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**Author: "Marietta" (fl. ca. 1860)**

**Transcribed letter, 4 Feb. 1860, [written near Boston, Mass.] to "my dear Birdie" (California)**

**1 item.**

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**Summary**

Anonymous letter written by "Marietta," a woman living in vicinity of Boston, Massachusetts, to a friend [a Miss "Em"] in California re sectional tensions prior to Civil War, and family news, including troubles at home because of her mother's illness and employment of an inexperienced "green" Irish servant.

Marietta writes, "Do you find California friends warmer hearted than yankee ones? I hope you don't hear so much of this quarrel twixt North and South as I do. Such a disgrace to our country. I had a letter from cousin Mary this week. She is quite a Southerner in her views - altogether too much so to please my strong Republican and Anti Slavery notions."

Marietta reports on her visit to the South Boston Institute for the Blind and two of its students: Julie Martin and Laura Bridgeman (1829-1889), the "famous deaf mute"; Marietta also notes her anticipation of sailing to Germany to continue her studies in the near future.

*("Marietta" wrote this letter in a "cross-hatched" fashion in which she wrote a six page letter on four sheets of blue stationery. This common 19<sup>th</sup> century practice saved paper and postage. However, cross-hatched letters appear virtually illegible to twenty-first century readers. South Caroliniana Library thanks Kathryn Graham for her transcription of this letter.)*

4 Feb. 1860

No 7 Orchard St. Feb 4<sup>th</sup> 60.

[near Boston, Mass.]

My dear Birdie – Take your seat in the magnetizing Chair. Vous serez ou rapport parfait avec moi. How shall I begin or where too did I leave off last time I have not heard from you yet which is an addition to my other burdens. Just now I'm in a peck of half bushels. I know you will sympathize with me. Is that any reason why I should disturb you with my tribulations. "Should I not rather" write a letter all smooth and sweet? Not I. You'll take me just as I am if you get me at all. Dont you see what a scrape you're in accepting my friendship. But you cant help yourself now. Bear it with as good a grace as possible.

Well then my mother is sick and the whole care of the house devolves upon me. Thats the first and chief cause of my troubles. 2<sup>ndly</sup> Our black girl has gone away and we have a green (oh that don't express it) Irish girl by name Bridget which does express it. I have to be right at her heels all the time to get anything done right for she is the most forgetful and careless specimen it has been my fortune to see in some time. When I speak to her she says Haw? and I must always say the thing a second time.

Of course school is not to be thought of under the circumstances. No such luxuries included in my present bill of fare. That goes for trouble the third. Then James and I have stopped studying together and I confess to you that I am dreadfully lonely – what is called home sick. It had become so much habit with me. We finished the Analysis and reviewed it and had planned a Latin course for the next thing but we have concluded it is best not and henceforth we each gang[?] our ain[?] gait[?]. We are good friends. I think better than ever before.

I have been sick my self with a very peculiar sore throat and cold but

mother's being sick has made me well. I don't know what does ail her and as usual she will not have a doctor – That is an old trick of hers. She never will have one. She is in great distress the most of the time in her back and head. I think she is rather better today though and I hope she will soon be well. I fly around and do the cooking an accomplishment which Bridget does not possess. Will you have some roast beef or fried ham or stewed oysters, cake bread or puddings of any kind? I am at your service mam, and they shall be “splin did”! as Bridget says. Oh, goodbye to the thoughts of present duties. I'll shake them all off and think of you. It is not quite ten yet. I go to bed at about twelve and must have my breakfast ready by quarter after six.

It wouldnt be half so hard for me if I wasn't so inexperienced and unused to doing anything that I quick get tired. I was up to see Mary E. well not quite a fortnight ago. Found her making molasses candy. She left her candy and we had a game of chess. She hasnt been up to see me once although I have her several times.

Well Em where are you baby? Do you find California friends warmer hearted than yankee ones? I hope you dont hear so much of this quarrel twixt North and South as I do. Such a disgrace to our country. I had a letter from cousin Mary this week. She is quite a Southerner in her views - altogether too much so to please my strong Republican and Anti Slavery notions. I'm afraid she'll get married down there as almost everyone suggests. Not for want of attentions either for even in this short time some have desired to play the agreeable. She repels them all however and is such a prudent maiden that she even refuses a kindly offer of company to church.

Oh, I, I've been to Boston since I wrote to you. I didnt stay very long and it was stormy every bit of the time of I was there, but I enjoyed myself very much. The only thing I was especially disappointed in was in going out to see my Mary. (Parkhurst) I suppose she is home now.

