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Title: Letter from John Armstrong to James Armstrong

Date: April 30, 1772

Location: I-SpahrB-1968-4

Contact:

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Dear James

April 30th 1772

Being favour'd with Mr Waddells letter from his Mother, informing me that he could 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 are ever some mistake thro' a defect in patience & experience, a fixidity & 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 (altho on the whole a good one) is too general, a variety of facts however mix'd or ill-tated they may be is more satisfactory especially when an Opinion or Judgment is to be form'd upon them — You maintain an equal style or diction thro' y^r letter & some of the Sentiments are good others very exceptionable — On that of trials or difficulties you shou'd not only say they may be design'd to quicken our sensibility, excite to careful industry &c. but also to lead to a dependance 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. Prestige 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 any thing 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 its Rest, 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 toils & dissipated situation may be provided it is mental, the invitation so call'd is to such a one. yea there are thousands of mankind perplex'd exceedingly seeking rest or a happy resting portion where it never will be found, the labour is all fruitless because they mistake the Object — and yet various subordinate comforts are to be sought after & are promis'd too, to such as seek first or above all other things the Kingdom of God. I gain 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 3^d 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 too obvious errors, first you have great reason for submission & resignation in your

moments, 'tis an immediate duty, 'tis not to be postponed, you must not make conditions with god; in the great patron & epitome of prayer be the state of the person what it will you find the Petition is they will be done. 2. mistakes - if god should try you as you describe & disappoint your 3. attempt, do you think you could command that quiet resignation of which you speak? I wish you were better acquainted with your own breast, don't trust your own abilities to procure or command such a precious jewel as resignation is, it is the gift of god - no it won't more probably flee from you for as the golden Objects of pursuit, leaving it's opposite in possession perhaps sundry other accomplices of the same kind.

Our common friend Mr. Waddell whose Judgment I much esteem thinks you can do very well where you are, & must be clearer in the propriety of your tarrying in Virginia than either y^r Mother or I can easily agree to, but for any 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 treat you not to determine any thing of consequence without a previous consultation with Mr. Waddell, who will readily talk with you on any convenient Subject whatever, & take pleasure in contributing to your assistance in those devices which his experience enables him to give. I'm pleas'd to hear of Mr. M^r. Cookerys agreeable prospects, some of which as may be imagin'd from your letter have set y^e off on an edge, I lay no absolute prohibition in matters of that kind only that those that are undoubtedly premature in every respect unless they are supported by good counsel, as an act of that sort may never ^{be} your power to alter or annul.

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, he told me once if those attacks were repeated he won't go to sea & afterward settle in Ireland, this naturally opens a full conversation in regard to y^e settling here, which you'd in this that none won't come so agreeable to him, that he won't 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 could 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 Bⁿ won't hardly be supported & y^e you shou'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 won't take at least another year to enable to form a right Judgment, that you may enlarge y^e district by crossing a River towards Potomach, yet perhaps Novemb^r next may afford sufficient light - pray take care to guard ag^t the Ague next fall as that won't be a great prejudice to you. Ned Tilghman's friend the Bⁿ is Dead, Davis Thear mov'd into Queenstown nor said to be a fine seat. Major's Chewy Tilghman blam'd you for going away, Davis is now in esteem, there are two ordinary Dutch fellows at Carlisle, and there were many others when the Bⁿ was ailing.

what mention of the Doctors going to Ireland is an entire uncertainty -
it's likely he will attempt Katorney this next Fall, but whether his
mark be Baltimore or the mouth of Letorts Spring is yet uncertain
Miss Betsey 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
Circumstances they are much as they were at y^r 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 in that acct^y my publick Offices being at
this time scarce worth naming - I have paid M^r Waddell and two other
~~Bills in Philad~~ and one Bill to a Shoemaker in Philad. y^r Taylor
also brought me in a Bill of about £14 but my money being exhausted
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 Philad. are in general well I din'd with D^r Morgan who com-
-plains that you don't write him a single letter, pray write him - he ask'd me
if you were preparing for a Doctors Degree, I told him y^r ill state of health
and to y^e situation I imagin'd wou'd prevent at present especially as he
said it wou'd require y^r personal attendance. D^r Rush has at least five ap-
-prentices & has lately printed something on Health dedicated to Cadogan
Parson Ramsey is Dead & his Brother writes once a month with
whos Name I now forget has wrote a pious & celebrated Eulogium on the occa-
-sion which is prefix'd to M^r Greens sermon - if you have any opportunity to
Philad. it's worth sending for. pray write by the way of Baltimore if you pos-
-sibly can, I shall write you before the Fall ordering to be dropp'd at Urbana
M^r 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 apoplexy, no person present.
You see the crude & hasty manner in which I have in order to be
a little particular. Eat no Pale Food if you have few Calls to the Sick
you have important Studies to pursue both for this world and that wch^e
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 Tammy
Your very affectionate Father

P.S: my fine Grey Colt is dead of the
Strangles or common disorder
how has the Grey Mare prov'd

John Armstrong

or are there any better pastures where you are now? M^r Waddell
thinks that M^r Eustes will naturally wait until you can conveniently
pay him & that it is only a common case. my compliments to M^r M^r Laker
I have assist'd his Aunt in getting a very good lot adjoining her House.

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 Rest, 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 ^{to} 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 comforts 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 & resignation 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.

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I entreat you not to determin 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 y^r teeth an edge. I lay no absolute prohibition in matters of that kind only that ^{Such} 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 y^r 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 y^r 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 ^hshou'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 y^r district by crossing a River towards Potomach, yet perhaps Novembr. next may aford sufficient light -pray take care to guard ags^t. 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 -its likely he will attempt Matrimoney this next Fall, but whether his mark be Baltimore or the mouth of Letorts Spring is yet uncertain. 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 Circumstances they are much as they were at y^r 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 diffculted on that acc^t. my publick offices being at this time scarce worth naming. I have paid Mr. Waddell ~~and two other Bills in Philad~~ and One Bill to Shomaker in Philad^a. y^r. 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 frie^ds 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 preparing for a Doctors Degree, I told him y^r ill state of health and toss'd situation I immagin'd wou'd prevent at present especially as he said it wou'd require y^r personal attendance. Dr. Rush has at least five apprentices & has lately printed somelthing on Health dedicated to Cadogan. Parson Ramsey is Dead & his Brother *in-law* once with Dr. Morgan whos name I now forget has wrote a pious celebrated Eulogium on the Occasion , which is prefixed to Mr. Greens Sermon -if you have any opportunity to Philad^a 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 we^h 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.