

[Letter from Simeon Locke Doggett to his brother Samuel, undated, but following the letter of Apr. 2, 1852]

Dear Brother

I received your letters to me, and I rejoice to write you. How shall I express myself! how shall I find words to speak my heart! My own Dear Brother my heart still turns to you, -- I can not, I will not try to tell of the depth of my feelings.

I wish I had the power to give you a clear & concise statement of the affairs and career of this family.

I am not able to do this, for I have not a clear view of their course myself (who has a clear view of the human heart even of his own heart?) and my statement may be injustice to them. I will write a few lines on the subject however, tho' I may be thought to extenuate, or exaggerate, to be governed by prejudice & wrapt up in self. For all concerned who may hear this letter, will not acquiesce in that part that concerns relates to themselves.

I will begin with the youngest (and ascend, for with the ascent the subject ascends in interest, 1st Laurence. Bryant; he is now about 7 yrs old; a rather good looking child healthy, and thrifty. He has great aversion to books and work; and the pursuit of either is the distress of his life, in fact he shuns them both, and gets indulged. But he is growing and changing every day, so let him pass. The next is Gertrude, about 9 or 10 yrs. a fair looking girl, and like the above healthy & thrifty. Gertrude is strongly inclined to good principles & to piety. She is endowed with a fine mind which ~~she~~ only wants ~~ample~~ generous cultivation to become ~~soon~~ intellectual and accomplished. She reads and understands with facility, and is inclined to books & writing, but she is rather lazy & this is a great failing.

Alfred is about 12 or 13, and is a healthy boy, but is not at all thrifty. He seems to be stunted & don't appear to grow. But he is strong, for his size, able to work, does work and takes an interest in his father's affairs. I think that he has been especially this year of great service to his parents. He possesses a very good mind; he gets a good view of persons and things, and only needs schooling to become a good scholar. I say schooling, for I have noticed that he requires the ambition of the schoolroom and the authority of a master to make him learn. So placed he learns fast & well. Alfred has an almost ungovernable temper, but I might say the same of all. I think seldom will be found a family of such touchy fiery tempers. In some it is like the lightning of the Cloud followed by a calm sky, in others it is like the burning of a volcano, lasting, and raging. Narcissa is about 16, a very good featured girl, healthy strong and thrifty, but I am sorry to say it, she is very deficient in education as she never went to school & has the smallest ambition to learn. In fact she has been brought up like her two elder sisters and she has followed their example and amounts to about the same. So I bring the three together. Narcissa, Malvina & Julia, our three grown Sisters, difficient in their education, having about them what you use to call "thimble head-bobism." This is the very reason they do not write you, they are ashamed to; they will not without help, and that they cannot always get. Julia in fact has about forgot all she ever knew, and Narcissa never knew anything to forget. Malvina is

indebted one to study for what she is. She has a ~~fine~~ food mind and if it could have been cultivated, or even ~~if~~ if she had employed her leisure in study she would have been benefited greatly. She has a very witty turn in her mind and in case of a rejoinder will give a reply that will often surprise for its appropriateness. She has been abroad a great deal, conversed with many and read unnumbered novels. Hence she has true and enlarged ideas of etiquette and politeness. She can converse with considerable ease, and write also a sensible and interesting letter, but for want of a blittle more grammar she is sometimes deffident in both. She is a very proud girl, and ambitious too, and now as she is nuble I notice she aims high in her alliance; Something hard and doubtful for a female to accomplish in this part of the world without She has had a boarding school education, and without she brings a dowry of several thousands. Yet these girls have generally a correctness about them that is obtained from books alone with great labor. This results from their parents who are you know in their pronounciztion and intelligence. For one who stands in the sunshine is brighter than one who stands in the shade. It is to be regretted much that they who have had so much leisure have not followed the good example I have set them of improving leisure moments. Tho' they wanted ample means they have had ample time to learn. I have no compuncions on this subject -- I have persuaded and have been willing to ~~learn~~ teach my brothers and sisters. But in regard to domestic acquirements the girls are tolerable and I think capable of having and managing a large families. Malvina is very skilful with her needle and scissors -- She is a very ingenious girl. Narcissa like Julia is not very expert with her sewing implements. She would rather do the business of a kitchen. But Malvina 5 or 6 years ago of her own accord, learned the tailor's trade at Upton, and has since depended much upon her trade for her appearance and plans. She is now along with Julia, at Royalston. She left this place I understand the 10th of last April, and that very day by the carelessness of the carmen lost her trunk.

Julia is in good health and spirits it appears. She has another infant which she has named A H Wheeler. Well it is certain that a new generation is coming to take the place of those that are. We smile and laugh at these things now, -- but will we when the end comes? Rira bien qui rira le dernier.

