

MS. A. 13. 1. 25a
Waverly House, Rochester; N. Y.

Monday Evening, March 17. 1837

My Dear Friend,

As my last letter to you made its exit,
your welcome one to me made its entrance.
It was instantly devoured, for it reached me at a
moment when I was ravenous for news - from you.
I have nothing out of which I can hope to fabricate
a readable letter. My motive for writing you just
now is low, selfish and unworthy. I am stupid
from confinement in my room all day, and for
change of occupation, I am scribbling this to
you. Here you have it. I've made a clean breast.
While I write, some 200 Citizens are feasting in
the long room, opposite mine, in honour of Ireland
and Ireland's patron Saint. A band is at my
door, stunning me with "Hail Columbia", "St.
Patrick's day in the morning", "The Lap o' Gowrie,"
and "Yankee doodle". Toasts, sentiments & speeches
are to follow, and I have resigned myself to four
or five hours of torment, - for I am not in a state
of health that will permit of my extracting amuse-
ment from the noises of an after supper assembly.

24 To day, the American is out against me, & the

Advertiser will therefore be in high glee tomorrow. I re-read
the article, and will only say, that it is a gross misrep-
resentation of what it affects to talk about. Wentworth "Harry
of the West" must respectfully, and dealt only in calm
criticisms upon the doctrines and views put forth in
his late speech. The other quotations - wrenched from their
contexts - are unfairly used. But, all is right. Several
thousands of persons have heard me - and while these
reports may injure me elsewhere - they only injure
their concoctors here. How would you feel, if you were
daily vituperated as I am, and made to stand out
before millions a very devil? Would you not lose
all faith in public writers, and learn to loathe the
very name of a newspaper? Could you avoid comparing
the people with the pope; for it is written in Alton Locke -
"as with the people so with the priest, is the evilest -
my law." Editors are as much priests as parsons.

I long to reach Ringarum, and to forget, amidst the
sublimities of nature, the depravity of man. Oh, if
for one hour, nature should depart from truth as
far as man, "Chaos would come again." Why is it
we love nature so much? Is it not, because in
nature there is truth - falsehood, in man alone. I
have found many well-meaning persons here, but
not one Congregial spirit. I long for a companion.
I do not wonder at the low condition of our cause
here. It is almost altogether in the hands of the
Poppers, and their vagaries are most ludicrous.

A word in your ear. The principal members of the Western New York Antislavery Society were lately enquiring of the rapping spirits; and their instructors, having told the eldest of the party (Mr. Post) to go home, told the rest (a goodly number) to turn into one bed together. This could only be done by the contrivance of placing several beds side by side, which was accomplished, and the "believers" tumbled in side by side!!!!

Down to a late period there was great uneasiness felt on account of the peculiar relationship of a certain English lady to a certain distinguished orator and Editor of this City; but counsel having been taken of the spirits, they replied, that the lady was "in her right place". Since then, the lady referred to has been the oracle of the true believers. I know greatly own the state of things here, for this is a fine city, and there are elements in it worth minding; but, alas! I have not found more than three persons who appear to possess any force of character.

The rest are full of the "spirit-words," though for the life of me I cannot discover what they have obtained from it that does them any good in this. I should much like to spend a month here, and have strength to keep lecturing all the time. I have won upon those who have heard me marvellously; & I should like to have the opportunity of preaching the whole Gospel of Abolitionism to the people here.

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A great work might be done with an effective agency. Mr. Foster occupied a hall here yesterday, but had few hearers. Where Agents cannot obtain hearers, the influence is necessarily small. Mr & Mrs Foster I believe to be most valuable auxiliaries. They are faithful, indomitable, unwearied; and render most important service, by looking up the friends of the cause, & keeping them together, and confirming their faith, and pointing out to them the various ways in which they can be useful. They are genuine and devoted friends of the American Antislavery Society, - quick to scent a plot, & to unmask false friends - good financiers - and enjoy the unlimited confidence of the entire household of faith. I believe they do a good work, and heaven forbid, such true and noble ~~their~~ friends should be aught but loved and cherished. Stephen, however, is not attractive. He has not the art of "winning souls." He has a plan and a theory of his own, and will give neither up. He must "e'en gang his ain gait," and do his own work. Abby has wrought wonders in her day. Her children are found wherever she has laboured, and her zeal burns with a strength and clearness which, which nor time nor persecutions can impair. I love her dearly for her works sake, & could I invest her with some attributes - but nonsense - she is made to be a missionary in the anti-slavery cause, not to be a companion for a sentimentalist like me. She has a nobler work than to amuse my weary hours.

