Title: Letter from John Armstrong to James Armstrong

Date: April 30, 1772

Location: I-SpahrB-1968-4

Contact:

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April 30th, 1772

Dear James,

Being favoured with Mr. Waddell's letter from Lord Motte, informing me that he could not come to Carlisle, I immediately wrote up to Capt. Armstrongs where I have had an agreeable interview with Mr. Waddell; and from thence I now write.

Your letter of the 10th inst. gave your mother and I, once a cup of pleasure - anxiety; but the former preponderates over we think you and her some mistake this defect in patience and experience. Logically, Character must precede large expectations in any way: in almost every other way, these in proper time will undergo the common influence of Heaven; yea, even human. Now a decent support. Impatient anxiety for any worldly matter is a dangerous disposition. You are mortifying your hands. Which is so far well if you persevere. Your letter (although on the whole agreeable) is too general, a vagueness of fact however mixed or ill-illustrated they may be is more satisfactory especially when an opinion or testament is to be formed upon them. You maintain an equal style in content of your letter: none of the sentiments are good others very exceptionable. On that of tragedy of course you would not only say this may be designed to awaken our tenderness and to call it upon, but it is to lead to a dependence on the source of all our comforts: perhaps to prevent the evils that but too often accompany or result from a scene of prosperity. Neither reason nor Religion requires a Man to throw away himself, this time nor law requires it on the other hand on should be, be ambitious. But life is the mind of Man indeed, but let me tell you in one word that the whole universe was not satisfied, the excitement of the human mind, nor can any thing give him rest but a spiritual union to the Lord Jesus by faith. Finally be it true that the most of what you bring back to God the only control of the earth, than the wise gradation of invitation. Come unto me let that labour and are heavy laden, I will give you rest, not as so many, no matter what the labour of this God spiritualisation may be, proved it is mental, the invitation so called to which one may there are the many of mankind, people exceedingly seeking rest in a happy dying portion where it never will be found, the labour in all sorts because they render the object, and yet various laboured, uncomfortable, comforts are to be sought after, are promised to, such as seek on above all other things the kingdom of God. I again on that resolution of yours respecting to the will of God on the gifts of Providence, you think if you went to make an attempt in the good things which you would call your 3 attempts be disappointed you can then let down without great reason, not the Divine will being brought by others. I can see no other way to your proposal; you must proceed, first try once more...
moment. It is an immediate duty, the nature of your post, and your good condition, to write to your post office of Washington, and to make immediate arrangements for your departure. I do not think it will be necessary to take up the matter of the petition, as it is likely to be adjourned. The time will be fully occupied in the business of the house, and I am satisfied that it will be the best course to follow. I shall be glad to hear from you soon, and to know how matters stand. I am, however, unwilling to leave the business in your hands, as I think it would be advisable to have the matter referred to the proper authority. If you can obtain the necessary information, I shall be happy to hear from you soon, and to know how matters stand.

Our common friend, Mr. Waddell, whose judgment I much esteem, has given me a great deal of trouble lately, and I am not sure that I shall be able to see him again. He is now in a very critical state, and I hope he will soon recover. I have written to him, and I hope he will write to me soon. I shall be happy to hear from him, and to know how matters stand. I am, however, unwilling to leave the matter in your hands, as I think it would be advisable to have the matter referred to the proper authority. If you can obtain the necessary information, I shall be happy to hear from you soon, and to know how matters stand.

Doctor Jones has not been able to persuade him to take his leave of his friends. He has been in London for about ten days, and I am sorry to say he is not in a favorable state of health. His country is suffering a great deal, and I hope he will soon recover.

I have been very much interested in the case of Mr. Waddell, and I hope he will soon be on the road to recovery. I shall be happy to hear from him, and to know how matters stand. I am, however, unwilling to leave the matter in your hands, as I think it would be advisable to have the matter referred to the proper authority. If you can obtain the necessary information, I shall be happy to hear from you soon, and to know how matters stand.

