

Letter to Abel Harwood (transcribed)

Tuesday June 21, 1842

My Friend

Yours bearing date of June 7th I took from the post office last Saturday, just one week after the same was mailed at Shelbyville. I began to think that for some reason or other you had concluded to drop me from the list of correspondents. But I am glad to find myself mistaken. The cause of the delay is the very same that has made me more than once slight a friend: the duties of school.

Since opening the above more than a week has elapsed during which time I have been kept from finishing this reply to an old friend by number of petty causes. This is July 4th the day on which the great National act of declaring independence is commemorated however coming in many places. How much praise is lavished on the (dauntly?) signers of the declaration, and upon the brave officers and soldiers of the revolution, but how little acknowledgement of the blessing of Heaven upon their efforts. The human race is prone to idolatry. Even in our own times and in our own nation we see a propensity to forget the true God and make gods of heroes.

It is as yet doubtful whether greater good or evil has resulted from the Revolution as yet. Is the expression of such doubt treasonable? You have heard that the Rev. Sylvester Judd was degraded from the chaplainship in Maine Legislature for preaching a sermon on evils that have followed followed from the Revolution. (In foolishness?): I have not learned the contents of that sermon more than is dictated by its title; but I presume it contains much that we must assent to. That evils have flowed from war is plain. Infidelity was introduced by the intercourse and alliance with the French. (Here) that imbibed the principles of Infidelity, became extravagant in their views of the rights of man and in endeavoring to (extract?) those rights they spread a (road?) the demoniac spirit of (Jacobinism?) which the friends of order and moderation have in vain contented with from the foundation of our government. Jacobinism, the spirit of misrule, and insubordination to the principle of justice have been on the increase and it is still triumphant notwithstanding efforts made to arrest it. It has manifested itself on various ways proceeding from bad to worse, and from worse to what is still worse. It first appeared in the shape of Jeffersonian democracy. And since the various manifestations have been in Socialism, in the working man's party in Abner Kneelandism, and finally in (Loeofocoism?) and ultra abolitionism. And as it goes on it becomes more desperate, as in seen in the mobs of our cities, in the nullification acts of the south, in (reproach?) of public debts, and in the rebellion of the redoubtable Gov. Dorr. It is my opinion that we stand but one or two moves from anarchy and universal civil war.

Allowing the Revolution to have been a war of principle, and justifiable on the ground of self defense, it must be allowed that it has been the occasion of much mischief

and trouble not only in our land but in Europe. But is war justifiable on Christian principles? Any war? (Quaestro! Osay! Quaestro!)....

This as I said is the 4th. While others are making a great (fuf?) perhaps, because they like to keep in remembrance fighting, for fighting is fun to them. I am at home free from excitement unannoyed by fudging celebrations. I have given holiday to my school, which consists of four only. Peaches are ripening and melons have been eatable a long time. Corn is hardening and cotton is from knee to breast high. The weather for three days has been cool enough to put on a woolen coat at morning and at evening. Today is nearly as warm as usual. The hot sun is very oppressive to the constitution but I think that white people could perform labor in the fields; some, nay many do, and appear to stand it very well as far as I know. My health has been very good ever since I have been here with exception of now and then a day of dullness, caused probably by the action or want of action of the (bile?) By care I believe health may be preserved here, but greater precaution must be used than that of those who run into excesses run great risk of their lives. Duelling is very fashionable in these parts. Several fights have taken place opposite tower since I came down. One occurred last Saturday in which one of the parties was wounded in the leg.

Your views on teaching correspond with mine. I make my scholars work out the problems of Arithmetic on their slates, and then repeat the rules and purposes and the problems again before me upon the blackboard. Having gone through a rule, they review it passing over it the second time as thoroughly as the first.

I wish you would give my respect to J. Allen and family, his brother David and co. and to all inquiring friends. Also to Mrs. Harwood.

Your sincere friend-
Arnold Hammu(o)nd

P.S. I am very secluded. I have spoken to (?) but three or four females in (M..?) except to the servants. Mr. Visk is in (G..?) where I hope he will find some good companion. He by the way is super excellent. I never expect to find Mrs. (Harmum?). She is lost.