

Boston, Dec. 16, 1843.

118

My dearly beloved friend - As I hastily seize my pen, at the last hour prior to the sailing of the steamer, my cheeks crimson with shame and regret to think that I have allowed days, weeks, months to transpire, without sending you a single epistle. During all that time, I have been in affliction with my family, in consequence of sickness - the unfortunate accident which happened to my dear Helen and her mother - and the long protracted sufferings and death of our lamented sister Anne. I will not, however, occupy any portion of this sheet with apologies; for to ~~reflect~~ reflect these upon you, would be most unsatisfactory, and quite needless. Surely, you know me too well to imagine that my affection for you has diminished - that I do not feel any special interest in your sublime christian mission abroad - that I am not with you, in spirit, in all your anxieties, cares, labors, sacrifices and triumphs. You are as dear to me as one human being ought to be ^{to} another, and I feel that we are united by the indissoluble bonds of faith and love. Judge me not by the number or quality of my letters. I am a dilatory correspondent, as you well know; and whoever has any epistolary correspondence with me must "let patience have her perfect work."

A brief letter which I have lately received from my dear friend Richard Allen informs me that you were then sitting by his side, and in tolerable health. I have been dismayed at the accounts of your illness, previously received; especially to hear that you have a strong tendency to consumption, and that your lungs are seriously affected. But the last intelligence cheers my heart, and I trust you will do nothing rashly to jeopard your valuable life. It is painfully evident that the climate of England is not friendly to your constitution; and I have been alarmingly apprehensive that you would fall a victim to it, as long, in connexion with your arduous labors. In my opinion, you ought to risk your life no longer by remaining abroad, but to return home as soon as practicable - perhaps not during the present winter, but early next summer; and when you do return, as a sea-voyage is so injurious to your system, you ought to ^{come} return in a homeward steamer from Liverpool, so as to be as few days on the passage as possible. If you are really in no special danger by remaining in England, why then I will not so earnestly urge your return; and yet I want to see and embrace you, and to have you laboring once more with and among us.

We miss you prodigiously. Little has been done, directly, to promote the heaven-born cause of non-resistance since you left. No agent has been found to take the field, and the Executive Committee of our little Non-Resistance Society are so occupied with their anti-slavery labors and responsibilities, that they have neither the time nor the means to put any efficient machinery into motion. Yet do not suppose that any reaction has taken place. The cause is certainly advancing, and thousands are beginning to feel an interest in its principles, who were formerly disposed to regard it as wild and chimerical.

We had an interesting annual meeting of the Society in October last; and though the number in attendance was not large, except at the evening sessions, those who were present were the best friends of reform in all its branches. Our resolves were of a audacious nature, and calculated, one would suppose, to awaken opposition on the part of those who are hostile to non-resistance; but, though there was free utterance allowed to all, not an opponent appeared, except during the last evening; and then none other than our indescribable friend G. W. F. Keller, who tried to defeat Liberty party and government - with what success you can readily imagine. Edmund Quincy declining to act any longer as President, Adin Ballou was chosen in his place, and Edmund was transferred to the Executive Committee. We intend to imitate the admirable plan adopted in England to scatter light and information, by publishing a series of tracts on various topics, occupying from two to eight pages. We hope that Adin Ballou will be induced to act as a lecturing agent for a considerable portion of the year, and also our bro. John M. Spear of Weymouth.

Great fears are entertained that Texas will be annexed to the Union at the present session of Congress. It was supposed that President Tyler would strongly recommend the annexation in his message, but he has had the cunning not to do so, knowing that, if he did, a tremendous excitement would ensue throughout the entire North. His language toward Mexico is insulting and belligerent; he intimates that the United States will declare war against her, unless she recognize the independence of Texas, or cease molesting her! There is no telling what a day will bring forth. Congress is corrupt enough to do any thing. The right of petition has again been cloven down, and no excitement has followed. This would not be loose in England, but Slavery is a more corrupting, more terrible power than Monarchy. Anti-slavery is indubitably lengthening its cords and strengthening its stakes; but it has a mighty work yet to perform. If the abolitionists would only be more uncompromising and more courageous in their dealings with the foe, they would achieve a hundred victories where they now obtain only ten. Multitudes of them yet need to be emancipated from their sectarian and party shackles, and to stand fast in the liberty of Christ.

