

(Exordium most of W.K. D's letter [a page seems to have been torn out of the ledger, though the numbering remains consistent.])

Part of a letter written to S. W. Doggett Jan. 15th, 1852

I have been led into this train of thinking from th the present aspect of my prospects. And the period of life which I have attained, and the position which circumstances have assumed have induced me to think very seriously of my plan of life and determine what course would be best for me to pursue. In coming to this decision I ought to take into consideration all the circumstances that surround me and by which I have bene influenced. I ought to consider what course of life I have pursued and the tendency of such life. I ought to consider the extent of my abilities both of mind and body. I ought to be governed in my decision by the education I have recvd and what it has best fitted me for. I ought to consider my poverty and remember that wealth is a very desirable thing; and that now when I am young and strong and healthy and ardent and ambitious is the time for me to make the acquisition, lest my after life will be evil days in which I will be unable to provide for myself or be useful or generous to others. In regard to the life I have lived -- Why it has been a laborious life on this farm. (Especially for the last several years have I had to work very hard). For I felt it to be my duty as long as I was a minor, and I saw also that it was quite necessary for me to assist my father, inasmuch as he could not hire much help -- (and moreover I have devoted the whole of the 22 years of my life and more (am almost 23) also to labor here, living to me, a laborious, unprofitable and discontented life and suffering many privations). But I now feel imperitively that the time has more than arrived for me to begin some pursuit that will be profitable and advantageous to me and enable me to be more extensively in the end of some benefit to myself and those who are dear to me, and enable me to reimburse those who may assist me, for I would return for letter, letters, for prayers prayers, for good wishes, good wishes, for money, money, for favors, favors, for to satisfy such obligations I would make my first and chief object, retaining in my heart that gratitude that is worthy

And as observed above, as the past course of life determines the future course, so I ought to try to engage in that which I have done the most whether of the body or of the mind. Now the life I have lived has been since here one spent on laboring on this farm. My leasure moments I have diligently employed on reading and study. I have acquired some learning, but such has been my poverty, my unhelped exertions without teachers and without proper books, my want of time and encouragement the discouraging and almost hopeless task of trying to learn an intricate study alone, only during my evenings, spare moments and the most of cold winter Burdened with chores &c. in a noisy house full of confusion, and such have been the crushing discouragements and disparagements which have bowed me down, and the almost and often insurmountable difficulties with which I have had to contend, that I wonder I had not long since given up, and tried no more to learn hard things without sufficient time, proper books and teachers. And I of late have often thought with all this formidable array of discouragements before me, what a fool I have been! to try so hard to learn Mathematics and Philology and knowledge in general.

It has thrown me into a curious and perplexing predicament. The people here, who dislike me because I am a Doggett and because I them dislike, with whom I do not associate, for if I were in a prison or on

some desolate island, I could not be more lonely, think that I must be amazing smart, and my poor deluded father thinks so, and tells them, so, and tells me so, and tells you so, and all my relations from Dan to Beersheba are laboring under the same mistake, though they never helped to ~~Y&Y~~ teach me, or give me any encouragement, and have scarcely ~~sp~~ seen or spoken to me. Thus have I learned by sad experience that "A little learning is a dangerous thing." Nevertheless what little I have learned has been of some advantage~~s~~ and comfort to me, and nevertheless I think, that if I could have been encouraged with place, and time and books and teachers I might have acquired considerable learning for I have been desirous to learn. So I have arrived at this period of my life, finding myself more indebted to nature for what I am, than to acquired knowledge. Finding myself ~~not~~ fashioned not as I would, but as circumstances would have me.

"A weary life is mine at best
 "Few pleasures mine that others share
 "And oft by lonely thoughts oppressed,
 "It seems that I might well despair.

For I have had to toil, to suffer poverty, inconvenience and mortification of being thinly and meanly clad, and the jeers and contumely of others -- lived a solitary life, associating with no one, never going to church, or down town, seldom going even to Milford, a place of some importance now. In fact I have been confined to the narrow limits of this farm (see back 3 pp). (See most of 2d Grandpa letter) -- Such reflections as these on my past life, make me regret much that though I have been of some benefit to others, I have been of little benefit to myself. Now if I could have learned a trade, I had not been at this time so perplexed and discouraged. It would have made me feel more independent than I now do, it would have kept me free from false views of life; it would have enabled me more correctly to form an opinion of myself, and if I was capable and worthy of taking an advanced step, it would have assisted me in accomplishing it. But not possessing the advantage, I feel dependent, discouraged, and perplexed, and constrained to put myself under obligations to others.

Now it happens as a very natural consequence that a young man in my condition, who has no interest nor friends nor prospects here, should turn his attention to Cal a place to which so many their attention turn, and if he has a brother there, to avail himself of such a fortunate circumstance, and ask him for his advice~~s~~, encouragement and assistance, of course pledging himself to reimburse him for his help, and to be ever grateful to him for his kindness. Now though I think this proposal viewed in all its bearings is one that is feasible, desirable, and expedient, and one I wish much to undertake, for I am persuaded that labor in Cal whether employed in the mines or in other pursuits is much more profitable there than here, and I sincerely hope you will take the subject into consideration as soon as you receive this and write me.

For now is the time. "Now is the constant syllable ticking from the clock of time, "Now is the watchword of the wise, Now, is on the banner of the prudent." &c. see Tupper. For now I feel myself almost bursting with restrained energy, for now I feel impelled by all the circumstances around me; now I feel more than ever that Mendon like "a pent up Utica constructs my powers" and I mutter to myself those lines "Thought is damnation, it is the plague of devils to think of what they are. ~~Y&Y/No/No/No~~

For now I'm in the world alone

~~W&Y/No/No~~

And would be on the sea.

But why should I for others groan
 When none will sigh for me?
 For pleasures (?) past I do not grieve,
 Nor perils gathering near;
 My greatest grief is that I leave
 Nothing that claims a tear
 Now gladly would I swiftly go
~~Now/glad~~ Athwart the foaming brine;
 Nor care what land I am borne to
 So not again to mine
 Welcome, welcome, ye dark blue waves!
 And when you fail my sight
 Welcome ye deserts and ye caves!
 So to this land -- Good night.

Yes 'now is the day and now the hour, -- And it is an hour of bitter
 pain, When the long agony of years, is crowded in a moments space -- When
 things seem false, and hope as vain -- And the wrung heart and burning brain
 Can only find relief in tears.

I close, hoping that this world &c. see Rems. on marriage (Chap. II

Simeon L. Doggett to Samuel W. Doggett

P.S. The family are in tolerable health, and send their best wishes. I
 wrote you a letter on the 5th of last Aug; and on the 1st of last May.
 Nothing new or strange here, excepting that the Methodists have lately
 got a foothold here. The people had got to be rather indifferent about
 religion, but since last spring a Methodist Minister named McReeding has
 been preaching here with great success, leading many to join the church
 & baptizing many in Muddy Brook, though opposed by the remnants of the Old
 Orthodox and Unitarian sects. His friends have just given him a Donation
 of produce, things and money. Thinking me smart~~s~~ as above observed ~~observed~~
 they got my father to ask me to compose them a hymn for the occasion.
 However I complied and such as it is I send it to you that you may see the
 state of feeling here.