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what members of the family going to Ireland in an entire uncertainly, likely he will attempt that journey this next Fall, but whether this manoeuvres in Baltimore or the mouth of Letort Spring is yet uncertain. Mrs. Betsy Callander is Match lately on foot with Philander Andrews to like to go back on the part of herself and father. As if my own family circumstances they are much as they were at going in July only that from one quarter another my debts have swelled high, and to have paid my land near the town am much delituation, that made my public officer being at this time scarce worth nothing—have paid Mr. Waddell and two other Bills; one and one Bill to Abramson in Philadelphia, of Taylor also brought me in a Bill of about £14 but my money being exhausted I can not pay him. The new governor treated me politely in the file of an office, there is about this time to be married to Miss Masters. Your friend in Philadelphia are in general well. Pardon me, Mr. Morgan who sometime claims that you don't write him as single letter may write him—head over if you were preparing for a Doctor degree. To tell him still state of health and the destination Imagining to prevent at person especially she said it would require of personal attendance. Mr. Waddell has at least five or meantime has lately present someting on Health dedicated to Cochran. Rowan Ramsey's Dear his circumstance been altered in 1784. Absent, whom name I am forget has wrote a poem called Eulogium on the decay, which is printed to Mr. Greenmount— if you had any opportunity for Philadelphia? I would love for you write by the way of Baltimore if you anybody can it shall witness you before the fall arrives to be seized at Aquana. Mr. John Campbell had by some means I think to his Father several letters since last Fall. Ben Armstrong Buchanan was lately found in his bed it was thought to be of an appleyx, recovery prevents work, you see the extreme charity manner in which I have endeavor to be all the particular. Just to Pyle, Send if you have few calls to the sick, you have important advice to frame both for the word and that we to come, this is the time for improvement, learn to write early. I commit to God the word of this grace and am your dear James.

Your very affectionate father

[Signature]

J. H. Armstrong
April 30th, 1772

Dear Jamey

Being favour'd with Mr. Waddells letter from his Mother, informing me that he cou'd not come to Carlisle, I immediately Rode up to Capt. Armstrongs where I have had an agreeable interview with Mr. Waddell and from whence I now write.

Your letter of the 10th Inst. gave your Mother & I at once a cup of pleasure & anxiety, but the former preponderates as we think you under some mistake thro' a defect in patience & experience—assiduity & Character must precede large expectations in y'r way & in almost every other way, these in proper time will under the common influence of heaven yield every honest Man a decent Support. Impatient anxiety for any worldly matter is a dangerous disposition. I see you are mending y'r hand-write which is so far well if you persevere. Your letter (alth'on the whole a good one) is too general, a variety of facts however mix'd or ill stated they may be is satisfactory especially when an Opinion or Judgement is to be form'd upon them —You maintain an equal Stile or diction thro' Y'r letter & some of the Sentiments are good others very exceptionable— On that of Tryals or difficulties you shou'd not only say they maybe design'd to quicken our Sensibility, excite lawful industry &tc. but also to lead to a dependence on the Source of all our comforts, & perhaps to prevent the evils that but too often accompany or result from a Scene of prosperity. Neither reason nor Religion requires a Man to throw away himself, his time nor his acquirements, nor on the other hand, shou'd he be too ambitious. Restless is the mind of Man indeed, but let me tell you in One word that the whole universe wou'd not satisfy the extensive & craving desires of One human mind nor can anything give solid rest but a Spiritual union to the lord Jesus by faith, whereby the Once Straying Soul is brought back to god the only Center of it's Best, hear the wise & gracious invitation —Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden & ye shall find
rest to your Souls—no matter what this labour this toss'd dissatisfied
Situation may be provided it is mental, the invitation or call is for such
a One. Yea there are thousands of mankind perplex'd exceedingly Seeking rest
or a happifying portion where it never will be found, the labour is all
fruitless because they mistake the Object— and yet various Subordinate com-
forts are to be Sought after & are promis'd too, to such as Seek first or
above all other things the kingdom of God. Again on that resolution of
yours respecting Submission to the will of God in the gifts of his Providence,
you think if you were to make an attempt in the West Indies which you would
call your 3d attempt & yet be disappointed you cou'd then Sit down with great
resignation to the Divine Will & eat brown bread & water. My dear Son here
are two obvious errors, first you have great reason for Submission & resig-
nation in the current moments,'tis an immediate duty 'tis not to be postpon'd,
you must not make conditions with God; in the great patron epitomy of prayer
be the state of the person what it will you find the Petition is thy will be
done. 2d mistake —if God shou'd try you as you describe & disappoint your 3d
attempt, do you think you cou'd command that quiet resignation of which you
speak? I wish you were better acquainted with your own breast. don't trust
y'r own abilities to procure or command such a precious jewel as resignation
is, it is the gift of God — no it wou'd more probably flee from you far as the
golden Object of pursuit, leaving it's opposite in possession & perhaps sundry
other accomplices of the same kind.

