

Lockport, March 31, 1851.

My dear Friend -

We received yours of the 25th inst. on Saturday, & were rejoiced to learn that your health is improving, though still delicate. Your sickness has been occasioned us a sad disappointment, for, on coming into this State, we found almost as strong a desire to hear you as our beloved Thompson, & in some respects we felt that you could do even a greater work than he. In arousing the public mind, & directing attention to the subject of Slavery, I believe he has among us no equal. His appeals are to the understanding & the conscience, ~~and~~ not to the sympathies, & hence the impression he creates will be permanent, & will not, like that of too many popular speakers, quickly pass away, "like the morning cloud & the early dew". But he is not an American in the estimation of the masses, & hence is not, like yourself, closely identified with the anti-slavery enterprise, & the representation of that enterprise.

Multitudes suppose they can love George Thompson & sustain him, while at the same time they hate & oppose you of the American Society. Besides, Mr. Thompson from his position as a foreigner, cannot enter into a minute investigation of our internal affairs, but must content himself with developing sound principles, leaving to others the work of applying them to the various sects & parties into which the country is divided. Now we had proposed to ourselves to have you travel with

Thompson, & gather up the fruits of his labors, that is, baptize his converts into the spirit of Ed. Organisations & make them see & feel that you & he are one & inseparable, & the supporters of the only true Standard of anti-slavery in the land. I am daily more & more convinced that there is a work to be done here in N.Y. by way of giving direction to anti-slavery feeling, which none but you can do. Your mere presence in a meeting, though you were as speechless as an Egyptian mummy, would often do more to remove prejudice against our cause, & secure the co-operations of the well-disposed, than hours of the best speaking from any other person. Have sufficient confidence in my judgment to try the experiment of devoting yourself, as far as is practicable, for six months to the cultivation of this field, & if you are not satisfied that your labor has been judiciously expended, I will never again ask you to respect my opinions. This State should be made the battle ground of our cause, the coming year. With your aid ~~and~~ (such as you can give) & that of Phillips, Pillsbury & Furleigh, we can place New York, within twelve months, in a position that shall strike terror to the whole South. There are thousands here who only need an acquaintance with the men who lead our cause to induce them to enlist at our under our banner; & when they are once with us, we have an immense accession of wealth, energy & zeal.

The place of our next annual meeting is a matter of much importance, & I hope will be well considered, before it

is decided upon. We have been once driven from New York by a drunken mob, & I do not see sufficient reasons for returning there, so long as the whole land is before us, unless there are evidences of a better state of feeling towards us. I am willing to encounter mobs, if necessary, but if we can accomplish the same object without it, as I think we can in this case, I prefer it rather. As to Brooklyn I have no faith that we could hold an undisturbed meeting there. It is too near N. Y., to afford us any security against Byrnes & his crew. And, then, if we go to Brooklyn, Thompson cannot be with us. All the circumstances seem to me to point to Syracuse as the place. There is where the most of the great political gatherings of the State are held. We have friends there, & by our meeting shall add many more to the number. It is a central place, easy of access to large numbers who desire to attend, the fare on the Albany & Buffalo road being reduced to \$6.50 through.

If we go to Brooklyn, ~~our~~ our meeting will exert a general influence favorable to the cause, & perhaps add a few to the number of its active friends. If we go to Syracuse, we shall exert nearly the same general influence, shall add hundreds ~~add~~ directly to our numbers, & put in operation a train of events, which will soon swell those hundreds into thousands. My wife, Douglass & Thompson are all ~~are~~ united with me in the opinion that Syracuse is the place, & we all think that if the Ex. Com. were here instead of being in Boston, they would all be of the same mind. We must make the rural districts react upon the City, as has already been done to some extent in Massachusetts.

Will you write me at the earliest possible time when you can send to me. A. G. G. that I may advise the Convention, in case you elect to come.

If the Com. decide to hold the anniversary at Syracuse, Abby immediately on learning the fact, will make out a list of conventions (beginning about the 15th) for you, Thompson, Douglass & herself, with special reference to bringing out the people on that occasion. Thompson left this morning in company with Douglass for Toronto whom he expects to meet S. J. May. His purpose is to remain in Canada about three weeks, & then return to Buffalo, where he will give several lectures. Will you write to Abby immediately, at Palmyra, care of Phiney Sexton, & let her know the decision of the Com. & how soon she may expect you in N. Y., if the meeting is to be at Syracuse. The earlier you can join Thompson after his return the better.

Abby wrote you <sup>in favor of</sup> ~~about~~ forming a New York State Society whose headquarters should be at Syracuse, but after further consultation we think such a step may, perhaps, be premature, at this time. It is questionable whether our friends there have had sufficient experience to take the helm. Nothing, I think, should be said about it publicly, but should the anniversary be held there, we can talk the matter over, when we come together, & if sufficient good material for an Ex. Com. ~~can~~ be found, such a society can then be formed, but if not, we will let the matter rest till another year, & in the mean time carry on the cause through the American Society.

I shall leave for home on Thursday next, to attend to domestic affairs, but Abby will remain here till the anniversary. Her health is poor, <sup>but</sup> we think it will improve as the season becomes warmer. We have made no definite <sup>arrangements</sup> for the summer, but have it in mind to spend two or three months in the West, if Thompson will accompany us. Yours, very truly, S. J. Foster.

W. L. Garrison