

To Francis and Anna Maria Cotton.

My dear friends,

Francis & Anna Maria Cotton.

Lest I should again give offence, I feel disposed to make a brief reply to your communications respectively. I must be brief; for I have neither time nor strength to expend on such truly unprofitable disquisitions.

Let me in the first place assure ^{you} that I felt nothing but sincere love towards you both, personally, when I penned the note that, to my astonishment, has occasioned such offence; — a love that I am determined, by best help, shall not even now be interrupted. Yet, neither then, nor now, do I feel bound to approve of any weakness, prejudice, or fault, that I may observe in my friends (I do not approve of such in myself, when conscious of them;) that kind of blind attachment would not be Christian love.

I fully hoped that the instruction to get white gloves, would prove an error on my part. I regret that the supposition should have occasioned uneasiness; & for this sincerely ask your forgiveness. But, my dear friends, let me entreat you not to let this uneasy feeling put by, as un-called

- called for, the gentle intimation which it afforded the occasion, not the reason for conveying; and which still rests with me as a needful caution - to avoid any thing that tends to neutralize our testimony in respect of plainness & simplicity of attire, as being incumbent on Christians. I am still of the judgment, that wearing gloves at all, in a room; - unless under bodily infirmity, - and especially where the persons we are amongst, as well as our own habits & manner of living, are simple & unostentatious, is, to say the least, out of place. If my dear friend A. M. Cotton's mind does not feel condemned in this respect, I am quite ready to leave it; having discharged the little debt of love due to one whom I have long regarded as a Christian sister: but if it does, & her own convictions accord with mine on the subject, let her not again "rise above" the reproof of a friend.

With respect to J. B. Mather's affair; I sought to correct, & remedy some defect of judgment, either in him or my friends at Kelvedon. I thought that if it were in the former, & he allowed himself to be imposed upon by others in the trade, it was high time he was put upon his guard. With reference to you, my dear friends, I assure you I did not view it in that important light in which

you seem to regard it. Nor I believe does Joseph: he well knows that my intention was to do the concern a kindness, as a matter of business, to guard them against imposition. While on the other hand, should he not be in fault, I considered that if your judgment was so far decided, as not to be convinced that you had been in the wrong, in thinking the things he had got out for you (that is, from other shops) "very dear," which you stated was your impression; it would be well, in future, that you should be spared the mortification, and he the trouble & discredit, of making such purchases. If however I have expressed these views in a needlessly abrupt manner, - which I really do not perceive in re-perusing them, - yet if I have been so understood; I willingly retract them, & may they be forgotten! I acted with an upright intention; and I told you what I had done, not knowing that Joseph intended himself writing on the subject. I did not suppose that from what I had said any importance would be attached to it, save as a matter of business, in which light I viewed it, & in which light, I believe, J.B.M. exclusively regards it: and I referred merely to matter of fact - that such was your impression.

As for those parts of my dear friends' letters which deal
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in recrimination & retort; * I can only say that I deeply regret that any thing, from any pen or quarter, should have elicited ^{them}: I leave them to pass their own judgment upon these, in their cool, retired moments, & when apart from each other.

And now, my beloved friends, let us all renewedly seek for ability to obey the injunction of an inspired Apostle - "to love as brethren - be pitiful - be courteous." If I have in any way infringed upon this precept, I ask your forgiveness. And in whatever degree you may have infringed upon it (which I do not undertake to decide) I desire sincerely to add, I forgive you, as I hope to be forgiven.

With love, I remain,

Your friend - your sincere friend }
Brother }

George W. Walker. ○
