

Ms. B. 1. 6 v. 8 p. 58
Leicester, May 19. 1861.

Dear friend Webb,

I mailed a letter, (with enclosure of a shipping receipt for small parcel sent to you by Steamer of Wed. last) on Monday 13th inst., and came hither that evng. bringing with me a large bundle of letters & other mss. of the late Capt. John Brown. I began the examination of them on Wed. ~~15th~~ 15th, and have given to it all the time I could, but have finished only this p.m. The letters were far more numerous than I supposed. I have selected some thing ~~or more~~, from which to make extracts for you; but it will not be possible for me to send you more than a small portion of these extracts by next Wed.'s Steamer. I shall devote to it all the time I can, but the selecting & copying cannot proceed very rapidly, with the various matters I must also attend ~~to~~ ^{to} this coming week. Moreover I doubt if I get the information from Mr. Stearns in season for this next Steamⁿ.

There is ^{not} much in J. B. letters to his wife & family wh. I sh^d. hesitate to copy, on acct. of its liability to betray anybody. If he wrote such letters, they have been destroyed or withheld. But I presume he did not write such. He was the very embodiment

of caution and of honour, on these points. In a set of Rules he drew up for an Association of coloured persons (men, women, & children), formed to resist the execution of the Eng. Sl. Law, (and in which the special parts to be ~~spoken~~ by did I young, male & female, ~~were~~ simply & distinctly pointed out,) one is that they shall never betray, by word or sign, any of their associates, but if necessary "be hanged", & die nobly & honorably. - His own demeanour, in prison and in death, shows how perfectly he fulfilled the condition he had prescribed to others, and proves his simple-hearted sincerity when he penned it. But, in the parcel, there are letters to him, from others, which, while written very cautiously, do ^{yet} give names, and such general statements & hints, as - in the light of events now past - might possibly, if published, make trouble for some, though I am aware of nothing from which any proof ^{c^d} be drawn. But all these I think it best for me to pass by. - My extracts will be, almost exclusively, from J. B.'s

own letters. I shall add a few - from his wife and
children - that you may understand them ^{all} the better.
- An extremely interesting family they must have been.
I have enjoyed, & been very glad of, the opportunity I
have had of reading over their letters, - an opp^o: wh^o
I probably never sh^d: have had, but for your call
for information on the point. I have read not only
many letters of John B. himself, but a few from
his wife, many from John Brown Jr, several from
his sons Jason, Owen, Salmon, Watson, & Oliver,
and from his daughter Ruth, wife of Henry
Thompson. There is not a word of Cant, from first
to last, - there is not one mean, low, or narrow
sentiment in the whole. Their words are not
many (generally), but they are uniformly simple,
unpretending, thoughtful of others, affectionate tow^d
one another, ^{showing} generous thoughts & feelings, and ^{kindly}
sympathies with the suffering everywhere. - I have
got my daughter Adeline to copy 2 letters for you
in full, which I send herewith; ^{and she does it gladly.} One from John Brown
written in 1844; - the other from his daughter Ruth,
written ^{to him} in 1858, when his great undertaking was

(evidently) supposed to be on the eve of being launched. Two noble young men were those youngest sons of his - Watson & Chace - hardly more than boys were they - who died at Harper's Ferry. Evidently they went into the work from a deep inward conviction & prompting; there was no inducement or influence of a sinister or unworthy nature brought to bear upon them. Doubtless they felt they couldn't bear the shame of holding back, while their father went on. - How we wish they were all alive now!

The North, as you will see, abides resolute & firm. Of course you will watch closely now the American news, and read with new interest the Star & Liberator. Read especially their Selections from the leading journals, North as well as South. You will see I think, much evidence that Slavery and the Slaves, a becoming a more & more important element in the North's view of the question. The prayers of a great multitude up now continually that God will avenge His own elect; & the determined purposes of a host of hearts & hands will co-act with all the leadings of Providence. Perilous shoals and quicksands, of compromise & bargain, are round us; but the grand

if clearly we need of nearly every eye. I am glad to see that you are not too far from the truth. I am glad to see that you are not too far from the truth. I am glad to see that you are not too far from the truth.