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Title: Letter from Thomas McFadden to Robert Black

Date: December 3, 1843

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No. 46 W.C. Dickinson College, Carlisle Pa.

Sunday December 3^d 1843

My Dear Robert,

I received your valuable and welcome communication on yesterday afternoon. — I had not been to the office for several days, and I thought certainly there must be a letter there for me from you, for I know you would not long delay writing, when you knew I was anxious to hear from you. I went to the P.O. and on inquiring, "anything for Mr. Fadden", the P. Master smiled, and saying "yes sir" handed me your epistle; I naturally put my hand in my pocket for change, and about the time I found I had none, he told me it was "paid". Now, if it had not have been paid, I should not have had the pleasure of perusing yours until Monday. I read your letter twice immediately on opening it, I read it again just before I went to bed and of course had a dream on the strength of it, to this effect; — I had been here about six months, when to my great joy and sorrow both (of course) some rich relations (thanks there's but few of them) of mine took it in his head to kick the bucket, and will me a handsome share of his property, and which was to descend into my own immediate control. Well — now what do you think I did first? I would have you to guess until my next letter, but will out with it. — I immediately invited you to share in the epistle, which invitation you accepted, and coming here, entered college. We took rooms together, studied together, walked together, talked together, loved each other, and I doubt what all. In course of time my commencement day rolled on. I had passed my examination, and had taken the honors of my class. The day I was to graduate was here, I was dressed, and ready to make my speech, and was sitting in our room talking with you, and waiting for the bell to ring to call me forth before the audience. It commenced ringing, and we were proceeding to the church, when my room-mate shook me, saying "Eh now you had better get up, the first bell is ringing". — Here was an end to my dream. But what is the use of telling it. I have such day dreams often, and often do I build my castles higher than that; the foundations of which are so poor that they readily tumble down, as soon as finished. — That was the only dream I have had for a long time that I have recollected, and hours, except one I had the night you were in Nashville last, and when I slept with Uncle Adams, and which trifling as it was I will tell you before I am done this sheet.

Sunday evening I have just returned from church, (M.E.) where for your special benefit, I have been squinting at the girls, but there was so many beautiful faces, it would be foolish to attempt either to classify, or particularize. Indeed I saw more beautiful countenances at church to night than I ever saw in one collection before. Perhaps when I feel better able, and when I am more acquainted, I will try to describe them. — Oh such delightful singing as I heard, performed by the choir before service commenced. It was certainly the best I ever heard in a church. It had a great effect on me, and in a manner

That I cannot describe. I leaned my head on the bench and wept. I know you can tell what were my thoughts there at least. I shall not put them on paper.

You too seem anxious concerning me, that is regarding sickness. I was myself, but I have no cause to fear it now. Not long after I got here and commenced studying my rights foot commenced aching and swelling similar to what it did when I was first attacked with the Inflamm. Rheumatism. I was considerably alarmed, and in writing to my parents foolishly communicated my fears to them. After a few days, and when my foot was well, I got a letter from Mother, betraying a great deal of anxiety on my account, and fears lest I should then be suffering with that dreadful complaint. I of course immediately wrote them, and told them I was well &c.

You say you would like to know how I came to go to Dickinson. That would be a hard thing to tell, at least by myself, for I know not what reasons particularly influenced my parents to chose this place, except its hucius celebrity for every thing good, and the moral reputation which it sustains. I did not myself think I could finish under two years, neither did I hold the idea out to my Father, that I could.

One circumstance perhaps had some influence in the choice it was my dream. The dream was this, though I can hardly state it. I dreamed I was sitting I don't know where and thinking about Dickinson & Washington and to which I was likely to go, when an old man came up and talked me my thoughts, I told him, and told him the only difficulty in my way to going to D was the expense attending it. He then placed in my hand twenty eagles, and told me to use it for that purpose. I told this to nuther at breakfast, for want of something better.

I did not know where I was going until about twenty hours before I started. - (Excuse me for to night's letter, I have to prepare my moral science, which we recite at six to-morrow morning to the President) (Monday night 11 o'clock) many times since I have been here have I sighed "Home, dear home - Nashville, Oh Nashville - never before did I feel so attached to the place, there seems something mysterious about it, and something I cannot account for. - You say you will probably pass through B. some time soon, and kindly ask if you can do any thing for me there. I know of nothing you could do for me, without you would be so kind as to give best respects to my young friends there, and inform them of my prosperity, and if they have any word for me, convey it to me. Remember me to I Estney Vange particularly, and see how the Gov. is getting along, not that I care though. - I sent you a paper to-day marked "W" as you requested. I would have sent it yesterday but I could not get any company to the P.O. and it is a considerable distance.

