

Levi Pennington

People

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## Levi Pennington To John Sullivan, October 23, 1965

Levi T. Pennington  
*George Fox University*

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October 23, 1965.

John A. Sullivan, Executive Secretary,  
American Friends Service Committee,  
814 N. E. Fortieth Street,  
Seattle, Wash. 98105.

Dear Friend:--

Your letter of the 14th should have had a much earlier answer but for the fact that I was away from Newberg from the morning of the 15th to the morning of the 20th, and again from the afternoon of the 21st to the afternoon of the 22nd, and then to Portland for an AFSC meeting; and the big pile of letters that I have written today has just got me down to your good letter. And I've pounded this machine so long that I won't even go back to start on another sheet, even after the interruption that made me write Salem instead of Seattle, and get as far as the O in Oregon before I realized my mistake.

A letter from Florence Hornig, no, a note on a postal card, says that the Great Falls folks will be asked to mail the Cary tape back here to Newberg early on the morning of the 8th, so we should have it before the 11th. I called Kelsey Rimshaw, and he said he would mail the tape of my speech back to you at once. I supposed he had already done it. I think the use of the tape will be so little that all the trouble taken about it will be like the old Hoosier expression of "shearing a pig." Any effort that was out of proportion to the beneficial results achieved was called "shearing a pig", or if you wanted a more elaborate statement of it, "like shearing a pig; much cry but little wool." I suspect that among its other faults there was the one I suggested in connection with Steve Cary's speech. My guess -- ah -- is that -- ah -- I -- used too many -- ah -- ahs.

I wish I could send you a copy of my first book of verse, Akk Kinds of Weather. I thought that there were still at least 50 with the sheets all printed and only waiting to be bound, but when I ordered another 50 I got half a dozen or so instead of half a hundred, and I can't get any more, any more than Oliver Twist could get more when he wanted it.

Perhaps you noticed that those Modern Fables in Variable Winds were numbered IV, V and VI. The reason was that I, II and III are in All Kinds of Weather. Maybe you'd like to read those. I've written a good many thousands of words today, but I'm nearly done, and I'll rest by copying some other fables.

#### MODERN FABLES I. THE SIDE HILL GOUGER

This is the side hill gouger. A hillside is his home.  
He always lives there, for you see he simply cannot roam.  
When he would travel round the hill he always goes one way.  
His legs are longer on one side, much longer, so they say.  
When a lady side hill gouger meets a side hill gouger man  
They should avoid falling in love, avoid it if they can,

For always they must travel in in different directions,  
 And that, as one can see, is gery hard on the affections.  
 Indeed a marriage of this sort can never turn out well.  
 It simply is impossible; indeed it's simply -- well --  
 I did not mean to say it's well, it's really very bad;  
 They're sorry that they married; they wish they never had.

## MORAL

The moral of this fable is sure not hard to find.  
 When you are getting married you should marry your own kind.

## MODERN FABLES II. THE HOOP SNAKE

This creature is the hoop snake. He lives among the gravel,  
 But when he would go places, my, how that boy can travel.  
 He takes his long tail in his mouth and he begins to roll  
 And travels like the wind, but rather faster, on my soul.  
 While other snakes go squirming and wriggling on the ground,  
 This enterprising serpent a better way has found.  
 He's overcome his handicap and made himself so fleet  
 That he can outstrip anything that travels on four feet.

## MORAL

The moral of this fable is very short and sweet.  
 Even when times are hardest, you can make both ends meet.

## MODERN FABLES III. THE GLASS SNAKE

This is the glass snake. When you hit this creature in the grass  
 He just flies all to pieces, like bits of broken glass.  
 There are his broken pieces scattered about the yard,  
 And you say, "Killing that snake certainly wasn't hard."  
 But after you have left him, these pieces all unite,  
 And then this snake is good as new, refabricated quite.  
 And when he's reunited he gives a quiet laugh.  
 He thinks he has the system, and it's not bad, not half.

## MORAL

When you have "gone to pieces" just do this thing, sir, whether  
 You find it hard or easy -- just "pull yourself together."

Now that I've done all that, I've "changed up my mind"  
 as my good friend Floyd Perisho used to say. As long as you have  
 enjoyed Variable Winds, I'm going to send you one of the few copies  
 I have left of All Kinds of Weather. Don't put it in the paper.  
 Somebody else might want one.

With best wishes always,

Sincerely your friend,

Levi T. Pennington.