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American Anti-Slavery Society Letter.

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TO THE HONORABLE CORNELIUS W. LAWRENCE,
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF NEW-YORK.

SIR,

THE undersigned, members of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society, duly appreciating the efforts of the City Authorities, and their fellow-citizens, in protecting their property from the depredations of an infuriated mob, feel themselves called upon to present, through you, to the Common Council, a statement of facts, showing that they have neither done nor designed any thing inconsistent with their duty as patriots, as Christians, as friends of the Union, and of the peace and prosperity of this city.

The Constitution of our country guaranties to us, in common with all our fellow-citizens, THE FREEDOM OF SPEECH, AND OF THE PRESS; and the Constitution of this, our own State, provides that "every citizen may freely SPEAK, WRITE and PUBLISH his sentiments, on all subjects, being responsible" [to the legal tribunals alone] "for the abuse of that right; and no law shall be passed, to restrain or abridge the liberty of speech or of the press." We have kept within these sacred enclosures; we shall not go beyond them; and we respectfully claim of our fellow-citizens, as Americans and men, that while we do not violate the rights of others, our own rights may be respected.

To show the objects of our Society, we annex an extract from its Constitution:

"The objects of this Society are the entire abolition of slavery in the United States. While it admits that each State, in which slavery exists, has, by the Constitution of the United States, the exclusive right to legislate in regard to its abolition in said State, it shall aim to convince all our fellow-citizens, by arguments addressed to their understandings and consciences, that slave-holding is a heinous crime in the sight of God, and that the duty, safety, and best interests of all concerned, require its immediate abandonment, without expatriation. The Society will also endeavor, in a constitutional way, to influence Congress to put an end to the domestic slave trade, and to abolish slavery in all those portions of our common country which come under its control, especially in the District of Columbia,—and likewise to prevent the extension of it to any State that may be hereafter admitted to the Union."

"This Society shall aim to elevate the character and condition of the people of color, by encouraging their intellectual, moral and religious improvement, and by removing public prejudice, that thus they may, according to their intellectual and moral worth, share an equality with the whites, of civil and religious privileges; but this Society will never, in any way, countenance the oppressed in vindicating their rights by resorting to physical force."

These are our sentiments, undisguisedly and honestly expressed. We disclaim, and have always disclaimed, any desire to promote or encourage intermarriages between white and colored persons; we have addressed no appeals to the slaves; we have done nothing to excite resistance to the laws; we have done no act, nor have we desired Congress to do any act inconsistent with the Constitution, the laws of the Union or of the States. It has been our object to address the hearts and consciences of our fellow-citizens, and to defend our principles and measures by facts and arguments; to encourage the people of color to great circumspection of conduct, and forbearance; to abstain from mingling the objects of our Society with those of either of the political parties; to treat the colored people with civility and respect according to their moral character and condition; and we seek to bring about the abolition of slavery (which nearly the whole country professes to desire) by promulgating the duty and safety of immediate emancipation.

Conscientiously believing the Colonization Society to be an obstruction to the abolition of slavery in the United States, and liable to other serious objections, as we have set forth at large in our publications, we have deemed it our duty to oppose its claims, but we feel no hostility to the memory of its founders nor to the persons of its present supporters.

We deem it proper here to state that the only meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society held or contemplated this month, was on the 4th of July; that the meeting of colored people at Chat-ham street Chapel on Monday evening, the week after, was of their own appointment to celebrate their usual anniversary; that the meeting at Clinton Hall was only of a Debating Society, not in connexion with ours; that no meeting of any Anti-Slavery Society was to have been held at the Chapel on Wednesday evening, it being only a meeting of the church worshipping there; that we believe some of the daily newspapers (by publishing that there would be meetings when there were to be none, and misrepresenting our principles and actions) excited the populace, and are the authors of all the disorders; and we affirm that the stories in circulation about individuals adopting colored children, ministers uniting white and colored people in marriage, abolitionists encouraging intermarriages, exciting the people of color to assume airs, &c. &c. &c. are wholly unfounded.

Having thus expressed our principles, and disclaimed a few of the numerous charges promulgated against us, we do not wish to trouble you, or the Common Council, with more detailed expostulations, not being conscious that we ought to recant or relinquish any principle or measure we have adopted, and being willing, as free American citizens, to live and die by the Constitution of our Society, and the Declaration of the National Anti-Slavery Convention.

We herewith transmit to you a copy of each of the publications issued by the Society since its formation, and have the honor to be,

Your fellow citizens, respectfully,

ARTHUR TAPPAN,
JOHN RANKIN,
E. WRIGHT, Jr.
JOSHUA LEAVITT,
W. GOODELL,
LEWIS TAPPAN,
SAMUEL E. CORNISH.