding, and touched the conscience of the Nation". And it expresses ~~its~~ "entire concurrence in the sentiments of ~~his~~ ^{his} speech". This address received a great number of names - some 12 hundred - including many of the wealthiest men of the city, but not many of those who are usually considered to give moral weight & dignity to a subject. A great many names of this sort are not to be found on the paper - were solicited, but refused. But, among the names which were given, which were volunteered it is said, are those of "Reverends" "Doctors" Woods, Stuart, and Emerson of the Andover Theological Seminary! Think of men, at the head of the chief theological school of the land, the fountain head of doctrine & religious faith, the nursery of the nation's religious guides, and of

the missionaries the seeds to heathen lands, giving their thanks for such a speech, their entire concurrence in it, and babbling about duty & conscience! ~~and~~ I have heard of even Orthodox ministers, in my neighbourhood here, who never were suspected of any sympathy with the Abolitionists, saying that this behaviour of the Andover Professor has proved the truth of the severest things that even Stephen S. Fox has ever said of them. And Jared Sparks, President of Harvard College and formerly a distinguished Unitarian minister, also ~~has~~ signed it. And I was told, by one of his most steadfast & trustworthy partisans, that Rev. Dr. Gannett had expressed his approval of the speech, using the very strong expression that he was ready to stake his salvation on the soundness & truth of the doctrines of Mr. Webster's Speech; this I did not hear myself, but I have on unexceptionable authority, where I cannot think a mistake can have been made.

On the other hand, it has been pleasant to see that nearly all the "religious" journals have come out in dissent from the speech; most of them guardedly, cautiously, & contenting themselves with as few words as possible to save themselves from shame, contempt, & self-loathing, but some of them speaking most manfully & decidedly against the whole speech. The New York Independent and New York Evangelist (Orthodox) & the New York Christian Inquirer (Unitarian) have taken the lead in this noble rejection of the doctrines & sentiments of Mr. Webster's speech.

Wendell Phillips has published in pamphlet form a Rejoinder to Webster's Speech; at his own expense printed an edition of 5000 copies & gave it to the Mass. Anti Slavery Socy. I have hesitated about sending you one by mail, remembering what you have said about the heavy postage on pamphlets in England; perhaps you shall have a private opportunity.

A week from today I expect to be in New York at the Annual Meeting of the American Anti Slavery Society. I shall make a point of seeing Wm. H. Channing there, & giving him another jog about answering your inquiries concerning the Portrait. —

By the "Plymouth Rock", wh. sailed for Liverpool Feb. 20 (of course arrived there Mar. 15.) I forwarded a box of "Reports", "Bazaar Goods" &c. &c. to R. D. Webb, Dublin. Bristol came in for a good share of the box. I cannot remember whether I wrote to you, by that opportunity or not. I think I did, but have preserved no memorandum. Will you inform me?