

1 January 1852

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[Letter from Simeon Lock Doggett to W. Deane]

Mendon. ~~Dec~~ Jan 1, 1852

Dear W. Deane

Having reflected on the past, the present and the future, I have been induced to write this letter, hoping that it may result profitably to me, and may not be considered inappropriate.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,
"Which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune:
"Ommitted, all the voyage of their life
"Is bound in shallows, and in miseries:
"So we must take the current when it serves,
"Or lose our ventures."

I feel that that time has arrived with me, and that it becomes me to embrace the opportunity, before it ~~becomes~~ shall have passed beyond my reach. A critical time, which is fraught with interest and anxiety, which requires action, and on which the career of life depends; one in regard to which, it has passed into a proverb, that as is the beginning so is the end, and of which it has been tritely observed, that well begun is half done, and that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

When this time arrives it were well for the one concerned, if he have a friend to whom he can apply for advice and assistance. And whom shall he consider to be that friend, if not the one who has treated him with kindness and regard, and towards whom his soul yearns as the panting of hart does for the warter brooks.

There is an old French adage, "Chacun est ouvrier de sa fortune;" that "everyman is the architect of his own fortune," which is indeed a true saying, but it is never the less true, that he will succeed but poorly who relying on his own weakness, or being unfortunate or friendless, obtains not the assistance of others.

Man is a being designed for society, and so designed that without the aid of his brother, he is a helpless creature. Place him on a desolate island and he is almost as helpless as a newborn babe. Hence from necessity they collect themselves into town, Cities, and nations. Some to provide food or clothing for the body, or shoes for the feet; some to carry on the commercial, others the agricultural business; some to care for the soul and others for the body, and then again for the government of the body politic there must be instructors, and rulers, and merchants, and farmers, and manufacturers. All are collected together by inseperable links; all are dependant on each other; all are under obligations; to all the golden rule applies, and where the golden rule is most observed the happiest society is found.

Then again, man is in himself a little world, a microcosm, who has his own interest, and preservation, and aggrandizement, to enhance, regard, and direct. He must strive for his own education, fortune fame and happiness, and he must obtain all the assistance, favors, and treasures from others, that his own conscience and the laws will permit. He soon learns, that he who helps not himself is not helped by others; and he strives for his own interest, and neglects not the helping hand of others. So that when he shall have arrived at maturity, -- hor half his knowledge, half his fortune, and for half his happiness, he is indebted to others.

And yet again, man is a created creature, -- accountable to his God, whose he is, and whom he serves. He is accountable to his maker, that he

treats his fellow Creature kindly and mercifully; that he loves his neighbor as himself, and does unto others as he would have others do; that he feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick, relieve the distressed, and protect the innocent. For the Savior of Mankind has said it and he speaks not in vain. "Inasmuch as ye have do it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto me."

Yet again, once more, -- man is a creature in whom is implanted, maternal, paternal, filial, and kindred affections. He prays for, and is deeply interested ~~interested~~ the welfare of those who are near and dear to him. He rejoices, when they rejoice, and grieves when they do grieve. Their happiness is his happiness, and their prosperity is as dear to him as his own. He is glad to see them, and he is glad to help them prosper; and when he finds them struggling in adversity, he will quickly lend a helping hand. He heeds with a cheerful heart the command of the poet;

"Give to thy near of kin, for Providence hath stationed thee his helper;

"Yet see that he claim not as his right, thy freewill offering of duty.

"Give for encouragement in good; the weak desponding mind

:: Hath many foes, and much to do, and leaneth on its friends."

In view of all these considerations, I have with others, great reason to be grateful. Grateful for that I was not born as many are to toil oppressed and tortured under a burning torrid sun, or bow down with superstitious awe to blocks and stones, or roam about in savage state through woods and prairies wild, or like the beast of the field in ignorance and degradation spend unthinking years. Grateful, that I was born in this free country, in which I can enjoy the inalienable rights of man, in which the arts and sciences, the comforts and conveniences of life are carried to such high perfection; in which there is "a church without a bishop, and a state without a king," in which we can have the Bible for our only creed, and our only Monarch God," in which we are secure in our lives and property, free in the choice of our rulers, free in worshiping according to the dictates of our own consciences, and free in pursuing our own views of happiness.

And moreover especially should I be grateful also that I am blessed with a kind and honorable relationship, and that that relationship should contain so kind and generous a person as yourself. For I remember with what kindness you and my dear Aunt Abbey encouraged me in a proposal that was made last thanksgiving. And now in regard to that proposition I understand that my venerable grandfather has been unable to obtain anything definite or encouraging at present. (But the time of action has with me arrived. I feel as though I ought to be engaged in some employment that may be of some advantage to me. I feel desirous of doing something. I think that if I could get into a business that would be of some better prospect to me, I would be better enabled to take an advanced step.) in the course of my friend who proposes to enable me to publish several poems & novelettes. For I would not like to take the advanced step at once, in my present situation, to be surrounded with difficult ties, straitened in circumstances, and a burden to my friends. I love the spirit of Abraham, when the king of Sodom would have favored him, and therefore I would rather be encouraged to advance by my own exertions. So that even now had I a charity opportunity to go to a theological Seminary, I would rather hesitate or decline, and delving until I could earn something to prepare me for such a step. This is the course I proposed to myself before the winter schools commenced; for in Nov. last I had a school offered

to me at \$30 a month, and I sent the committee, a letter accepting the offer; but the letter getting ~~with~~ unfortunately miscarried, I lost the engagement; and thus I am now earning nothing, and troubled with regards regret. And now in the kindness of your heart, you would ask me what can I do?

I understand Bookkeeping by double entry, so that I could keep A Merchant's Books, I would do the writing for some establishment, or law office &c, I could be employed as an accountant, or a clerk, or a salesman, I could do harder kinds of work as St Paul did with his own hands

If you think it advisable to advertise -- do it, and I will pay for it, & any other necessary expense. If it can be accomplished now, I am ready if not when there is an opportunity.)

But I will here close, hoping that this letter may find you all enjoying health and prosperity; that bright hopes, and bright flowers, and bright stars are before & around and above you; and that this world may not be all a desert, but that there are green spots in the wide waste, in which several flowers are in bloom, and buds, promising buds are found to cheer the saddened heart. (The family here are in Health the same as usual. Nothing new or strange in this vicinity. I wish to be remembered to my Cousin Roscoe, Abby, and Sammy, To my Aunt Abby I cannot sufficiently express my thanks and gratitude for her kindness & regard for me, and may no more trouble and anxiety be found in her path, nor care upon her countenance.)

I am respectfully Yours &c

Simeon L. Doggett

PS. I have been induced to prefer Andover to Meadville, because that at Andover is a more literary institution and with the aid of the American Education Society is as little expensive as any other. I have proposed what I have written in this letter, because Oct. is the only proper time for admission; because Professor Park in his letter discourages coming until next Oct, because in the Catalogue it says "No Student can apply for charitable assistance the first year, when not examined and approved within the first five weeks of the year" (Commencing the 1st of Oct.) Because if encouraged in the meantime I can earn something to prepare me for the commencement, and my evenings I can spend in teaching myself the Hebrew, one great barrier in my way. Then afterward also the $\frac{1}{2}$ week vacation every year I can employ profitably to help me along.)