Our common friend Mr. Waddell whos Judgment I much esteem thinks you
can do very well where you are—seems to be clearer in the propriety of your
tarrying in Virginia than either y'r Mother or I can easily agree to, but for
anything that yet appears it is doubtless duty to tarry there until the
middle of November next, about that time we shall expect a short visit from
you for farther consultation on various important things & in the meantime I
I entreat you not to determine anything of consequence without a previous consultation with Mr. Waddell, who will ready talk with you on any convenient Subject whatever & take pleasure in contributing to your assistance in those advices which his experience enables him to give. I'm pleas'd to hear of Mr. McCoskerys agreeable prospects, some of which as may be imagin'd from your own letter have set yr teeth an edge. I lay no absolute prohibition in matters of that kind only that thoughts are undoubtedly premature in every respect unless He pro to be very favourable & Supported by good council, as an act of that sort may never be in yr power to alter or amend.

Doctor Irwin has not been able since you saw him to Ride abroad or leave his House till about ten days ago & is yet but weak altho' the disorder is removed, he told me once if those attacks were repeated he wou'd go to Sea & afterward settle in Ireland, this naturally Open'd a full conversation in regard to yr settling here, which issu'd in this, that none wou'd come so agreeable to him, that he wou'd desire to live on good terms—that his practice had not been so good for two years past as formerly tho he knew not the reason that if you cou'd not evidently do better where you were you might tarry here when you shou'd come to pay the next visit, but that if the Germans continued to buy lands here even one Dr. wou'd hardly be supported &tc you you'd have wrote the Doctor a few lines as you left him Sick. I'm much inclin'd to your return in some prudent space of time. Mr. Waddell thinks it wou'd take at least another year to enable to form a right judgment & that you may enlarge yr district by crossing a River towards Potomach, yet perhaps Novembr. next may afford sufficient light—pray take care to guard agst. the Ague next fall, as that wou'd be a great prejudice to you. Ned Tilghmans friend the Dr. is Dead—Davis I hear mov'd into Queenstown now said to be a fine seat. Messrs. Chew & Tilghman blam'd you for going away, Davis is now
in esteem. there are two ordinary Duck fellows at Carlisle, and there were many
calls when the Dr. was ailing—what I mention of the Doctors going to Ireland
is an entire uncertainty—it's likely he will attempt Matrimoney this next Fall,
but whether his mark be Baltimore or the mouth of Letorts Spring is yet un-
certain. Miss Betsy Callandars Match lately on foot with Parson Andrews is
like to go back on the part of herself and Father. As to my own Family Cir-
cumstances they are much as they were at yr going away only that from one
quarter & another my debts have Swollen high, and as I have not Sold my land
near the Town am much difficulted on that acct. my publick offices being at
this time scarce worth naming. I have paid Mr. Waddell and-two-other-Bills-in
Phila and One Bill to Shomaker in Philad. yr. Taylor also brought me in
a Bill of about £14 but my money being exausted I cou'd not pay him. The
new Governor treated me politely & in the Stile of an old friend, he is
about this time to be marry'd to Miss Masters. Your friends in Philada.
are in general well I din'd with Dr. Morgan who complains that you don't
write him a Single letter, pray write him—he ask'd me if you were prepar-
ing for a Doctors Degree, I told him yr ill state of health and toss'd
situation I immagin'd you'd prevent at present especially as he said it wou'd
require yr personal attendance. Dr. Rush has at least five apprentices &
has lately printed som[e]thing on Health dedicated to Cadogan. Parson Ramsey
is Dead & his Brother is once with Dr. Morgan whos name I now for-
get has wrote a pious celebrated Eulogium on the Occasion , which is prefix-
ed to Mr. Greens Sermon—if you have any opportunity to Philad it's worth
sending for, pray write by the way of Baltimore if you possibly can. I shall
write you before the Fall ordering to be drop'd at Arbana,Mr. John Campbell
has by some means I think sent his Father Several letters Since last Fall.
Poor Armstrong Buchanan was lately found Dead in his Bed it was thought to be
of an appoplexy, no person present.
You see the crude & hasty manner in which I have wrote in order to be a little particular. Eat no Idle Bread if you have few calls to the Sick you have important Studies to pursue both for this world and that wh is to come, this is the time for improvement, learn to Rise early. I commit to God & the word of his grace, and am dear Jamey

Your very Affectionate Father

John Armstrong

P.S. My fine Grey Colt is dead of the Strangles or common disorder how has the Grey Mare prov'd or are there any better pastures where you are mov'd Mr. Waddell thinks that Mrs. Eustes will naturally wait until you can conveniently pay him & that it is only a common case. My compliments to Mr. McCosker I have assisted his Aunt in getting a very good Lot adjoining her House.