I had no opportunity [i.e. favorable] to see Mrs B. before I left home, but she was the last one I saw in B. I had bidden the folks at the stage "Good-bye" and with tearful eyes had thrown myself on a seat, when I looked up and saw her standing in the door, I gazed at her for sometime, she looked so sad, I thought from her appearance she could read all my thoughts, the stage started, I waved my hand to

I think I will have to stop now, being pressed for time. The Christmas examination is not far off, and we are now receiving, preparatory to being examined. I shall be pressed until it is over, then we will have a week or two of study of vacation. — If I receive ^{an} ~~one~~ letter from you before that time, I will write you a real long one in return. I must now away to my French, Latin, &c., so forgive me for leaving two pages unfinished — Your dear friend — Thomas —

Handwritten scribble

Wm. J. Black Esq.
 Circleville
 Pickaway Co.
 Ohio

Thomas W. Estabrook
 Parkville, Mo.
 Dec. 3-43



Single M

Thursday morning, Dec 4
 We had a pretty heavy fall of snow last night, about 12 inches, and here I am with nothing but shoes to wear in wading from one college to another several times a day. — I would not be surprised if I should be in my bed soon, indeed I now feel some pain in my knee. I wrote to Father this morning, but I did not tell them that, I merely hinted I would like a pair of boots. I told them I ought have them before I left home, and although, there was a pair that fit me exactly, and no one was wearing them, nor likely to, no, I could not get them. "Humanum est errare."

Yours for ever
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where and thinking about Dickinson & Washington and to which I was likely to go, when an old man came up and asked me my thoughts. I told him, and told him the only difficulty in my way to going to D___ was the expense attending it. He then placed in my hand twenty eagles, and told me to use it for that purpose. I told this to mother at breakfast, for want of something better. I did not know where I was going until about twenty hours before I started. ___ (Excuse me for to-night Robert, I have to prepare my moral science which we recite at six to-morrow morning to the President). (Monday night 11 o'clock) many times since I have been here have I sighed "Home, dear home" – "Rushville, oh Rushville" – Never before did I feel so attached to the place, there seems something mysterious about it, and something I cannot account for ---. You say you will probably pass through R- sometime soon, and kindly ask if you can do any thing for me there. I know of nothing you could do for me, without you would be so kind as to give my best respects to my young friends there, and inform them of my prosperity, if of they have any word for me, convey it to me. Remember me to J Fortney & wife particularly. And see how the Gov. is getting along, not that I care though. – I sent you a paper to-day marked "W" as you requested. I would have sent it yesterday, but I could not get any company to the P.O. and it is a considerable distance.

I had no opportunity (i.e. favorable) to see Miss B___ before I left home, but she was the last one I saw in R___. I had bidden the folks at the stage "Good-bye" and with tearful eyes had thrown myself on the seat, when I looked up and saw her standing in the door, I gazed at her for sometime, she looked so sad, I thought from her appearance she could read all my thoughts, the stage started, I waved my hand to her, and muttered a "Farewell". My thoughts were too much for me, I hid my face, and saw no more of R___ save one last glance. I wished to see her very much, but I delayed it from day to day seeking a better opportunity, until I started, and lost it altogether.

The "Tohere", has ceased to be a cause of affliction to me, and now is a great cause contributing to my happiness, in my solemn hours. ___ I peruse it frequently. Many of the peices suit me exactly, and are of the same spirit

With me, one especially, and which I have read frequently, is entitled "Weep not for her: and which is so excellent that you must excuse me for quoting the last verse

"Weep not for her! There is no cause for wo,
But rather nerve the spirit that it walk
Unshrinking o'er the thorny path below,
And from the earth's low defilements keep thee back,
So when a few fleet swerving years have flown,
She'll meet thee at Heaven's gate – and lead thee on:
Weep not for her!

The little book abounds in such good peices as that. Did you read it? If not, you should have done it. Besides this on "Early Freinds" – "Memory" & several others are my particular and chosen favorites.

My "Chum" demands my attention next. I don't like him much, and don't think I shall stay with him longer than Christmas vacation. He is very profane and immoral and scarcely utters a sentence without an oath. That I cannot and will not abide, he will either reform or we will part. And he is rather slovenly in his general habits, and though he dresses neatly, yet his room, If I did not take pains in fixing it, would look like a hog pen. He is not at all studious in his habits, but to the contrary; and as is something "catching", I shan't stay in the neighborhood.

I have heard nothing certain about "Durbins Travels" yet, although I think it will come out soon. He appears to be busy about something, as he is scarcely ever out, except when on college duties. I have been in his private room several times and always found him engaged in something, which from appearance I should judge to be a work designed for press. He enlivens

his recitations with anecdotes of his travels which are quite interesting. He was at Phil. When I came here, and has been once since, staying several days at a time.

