

Anti-Slavery Office,  
New York, 3 March, 1859.

20

Dear Garrison,

I wish, in the strictest confidence, to ask your advice in a matter respecting which I have some hesitancy in coming to a decision.

For some time past I have had serious thoughts of asking the Executive Committee to increase my salary. It has required a strict economy, during the <sup>(almost)</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>last</sup> years that I have been connected with the Standard, to meet our necessary expenses; and indeed we could not have done it, if we had not sacrificed our tastes, and, to some extent, even the ordinary means of comfort, to obtain cheap board, often in houses where we were almost ashamed to ask a friend to call upon us. For two years we

lived in a fourth-rate boarding house, and in an attic, that we might have the means whereby to live, while rendering needed assistance to those who, from their relationship, had claims upon us. Living in New York is more expensive than in any other city of the country, and the prices have been going steadily up ever since we came here, till now \$1,000 hardly goes farther than \$800 would <sup>have done</sup> six years ago. Last fall we were compelled to move, and thereby to increase considerably ~~our~~ the price of living. In consequence of this we are somewhat pinched to meet ordinary expenses; but, what is a more serious matter, I am suffering for lack of skilful dentistry, for which I have not the means to pay. When Mary Anne was able to lecture, we did better; but she has been too weak to do much in this way for nearly three years past.

My salary, compared with those

of other persons here in similar employ-  
ment, is very small. For example, my friend  
Tilton, who fills quite a subordinate post  
in the Independent, and one which does  
not involve half my labor and respon-  
sibility, is paid \$1500; and then he has  
many opportunities, by extra work, to earn  
considerable more. The ordinary re-  
porters on the daily papers here are  
paid more than I am, and so much  
of their time is at command for other labors,  
that they earn, often, \$500 extra in a single  
year. I mention this not as a matter of  
invidious, still less of envious, comparison;  
but as a proof that, if I were to ask a small  
increase of compensation, I should make  
no unreasonable demand.

I hope I do not overrate the  
value and importance of my services to  
the Society. Those who know me most inti-  
mately will not, I think, charge me with  
too great self-esteem, or with a disposition  
to weigh any selfish interest against the

the claims of the cause. Certainly, I serve the Society with diligence and fidelity; though, unfortunately, much of my labor is of a sort that makes no show and can be put in no inventory. Those who are acquainted with my daily habits will testify that I am a hard-working, pains-taking editor, and that I devote myself to my occupation more exclusively than most men in similar places. The fact is, I exhaust my whole power in my editorial and other duties, inasmuch that I am in danger of breaking down. Since Mrs. Fay left, my labors, especially in the way of correspondence and in waiting upon those who call at the office for one purpose or another, have been much increased, so that I can hardly go out of town for a Sunday without inconvenience. Those who see nothing of what I do save what shows in the columns of the Standard, have little idea of the work I do.

In ~~of~~ this matter, dear Garrison, I speak to you as <sup>to</sup> my second self. I would know the difficulty of raising money for

our treasury, and the need here is of making every dollar go as far as possible; and if you, upon consideration of all the circumstances, think I had better struggle on and do the best I can with my present salary, I will cheerfully follow your advice. If, on the other hand, you think the Ex. Com. would recognize the justice of an application on my part for an increase of my stipend, and would be likely to vote it freely and cheerfully, I will take your advice as to the best way to bring the subject to their notice.

I repeat the request that you will consider this letter and its subject, for the present, strictly confidential.

Mary Anne writes with me in warm remembrances to Helen and yourself, and the children.

Yours, unfalteringly,

Oliver Johnson