The annual Massachusetts Fair will open in a few days, and we think under favorable circumstances. The articles received from Ireland excite our admiration and gratitude. Heaven bless the generous spirits there, who, with but a small portion of this world's goods in their possession, and surrounded by distress and poverty in every form, have continued to show that their hearts are as expansive as suffering humanity, and that their benevolence is not confined to the Emerald Isle on which they reside. Would that I could see them all individually, take them by the hand, and, as the mouth-piece of three millions of the most wretched creatures to be found on the face of the earth, express the feelings of my heart in view of their kindness! Truly, I want to see Ireland again, more than words can express; and especially do I desire to see Dublin. The Haughtons, Watts, Allens, &c. &c. do not know how much they are beloved by me, because I cannot tell them, and have no means to make it strikingly manifest. Extraordinary people they are — abounding in all good traits of mind, heart and intellect. I must see them again — but how or when? Alas! I cannot tell. Will none of them make us a visit? Is it really impracticable for such an arrangement to be made? Next summer, certainly, some one or more of them (the more the better) must come over and reciprocate the visit we made them in 1840. Every thing shall be done to make their visit delightful, and without any pecuniary expense to them during their sojourn among us.

Please say to Richard Allen, that his present of four valuable and neatly wrought linen shirts has come safely to hand, for which I beg to proffer him my most grateful thanks. If I knew who made them, I would also send my compliments to her, for her skill with the needle. These tokens of friendship are more valued by me than all worldly honors and emoluments. [I have received presents, also, in money, from dear Webb and others in Dublin, to sustain the Liberator. Elizabeth Pease has also made a most generous donation for the same object. These gifts have helped to preserve the existence of the paper during the present year; and without them, though entirely unexpected, I know not what could have been done to get along. Our subscription list is very much reduced, and the hatred of the enemies of God and man towards it, ^{the Liberator is} increasing continually. It often seems to me that there is no alternative left but to let the paper go down; but the good providence of God has thus far sustained it, and brought signal relief in the hour of extreme distress.] Tell dear Webb that, with his large family, and limited means, and many calls for charity, I cannot feel as if I ought to retain what he has sent over; and yet I know it would hurt his feelings for me to send it back to him.

My health is very much improved, but my family continues to be afflicted with sickness. Within the last three weeks, every member of it, except myself, has had a most violent attack of the influenza, attended with a fever and a bad cough, but they are now all convalescent. Helen has again partially dislocated her elbow, by over-exertion, and will probably have to go to Connecticut again to see Dr. Sweet. We are now living in the city, in Pine-street, at the south end. Oliver Johnson and his wife are living under the same roof with us. George Thompson is now a very tall boy, active in work or play, but dull as a scholar. He can scarcely spell the simplest words, though he has been to school some four or five years! He abhors a book, and would much prefer that reading and writing should come by nature, than be obtained in any other method. He is far from being a dunce, but he is too restless to give any attention to his books. However, I feel no anxiety on that score. Hereafter he may take a sudden start, and be an inveterate book-worm. William is a much better scholar than George, and is getting along fast enough. Wendell has mastered the alphabet, and is the brightest and most beautiful boy of the lot. — They all remember you with great vividness, and frequently ask when they shall see and frolic with you again. Charles is now beginning to walk alone, and bids fair to be a fine boy. These constitute my earthly jewels. My affection for them is strong and pure, but not idolatrous. It shall be my aim to bring them up to be a blessing to the world.

Bro. George W. Benson is still located in the "Northampton Community," which promises to be a very successful experiment. James Doyle and his wife are also members of the same community. The subject of social reorganization is attracting general attention, and exciting a growing interest. Many schemes are ⁱⁿ embryo, and others have had a birth, and are now struggling for an existence. As experiments, to bless our race, I feel an interest in them all, though I am not very sanguine as to the result of this new species of colonization.

John A. Collins is almost entirely absorbed in his "community" project at Skaneateles, and is therefore unable to do much directly for the anti-slavery cause. He goes for a community of interest, and against all individual possessions, whether of land or its fruits - of labor or its products; but he does not act very consistently with his principles, though he says he does the best he can in the present state of society. He holds, with Robert Owen, that man is the creature of circumstances, and therefore not deserving of praise or blame for what he does - a most absurd and demoralizing doctrine, in my opinion, which will make shipwreck of any man or any scheme under its guidance, in due season. Still, it cannot be denied that circumstances are often very unfavorable to the development of man's faculties and moral nature; and if, by a reorganization of society, these can be rendered more favorable, - as doubtless they can, - let it take place. But it is an internal rather than an outward reorganization that is needed to put away the evil that is in the world.

But the last five minutes have come, before the closing of the mail, and I must ~~stop~~ bring this hasty scribble to a close, by begging you to let me hear from you as often as convenient, even if you get little or nothing from me in return; and by sending kind remembrances to you, without number, from all the family, and thousands of warm-hearted friends, to whom you are unspeakably dear. To all the Dublin friends give the latest assurances of my unquenchable love for them.

Yours, affectionately,

Wm. Lloyd Garrison.



DL 43

Henry C. Wright
Care of Richard D. Webb,
Dublin,
Ireland

43

