

Leicester, February 25. 1862.

Dear friend Webb;

I am your debtor for several letters, which I could not pay off in one, were it ever so good a one; and with a "parcel of children" round me to-day, I fear I may make a poor hand of it now. - In our normal state, our Bessie (now a girl of nearly 12 & tall of her age) is our only child; but just now we have two others, - one little, quiet, delicate girl of 8 $\frac{1}{2}$, (the child of my wife's oldest sister who died, very suddenly, a little more than 3 weeks ago;) has been with us a fortnight, - she is very bright, & in her talk almost womanly; - then we have a Boston boy, 11 yrs. old, the son of my sister, who comes to spend his vacation of a week, - winter as it is, - bringing his "sled" with him; - all children with us, boys or girls, have sleds, & usually skates, and the winter sports are considered the finest of the year. We have had a beautiful February thus far - or rather until yesterday - mild, & free from the usual high winds; there has scarcely been a day when the children couldn't play out for hours, "coasting" as 'tis called, which perhaps you don't know is seating, or otherwise placing themselves upon these long, narrow, iron-shod sleds, and sliding (or rather tearing) down hill at a great ^{rate} ~~rate~~. - Yesterday we had the combination (most unusual for winter) of rain, hail, thunder & lightning, followed by almost a hurricane of wind and a blinding snow storm. The wind, accompanied with a fall of the thermometer to zero of Fahrenheit, continues to-day - making it one of the most "tedious" days, to use a Yankee-ism, we have had all winter. So the children are shut up in house mostly, & though very good children, of course must talk, play, laugh, &c. - which is not helpful to letter-writing; - but, now, Bessie has gone to her morning school, & the other two have suddenly thought of some play

up-stairs, and disappeared together like a flash.
Pray excuse my particulars of meteorology and
household affairs. I may add that my wife and
Ade. are in good health - that my own health is
as good as I can reasonably expect at present, and
that I am expecting to resume my office duties in
Boston on the 1st of March. - Edward, for whom your
kind remembrance continues, is still on the So. Carolina
coast - we had a letter from him yesterday. We hear about once
in 10 days. He has lately been near Savannah, ^(within eight) with a
pretty strong force of both army & navy; - the latter have
been deterred from getting ^{any} nearer ^{the city}, by sunken
batteries, torpedoes, &c. - sometimes called "infernal machines"
placed to impede & destroy vessels. One very powerful
one had been partially removed, - one of the large canisters
(of which there were 5 fastened together by wires) was
separated, placed on shore, & being fired at, exploded with
a noise, Edward said, to which ^{the noise of} their own large gun, (a
pivot gun of 11 inch bore) was but as that of a fire-cracker,
and tearing up the earth for yards around. To have
encountered 5 of those machines together, & met their united
explosion, would have made short work of their vessel & their
lives. Edw^d. chafed a good deal at the delay thus caused
in their operations. The land forces are now very near
Savannah, and its capture is, I think, only a question
of a week or two, less or more. My other son, Joseph
Russell, now 17 yrs. old, has just commenced his business
life in the Store of Hovey and Co. in Boston, the partner,
friend, & successor of our late excellent friend Charles
F. Hovey.

I have had a letter from Mr. Kim, saying he
still had 25 copies of his Co of "John Brown" on hand, and
wanted no more at present. I think that, in 2 or 3
months, we may be in a condition to order more of you.
I shall bear it in mind, & do what I can. Write me
what the cost to us would be, in Dublin, of your bound
volumes? Could we get them at a rate, when freight

charges & duties are added, to sell them at \$1. ea
We should not like to ask more, as we have sold
hitherto at that rate? We do not care to make any
profit on them, of course.

I wrote to you by last week's mail - enclosing 2
notes - and also 2 photographs which my wife sent to you, of
herself & Ade. It was a double letter, and I knew it was,
but being late for the post, and in a great hurry, I put on
the customary 2 stamps, thinking at the moment that that
was correct double postage; - nor did the postmaster's
assistant correct my mistake, tho' himself aware it
was a double letter. I suppose therefore the postage paid
by me is thrown away, and you will be charged 2/. Now
I depend on you to let me know if this is so - that I may
make it right with you. - I hope in time to get your photograph.
- In a late note you speak of some postage of your own. I
believe it was understood that all our Antislavery correspondence
(if it nearly all is that ^{wholly or} mainly) should be paid by me, here,
I charging it, so much as is Antislavery, to our Society, of
course. - The photog^s last week made the additional postage,
which of course I did not (I should not had I paid the postage
correctly) charge to the Socy. - I hope you have received
the parcel by Mrs. Abigail Hewson. - I believe I told you
that, as you requested, I sent to Mr. Sulist the copy of John
Brown's Life.

