

New Bedford 7th Mo 18. 1841.

My dear Debra

I am glad that something has occurred to revive your interest in your N. B. friends— even the slave case. I think I shall not quarrel with, as it is the cause of my receiving a letter from one I so dearly love— but as to answering all your questions and telling you all that his excellency the Public says of us vile abolitionists— why I fear my chère it is entirely beyond my power— is thy servant a witch that she should do such a thing? However I'll do my prettiest to gratify that feminine trait— curiosity which thou with the rest of us inheritest from our common mother— but where shall I begin? Truly I have so much to say I fear I shall make a strange jumble. Perhaps you would like to know how we received information concerning the chattel. Anna Bailey and I called at her father's store one P.M. and found there five or six of the faithful listening to an account which the Rev. Mr. James was giving of an interview which he had just had with Mr Ludlum. The substance of his account was as follows— When he ascertained that the Ludlams were accompanied by a col^d servant, he determined to ascertain whether she was a slave; and if so whether she would like to be free— so taking with him two of the col^d sisters they proceeded to the house. They were met at the door by Mr. L.— who desired to know their business. We have come to make a friendly call upon your servt.— was the reply. whereupon the gentleman became very angry— told them his servant had not and should not have any associates among the col^d people— and desired them immediately to leave the house. While they were in the midst of this altercation Henry Johnson a shrewd ^{col^d} fellow (whom I forgot to mention as one of their number) slipped round the house into the kitchen

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and found greatly to his surprise that she was a person whom he had known in Va. He lost no time in acquainting her with her right to freedom — She told him she should like to be free — but it was evident she was afraid to say so before the other servants for fear it would get to her master's ears.

The above was the amount of what Mr. James told us, and the questions then arose — what shall we do? It was evident they intended to keep her from the influence of abolitionists and as no such case had before occurred here we did not know how far we could lawfully proceed. In this extremity it was deemed proper for Mr. Spear to go to Boston to consult C. P. L. So secret were all these movements that very few were aware of any action in the case. /

When the cars arrived wednesday eve Br. Spear and the sheriff Mr. Pratt went to J. Bailey's to make the necessary arrangements. Pratt said he knew Mr. Knight the methodist minister now preaching in Elm street and desired to see him. He was sent for and agreed to accompany Pratt and Spear to Capt Dunbar's. Henry Johnson the col. man mentioned above was desired to be within halting distance if his evidence was needed and others were told to perambulate the streets in that vicinity for fear they should try to convey her away privately. Every thing succeeded to a charm. The Ls to be sure made every possible effort secure their prey: Mr Colby was summoned to their aid; but he knew that he had the wrong side of the question. After a discussion of nearly two hours the sheriff told them that he was ready to take the girl along with him and she was delivered into his hands. This was 10 o'clock P. M. and the next question was, "where shall she pass the night?" Her employers were very unwilling that she should be taken to the house of an abolitionist fearing that she would be influenced and desired that Mr. Knight would take her home with him. (by the way Knight was not known to them as ~~an~~ abolitionist) He prevailed on Ellen Gibson to pass the night with her and the next morning she was taken to Boston.

As you have seen the papers you are probably acquainted with many of the facts so I will not weary you by a repetition of them. And now—what does the world say? Why the whole community is in an uproar. Capt Robert Pills thinks the D— abolitionists deserve to have their necks stretched—and I suppose many others are of his opinion. I have inquired of several what Peabody's views are but I cannot find that he has expressed an opinion on the subject. Fortunately for the Bicketsons ^{and wife} they are absent on a journey, so their dignity will not be endangered by participation in this affair. Doubtless we shall have your commiseration when I tell you that we are so unfortunate as to offend by our measures a scion of the illustrious house of Bicketson. The redoubtable Daniel told J. B. a few days since that the abolitionists in this place had become so mean—no respectable person would act with them—every man who could be called respectable was leaving our ranks &c. When urged to mention some instances he named W. Puttice and Sturge and concluded by saying—my father and I can't act with you. Oh terrible!! "Think of that Mr. Brooker" sunk so low that even Daniel B. can't have fellowship with us.

But to be serious Deborah—we have had to encounter much reproach and obloquy. Nothing but a firm conviction of the righteousness of our cause could sustain us under such a weight of falsehood and contumely as is heaped up on us—we know now how to appreciate in some small degree the trials through which you have passed. We have been told that our conduct was inhuman in the highest degree. Even Samuel Rodman thinks our measures quite too precipitate: "we ought to have waited until there was some change in Capt D—". No one appeared to be aware of the possibility of her being taken out of the state while we were patiently waiting for Capt D— to die. I do not mean to speak lightly of the affliction of this family—the sick man has been a great sufferer in body and mind; and I know that those who were active in the matter would

most gladly have been released from the necessity of entering his house on such
and errands - as it was they took every precaution to prevent disturbance and
if the invalid was in any way a sufferer by this affair - on his family must
the responsibility. Brother James says Mr. Colby admitted while in
conversation with him that the abolitionists who came for the girl behaved
in a perfectly gentlemanly manner he had no fault to find with them
on that score.

Now that this chattel personal is beyond their reach they have
become desperate. They are determined if possible to ruin Spear. He went
to the gaol a day or two since on one of his missions of love intending
to obtain the release of a man confined there for drunkenness. Baylies
put a writ in his hands saying "I shall serve it in a few days; you had
better look round for bail" I have seen a copy of it. L. is therein accused
of enticing away Ludlams property thereby putting him to great expense
and inconvenience - and also of falsely and maliciously swearing
that the girl's liberty was restrained. The trial is to come on in November.
Do you think it probable that L. - will be so foolish as to persevere in this
law suit? His property! I suspect he will find some difference between
our laws and those of Virginia in respect to what he is pleased to call
his property.

As it regards the fine which you mention - Colby told James that
L. would have to pay a fine of three times her value; the general opinion
is however that the law will not be enforced. You ask what the
Parker faction say - They are boiling over with wrath. John A. Parker
met John Bailey in the market and charged him with his guilty and inhuman
conduct in going to the house of a dying man and dragging the poor
frightened girl from under his bed where she had secreted herself
through fear of such as he. After he had pretty much exhausted his vitri-
peratives, father John told him with the greatest nonchalance that he
was not out of his own house at all that evening.

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