

Leicester, Massachusetts

August 11, 1857.

Dear Mr. Webb;

I wrote to you, some time in June I think, - since your return from your Italian tour. Not long since, I received a message from you, thro' P. Pillsbury, to the effect that the volume of Olmsted's Texas had been received. - By the same conveyance (Thayer & Warren's Liverpool Packets - recently Train's-) & to the same care in Liverpool (S. R. Graves), I have <sup>lately</sup> forwarded to you a copy of a new & very remarkable book. It is written by a North Carolina man, and is called "The Impending Crisis of the South." It is one of those books, which it is worth labouring and waiting many years for, & which well reward the faith and patience of the abolitionists. As you will readily infer from the title, Slavery is its subject. It does not take it up, <sup>mainly</sup> as a moral and religious question; but it has no low sneers, none of the ordinary Southern scurrility, no sympathy with the usual Southern manner of talking and writing on the subject, as a question of conscience; but, on the contrary, throughout adopts and bravely carries a tone & manner to which hitherto the South has shown itself almost a total stranger. The book takes up <sup>mainly</sup> Slavery as a social, economical, financial question.

It argues and it demonstrates, by ~~its~~ history, by innumerable facts, by statistical tables respecting the population, production, exports, imports, amount of wealth & property, and the like, that Slavery is a complete & unmitigated curse to the whole Southern country; that it is a millstone ~~on~~ about its neck, perpetually dragging it lower and lower; that it has retarded and paralysed its growth, impoverished its soil, enervated the physical and intellectual energies of its people, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> reduced them to ~~the~~ <sup>a</sup> condition of entire dependence on the Northern States for every necessary and comfort of life, making them in fact mere tributaries to the growth and wealth of the Northern States. He argues, accordingly, that the Immediate Abolition of Slavery is the True Policy of the South. He shows how it can be effected, in his judgment. He points out the vast field for enterprise, talent, industry, which the overthrow of Slavery would open, and the certainty of the rapid growth of the Southern States, and of their social & commercial prosperity, all upon a sure and stable basis. He does not wholly ignore the religious and moral aspects of the question; and deals with these in a frank and fearless manner. He

most striking and encouraging feature of the book is the downright plainness of its talk. This is exceedingly refreshing to those who have so long been nauseated by the feeble twaddle which emanates from the great majority of Northern writers on Slavery, both political and ecclesiastical, even of ~~those~~ <sup>most of those</sup> who claim to be anti-slavery. Mr. Helper (for such is the author's very <sup>significant</sup> ~~appropriate~~ name, and I believe his <sup>real</sup> ~~name~~ one) seems to have no taint of that wretched dreakness, that moral disease, which disqualifies the American mind so extensively for seeing that wrong is wrong, and ought to be repented of now, and put away at once. He has made up his mind that Slavery is a most execrable and ruinous thing, and he expresses this opinion without an 'if' or a 'but', ~~or~~ <sup>without</sup> making any apologies for thinking so, or asking anybody's pardon for ~~the~~ saying so. And he says it with all the <sup>directness</sup> ~~force~~ and strength that the English language is capable of. The book is intended for Southern circulation, and is addressed and dedicated to the Non Slaveholding Whites of the South. Still, he declares himself "not merely a free-soiler, but an abolitionist, in the fullest sense of the term." "The first & most sacred duty of every Southerner", he says, "who has the honor & the interest of his country at heart, is to declare himself an unqualified and uncompromising abolitionist." - I ask you, dear Mr. Webb, <sup>are</sup> ~~is~~ not these encouraging words to come

I wish best regards to your wife, truly yours, Saml. May Jr.

MS. B. 1. 6 v. 16 p. 59

from a Slaveholding state, and from one who  
~~was~~ "reared" is a native of the South, a  
 Southerner by instinct and by all the influences of the  
 habits, & kindred, whose desire & fixed purpose it is to  
 reside permanently within the limits of the South  
 and with the expectation of dying there also"? Do  
 they not show that the seeds, which the Antislavery  
 agitation has scattered, have not all perished &  
 been cast on rocky and barren soil; but that  
 some have germinated, and are about to yield  
 fruit manifold? I think you will say so,  
 you read the book. How it will be received  
 the South, remains to be seen. A dead silence has  
 been preserved hitherto, - which is clearly the  
 policy of that band of ambitious and unprincipled  
 Southern leaders, who now, by means of Slavery, rule  
 the entire South, and the entire country. I have  
 no idea that Mr. Helper will be allowed to live  
 in North Carolina, after being known as the writer  
 of this book. He says the book was written  
 part in Baltimore, Maryland, and would have  
 been published there but for the odious laws of that  
 State; hence its publication in New York. Whatever  
 its effect at the South, it will do vast good at the  
 North, in many ways, and not least by shaming  
 the Northern Soughfaces into silence, or converting them  
 into manly & outspoken opponents of Slavery. I  
 book, together with that entitled "Auto biography of a  
 Slave," written by a young lady of Kentucky, born to the  
 inheritance of slaves, whom she has emancipated, though the  
 act leaves her penniless - these two books will go far to lift  
 hopes of the South, & prepare for a co-operation of North & South for the overthrow  
 of Slavery.