I commenced this letter soon, for fear I should not have time to finish it, and mail it to reach you before you leave for Columbus, but I'll have it ready pretty soon. Could you not write me from there? If you could it would be highly gratifying indeed, nothing would please me better. Don't forget (if you are acquainted) to give my best respects to your "Dear Little Angel"

of the "Sylph-like form". –

There are a great many "Angels" here, and of "Sylph like forms" too; but a great many of them are mere Fashionables, and as in every general case there are exceptions, and in this case a great many. I noticed at church that a majority of the young ladies pay strict attention to the sermon, and always kneel at prayers, is not that a good recommendation? Turn to page I if you please.

Wednesday Evening – I just returned from a first rate supper, at which I was the last one except Prof. Allen and one or two others. We have very good boarding here. I could not wish, or rather I mean I could not expect, better, at least for the price.

There are two excellent literary societies connected with the College, with libraries of several thousand volumes each. I have handed my name for membership, and have been unanimously elected a member, and am now patiently waiting to be initiated. There is a great deal of rivalry between the two in everything. If a member of one society takes the honors in his class, the whole society rejoices, and seem to take it as a common honor. Or if one of their members gets into a scrape, his fellow members will help him out, so great seems their brotherly love. I have joined union P. as I considered it the best, their members all love one another, and do not quarrel, and love their own society. The Belles-Lettres on the contrary, are continually dissenting, and some of their best members have been overheard to curse their own society. A young man, a member of the Union died here last summer, his last words were "God bless the white rose of the Union Society" – But let us change the subject – well agreed but what to? Let's draw lots. Well what did it turn up? –The girls- Girls? ha! – I have not much to share on that subject, but I will give you all I have to say below.

"You can talk if you please,

Of the brown Portuguese

But where ever you roam, wherever you roam

You nothing will meet,

Half so lovely so sweet,

As the girls at home, the girls at home."

"Their eyes are not sloes

Nor so long their nose

But, between you and me, between you and me

They are just as alarming

And tentimes mor charming

With hazel and blue, with hazel and blue."

"No mantillas the sport

But a petticoat short

Shows an ankle the best, and ankle the best

And a leg; but O! murther

I dare not go further

So here's to the west, so here's to the west."

I beg your pardon for quoting the above, but when I tossed up and it came "Girls" I could do no better. – Now turn to the last or fourth page.

Thursday morn

We had a pretty heavy fall of snow last night, about 12 inches, and here I am with nothing but shoes to wear in wading from one college to another several times a day. – I would not be surprized if I should be in my bed soon, indeed I now feel some pain in my knee. I wrote to Father this morning, but I did not tell him that, I merely hinted I would like a pair of boots. I told them I ought have them before I left home, and although, there was a pair that fit me exactly, and no one was using them, nor likely to, no, I could not get them. “Humanum est errare.”

Yours for ever,
Thomas

now go to page 2 again.

I will send you a paper in a day or two and if you look carefully you will find either “W” or “S” on it. “W” standing for well, “S” standing for sick. I will put it on one of the corners. I have stopped chawing tobacco, but merely because I could not help myself, that is I have not the funds necessary, having spent all my own in purchasing little articles that were necessary and so to lessen the bill sent home to the “Old Man”. My best respects to Saml, tell him to hurry through with those hymns, and write to me/

I hear the sound of sleigh bells already, wont we have fine times at Christmas vacation. I hope so at least.

Wednesday noon- I am always adding little by little, and I will soon fill all the sheet, but one thing has occurred which I must tell you. The whole Junior class were arraigned before President Durbin this morning. The offence was this. It was appointed that our class was to recite to Prof. McClintlock at 9 o'clock instead of 10, well we went up, and found the freshman class in the room and understood we were to recite with them, this the class refused to do, and retired to their rooms. This was done by the class collectively. I am free from blame, as I never recited to him before, I did not wish to enter by myself and not being acquainted with the customs, I did not know how to act. The affair promises to become serious before it is over. Some of the class, who talk bold on the matter, and who have several offences on their heads, will be very likely sent home. It is snowing like all the blazes, and there is now about two feet on the ground. The cars have not come in yet, and it is already three hours behind the time.

No more at present from
Yours affectionately
Thomas

could not you write to me about the 20th or 21st, so I would get it on Christmas, and I will answer it in vacation.

I think I will have to stop now, being pressed for time. The Christmas examination is not far off, and we are now reviewing, preparatory to being examined. I shall be pressed until it is over, then we will have a week or two ~~of study~~ of vacation. – If I receive a letter from you before that time, I will write you a real long one in return

I must now away to my french, Lantin, &c, so forgive me for leaving two pages unfinished – your dear friend- Thomas