Just as I was about closing mine to you last week, your
note of Feb. 1st arrived. I read no farther than its first topic, and
immediately hurried to send a reply to that - viz. your remark that
you had heard your Standard letters did not give satisfaction.
When I had said, tho' briefly, what I had to say, my time was
up, & more; - I nearly lost the chance of getting the letter into the
mail. But I desire to re-iterate all I said there. Your
letters do give pleasure & general satisfaction. That we
should accept & believe every opinion & view of yours, you
would neither expect nor wish; and we are all the better
for having honest men & women express to us candidly their
own opinions, however differing from ours. No one would

Say, sooner than McKim, that you must not stop
writing, for any such reason or imagination as you
allege. — The trouble about Miss Martineau is, not
at all that she has differed from us widely, or expressed
untenable opinions, but that she has written to us
in a strain of domineering and lecturing and censoring
really quite unbearable. She played off these School-
Mistress airs (if I may so call them, to you, & in confidence
on the subject of our Tariff, and it was borne by us all,
tho' a wholly irrelevant topic, if we chose to be strict about
it; — scarcely one of the A.S. writers proper took any notice
of it, and it was left to Horace Greeley to furnish one
article in the way of a reply. Then, however, she intro-
duced the same strain, pitched in even a higher key, into the ques-
tion of Slavery & the rebellion, and our Government's course
actual and expected in the war, it was beyond even peace-
folks' bearing. How flatly & superciliously she contradicted
me, on a question of facts, in her letter in Standard of Feb. 15
I was obliged to reply to that (Feb. 22?), and I think rather to
her discomfiture on that point; — but I left it to her to
"own up" as we say, & make the amende honorable if
she pleases; and there I hope, so far as I am concerned,
will be the end of controversy with H. M. — In spite of
your strong endorsement of her knowledge of American
affairs, (and, as a general thing, I agree to and believe
all you say of her). I must say, and I say it very
emphatically, that, in respect to the Rebellion — the War — ~~and~~
the Course of our Government — and the prevailing Tone & Spirit
of our Northern States, — there are a dozen English writers and
speakers who have shown a very much better understanding of
them ^{all} than she. She got angry with the Country about the
Tariff, & that warped her from her bearings, so that she was not
in the right state of mind to look at us, when we came to deal with
the Rebellion of the Slaveholders. I do not give this as merely a
construction. Every one speaks of the temper her letters evince.
Of course we shan't ask her to stop writing; but she has
essentially damaged her influence here, I am quite sure.

To some other points in yours of Feb. 1st, I ^{would} ~~may~~ ^{reply},
 and in so doing shall ~~also~~ answer similar ones
 in your previous ~~see~~ notes, perhaps. [You object to our
 taking the London Times as an exponent of British thought
 and feeling; and we know it is not the mouthpiece of any
 honest opponent of Slavery. We know that its aim is to
 distort, misrepresent, and falsify every fact of our repub-
 lican government and people, and, if possible, to argue
 or sneer us out of existence. We know that, for years, its
 sympathies and its support have all been with the Slaveholder
 section of our country; and we understand now how it was
 that, with an entire want of any principle on the subject
 of buying & selling men, & working & using them like cattle,
 it could encourage and urge on every slaveholders' measure
 with the purpose to divide and destroy our nation. We
 know that such a paper cannot be the representative of
 the real, honest thought of the great body of the people of
 Great Britain. On the other hand, we have the very strongest
 reason to think that it does represent, and is the virtual
 organ of, a very numerous and a very powerful section of
 the people of England, - of a section which, if not always
 dominant & controlling, does always have a strong influence
 upon the measures of the Government. That section embrace
 the aristocratic supporters of things as they are, a firm monarchy
 &c. - men who thoroughly & cordially hate (like Blackwood's Magazine)
 the very name of Republic, Free Suffrage, & Human
 Equality, - and also the great majority of those whose capital
 and living are all embarked & identified ~~with~~ the commercial
 and manufacturing operations of the land. The "thunder"
 does not become so, because uttering its own thunder merely,
 but because the potent voices of millions of wealthy and
 influential men - the ordinary, most influential classes -
 roll forth together thro' its columns. I do not think we
 give the Times any more credit for ~~influence~~ as an organ
 than belongs to it; it certainly is neither our interest or
 policy, as a people, to do so. But I ~~do not~~ ^{do} think it is
 more entitled to be considered the leading British press, than
 the New York Herald is entitled to be considered as holding
 the same place in this country, - as so many of your

