

1 July 1851

Letter from Simeon Lock Doggett in Mendon, Mass to his brother Samuel in California, dated July 1st 1851 & August 5th '51

Dear Brother

I write. But what to write, and how to write. I hardly know. "That which I am I am, I did not make myself." What then, have I no control! I have, fear I enemies? no I fear my friends! friends! Specious word, what is meant in lexicons by it I never experienced. And kindred? Yes I have kindred, and in regard to some of them twere better far for one that has them to be as distant from them as Logan was from his. And the Rest? I thank God for them, I love them, I pray for them, I rejoice when they rejoice and greive when they do grieve. If then I were to write to one of those so near and dear to me, would I disturb him, agitate him, distress him, grieve him? No I rather would if I could "soothe his soul to pleasures" & bid the lovely scenes at distance hail." But I forbear, lest at any moment I dash my pen against obstacles. Perhaps I am not in that &c.

[sic]

But to refer to parts of your letter. That old French proverb, "L'homme propose, et Dieu dispose," about which you made such singular remarks, has often impressed me with its truthfulness, and I would not readily admit, that some exceptions to it, may be found. But even if you were serious in writing as you wrote this passage, yet you will pardon me, if I say, that when reading it, a sardonic laughter will arise, even if one not given to risibility should read it.

I suppose that when it rains sufficiently, you will return to the "dry diggings, and wash out the dust that is "still in the Bank." I am sorry to learn that "damning and racing" Weber Creek ~~proved~~ turned out so unprofitably. I hope you will be recompensed for past disappointments by success in the new enterprize in which you are engaged. Although plans and expectations built upon the prospects of the weather, are built upon a very uncertain foundation. I am glad to learn that the letter I wrote to you last August has at length been recived. Your remarks ensuing are quite appropriate. You quote from Pope and Young as though you were in a library -- how is it! I am some surprised to see how well you know what is transpiring in the Atlantic States. Bye the bye I received a letter a few days ago from Aristides, by which I learn that he has been deeply engaged in the Cuba expedition that was lately fitted out at Jacksonville. Since the defeat of the Cuba hunt, he has commenced the study of Medicine, -- he intends to visit the North. He says that he wrote to you several times when you were in N.O. but you never answered him. He and his associates are quite vexed because the general government interferes with their plans. I am sorry that the several expeditions against Cuba have been frustrated, but all is not lost that is delayed (see above).

^{what is here consider}
Public attemp^tib us here c^onsiderably taken up by the great Exhibition that is going on in London; some 50 or 60,000 persons of all nations visit the crystal palace daily I regret that the contributions from our country turn out so meagre, when it is a fact that ~~what is out~~ the machinery, arts, inventions and things exhibited at the Mechanics' fair in our city of Boston last year, if they could have been carried to England, and now displayed before the assembled

of all nations, they would have humbled the pride of vaunting John Bull, and astonished and filled with admiration an admiring world.

Among the visitors from this country is Horace Greely who writes to his paper, the Tribune some graphic descriptions of scenes in London. After stating that the Anglican Church will very soon be summoned to take her stand distinctly on the side of Romanism of Protestantism, he describes some of the scenes of poverty in London. One evening he attended one of the "Ragged schools. He portrays the appearance of the ~~sordid~~ squalid school with its 500 pupils of both sexes young and adult, its 40 gratuitous teachers, and the inefficiency of the system. "But such faces! Such garments! Such daguerreotypes of the superlative of human wretchedness and degradation!" "The gallows, the charity hospitals, the prisons, the work-houses (refuges denied to the healthy and the unconvicted,) with the unfenced kennels and hiding-places of the destitute generally see the earthly end of all of them. And all this has been going on unresisted and almost unnoticed for countless generations, in the very shadows of hundreds of church steeples, and in a city which pays millions of dollars annually for the support of gospel ministrations.

