

Worcester Feby 10, 1850

Dear Bradburn,

I returned from New York Friday evening. I have a sort of a promise from Butler, that he will give his opinion this week, or next. Not getting his opinion, I probably shall not be in Boston this week, as I had hoped to be.

The suggestions mentioned in my last letter, touching your matters with R., are these. You, knowing all the circumstances, can probably judge better than I, whether they are well founded. If well founded, they excuse R's conduct—in part certainly—on the pecuniary score.

1. Mrs. P's going to L, was an act of shocking imprudence—and probably she and yourself are much more responsible for that act than R. But for yourself, he would never have thought of it. But for your approval, he probably would not have asked her to come. Doubtless your judgment was his controlling inducement.

2. R's paying \$200, or \$300, of Mrs. P's debts, as a preliminary to her coming, was certainly very generous. So also was his becoming responsible for the rent of the house for three years.

3. His promise to make up all deficiencies, if she should not make the house support itself, was of course made, and is to be now understood as being made, solely with reference to the plans then in view, viz, that she should take boarders—other boarders than himself and family. He now finds those plans utterly defeated. Mrs. P. has had no other boarders the last year—and probably can expect none in the future, owing to the lawsuits, past and in progress, and the consequent notoriety.

R., then, finds himself paying her a salary for taking care of his children, paying weekly board for them and himself, and saddled beside with the responsibility of \$400, or \$500, rent per annum—and all the plans already defeated, in view of which his undertaking was entered into. He also finds that he himself has been involved in one lawsuit—he finds you involved in another. Mrs. P. in another—and, as I understood you, (or inferred from what you said) that he is looked to by both you and her for the mans of prosecuting them.

Considering that he has a large family of his own to provide for, is it not time for him to ask himself where all these expenses are to end? All the plans—to carry out which his promise was made—have failed—after he has done all that he was bound to do towards enabling her to execute them. The plans having failed, his promise, based upon them, is of course no longer obligatory. It could not

have been understood by any of you, at the time, that he was to take upon himself such a responsibility as he now finds thrown upon him—vis, that of giving Mrs. P a costly rent for three years, whether she succeeded in getting boarders or not—that of giving her a salary for the same time at all events—and board for himself and family, under all contingencies—and that of carrying out all the lawsuits in which she and yourself might become involved in three years.

I say nothing equal to this could have been expected at the time, because it is manifestly impossible for Mrs. P, or any other woman, to render any sort of equivalent for it. The care and instruction of two or three children are no reasonable equivalent, because he can send them to the best schools at a much cheaper rate.

Besides, who is responsible for the failure of all the plans on which his promise was based? And who is responsible for these suits, which have made these unpleasant matters so notorious? Perhaps some responsibility rests upon all three of you—but does not the smallest part rest upon R.? Did not your violent and repeated attacks upon B___ compel him in self-defense to attack you? Or at least was it not to have been expected that he would rehabilitate in the way he has?

I know not what provocation B___ may have given you in the first instance—but I think hardly any provocation, given in private, by such a fellow as he, could justify you in such violent attacks through your paper. Besides, B___ is weak-minded constitutionally violent—he is to be pitied and shunned, or else conciliated, rather than thus publicly and violently assailed. A man is not to be blamed for being a fool—and to quarrel with a fool is the height of folly. It is to be expected that he will throw stories—right or wrong.

But you will say that Mrs. P gave up her prospects in New York, at R's request. I answer that if she had any reliable prospects in New York, it was perfect fortuity to give them up to go to Lynn. And her motive for giving them up could not have been to accommodate R. or to do good to his children—it was only that she might be with you. And that was your motive for wishing her to come. There is no disguising that fact. And R. must know, therefore, that any sacrifices she made in leaving New York, were made for her own sake and yours, and not for his. It is idle to suppose that benevolence towards R, or his children had any thing to do with it.

This is the way the thing looks to me. You of course must judge whether it be a correct view. But if it be, I do hope that you will look all these unpleasant matters in the face, hush them up, and make the best of them. And not ruin yourself and Mrs. P by an outbreak with R., which it seems to me would be almost certain ruin to both of you. The world would certainly take sides with R.—and there would be no limits to the scandal.

Yours truly,

L. Spooner