

ministrative talents. His religious radicalism and staunch Garrisonian abolitionism made him a leading critic of clerical moderation on the slavery issue. Garrison praised Murray and Smeal as "two of the most active and zealous abolitionists in all Great Britain." C. Duncan Rice, *The Scots Abolitionists, 1833–1861* (Baton Rouge, La., 1981), 39–45, 108–11; Garrison and Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison*, 2:398; Clare Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists: An Episode in Transatlantic Understanding* (Edinburgh, 1974), 106–7, 149–50, 189–90.

2. William Smeal (1793–1877) was a Glasgow Quaker and prosperous tea merchant. He coedited *The British Friend* with his brother Robert between 1843 and 1861. He was involved in many reform causes—temperance, peace, abolition of capital punishment, repeal of the Corn Laws, and antislavery. Smeal and John Murray were cosecretaries of the Glasgow Emancipation Society and among the leading Scottish Garrisonians. Smeal orchestrated the "Send Back the Money" campaign to impel the Scottish Free Church to return contributions from southern slaveholders. During the Civil War, he generated public sympathy for the Union cause. From 1864 to 1867, he was secretary of the Glasgow Freedmen's Aid Society. Temperley, *British Antislavery*, 210–13; Rice, *Scots Abolitionists*, 37, 41–44, 150–55.

7.

## Charles Lenox Remond to Charles B. Ray

30 June 1840

Beginning in 1840, many black abolitionists ventured abroad as delegates to international reform conventions. The first of these delegates, Charles Lenox Remond, attended the mid-June meeting of the World's Anti-Slavery Convention in London. Remond and other Garrisonians refused to be seated as delegates after the convention voted to exclude women from active participation in the proceedings. Remond addressed the delegates only after the formal convention was completed. On 24 June, he and other Garrisonians attended the annual anniversary meeting of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Remond summarized his first two weeks in England in a 30 June 1840 letter to black editor Charles B. Ray. Whereas other Garrisonian delegates sent back convention reports to leading white antislavery papers, Remond chose to inform readers of the *Colored American*, the only reform paper directed at a black audience. CA, 3 October 1840; Miriam L. Usrey, "Charles Lenox Remond, Garrison's Ebony Echo: World Anti-Slavery Convention, 1840," *EIHC* 106: 113–25 (April 1970).

London, [England]

June 30th, 1840

MY DEAR FRIEND RAY:<sup>1</sup>

Faithful to my promise, although in the midst of engagements, I steal a moment, not to fill this sheet, as my time will not admit, but to inform you of my safe arrival and good health at this time, and that this sheet may meet you with your wife, sisters and friends in possession of the same privilege is my best wish. In referring to the subject of anti slavery on this side the Atlantic, permit me to say, as a silent listener, I was much interested in the discussions during the sitting of the British and Foreign Anti Slavery Society<sup>2</sup> (not World's Convention)<sup>3</sup> as we had fondly and anxiously anticipated, which facts, with many others, forbid my taking a seat, and participating in its deliberations. That on my arrival I learned with much sorrow of the rejection of the female delegation, I need not mention. And in few instances through life have I met with greater disappointment, especially in view of the fact, that I was almost entirely indebted to the kind and generous members of the Bangor Female Anti-Slavery Society, the Portland sewing circle, and the Newport Young Ladies Juvenile Anti Slavery Society, for the aid in visiting this country. And I can assure you it was among my most happy reflections to know, that in taking my seat in the World's Convention, I should do so, the honored representative of three female associations, at once most praiseworthy in



1. Charles Lenox Remond  
Courtesy of Library of Congress

their object and efficient in their co-operation. And sure I am, that could the members of these associations have had even a place in the imaginations of those who voted for their exclusion, the decision would have been otherwise, far otherwise. Thanks be to Providence, I have yet to learn, that the emancipation of the American slave, from the sepulchre of American slavery, is not of more importance than the rejection of females from the platform of any Anti Slavery Society, Convention, or Conference. In the name of heaven, and in the name of the bleeding, dying slave, I ask if I shall scruple the propriety of female action, of whatever kind or description. I trust not—I hope not—I pray not, until the bastard system is annihilated, and not a vestige remains to remind the future traveller, that such a system ever cursed our country, and made us a hissing and a by-word in the mouth of every subject of every Monarch, King, Queen, Despot, Tyrant, Autocrat and Czar of the civilized and uncivilized world!

