

[3 blank, but numbered pages, then on p. 123, Letter from Simeon Locke Doggett to his Uncle Deane, executor of his Grandfather's estate who has offered to help Simeon in his aspirations to go to school.]

Mendon May 31st. 1852

Dear Uncle Deane,

"So oft have letters caused their writers  
To curse the day they were inditers."

that I reflected fully before I concluded to write you this letter. I find myself the victim of misrepresentation and a fool for every one who has a foot. But,

"The Galled horse will wince;" and even tread upon a worm and it will turn. I write this as no argument for ingratitude but against so vile a sin, a sin that looks so horrid in the Caspii, and by which angels bell to the regions of the damn.

"Ingratitude! thou marble-headed fiend  
More hideous wherever thou showest thyself  
Than the sea monster."

No sir, we have no tears to shed for ingratitude, though it be condemned to the punishment of the Danaides, or forever doomed like Sisyphus to roll a stone up the mountains of hell. Let Cerberus quickly open the gates of Gehenna, for it, and Charon hasten to ferry it, over the Styx, let Pluto bring forth his chosen tortures, and Minos adjudge them to it, so that even Ixion will feel relieved from his pain to see it writhe.

Such being ingratitude what a proof of the total depravity of the human race is the exhibition of it.

Is gratitude so difficult a virtue that some people like Falstaff in respect to honor, "will have none of it, declare it a mere escutcheon and to end their catechism?"

Hark to the words of the man of gratitude; There is not a more pleasing exercise of the mind than gratitude v.p. 38

"O wad some power the giftie gie us  
To see ourself as others see us."

But I cannot in the instance I am obliged to bring to your notice view myself as others view me and I would refer it to the candid and ingenuous and if I receive a verdict of condemnation then I submit ask forgiveness and wish to be forgiven. These premises written, I would refer to my two visits to Raynham, first and last, last indeed. When I visited it was with reluctance that I went, I thought they entertained a rather unfavorable opinion of me, as one without cents in his pocket or pence in his head for how could they expect better of a person who never went to school, and dug the earth for his living. Therefore with reluctance I ventured to come down and it was the urgent solicitation of my father that overcame my scruples. ~~But I was~~ ~~happily~~ And ever since I could read Ovid I have cherished and followed a certain line of his, that made an impression on my mind the first time I read it; viz. "Qui bene Caluit qui bene vixit," which in our poor English means, "he who escapes notice or rather hides himself from the view of others lives well." Thus I have wished to avoid offense by keeping myself out of the presence of others. So yielding to my father, he carried me to Raynham. I was happily disappointed for I was treated with attention and kindness by all. But I have just learned that there was more appearance than genuineness in the reception. With me

"All seemed well pleased; but were not all."

After I had been in my Grandfather's house a little while my Grandfather (Requiescat in pace!!) made two proposals to me, one to spend the winter with him, the other to take up the ministry for my profession and as I stood before that venerable old man, and saw experience, wisdom, and beneficence written upon his brow and age and honor in his silver locks, I thought it was best to let him fix my destiny and so accordingly consented, resolving to do with all my strength the duties that would devolve upon me, and to be faithful to my trust as long as I was useful to others.

But just as my father was preparing to return, it was concluded that I should return, this was very sudden to me but I cordially acquiesced. Now I understood that there was a conclave held to pass judgement on my principles.

Aunt Prudence now tells Melancthon that it was noticed that the buffalo was on the floor and I let my father pick it up instead of doing it myself, for which cause Grandpa considered me disrespectful to my father and declared that by all means I should go back, and the conclave all I suppose said amen. This is an iron to my soul, that my revered grandfather should think me so base and degenerate, and all the conclave say amen. "My occupation is gone nor will never come for surely he should ~~not could~~ not be a minister of God who is disrespectful to his parents.

"There must be

"Some chosen curse,

Some hidden thunder in the stores of heaven,

Red with uncommon wrath, to blast the child"

And shall I add abomination to my iniquity and by assuming a sacred office disRespect God? Forbid it Heaven! If I am as criminal as I am accused then my ambition is crushed and my hope is fled, -- I would not what I would and I should not what I could.