Countrymen think of it. And it is very true that the New York Herald has a large circulation and is very widely read among us. But its circulation is much less than that of the Tribune, and its readers as a class altogether inferior in character and real intelligence to the readers of the Tribune or of the New York Times. It commands the support of men & classes who need and like an unscrupulous organ, one ~~who~~ ^{which} can shift sides easily & quickly, and advocate to-day without shame what it denounced as the worst thing conceivable yesterday. A facile and a venal sheet will always have the support of the selfish, ~~and~~ dishonest, and scheming. There are too many such in every country. The Herald is eminently the organ of such here. Perhaps the Times is equally the organ of such in England; but I think, also, of a far more reputable & intelligent class. The Times ~~always~~ ^{usually} maintains a certain decorum and dignity in all its fulminations and falsehoods. The Herald is always and only low - irretrievably vulgar, - openly & unblushingly ready to serve wherever and from whomsoever it can get the most pay in the long run. It will always be on the winning side, if it knows it, with utter unconcern about consistency.

It is lamentably true that our newspapers, journals have a great power for mischief as well as for good; and, on both sides, the water, they have done much, very much beyond doubt, to excite the public mind unjustly, in regard to topics of difference between us. Upon those topics, I have no wish to enlarge more, ^{and yet something being necessary, to vindicate our position.} We were both surprised and disappointed to see how quickly (how seemingly spontaneously) and how furiously the flame of war-feeling against this country burst forth in England. It was a revelation of an unexpected fact. We had always heard, from England, how strong & inimical was the feeling of our country, against yours. We were very

little aware of it, ourselves, and didn't really believe in it; and yet had got in the way of supposing it must be so, until the visit here of the Prince of Wales, and the cordial good feeling towards him, his royal mother, and the people he represented, expressed universally by all the people & journals, city & country, of our Northern States, afforded a proof which must have convinced any but a stubbornly unbelieving mind of the non-existence among us of any ~~deep~~ considerable enmity to England. I am bound to say, that the same thing could not be said now, with equal truth. Our nation and government ~~were~~ ^{were} ~~have been~~ treated, in the Mason and Skidell case, as tho' an intentional insult to England had been planned and executed. Nothing could be farther than that from the truth. No insult, or discourtesy, to England was imagined, - ^{that may be fearlessly & promptly explained -} while it is very true, that, in the first burst of joy of getting into our hands two of the most wily and influential enemies of our Government, two of the most inveterate of the plotters against our national life, two of the most extreme defenders of Slavery & the slave-trade, some things were said of a foolish and possibly of a defiant character; all these however were quite matched, to some extent provoked, by the deportment of the officers in the Trent. But of ninety-nine in every hundred of the people, no wish or thought of hostility or discourtesy, to England, had any part in their exultation over the capture of those men - whose character and whose part lives the London Times subsequently described so well, & justly. No English respect ought to have received them; they were not refugees, they were not seeking or desiring an asylum. They would have been the first to reject the idea, & with scorn, that they were flying to an asylum! They were going as the proud, liberty-hating, representatives of a new "power in the earth"; Com-missioners to England & France from a new Confederacy

[9 of these 4 pages are fit for destruction, they are at yr. service. Yours very truly J. W. F.]
which had just laid the foundations of its being upon
the right of ownership of human beings. With that
purpose, and in that character, solely, they were going to
Europe to seek means to subvert a Government with
which England was ^{a country essentially at one with England in spirit,} ~~the~~ allied by treaty, and to set
up in perpetuity a Slaveholding and Slavetrading
Oligarchy, to the shame of the whole world. I maintain
that those two villainous men ("Southern gentlemen",
a high English authority has called them) were rightful
our prisoners, wherever we could take them, provided
we did harm to no one else. The Injury, and
great injury, was done to us by their being received
the Treat at all. With a full disclaimer of any ^{intention}
slight or disrespect to England, which might have been
most truthfully given on the part of the American people
and ample payment of any loss incurred by detention
or otherwise, the prisoners should have been left in our
possession peacefully, ~~as soon as~~ ^{as soon as} I know I am
no diplomatist, but such seems to me the dictate of
common sense and of justice. Had they been
flying for their lives, & seeking protection, the case would
have been wholly different. Now the plea of Right of
asylum is absurd, and only adds to the ill-feeling
already engendered. I rejoice to say that the
utter indifference, ^{the} slight indeed, shown to both these
bad men on English soil, has done much to reconcile
the American mind to the course things have taken. Still
the feeling is, generally, that advantage was taken of our en-
pre-occupation to launch this trouble France hotly upon
us, and with it to launch a powerful force of troops
and of ships upon our borders.

I have no time or room to refer to the numerous &
marked successes of the American forces over the rebels in
Kentucky, Tennessee, & North Carolina, But the papers will tell ^{of these}