I have further to say of Narcissa, that it is pretty certain that She is engaged to be married to a young man named Carleton at some future time, a year or so. They fancy each other, and as yet there appears no objectns ~~yet them~~

I have next to speak here of Melanchthon who of late has been moving in a greater circle than any of the family. He run away 15th March 1850; he returned Aug. 30th 1850. May 6th ult. or about that date, he ran away again. His love of money is the cause his course in a measure, and being selfish, withal he thinks he can do better by himself, not caring how others do.

The first time he ran away, he left home suddenly poorly clad, with but a quarter in his pocket. His account of himself during his absence is so full of inconsistency, that falsity is evident.

But it does appear that he spent part of his time at Palmer by a letter from him to Benj. B. Wheeler postmarked Palmer. In that letter he stated that he was going to Albany and had changed his name to James streeter. But other than from his own mouth there is not the least account of him from March 15th to Aug. 30 of 1850. From that date until this date (may 6th inst) he remained about home. He assisted last summer in the labor of the family. But he raised so many fowls, vegetables and had so many plans with boys that he consumed much of his time his own way. In winter having the whole of his time he cut and sold about a dozen loads of Alders, or about 8 cords. and faggots also and things out the cellar that he had no right to sell. Tho from the first his father felt uneasy, yet he permitted such proceedings for he thought they would be subservient to his improvement, clothing, and attachment to home, and obedience to his parents. But with more penetration I saw from the commencement that he steadily kept in view his end in view, viz; to raise money so he could run away.

He had fine opportunities for the last two winters especially to learn at school or at home. He preferred not to go to school. I tried hard to teach him grammar and algebra, and helped him along in his arithmetic & geography. Got him Parker's progressive exercises &c. But a few weeks before he decamped, he wanted me to teach him Book-keeping by Double Entry, but the Italian method of book-keeping is not so easily learned. More weeks than one or two are necessary, more than a superficial knowledge of arithmetic, and more than a boy's understanding. Hence I did not attempt to teach him this. So I offended him I suppose, for he vainly thought to understand quickly the whole doctrine of accounts, and with the same speed run away, and profit by it. Place and time also ~~was~~ as well as other advantages he had; for after the Paddies moved away, Oct. 7th 1850, the little room over the ~~room~~ was filled up into a Study, having a new stove and other conveniences. For my own part I flattered myself that I also would have a favorable time over there.

But prospects are often different from transactions. I will not tell you of all the unpleasantness and vexation I endured in that place for a month or two. Suffice to say that I gave it up wishing that it might be that benefit to another that it should have been to me if for me solely. So I have had to pass ~~ed~~ my days not only without instructors, and the means of instruction but deprived of a place unmolested, and of time uninterrupted.

But Lancky having thus got possession of the place over there, commenced an idle course with a set of idle boys, vulgar, profane, and ignorant fellows, who were in there with him almost every day and evening. From all these things combined a variance arose between him and his father, a variance widened ~~varied~~ by continual disobedience wont or will, Shall or Shant on the part of the son & of scolding on the part of the parent.

At length having wintered himself at home, and sold whatever he could, about the close of last April, as warm weather and hard work were approaching, he was all ready to start. But during that month he helped get Ike & Pa to move in there & now that "damn Vicars family with their Bastard progeny are about here. I was away that month,

near the close of it happened to be at Taunton, for Mr. Deane met there met with a lawyer, who knew grandpa -- took an interest in the family, and offered to teach me law. I saw no objection to it and entertained his offer, as Aunt Prudence had expressed most urgently her desire to have me continue at live at Raynham, and it was agreeable especially to Mr. Deane, he being Executor. So father came down to Taunton about 1st May and I cam home with him for a few days intending to return. But during these few days Lanky clandestinely left home, went to Raynham, and is there ingratiated himself by traducing others. He has got Aunt Prudence to say that she dislikes me & thinks to take his part & Perez to pay his tuition at the Taunton Academy I wish him well but that he has done me no small evil is evident to all

But considering that Mel. has run away and must feel dependent, must feel humble, and time-serving, wherever he is with womsoever, far more than at home I have charity for him; but for Aunt Prudence who now denounces me after I tried to do her kindness shall I have much charity?

You are not fully aware of the injustice I have received, and I will here write somewhat further about it if you have patience to read. (Here is given an account like that on pp. 123-4-5-6-7)

But enough of this. Father is very indignant about the whole of the above affair, and does not spare the participator in it; And thinks that I have not been treated fairly

[The rest of the page is blank and unsigned.]