

21 September 1846

[Letter from Simeon Lock Doggett in Mendon to his ^{cousin} ~~brother~~ Aristides]

Mendon Sept 21, 1846

Dear

The oblivion in which I have (remained) kept myself may require apology, to expel the idea of disaffection, negligence, or that of apathy which you might consider as the reason of my silence; but it does appear to me, that in regard to the dormant state in which our communicating powers have remained you are as culpable as I, and moreover the plan adopted to elicit this letter from me, might have been performed "long ago".

The excuse which you have framed to exonerate yourself and to implicate me, is hardly sufficient to cover you from the inadvertency, which from the tenor of your letter you have it appears, entirely thrown upon me and thrown it not carefully, but intentionally I presume, which makes it the more onerous for me to bear; now this fault is partly thine but I will generously bear a part tho' the greater portion is thine.

Perhaps it will be necessary to extend my argument further to elucidate more fully your culpability and also to exculpate myself, (for it is natural to make our own acts better than the acts of others).

You are doubly aware that you are engaged in literary pursuits while my occupation is indeed of the earth earthy, -- mark the disparity, -- now surely, letters are not found in the ground, they are found in books, therefore while thine eyes are on Books mine are on ground; for these reasons you should have had charity and written first, for syntax is an easy thing, for you to perform especially that kind denominated epistolary, writing -- it is as easily accomplished as it is for the wind to move the branches of the willow but for my part I no not how, nor when, nor where, I am most like Antony the triumvirate, who said thus, "you all know me to be a plain, blunt man" and "that I've neither wit, nor words, nor worth, action nor utterance, nor power of speech, I only speak right on"

----- By your description ~~of~~ florida appears natural and wild, while the prospect here is certainly artificial; for where you see a deer coursing with great swiftness, here can be seen the steam car ~~like~~ a huge monster rushing o'er the iron road vieing with the rapidity of lighting; the opposition this place to every feirce bear which you behold, is the patient ox and the noble horse; to every negro that of the happy woman employed in her own domicil; to every lofty tree that of a stately mansion, and to every pestilential waste that of a flourshing town. This is the land of enterprise and parsimony, charity and selfishness, bravery and pusillanimity, industry and meanness, literature and speculation, labour and ease, religion and hypocracy, philanthropy (*misanthropy), rectitude and dissimulation, and where the moralist may well exclaim, O tempora O mores how great, how wonderful are they.

-----Of all things the most difficult for me to Ans. is that Question, "tell me all the news," I know not what news to communicate surely it would be uninteresting for me to say anything about muddy brook, mendon pond, chirping surrels, ground birds, sparrows, crickets or grasshopper or shoemakers but this were a "land of flowers" bears, deer, arum and bass I would wish my paper as long, as an arum, that I might tell you of such wonderful things.

What news would you have me write? I cannot enlighten your mind