But what shall I say then? what shall I think? I never thought that Grandpa drew his conclusions from such shallow premises. It is no slight thing to pass judgement on a person's character, his dearest treasure, adjudge him infamous fit to be sent away from the house of his relations to be banished from the presence of the pious, because he let his father pick up a buffalo skin! Good heavens deliver me from such transcentalism as this, from such casuistry let me flee -- and I am delivered from the pent up city and luxurious abode Where formality takes the place of ingenuousness, and affectation that of naivete Where respect is shown to parents by picking up a buffalo skin or handkerchief and at the same time in the heart wishing them dead for their property. I have learned from history to respect my parents in a more useful & essential manner than in picking up a buffalo skin for them. It was Nero who could smile in his mother's face and pick up her glove for her, Yet it was Nero also who kicked his mother in her stomach and breast till she died, foul murderer of his wife and his brother. But on the other hand it was the noble Aeneas who stppped not to pick up his father's buffalo skin or his glove, but to take up his aged father himself and bore him on his shoulders

through the flames of Troy at the hazard of his own life. And the name of Hypsipyle for preserving her father's will also go down to the remotest time.

But what fairness is there in the whole of this proceeding if it be true? and is Aunt Prudence has fabricated it -- what fairness is there in that? Ask my father if I have been an ungrateful and disrespectful Son, -- the parent only is capable to decide -- if he answer affirmatively, then I submit and hide myself in dust and ashes. Thus you perceive my Dearest Uncle that then by trying to avoid offense I did offend. I now fully understand that hard saying in Matthew "It must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." And it would have saved me from committing more offense, (for I am told that my last sojourn at Raynham was all offense) if without dissimulation I had been told by those who knew the true reason why after I had been invited to remain at Raynham I was so suddenly desired to return, but instead of being told that I had become obnoxious both of my aunts told me the objection was on account of my sitting up at night. I would have shaped my course differently you may depend if I could have known what now I am told. But ignorant of all this disaffection towards me I returned home -- pleasant was my memory of Thanksgiving Day, and I thought that pleasant it would ~~always~~ be. But now what was my pleasure is my regret. Thus I passed the winter with pleasing reminiscences and with a charity that thinketh no evil. But one evening the 20th of last March, as I sat with my brain fevered from over exertion and my lungs wearied with coughing I was told of the demise of Grandfather, -- the venerable dead and the tears of my father induced me to attend the funeral. The funeral ceremonies over, I was persuaded by the urgent solicitations of all to remain in the bereaved house for the good of the survivors. I said nothing about my own interest, I told no one that if I consented to remain, I would tear myself away from my home, my books and pursuits that cheered me and smoothed the rugged path of my life (I told no one that if I remained I would be defeated in a project by which I was to obtain ten dols. (viz delivering a lecture before the Milford Liceum;) I mentioned not a word of the sacrifice I would have to make. No sir, I looked around, I saw the grief of my relations, I banished thoughts of self and humbly said, that I was not to return home but I would remain for the benefit of others. Accordingly I continued there 34 days. I exerted myself in every respect to be useful and agreeable. I even would have staid longer and could have made arrangements to that effect.

But the morning of the 35th day, Sun. Ap. 25th about a 1/4 of an hour before my father started (for my father wanted me still to remain -- he said remain, by all means) Aunt Prudence Changed her mind very suddenly. She declared that she wanted me to return home, that she was exhausted, that your family was coming up, and ~~that~~ as I would make more work for her I was a burden. My father replied, "Great Heavens! a young man of my son's age a burden to you -- let him go home then immediately" Without a moment to change my clothes, or to make my exterior look consistent with the sabbath, I had to get into my father's waggon and travel all that Sunday home. Now she tells Melancthon that I took no interest in her affairs, or in grandma" and

[Letter from Simeon Lock Doggett to his Uncle Deane]  
Mendon. June 8th. 1852

Dear Uncle Deane -- doubly dear to me, I write not to weary you with a long letter, or to trouble you for an answer.

I write to express my gratitude to you for your kind letter which has proved "a flattering unction to my soul." I desired you to be a benefactor in the case, and a benefactor you have been. I did not expect to receive so much attention from you; for I ~~was~~ like poor lame Mephistoth whom King David desired to favor, I bow my head, and like him, I say "What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?" I am poor in body, poor in mind, poor in years, and poor in spirit. I know nothing, have nothing, am nothing; favored neither in respect nor aspect, nor prospect. "The good I would I would, I am not, and what I am, I would not, that I would, I cannot, and that I might, I may not. What I will it shall not, and what I shall, I will it not. When I think of what I am, and what once I was, and when I think of what I am, and what yet may be I do not wish I were not, but I really wish to fear not. I was, I am, I will be, for the things that are, will not be, and those that are not, will [b]e I was sad, I was sad, I will be sad or glad I know not. For what I was, I should repent, for that I am, I should rejoice, and for what I will, should hope and trust. Yet, I would I were, and I know where, and I know who were with me; I wish I had and I know what, and I know who would give me.

