

I am delighted to learn about this (to me) heretofore unknown document in the hand of John Brown. I am currently writing on Brown's last days, so I am doubly delighted that you were kind enough to reach out along the lines of content. Below, I have provided a contextual discussion that includes my suggestion as to which purported remarks were "intentional misrepresentations." Of course, historians are always subject to the discovery of further evidence; but I've offered below my best sense.

The "Galager" addressed by John Brown in this document was doubtlessly W. W. B. Gallaher, the publisher of a local newspaper, *The Free Press and Farmer's Repository*, in Charlestown, and also a correspondent of the *New York Herald* during the Harper's Ferry crisis and aftermath. The *Herald* was an ultra-conservative publication that sided with the pro-slavery element in most questions. According to its editor and publisher, James Gordon Bennett, a New York associate of Gallaher sent a copy of the Beecher sermon as published in *The Spiritual Telegraph*, a spiritualist and anti-slavery publication. Very likely, the man who sent it was a relative, E. A. Gallaher, a Virginian residing in New York City, who seems also to have been associated with the *Herald*.

In an editorial column, Bennett wrote that the copy of Beecher's published remarks were thus sent "for the purpose of eliciting [Brown's] views in regard to it." I would assume this was not a matter of curiosity, but an intentional journalistic project for *The Herald*. After Brown read it and made brief comments, the paper was "furnished to the *Herald*," according to editor Bennett, who continued: "we publish the commentaries and the passages commented upon, entirely and literally. We have no doubt as to its authenticity, for we have had other opportunities of becoming acquainted with Brown's handwriting." He added that the remarks by Brown "are characteristic of him, being curt, frank, candid, and to the point."

The *Herald* thus published Brown's remarks on November 23 under the title, "Beecher on Brown,

and Brown on Beecher," and it was this that was afterward shown to Brown, eliciting this wonderful letter now under auction. As the letter shows, Brown tells "Galager" that his remarks "had been treated with as much fairness as I have; by the Paper I have met with." He means the *Herald* had treated this document in the same manner it had generally taken toward reporting on him. Brown's remarks are further appreciated by his reported assessment of that newspaper, published in the *Herald* on October 27, during his trial. The report states: "Old Brown said that he had read the *New York Herald* a great deal, and added:--'I will give the *Herald* credit for one thing—although I do not agree with its sentiments of course—it is very fair in its reports towards all sides.'"

As to the remarks on Beecher as reported, of course we wish that the original comments on the newspaper were preserved. I am endeavoring to locate the original, if indeed it is extant, but I fear it has been lost. Your letter of Brown dated November 30 is important if not problematic, for it seems to contradict an affidavit of the jailer, John Avis, dated 10 December 1859, to the effect that Brown's comments "on the margin, and other blank pieces of said paper" were correctly transcribed. Avis thus certified: "I heard Captain Brown deny that his comments were incorrectly printed in *The New York Herald*" (*New York Herald*, 17 Dec. 1859).

I can only explain this discrepancy in two ways. First, the affidavit was either willfully or accidentally misprinted by the *Herald*, and Avis' words actually were: "I heard Captain Brown deny that his comments were correctly printed..." I only raise this as a possibility because Richard Hinton presents the same affidavit in his biography of John Brown (1894), and renders the line according to the latter, that is, that Brown denied his words had been correctly represented. This reading flows with your Brown letter of November 30. A second possibility is that Brown initially approved of the *Herald's* transcription, but afterward read it more closely and "discovered" points of objection. I suppose the latter is just as pos-

sible as the former. (This would naturally mean Hinton was the one who had erred in rendering the affidavit.)

Regardless, we now have in Brown's own handwriting an objection to the published remarks, which finally brings me to the question of the "intentional misrepresentations" to which John Brown refers. Obviously, without the original, we are forced to engage in a measure of educated speculation, but I will offer you my opinion as a student of Brown's life and letters—of course subject to correction should we ever be so fortunate as to recover the abolitionist's original handwritten comments. From my own reading of the Beecher excerpts and Brown comments, there are a few that seem uncharacteristic in tone or style, but only a few.

The first is a short excerpt where Beecher refers to St. Paul's statements on liberty made to the Christian slaves of antiquity, which the preacher declared were needed by slaves in the South at present. He says, "If I lived in the South I should preach these things to slaves, while preaching on masters' duties to those who hold them." To this is printed Brown's remark: "Why don't Beecher come South to preach?" Brown probably thought Beecher, like most abolitionist orators, talked too much and had little real action behind his words. However, this remark has previously struck me as uncharacteristic in tone, grammar, and spirit. Brown could be dryly cutting, but there is sarcasm to this remark that seems like an interpolation from the hand of a Southerner.

There are two other remarks that might be interpolations by one of the Gallahers. One comment is made after Beecher presents himself as standing up for two million enslaved women "who are without a voice" in regard to the protection of marriage and violation by slave masters. To this Brown remarks, "Let the champion come here to preach." A little later, where Beecher remarks as to preserving the sanctity of marriage and "the conscience of the South," Brown's response is "Come on, Beecher." In both cases, like the previ-

ous, I would tend toward suspicion in the absence of the original, handwritten comments. It is also worth noting that these comments are all italicized, unlike the rest of Brown's remarks as published in the Herald. Do the italics thus flag interpolations? Possibly, but I am more suspicious of these particular remarks because they are unlike the tone and style of Brown's other remarks, such as: "Truth," "Not well posted," "Not strictly true," "Very well," and a few specific correctives that, although blunt, are never *ad hominem* in style. Whether in cross examination, conversation, or letters, Brown exercised a tone of respectful argument, and the remarks that I've identified, at least to my reading, strike me as unlike the man.

It is unfortunate that Brown's date with the gallows was too close for him to engage the subject. Had he time, we might have a fascinating insight to this interesting but little known episode of the story.

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