

Washington Nov 27, 1861

My Dear Spooner,

I found your letter in the P.O. in this city on my return from N.Y. a week ago and improve the first leisure moment since to reply. Your handwriting, familiar to me for twenty five years, and even the vehicle of kindly sentiments and friendly aid, was greeted as an old and welcome friend. The other letter of which you write, and your work on Banking, were received before I left Toledo and I wrote, at the time, a brief reply, promising at an early day, to answer more at length. It seems you did not receive the letter, and I am under the impression that I send it enclosed in a letter of introduction; by my friend W. Bond of Toledo, who probably failed to deliver it. I have never seen him since to inquire.

Life with me goes on much as usual. After thirty years of sad experience in the west, I have brought up, at the age of forty seven, in Washington— a pensioner upon Government to the amount of \$1200 per annum; for nothing to do, in the Library of the House of Representatives – and very valuable collection of undigested duplicate and triplicate volumes of the laws and proceedings of a Country once known as the United States, bound in sheep with red leather gill labels, which will probably require dusting at my hands, as often as twice or thrice during the present session. This highly responsible, and largely demonstrative position, I would have you understand is shared by me with one Dr. Chaffer, formerly a member of Congress from Massachusetts. Between us both, I think we can keep the sheepskins in perfect order. You will be gratified I know, to learn that after trying law, logic and literature, I have at length found my level, and that, at an age not so much advanced, but that I may hope, that my mutual and physical powers will enable me to perform the services required for several years. If I had only known twenty years ago, what my genius was fitted for, the world would have escaped an immense amount of literary labor, that will now go for nought and I should probably, with an emptier head, and a freer heart, have gloried in full pockets and congenial occupation. I am now a public functionary. Once I hoped to be a member of Congress, I have come so near it, that my place is in a little room on the floor, where I can look out upon the circle of Congressmen. There is the distance of only a few steps between I, in position, and while they have only seats I have an entire room to myself. The more I reflect upon my position as an officer of the Government, the more deeply am I impressed with its consequences, and I sometimes wonder what there was in my personal appearance, and my credentials, to fit me for the discharge of these high duties. Indeed my old friend, the difference between my position and that of the President himself, consists chiefly in compensation. He gets greater pay, I perform more labor – for he only attends the military reviews, which I attend them also, besides reviewing my sheepskins. I am already more perfect in my business than Gen. McClellan, because I keep all the books committed to my charge in perfect order, which is a devilish sigh more than he can say of his troops.

Now, having as I trust fully impressed you with a sense of the importance of my position in the Government, let us proceed to matters of minor consequence. I should like to take hold of you Banking system, if I were fitted for it. I can find no fault with it, but in the present condition of national affairs, tho uncertain and fluctuating values of real property, do you think it could be brought into practical operation? I should have no doubt about it were time times favorable— but I fear that at present, it would not fill our pockets very raidly. I am not the less grateful to you, for your kind remembrance.

You have tried your hand at invention. Did it ever seem to you that there are a hundred things connected with the army that might be improved by an ingenious mind. I know the value you place upon human life, and of course do not believe you would invent any projectiles or missives to increase the means of its destruction: but any improvements, whereby the comfort and convenience of our troops could be enhanced, such as better tents – or beds– or wardrobes, would make a fortune for a man very

speedily. Could not your spring bed bottoms be so applied to hospital fixtures, as to make the a desiduatum? Think of I, and as I am to remain here, if you can use me, I will endeavor so far to shirk the vast responsibilities of my public position, as to serve you.

What think you of the war? Of course, you trace its progress thro' the papers. I live here in the midst of camps. Guns, drums and cannon are constantly going, troops are marching to and fro daily, and expectation has stook on tip-toe her senses are stiffened, to hear the dim of a great battle. To day, thirteen regiments, which have been encamped two months or more on this side of the Potomac, have crossed to join the grand army, as all believe, preparatory to an engagement between this and Monday morning. I do not think it possible for there to make a successful march. The road in Virginia are also impassible— the country for more than a hundred miles devastated, and a heavy rain has just set in, to increase the embarrassments. I have little faith in the skill or efficiency of out present military organization. McDowell ought to have retained his position as Commander in Chief. His failure at Bull Run was no fault of his. His plans were admirable. He is a much greater man in every respect than McClellan – full of strategy and military service.

Washington is now a very lively city. An army of 300,000 men around it ad a sixth of that number of strangers in it, makes it rather an interesting center of observation. I wish you were here to enjoy it with me. Can you not make it convenient and profitable to spend a few months here. I will do all I can to make it agreeable. You shall have the freedom of my library or what will I imagine suit you much better, a seat at my desk. We could spend two or three months amid the scenes which must transpire here very pleasantly. Increasing years has made me somewhat contemplative, but I think we should find no lack of interest in each others society. I often recuz to the past. When we became acquainted, life was in its hey day with us both. Do you recollect how rich you intended to be out of the avails of that wonderful city of Gilead? And what an immense lawyer I designed to be at Maconnee. That walk together from Toledo to Perrysburg, more than twenty years ago, when we cast our horoscopes – do you remember it? What a laugh we had at the appearance of the Old Count. Dear old fellow! For many years after that he was one of my best friends. It was then, we first knew Williams. He too has gone, barring only a life insurance of five thousand dollars for an interesting family. Old Jim Myers is nearly ready to die of gout. The devil will get him, go when he may. Well. I will stop, but I could make the page fragrant and sorrowful with memories, which it would be delightful to talk over – and should our lives hold out– and Uncle Sam be satisfied to continue my valuable services if you don't visit me here this winter, I'll visit you at Boston next summer and we'll have a time. Do you suppose I could obtain employment as a Correspondent for one of the Boston papers? I shall have good opportunities and will work for moderate pay. If you think so would you be willing to enquire of some of the publishers? As all events write, write long and often and ___ me or ever.

Your old & true friend
Hez. S Hasmer