But what I wish, if I but got, I would then wish it not; and where I would, if I but but were, I would then wish me here. So I wish I were, I know not where, nor who I would have with me, and I wish I had, I know not what, and know not who would give me.

Then what I must is what I can;  
"Hope humbly, and with trembling Pinions soar.  
Wait the great teacher Death, and God adore."

You must think it reasonable, that I wrote you the letter of the 31st ult. for ~~the~~ though the opinion of the bad is no index to merit, yet the good opinion of the good, is precious, and when once obtained, will not be thrown away, nor allowed to be torn away, by him who knows how dear such treasure is. And when one is fallen in the esteem of others, if he act prudently, he will make one last exertion to restore himself, at least, to ask forgiveness of those he may have made verterently offended. He will heed the truth of this Italian line "Hai cinquanta Amici? -- non basta == hai un nemico? -- è troppo;" which (if you will excuse my poor English,) means; Have You fifty friends? -- you have not enough -- Have you one enemy? -- You have too many. Therefore, I sought to know two things of you; if I had truly fallen in the esteem of the good and wise, and if I had, to tell you of my sorrow. if I had offended those whom I respect, and if I had, to ask forgiveness for my faults.

To err is human, to forgive divine. This is the sentiment I wish to cherish, or rather the feeling I wish to entertain towards others, and have others entertained toward me. Now the sum of the whole matter is, it is "best to study those things which tend for peace"

enclosed is a few lines from my father He approves of your proposal, and the good sense of all must also; Where they books are they are not safe, and if removed into the house they surely would get "badly smoked! Bring in heaps, money in heaps & books in hear do no good but spread them and they benefit wherever they are spread -- Long as we live (?) & we will all love one another &c.

S.L? Doggett

Mendon Mass May 25th 1853

Agreeable to our last intercourse I now write you. The purport of this letter you doubtless anticipate as a confirmation of your last proposal of reengagement. It is to be considered in that light. I see now no obstacles, hinderance or uncertainty or at least the intention may be considered as definite as life or health is or any future arrangement can be: After leaving your kind vicinity I continued in Boston a week or two revolving in my mind what course to pursue. My inclination was strong for going to the West or to accept a yearly school -- But I was more ambitious to commence the study of a profession than for present profit and emolument, and I found that I could more conveniently devote my time to study in this state than in any other. Accordingly I entered the office of W. F. Slocum Esqu. of Grafton the 26th of last Apr. and am now engaged in preparing for the bar. In consequence of the expenxe of my position which is all outlay with noly hope of pecuniary compensation for the next term -- and this is but reasonable for approbation of past fretfulness and for encouragement of more strenuous exertion, and indefatigable perseverance in future if possible which I hardly think can be, but surely think will full equal to the past.

has apprised you early of my intention of reengagement for you desired me so to do at our last interview and for several other reasons, viz. &c &c.

Simeon L. Doggett to

A. B. Ellis, West Dedham.

[The ledger stops here, thus abruptly, though it is clear that at least some of Simeon's woes have been attended to. I don't have the information to hand here, but we know that he married Mary Ann and went to Iowa, where his son Laurence Lock was born -- interesting that he should have named his son thus, after his despair over the original Lanky's behavior!

Obiously, this is the stuff for a lovely little book and you are the person/s to take it on. Just a little filling of gaps would do the trick, as the story tells itself. Typing, I could hardly wait for the next chapter and an interesting life shines through the bombast and self-taught flourishing. I am having a box made for the original and when I can, I'll have it copied. As that will be fairly expensive, you must let me know how many of your family will want such a copy. I'll send you the original, now that I have made this copy, but not until after the box is made -- by a wonderful, but very slow craftsman. Keep me posted and Hoorah for our tribe. I forgot to inscribe the Greek on a couple of pages, but will rectify the error and send that on.

Much love, Melinda

wouldn't you know there would be one word at the very end that I am unable to read. It might be Fortune, or even Gertrude . . .]