[sic]

The next evening he went to a British Anti-slavery meeting, and there he saw American abolitionists, Negro Lecturers from Mass and a 1000 Englishmen. And he heard the speakers harrangue at length in unmeasured glorification of Great Britain as the land of true freedom and equality, where simple manhood is respected without regard to color and where alone he had ever been treated by all as a man and a brother. Now Horace Greely was invited to speak, and he reminded them of the enormous Political abuses and wrongs and wretchedness which are so prevalent in Great Britian, and that if they would first better the condition of the downtrodden thousands of their own country, it would then be more consistent for them to pity the slaves of America. And now from the nation comes Geo. Thompson M.P. with a heart overflowing with love and commiseration for the poor slaves of the South, comes a distance of 3000 miles to find objects for his philanthropy and love. I accord fully with you, when you say that "he turn a deaf ear to the cries of suffering humanity at his own door and intrudes his spurious philanthropy where it is offensive and useless." Perhaps you may have forgotten that when Thompson first arrived he undertook to speak in Boston, and that some of the citizens were so incensed, that they would not permit him. He has lately returned to England to resign his seat in parliament, intending to return, having adopted this country for his own. The hypocrite adopts the land in which he finds so much to execrate and abhor.

[sic]

Dear Brother,

I am now writing to you. I wrote a letter about the 1st of July, & I intended to send it to you, but I thought it to be so prolix and prosy that I never sent it. Moreover your Father wrote you about that time. Your letter dated Placesville May 1st '51 addressed to me I received June 24. At the same time arrived the Map, which you kindly obtained for me, also a letter to Melancthon. The Newspapers came soon after. The letter to your father came June 21. The Bill of Exchange was cashed in due time 3 days after the 3 days specified. By your letter to me I learn that you had left the central "diggings" for the more Northern Mines. But to refer

Finished haying on the 2d inst. -- had a very favorable time. The hay crop is a good yeild. Perhaps the hay is of a better quality than usual, and it has been gathered without injury from rain. The Great Lot and School House Lot produced finely, this, 12, that 14 loads. The No of loads of hay cut this yr amount to 45. This has been a good season. Though the spring was rahrer backward, yet vegetation advanced rapidly towards its close, and made amends for tardiness. And the time has been well improved.

[sic]

As early as March 6th, the birds sung merrily in the morning, -- the sparrow, and the blue-bird hopped among the leafless boughs. And even now the frost permitted that first step in spring's work to be taken, viz the beating of dung. Not much ploughing could be done before the 1st of Apr. April was employed primarily in ploughing, grafting, setting out trees, cutting firewood, trimming trees, and shoveling all the dung and compost into a great heap. May 1st, commenced planting, potatoes; and about the middle of the month, began to plant corn. This month was busily employed in preparing the ground and in planting. The cornfield i.e. the house-lot was ploughed twice, part of it 3 times, harrowed, manured with 200 loads of the best of dung, and planted with great care before May 26. During this month grafting, packing stones, fences, the garden etc. were attended to. Peach and cherry trees were in blossom about the 9th and apple trees on the 20th. The 1st week of June was employed in planting the Joe[?] lot to beans, perhaps the largest field of beans ever raised on this farm. The ploughing twice, the harrowing and planting such a rocky piece, set out to young fruit trees as it is, was a laborious job. The corn was ready for the hoe as soon as the planting was finished. The principal part of June was spent in hoeing and in shingling the front barn. Finished hoeing the cornfield, the third time in July, soon after having commenced haying. Began to make hay on the 11th ult; finished on the 2d inst as above stated. The only help hired was George Streeter to help shingle the barn for \$10, and two men to mow the grass down at a \$1 an acre. Amounting to \$30 dols. for cutting the grass.

And now the cornfield is in area about 3 Acres and is far superior to anything ever raised on this farm and is equal in growth, in Luxuriance and promise to any cornfield in the country. The potatoes look poorly; the beanfield is promising; and the peach and apples have fruit on them. In fact the prospect is in every respect better than it was last year as far as the crops are concerned. The \$250 that Father rec'd from you he immediately applied to the payment the following debts which were pressing upon him; The Charles Hastings Note, that has been due since '42, -- \$176.86; to Sam Gaskill for meal &c. \$24; to H. Aldrich for grassseed tools &c, got 2 yrs ago. \$15. to Ben. Smith for mowing the grass &c \$30; for pew rent \$3; for a vinette [?] for Mother, \$5; for Homespun and sundries \$6.14. Father is very grateful to you for this great assistance, for though still oppressed, yet he would have sunk had it not been for this timely aid. I refer you to his letter.

&c. Simeon L. Doggett