

Brother John, Read at leisure Jan 12th 1859

Having plenty of leisure I improve some of this idle
snap to have a little chat with you, as I have been thinking
about it some time, during the past year I have worked away
from home a large part of the time and what time I have
been at home I have found plenty of work in doing large
and little things which you can understand the importance
of for anyone having a small place which they wish to keep
and improve, though many think we are foolish to do
such things when we have not as much money as we want.

If I had not done so I should ^{not} now have anything nor should
I have had many more comforts since I have been here.

True I might not have worked so hard, then I should
have had the credit of being a lazy one, but no matter
what others think, I know I have done the best I could
under the circumstances, it might seem that I had made a
good deal of money the past year having so much work from
home, well I don't complain, but it has been quite an uphill
business, for I went to work for a store keeper whom I owed
for goods, but the first time about four months last winter, I had
only ten dollars per month, having the privilege of drawing goods
all the time, I was able to keep the folks comfortable, but
when I quit in the spring I owed him more than when
I commenced, then I recommenced with him about the first
of July (being still more in debt.) at \$1- per day, worked until
the last of October, at which time I owed him \$53 - having
drawn goods - some clothing &c, but getting no cash from him,
you know at ~~least~~ there must be some more expenses.

having to buy wood and such other things as could not be
got from the store, I will not attempt to tell how that
dodge was got along with so far only that I have to shift
as well as I can, having earned only about \$15 - in cash
and sold about twenty five \$25 - from our land, buying ^{some} more
out of that, well I consider my place much improved this
^{last} year, I have a good patch of raspberries, not a full stand
however, and I don't expect more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of a crop, but
my small patch I think will do much better than last
summer, ^{about 9 bds} so you see I am working for the future
yet, as usual, now John I know this has been a fault
with me rather than a virtue, but how can a man
with any thing like a heart, and knowledge of the ways of
the world, and having dear ones dependant on him,
how can he be content with barely living from day to day
as so many do barely keeping up a decent appearance to prevent
being utterly cast off by all their friends who may happen
to be a little better in worldly goods. I was well satisfied

that I could not live any thing ^{like} life in Boston, and let what
might come to us I think I shall not regret moving from
there, it is hard enough to commence every spring at the bottom of
the hill (having run behind all winter) but there is some
hope of getting better in time, in connection with my money
earnings last season. I might say my interest account was
most as much as the cash income, 28 dollars on the mortgage
interest on ^{the} last years interest, and seven dollars on store bill
and so I must expect to get on as I can until I get was
to produce enough to turn the tide which I shall do sometime
but we must live till then if we can and as we can, and I don't
expect to get discouraged if I can have a moderate share of health.
I consider myself now past the prime of life for hard work, but
if I can do without working very hard, I shall try to live long
enough to have those notes paid, and you can see from what
I have written some reason why Eliza should feel bad about
the conditions of that will, she knows how I have endeavored
to place her and the children in such condition that they could
take care of themselves when I could not, and I have always
been willing to forgo present ease and comfort for that.
Oh how much better it would be if parents would think
more of teaching their children to take care of themselves
and help them to do so while they are young and not think
quite so much of leaving meagrely dollars for them at some
future day, and these pledging them around with conditions
to prevent them getting much of the benefit of the gift,
how much ~~more~~ Father felt like Old Thordille when he
made his will, well he has not done worse than I expected
for I have never forgot the flash of his eye when I
talked with him about the money I owed him. I can
compare it to nothing but the look of old Booth in
the character of Shylock when he demands the pound of
flesh, it was something like this, when my years ^{entire}
was about to expire I told him what I wanted to do and
what ^{next of} the other creditors would let me do, viz go on an
another year, he made no objection and I supposed he was
satisfied but when the other year came round and I was
~~forced to come up~~ sitting up I asked him to figure up
the interest, he don't say, what said I do you figure on
the whole four hundred, yes said he and shall demand
every cent, principle and interest, what said I, won't you
do as well by me for the present as others have done,
no said he, if you had paid promptly when the years
was out you might have held me to the agreement, but
as you did not I shall fall back on the original debt,
said I why did you not express your dissatisfaction when
I told you that I was trying to get another extension,
he said he cared nothing about that he should insist

upon having every cent, well said I if so, you must
get it as you can, for I can not get it for you.
It is no use for me to try longer, now I give it up don't care
one damn about it. I shall give up business and
go to work at what I can to support my family.

I have never regretted talking as I did to him and
wish I ^{had} told him more, that he might have hated me
more on his death bed. I ask no better boon than the
hated of the mean and scoldish. you will not of course
think Eliza objected to do what was asked for you. she
would be glad to help you, and thought if you could
break the will it would be better for all concerned.

It seems to me the estate can not be wholly settled until
those notes are paid by the interest on my death. how
can it, if they are paid who is to have the money, if not
paid where port do they come out off, well I don't want
to die to prevent any one getting it. for I have nothing but
good will for any of the family and am sorry they should
have any trouble. I think you should not suffer
in the will because you lost the place for I think it
would have been unjust for him to have taken more
than the cost, especially as he added interest. I hope you
will ^{set} the highest figure named in the agreement, and save
enough for it to do you and your family some good.

I shall probably work along as well as if nothing had
happened in that quarter, but ^{you} must ^{see} that Eliza feels
very much tantalized at the way in which her portion
is fixed, yesterday was the coldest day we have had
since we came here, well so far we have had
wood enough, for when I could not pay for it I
made out to get timber for a load and perhaps I
can for more if need be. business is dull here
as usual in the winter, but we have several interesting
things going on, singing classes, Grammar, French &c.

Social parties, and not the least a Dramatic Club
performances fortnightly, we, Eliza, Eliza F., and myself
take some parts, we are all well except my in-
ability to stand the cold which makes me say I
am not quite sound, but think I will be about right
in the spring. I don't like to flinch so at a little cold
but can't help it, you may show this to any of the
family if you wish.

Eliza & F. and Jim E. send their love

Yours truly

James D. Blacker

Thompson Station

Eliza need not endorse or approve of what I have said but
over

as this is not important Read at leisure
Eliza says as I have wrote so much she will not
write a present, but will an other time.

will speak for her self when she writes, I on speak
as the thoughts came to me