

Let me briefly indicate the course of this correspondence.

I am placed before me a notation from a letter which you alleged had been written by me, I was in your possession, and asked me to give you the grounds on which I imputed to you what was conveyed by the "extract." In reply, I reminded you that you had not put yourself in a position in which you could consistently and legitimately make such an enquiry of me.

You seemed not to apprehend the obvious import of my reply, and required a specific statement from me wherein I considered you had not qualified yourself to make the demand contained in your first letter. In answer, I called your attention to the fact (1) that you were asking me to account for language without furnishing me the means of determining whether I had used it or not, and which, in point of fact, I was unable to determine from any information in my possession; and (2) that you had not denied the substantial correctness of what the extract imputed to you. I assured you that when these preliminary steps had been taken, I should acknowledge the obligation which your first letter sought to impose.

In response, while you were compelled to concede the first preliminary step, you thought it necessary to screen the unwilling concession by charging me with evasion and reckless assertion, and broadly assuming the right to impeach my veracity without grounds. But you declined to accede to the other preliminary step, although it had been in your power to do so, three words would have sufficed. Instead of compliance, however, you rained invective upon me, prejudging and maligning me, and forwarded your letter unsealed. In reply, I vindicated the justness of the 1st preliminary on its own merits—commented upon the ungracious way in which it had been yielded—reminded you that you should be slow to charge me with reckless assertion when you were crediting your first letter with language it did not contain—and showed that it was reasonable and proper to ask your compliance with the 2nd preliminary, since if the imputation was true, no wrong had been done you, in which case it would be unreasonable that you could impose on any one the obligation in question. Having done this I deemed it proper to vindicate my assertion, so uncharitably impugned by you, that I was unable from any information in my possession to affirm or deny having used the language contained in the "extract"—unable to affirm it because I could not recall having written the language in question; unable to deny it because I possessed information, from sources which I believed entirely reliable, touching your connection with Mr. Rand's dismissal (an act I may remark of wrong doing not against an individual only, but against every citizen) which rendered it impossible for me to say that I might not have done so—and I gave you "a part" of that information that you might not further presume to impeach my veracity, with the pledge that, if the statements were not correct, you should have the names of the gentlemen who had made them to me. I re-assured you, also, that I was ready to do you the amplest justice if you could show me that I had any where uttered what was untrue respecting you.