

20 August 1850

[Letter from Simeon Locke Doggett to his brother]

Aug. 20th, 1850

Dear Brother,

I commence here, intending as you will perceive, to finish the rest of this sheet; -- and I will write down such thoughts as will suggest themselves, such information as I presume will interest you.

I received a letter from you, dated the 24th June, '50 California

Previous to this you had written  $\text{Ma } \frac{5}{2}$  letters, when departing from N.O. 1 at Panama, 1 at Acapulco, 1 at San Francisco. Also the Panama Echo, & the Calofornia Atlas.

I also acknowledge the reception of 1 letter, N.O. May 15th, 50 announcing your departure from N.O. This intelligence was quite unexpected, because you had remained so long in the Crescent City, that it might have been naturally supposed, it was the place of your choice & your fortune.

But to this unexpected news, much excitement was added, when you stated that California was your destination. It was not even surmised that what has transpired was your intention, -- for some time has elapsed since the first discovery of gold, and then when such suprising statements were made, your Gold hunting expedition was even anticipated. But we all err in our calculations about the future, and what transpires is most generally different from our expectations. Hence Sancho Panzo's maxim on expecting is the best policy, for most people, for the children of adversity at least.

The middle sentence of yours of May 15th ("what may betide me I know not and were it &c'") affected the family very much. How could you write thus. Fortitude, affection, love, generosity, Courage, rashness.

You long for variety. This is a natural desire of mankind, -- everything new attracts their attention. Curiosity begets more knowledge than any other incitement. It is this that induces man to traverse the frozen regions of the poles, and the burning sands of Africa. He digs into the bowels of the earth, to find the wonders hidden there; he raises his eyes to heaven to view the starry firmament.

How vast is variety! How many different ingredients in this earth on which we tread, how infinite the productions which spring from its prolific soil. -- Who can number the different kinds of animals that breathe? Who mention how much and what the sea contains? Who can speak of the innumerable insect kingdom, of the birds that wing the air and of the leaves that clothe the forest?

The wide the unbounded prospect lies before me." My argument accumulates, I feel the force of nature bursting on me -- I shrink from the task, and with my mind filled with astonishment, admiration, I cry aloud, Where is the mighty intellect that would presume to enumerate variety?

If so various be the contents of the earth, and if this world is but a speck in the universe, and if there be more millions of worlds than there are varieties on this planet, -- how far then beyond the comprehension of man is Creation!

Here will I hold. If there is a power above us,  
And that there is, all nature cries aloud  
Through all her works he must delight in virtue;  
And that which he delights in must be happy."

June 24th you wrote that, after much tribulation & travelling you at last find yourself in the celebrated city of San Francisco. Your description of the City was quite graphic, yet that City so famous now, 2 years ago was only an inconsiderable town, -- men noticed it only to find its latitude and praised it only for its harbour.

Finish haying on the 18th of this month. Many things conspired to make it a long a laborious job. It has been thus far the wettest year for any number, "whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary." for several days of the last fortnight, the Morning and evening have been as cold as autumnal Shades in northern lattitudes, -- but at noon by no means so hot as you represent San Francisco to be.

To the adverse nature of the weather must be added the heaviness of the crop, -- more hay than usual.

Five men mowed it down by the acre, and myself, Alfred, and our Father were to do the rest. Where was Lanky? He run away on 15 of March, and where he is and what about no one here can tell.

The family received a letter from him last , wherein he said he lived in Boston, with a doctor, and that he was agoing to N York. He wrote that he was doing well. Benjamine Wheeler wote lately informing home of Julia's safe delivery (I salute you for the mute progeny, "Uncle Sam.") and also mentioned that about 2 mo. ago he received a letter from Lancky (from postmarked Palmer (this Co.) stating that he was agoing to Albany. Moreover his name he had changed to "James Streeter." This is all very mortifying to the family.

Nothing exists that can justify his course; -- but as the love of money is the root of all evil, and as the boy had a great inclination to make money for himself, and as his own obstinacy could not be controlled I may safely say that nothing else but self-concern made him go away, and makes him stay away. The design of his letters seems to be only to let the family know that he is . and to mystify his whereabouts.

He was an honest smart healthy boy, addicted to no vice and inclined to be religious. For my own justification I can say I assisted him in his studies, guided him by my counsels, and influenced him by my example. If I have erred therein I ask~~s~~ to be forgiven.

In crossing the isthmus it appears you had a serious time. I wonder were you revolver was; at the same time I consider your successful dexterity, -- surely more than earthly power saved you then. Tho your bravery may defend your body, your carelessness may loss your health. To lose this precious boon ~~of~~ soon to sink in death is a poor consolation "For thee For thee vile yellow slave, &c see Dr. Leyden's ode

[Thus ends p 77 of the ledger, without signature. I'd love to know what that adventure was when the revolver was missing!]

[Lanky = Lawrence]