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we (that is, S. S. & A. K. & G. D.) have a project to form a
New York State Anti-Slavery Society, the head
quarters to be at Syracuse, where there is, we believe,
the staff necessary for the organization, and whence the
sound might go out into all the region round about.
Mr. May will, I believe be my companion next week
to Lockport, the Falls, and Canada, and we shall
talk the matter well over. It would be a grand move,
if it could be properly effected, and this seems to be
a most favorable juncture. Move of this season.

I have read Alton Locke, and it has shaken me.
It is a strange book. The writer has great power, & he
writes with a wonderfully fascinating skill. It is how-
ever altogether too mystical; yet upon the whole, good
in its tendency, and will, I trust, be good in its actual
result. I don't like a fool for a hero, and I must say
that Alton Locke strikes me as a very great ass. I
cannot admire very greatly a man who has no
common sense; but he may not be the best material
for that. Pratchett is really well drawn, ^{& you} are
constrained to love the old man, from the time he
calls Alton into his shop, until his brave spirit
goes to the judgment of the God of all the Earth, who
will do "right, right, right". Many thanks for
thinking of me in my solitude, for believe me I am
very lonely. Crowds have no charms. Friends & books
24th are my only earthly enjoyments.

Ladies

I am a special favorite among the Rochesterⁿ - for a few days. Locks of my hair - autographs - likenesses are in great demand. Of course they are supplied, though custom obliges me to say, I have felt no disposition, in any instance, to return the compliment. I have four evening parties before me this week. Pray that I may have a safe deliverance. Those I have hitherto attended here have been disappointing affairs, and in every case I have had to take my station between two rooms, that I might at least be heard, if not seen, in both. I have done my very utmost to acquit myself creditably - at all events to amuse my kind friends. Were all I have met in parties here of the same stuff I have met in Boston, this City might soon be revolutionized. In my hour, the ladies have called upon me in considerable numbers. In my rooms - which is parlor, bed-room study and all, I have received them in my dressing gown, - paste brush in hand, - and have tried my best to do the agreeable. I have looked in vain for one I should care to see again. What is it, the absence of what, in the fair sex of this country, occasions this strange indifference? Perhaps you cannot tell me, as you have not seen your sex in other lands. Till now, I thought myself impregnable, and inured to my quick susceptibilities, which were the cause of innumerable regrets amidst my short-lived acquaintanceships; but now - no matter. So it is, and yet as Othello says - I am not old - at least in heart.

I am tired - stupid - worn out. I have scrawled this
while all kinds of noises have been going on. Excuse
its blunders, and burn, it lest it should appear in
judgment against me. I will to bed - though not
to sleep, for these Irish Democrats I fear will
keep it up till morning. I can trace the effects
of what they drink, and can tell how they are
going on, as well as if I counted every glass. I should
not be surprised to hear that I came in for a
share of their eloquence as a mischievous foreigner!
Old Mackay, in Alton Locke, has drawn a
picture of the Irish - only too true. Any man
be compelled to trust an Irishman! Good night,
dear friend. One fellow is now on his legs, opposite,
who roars horribly. His tone is angry. Is he giving
me a little Irish blackguard? who cares? "Pour on
you bastards! You talk of slavery at home, and
are the basest partisans to the same power
here. Had the negro had half your chivalry in
Ireland, he would have been a free man there.
If ever men were the authors of their own bondage,
they are the people of Ireland. Put him out of
humour to night, and will leave off, lest I
commit more sins against charity. Good night,
One more good night

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I give a lecture on India this afternoon in Corinthian Hall and one on the same subject tomorrow evening in the same place.

I have received and read the proceedings of the Anti-Slavery Meeting recently held in Toronto, and also the rules and regulations of the Society formed at the same meeting. I recognize in the officers of the Society some friends I have known at home. Charles Stuart is, I see, one of the Corresponding Secretaries. When I last met with him, he was a great Garrison hater, and I am afraid he remains so. I expect therefore to find the folks prejudiced against old organization. There are 9 Ministers on the list of officers including some D. D.

I must now leave off. I have added this since I got up this (Tuesday) morning. My head is very bad. I scarcely ever feel else than ill until I have been up several hours.

It is now just a month since you got to New York. How much longer do you mean to remain under the guardianship of the Union Safety Committee? Let me know how long. Could you not join us at Syracuse on my return from Canada, and go back via Springfield. This would be a good move. Think it over. We hope to have a great gathering at Syracuse by and by.

Yours affectionately (I believe)
Geo Thompson