

Boston Sept 20, 1852

Dear Bradburn,

I am ashamed to think how long it is since I have given you a letter—but I should have been much more ashamed but for the excuse of which I can justly and truly avail myself, viz, that I have had nothing to tell you that was worth writing—with the exception possibly of one thing, which has interested me somewhat for near a year past, and which I will probably tell you sometime, though I must not now. With that exception, nothing has [sic] interested me at all, in a degree worth speaking of, except my book on the Trial by Jury. It has proved to be a very laborious book to write, compared with what I anticipated when I commenced. But it is at last done, and not only those who have read it, (Hildreth, Sewall, Wright, Apthrop[?], and John W. Browne[?]), are satisfied with it, but I believe I am satisfied with it myself. Hildreth says it is the best thing that I have ever written. We have as yet only the proof sheets of it. It probably will not be published for some two months—owing to the delay that will be occasioned in getting the copyright in England, which must be secured before it is published here, or I am liable to lose the copyright there altogether. The book will be as applicable to England as to this country, and I anticipate as large a sale there as here. It is a book of 224 pages. And I consider it all that is necessary to prove what the true and original Trial by Jury was. Nevertheless I wish now to write a second volume, in which I should give still further proof, and also discuss a variety of political and legal questions that will be likely to assume importance, if the trial by jury should be reestablished. Whether I shall get means to live on while I write it is uncertain. If I fail of it, I have no plans before me, and what I shall be doing is uncertain. (I said "no plans"—I have plans enough, if I had the means of prosecuting them).

You will wonder perhaps that I have not written you, and will also wonder that I could not make up a letter out of something. Yet it is literally true that I have not had enough to write you at any one time to make a respectable letter. I wrote one for you two or three months ago, but after it was written, it seemed so stale, flat, and unprofitable that I did not send it. I have taken very little interest in politics, and if I had I could have told you nothing that would have been new to you. I am glad to see the free soilers so zealous, and hope that the movement may sometime go beyond what the present leaders contemplate. The point they are now laboring so hard, viz, that it is the duty of the states, and not the general government, to give up fugitives, is all moonshine. The arguments of Ramtoral[?] and Sumner on that point are certainly erroneous. I have not time and space now to give you the proof, but

you may be assured that their positions are certainly untenable. And if the free soilers have not the courage to meet the constitutional question point blank, and deny not only the "nationality," but the "sectionality" of slavery, they might as well keep their mouths shut, for they are only uttering words that will sometime have to be eaten.

Our friends here are all well I believe. Dr. Hoyt is here yet—he gains practice slowly—but will finally succeed, if he perseveres. Mrs. Hoyt is still at Athol, the doctor's practice not being sufficient to enable him to have her here. Sarah is at Mrs. Willard's School, Troy, N.Y. She is really a remarkable girl, has wonderful musical powers, as well as a superior mind and superior accomplishments, in other respect. And is as simple and childlike in her manners almost as she was half a dozen years ago. Henry is in a bookstore at Northampton. Hittridge is flourishing bravely in his practice. Miss Hickley is at Hallowell. Mrs. Hildreth is working very hard to finish pictures on hand that she may get time to go to Niagara. Whether she is likely to succeed I do not know. I do not know what Hildreth is doing, since he got his history off his hands. His wife said he had a job, which he was doing "solely for money," but did not tell what it was.

I see by Douglass's paper today that Gerrit Smith, and those who joined the free soilers with him, (with the exception of Douglass himself), have backed out from the support of Hale, and called another convention of the Liberty Party to nominate candidates for the Presidency and so forth. What a farcical affair that party make of their cause and themselves. Can hardly get a dozen men together, and yet now propose to hold their fourth "convention" to nominate candidates. I hope they may live long enough to learn that nominating candidates is not, (as they seem to imagine) "the sovereignest thing on earth" for all the ills that man is heir to.

Give my love to Mrs. Bradburn, and write me if you think this letter worth answering.

Yours truly,

L. Spooner