

John Elghman Esq - Dr Sir,

Your letter under date Feb. 24th 1829 has been duly received and I owe you an apology for delaying an earlier answer - The letter by some means was misplaced and it had escaped my memory till I recently discovered it - In answer to your inquiries I regret to inform you that Mr Spencer left this country about a year since and embarked on a board of a vessel near Boston for a whaling voyage to the South Seas - Dr. Hadley his brother-in-law informed me today that he had not heard from him since his departure - He had abandoned the profession of Law in the City of New York and came to this place and resided with Dr. Hadley about a year before he went away - It will probably be painful to you to learn that ~~he was~~ he was induced to quit his profession not only from the weakness of his health but from his habits of dissipation which had in a great measure destroyed his usefulness - His friends lamenting this unexpected change used every effort to reclaim him but it was fruitless - Kind affable and gentlemanly as well as talented he had fair to rise to eminence in his profession till he sunk into the vice of intemperance - He seemed to pine at his lot and apparently becoming insupportable to himself he involuntarily rushed to the Ocean for relief - It is not likely he will ever return - Having known him from almost infancy and admiring his fine talents and pleasing manners I feel for his fate - This unpleasant information may perhaps be deemed by you as gratuitous but I do it in compliance with Dr. Hadley's request who supposes you might from your former acquaintance with W. S. feel an anxiety to be informed of his destiny -

Sanford Off 27th 1829

Yours truly
H. K. Altou