My Friend, for thirteen years have I thought myself an abolitionist, but I had been in a measure mistaken, until I listened to the scorching rebukes of the fearless O'Connell in Exeter Hall, on the 24th June,<sup>4</sup> when before that vast assemblage, he quoted from American publications, and alluded to the American declaration,<sup>5</sup> and contrasted the theory with the practice; then was I moved to think, and feel, and speak; and from his soul-stirring eloquence and burning sarcasm would every fibre of my heart contract in abominating the worse than Spanish Inquisition system<sup>6</sup> in my own. I almost fear, devoted country. Let it suffice to say, the meeting at Exeter Hall more than compensated me for the sacrifice and suffering I experienced in crossing the Atlantic,<sup>7</sup> under circumstances which I shall make known at some future time. Until the facts are known, let no one envy me in my voyage or undertaking. A few words in relation to slavery's grand handmaid, in the states proclaimed to be non-slaveholding, I mean *prejudice*, that acts the part to slavery of second king at arms, and exercises its authority by assisting in kidnapping the innocent and free at the capitol, disfranchises the citizens of Pennsylvania, proscribes the colored man in Rhode Island, abuses and gives him no resting place as a man in New Hampshire, which murders in Illinois, cries out amalgamation in Maine, mobs him in New York, and stones him in Connecticut. I say this hydra headed personage, thanks be to God, has but few advocates in this country, if any, I have it to learn; and if you would rouse the honest indignation of the intelligent Englishman, tell him of our school and academy exclusions. If you would enlist the sympathies of the pious, refer him to our Negro pews in the house of worship, and when you tell him of the Jim Crow car, the top of the stage coach, the forward deck of the steamboat, as the only place for colored people to occupy, he at once, turning pale, then red, inquires if this is American republicanism, if this the fruit of our many religious institu-

tions; and as a West Indian remarked to me yesterday, that Liberty in my country was in its best estate, but the grossest licentiousness. I could not—I dare not—contradict him, as my presence in England at this time, proved too much for his argument. More hereafter. I was happy to meet R. Douglass<sup>8</sup> and W. Jeffers,<sup>9</sup> in the city, and especially to find William well situated in business, and his health much improved. I hope to receive a copy of the *Colored American*<sup>10</sup> soon, and in the mean time I remain, desiring to be remembered most kindly to the several members of your family, and to my many friends in New York. Most truly yours,  
For truth and the oppressed,

C. LENOX REMOND<sup>11</sup>

To the Rev. C. B. Ray.

P.S. I will not mail this sheet without saying that, notwithstanding the pleasant circumstances with which I am surrounded, I long to tread again the country of my birth, again to raise my feeble voice in behalf of the suffering, again to unite with you in razing to the ground, the system which is, and ever has proved too faithfully, the fell destroyer of our race and nation. Again, yours,

C. L. R.

*Colored American* (New York, N.Y.), 3 October 1840.

1. Charles B. Ray (1807–1886) was born in Falmouth, Massachusetts, the eldest of seven children. Ray's father delivered mail to the islands off Cape Cod; his well-educated mother encouraged her children to attend the integrated public schools in nearby New Bedford. Ray worked as a farmer and a boot-maker before deciding upon a career in the ministry. After attending Wesleyan Academy in western Massachusetts, he enrolled in Wesleyan University Theological Seminary in 1832, but was forced to withdraw from the institution by white student protests and a faculty that viewed his departure as the "wisest course." Ray moved to New York City, opened a shoe store, and began a lifetime commitment to anti-slavery and to home missionary work among the poorest members of the city's black community. Ray believed in the importance of black self-discipline and economic security and was a proponent of temperance and the Grahamite diet regimen. An early abolitionist, he believed that antislavery reform restrained northern racial prejudice. During the mid-1830s, he helped found the New York Vigilance Committee, participated in the black national convention movement, and belonged to the American Anti-Slavery Society. He left the American society in 1840 because he believed in political action and became a leader of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.

