

1 December 1851

Letter from Simeon Locke Doggett to his brother Samuel in California]

Mendon [Mass.] December 1st. 1851

Dear Brother

I wrote you a letter on the 5th of last August. I have not received a letter from you since ~~last~~ the one dated the 1st of May '51, Placerville. I am anxious to hear from you and it is for this reason I write, to try to induce you to relieve me of the suspense in which I live, and cheer the family, once more with the glad tidings of your continued health and courage.

Father received a letter from Mr. Augustus Shelly of New Orleans inquiring where you were if alive, and what your directions were if dead, about a trunk of yours in his custody. In reply he was told what might be learned from your last letters. Mr. S. spoke affectionately of you. I expect you have heard from him by this time.

Mrs. M. Doggett and her five children Catherine and Fobes have been to Raynham. It appears that fortune has favored her, and that she is a rich woman. She unbuckled her mail as fast as she could. It is worthy of observation that while she spoke often against you, her two children invariably spoke favorably of you. It happened that Malvina was at Grandfather's house when M.D. came. It is of no use for me to mention anything she said in favor or against you, for her selfishness in this late visit to Raynham and to Aunt Abby's is an ~~absolute~~ index to her Character. She did not come to Mendon, and it is some satisfaction that she did not. Malvina did some sewing for her, but she never paid her a cent, & Grandfather fed her and her children for a month but she never even thank him. Aristides came with her as far as N.Y. -- from there he proceeded to Illinois to study medicine.

Having an opportunity I went to Raynham to spend thanksgiving for the first time. I there saw Grandfather, Grandmother, Aunt Abby and Prudence, Uncle Peres & Deanes, and Aunt Abbys children. The old folk live and enjoy life remarkably well. It pleased me much ~~some~~ to talk with Grandfather -- I was treated very well by all & by Aunt Abby with marked attention, and with her children I was highly interested.

Yourself considered abstractly, and yourself considered in connection with the hazardous life that you are living, was a constant theme of conversation.

Our dear Mother was attacked with Neuralgy about the 25th of August, and for 15 weeks afterwards suffered very greatly, so that it is ~~that it~~ a wonder that she is alive. It is a great blessing to the family that she can again move about, and attend to the domestic concerns.

The harvest is gathered. There were about 33 bush. of peaches and 150 barrels of apples -- all of which I gathered with my own hands. Apples are cheap and abundant for it is the only time that trees in this vicinity have born much for the last 3 or 4 years.

The cornfield yeilded a large crop about 340 bushels of ears. Raised not more than 50 bush of potatoes, -- raised about 10 bushels of beans. And now cold winter begins to rage around the old homestead. Some absolutely necessary repairs have been made. With my own hand I white-washed and papered two room. The kitchen since I papered it looks and is much more comfortable than it was.

Julia and her husband visited this place in October. I am glad to state that they are healthy & live amicably. They reside in Royalston this coN state. -- Everybody is thinking of Kossuth and the immense quantity of gold that comes from California. A heartrending accident occurred in N.Y. lately -- 50 children killed & 48 wounded. They were in school, and a false alarm of fire being given, they rushed down the steps in such crowds (there being 1833 in the different stories of the building) that the balisters gave way, precipitating several hundred of them a distance of thirty feet.

[The letter ends without signature.]