

[Letter from Simeon Locke Doggett to Samuel Doggett in Florida] 1846

Your favor of the 15th was duly received, and afforded much pleasure -- But it is useless for me to attempt to express my gratitude, I would poorly succeed, and probably do it less merit than it really deserves; I therefore content myself with this consolation, that is I know you to be generous and will undoubtedly judge rightly of my feelings

When thoughts that were in your mind, dictated by your best and most natural feelings, are committed to paper and then sent to me over the wide and deep and mighty ocean; when such kindness is shown me, unworthy, as I am, how can I otherwise than appreciate it? These observations I make, not to have you cease to perform this most pleasing fraternal obligation, but indeed to have the opposite effect.

Since your last I received a letter from, and also wrote an ans to Aristides; and as a few items were therein mentioned, more interesting to you, than to him, I requested Aristides to permit you to peruse it. The Papers sent here, I perceive, contain several articles, written in a very masterly style. They deserve great praise -- That on education is indeed elegant. The resolution of Lycurgus, makes a very appropriate heading, and I admire the truth it contains.

It refers me to the great maxim of Lycurgus, which Aristotle repeats in express terms, which was, that as children belong to the state, their education ought to be directed by the state, and the views and interests of the state only considered therein. And for this reason they should be educated in common, and not left to the humor and caprice of their parents, who generally permit them to grow up in ignorance, or through a soft and blind indulgence, and mistaken tenderness, enervate at once both the Bodies and minds of their children.

Though the war against Mexico is decidedly unpopular here, yet all parties admire the courage of our troops, and the skill of our commander. The seige of Monterey reflects great glory on the American arms. It has established the reputation of the Volunteers. It is equal to any battle in proportion to the number of men engaged.

When all the circumstances are considered, the number of Mexicans The natural strength of Monterey, which must be very great (as General Taylor has observed that next to Quebec it is the strongest place on the continent,) we could hardly expect success.

"Blessed are they who expect nothing for they shall not be disappointed", this was a most egregious and wise maxim, which the great Sancho Panza wispered inwardly in the ears of Don Quixote, to allay the ardour of his ambition, and to moderate his expectations. I have indeed fully felt the force of it during the past season and in future will more strictly observe the truth it contains; and anticipate not to be disappointed, and laugh not to grieve, when "sweet prospects, sweet birds, and sweet flowers" fade Like glimmering landscapes on the sight and are no more! These are the observations which must necessarily arise from the following -- Early in the past Season it was resolved, that I should be engage in keeping one of our common schools this winter. Therefore, having this object in view I, diligently employed my leisure moments and succeeded so far, as in my humble opinion to be capable of performing, the "purposed aim." ("But few can reach purposed aim, And thousands daily are undone")

For to say the least, I have successfully gone through Alger Murray's Grammer rules, notes, app.' obs'. remarks, exercises etc. and Pike's Arithmetic, so as to ans' all the rules, notes, etc., without hesitation. Beside these other necessary, and important studies. Being thus prepared the prospect was at first very encouraging; Pa went to Worthbrige and had an interview with Mr Cooper, the committee who made good promises and said, he would write me soon on the subject. But he turned out like the Governor of Pennsylvania, who promised, at his own expense, to furnish Doc. Franklin with the means to go to London and select all the necessary implements for a printer, and establish the Dr in Philadelphia. But the subsequent conduct of the Governor proved that there was no sincerity in his intentions, for after poor Franklin got to London and presented the Governor's letter to the stationer, the latter said "I know this scoundrel, he has swindled me once, but he shan't again" while saying this he turned round and shut the door upon Franklin. Thus Cooper made fair promises which he never has fulfilled. While waiting for Cooper's letter, time flew away, and the season for engaging schools, had too far advanced. Perceiving the inutility of waiting, I then went to several districts and Pa did also. But it was of no avail, it was too late the Ans was, "the school is engage". Several other causes might be deduced as the means of my ill success -- I think that it was a derilection of duty on the part of Pa, that his effort have been so feeble.

Which was owing to the prospect his neighbors held forth with the assistance of his own confidence in their hollow protestation, that to Boston he would go; but disappointed in my purpose and defeated in his we here remain, amid homely joy and destinies obscure.

On the 25th winter very suddenly came in like a roaring Lion snowing, and blowing with great rigor

The health of the family is tolerable, and all wish to be revived in your recollection; from Laurence up to the head, from Jockey down to Lonzo. Write as soon as opportunity and Leisure will permit and be assured, that a letter from you would be the source of great comfort to us, all but to none more than your affectionate

Brother

S. L. Doggett

To S. W. Doggett in Florida