Ray was an eloquent spokesman for a national black press. In 1837 he was hired as a traveling agent for the New York *Colored American*, and by early 1840, he was its sole editor and proprietor. Ray used the paper to press his political antislavery convictions (he was a vigorous proponent of black suffrage throughout the 1840s and 1850s), to rebut arguments for African colonization and Canadian emigration, and to advocate the legal rights of fugitive slaves. Ray directed his attention to domestic missionary activity in the mid-1840s, serving as

secretary of J. W. C. Pennington's Union Missionary Society and beginning an extended relationship with the New York City Missionary Society—an affiliate of the American Missionary Association. Ray became pastor of New York's Bethesda Congregational Church in 1845 and, at about the same time, helped select recipients for Gerrit Smith's black land-grant plan. In 1848 he was appointed to the Committee of Twenty-Five, a group selected by that year's black national convention to devise a plan for establishing a black manual labor college.

Ray was infuriated by passage of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 and led a New York petition drive against it. At the Colored National Convention held in Rochester during 1853, he helped write the convention's "Report on Social Relations and Polity," a provocative analysis of black political economy. In 1859, as president of the New York Society for Promoting the Education of Colored Children, he focused on the need for quality black education and public school integration. In the 1860s, he was a leader of the African Society for Mutual Relief and dispensed private funds to black victims of New York's 1863 draft riot. In 1869 Ray renewed his call for black labor solidarity (a call he first made as a member of the American League of Colored Laborers in 1850) and helped organize the National Labor Convention of Colored People. In the mid-1870s, Ray aided black men and women emigrating to the Kansas frontier. M. N. Work, "The Life of Charles B. Ray," *JNH* 4:361–71 (October 1919); Florence T. Ray and H. Cordelia Ray, "Sketch of the Life of Rev. Charles B. Ray," enclosure in Florence T. Ray and H. Cordelia Ray to William H. Siebert, 12 April 1897, Siebert "Underground Railroad" Collection, MH; *NASS*, 6 June 1843, 24 October 1844, 26 August 1845, 16 July 1846, 3 May 1849, 17 July 1862, 5 September 1863, 24 March 1866, 5, 19 June, 23 October 1869, 1 October 1870 [4:0940, 0582, 5:0249, 1074]; *NSt*, 4, 11, 18 May, 23 November 1849, 13 June, 27 July, 5 September 1850; *FDP*, 16, 30 October, 13 November 1851, 27 May 1852, 15, 29 July, 28 October 1853, 3 February 1854, 25 April, 25 May, 3 August, 14 September, 16 November 1855; *OE*, 20 December 1843; *PL*, 27 December 1843; *LP*, 14 February 1846; *NEW*, 20 May 1847, 6 July 1848, 2 February, 14 March 1850 [5:0422, 0698, 6:0374, 0425]; Charles B. Ray to Thomas Lafon, 16 July 1845, *AMA-ARC* [5:0057]; Charles B. Ray to Gerrit Smith, 22 May, 2 December 1847, Gerrit Smith Papers, *NSyU* [5:0423, 0533]; *AAM*, July 1859 [11:0818]; *WAA*, 21 April 1860, 2 February 1861, 12 April 1862 [12:0646, 13:0254, 14:0237]; *DANB*, 515–16.

2. During mid-April 1839, Joseph Sturge headed the group of leading British abolitionists that founded the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and, in so doing, united disparate elements of the British antislavery movement in a general crusade for worldwide emancipation. From the moment of its inception and for the next thirty years, the highly centralized society was the only antislavery organization of national stature in Britain; it was supported by provincial auxiliaries and the contributions of private donors. The society regularly convened annual meetings in London, usually during May or June. Policy decisions were made by a thirty-member executive board and were implemented by the society's most powerful officeholder, the executive secretary. John Tredgold served as the first secretary (1839–40) and was succeeded by John Scoble (1841–51) and Louis Alexis Chamerovzow (1852–69). The secretary had many functions, chief among these was overseeing the publication of the BFASS-sponsored newspaper,