I went out to the South Boston Institution for the Blind - I suppose you have been into the one at New York. Their school was in session when we went in and I heard them read and recite in Arithmetic, Algebra, Geography &c. also sing and play upon the piano. The music teacher is blind too. I saw there Laura Bridgeman. You have heard much of her. She has only two senses touch and I think smell either that or taste. It is astonishing to see her carry a conversation. She has lately expe

rienced religion and is much happier than before. I wonder that she never did before. God seems very near to the blind that is to me. And to others I suppose he seems very near to the lame. And yet I haven't made that manifest. Somehow I never could believe in religion coming all in a hurry. It seems as if a love of God and The Good One must be gained by a series of struggles and resolutions and failures and try it agains.

Do you know that piece  
of J Russel Leonells' called  
Longing. It is a capital  
thing I think.

"To let the new life in we know  
Desire must open the portal  
Perhaps the longing to be so  
Helps make the soul immortal."

Well where am I with my immortal souls. Come back to the Blind Asylum and Laura Bridgeman. How do you suppose the first idea was ever conveyed to her of a series of letters put together to represent thought Wonderful! You know to converse with her you make the deaf and dumb letters within her hand that she may feel them for she is deaf, dumb and blind.

[I went into the Aquarial Gardens where I saw beside the fish snakes, kangaroo, moose, genets[?] happy family &c together with the learned souls who play very well on the hand organ. Such beautiful eyes as they have. They seem melting with love. I spent one night with Julie Martin in her French habitation. She is as easily situated as you please. And they are so kind to her and take such pains to teach her to converse. I liked the younger Mademoiselle especially. Julie hasn't written to me yet and she might be ashamed of it. I took her everywhere with me when I was there and tried to make things pleasant for her. I even took my spark over and made a call on her and asked him as a personal favor to repeat it on his own account.

Wasn't I self-sacrificing? No I wasn't either for I should be delighted if he and Julie would like one another. He is a real nice fellow good principled and smart and all that besides already being in business for himself but there my standard of manhood is very high.

I had a letter from Phin last week. He says he is to be on the wing soon and that on that account it will not be possible for me to join him & neither would it be at all expedient for me. He says I must be in a family where not a word of English is spoken. Such a family (a young minister and his wife) he knows in Buis-him not far from Heidelberg and he says at his request he is sure they would take me.

He says as soon as I am sufficiently acquainted with the German

(say 3 months) I can go right on with my studies Greek Latin History &c. all of course through German as a medium for this man knows not a word of English. He is a highly educated German. My father and mother have both consented for me to go and I have written to Mr. C. to make terms.

So all things holding as at present and God willing I shall sail to Germany as soon as I can find a party going. I shall go from New York by the Liverpool New York Philadelphia Steam ship Company line. the same line of steamers that Mr. James and his wife went by - Likewise Mr. Jacques They both recommend the steamers very highly - The fare by them is very moderate which is likewise a reason with me. John Whiton went by that line -

I wish it could be that I could go in company with your uncle and aunt. I will be ready to go in April May or June or even sooner than April if I hear from Mr. Calkins. I say nothing about it yet nor should I be willing to have it known until it is so sure a thing that my passage is already engaged. Then I dont care so much although I want to get off as quietly as possible.

Maybe you already know that I am fond of quiet. Oh you'll see me a regular Dutchman yet. It will be of great advantage to us Im[Em?] when we set up our school.

Have you seen Van Pelt yet? Do tell me how you like him. Is he as good as James is. I think so much of him - the only boy he ever did love he says. I suppose he has told you about going to the Anti-Slavery Convention in Boston. It made him about sick he got so much excited. He is not a very strong youth. I trouble a little for whither can he stand the next four years of his life and yet he is so full of the scimpi[?] that I dont believe he can ever hurt himself with study.

I think he will be brilliant in some things but dull in the regular studies. He will excel in what ever pertains to Speaking or to Natural Science. I shall take great interest in his college life. I think the prospect of the long waiting frets Anne but she will have to learn that lesson well if she looks to him for his life journey and so I tell her - I think she got used to it after that but I dont know I shall be gone too you know. I suppose I could comfort her somewhat if I was here

My cousin Henry is well if not engaged the same thing, to a Miss Eva Adams a very pretty girl as I think. Everyone likes her as far as I can find out. She is just as affectionate as she can be I should judge her to be very smart and I am glad Henry has found someone to love him - Since he has lost his mother he has -felt- this need enough and he is naturally very affectionate. He thought the world of his mother and even now although she has been dead these ten years he tries to do as he thinks she (his mother) would like to have him.

Emily Brian's and Fred Barnards names are much joined now and I think truthfully enough.

You write often to me. It seems as if I had done all the writing thus far and in fact I have. I dont know how many letters you have on the way but I dont believe you have equalled mine. I have a great many correspondents too and I write very often to cousin Mary Birdie you see I have confided wholly to you in this.

I know you will be true to me and so a loving goodnight from  
Marietta