

Dublin, March 11. 1857

My dear friend - You will soon begin to think that the old proverb  
 "It never rains but it pours" is verified in your experience of my letters.  
 I want to bother somebody, in a bad Boston and I know no better selection  
 to make for this house than myself. When I was about 15, that is, 32 years  
 ago, I was sent from a grim, starved, dark, Quaker boarding school, belonging to the  
sect, to another in the village of Ballinacorney, about 35 miles from Dublin, which was  
 not an exclusive school, and was kept by one of the most learned and most amiable  
 men that ever lived. One of the first persons I saw in the school parlour on my  
 arrival was a quiet looking little girl, the master's niece. She is now a grown  
 woman, and has been Mrs. R.D. Webb for the last 18 years. But I did not care a  
 button about her then, for long after. I very soon commenced my new studies by  
 falling over head & ears in love with his cousin, the master's daughter, and her  
 vicinity with all her relations. Ballinacorney was at that time a very charming  
 place. It is a pretty village in a valley about a quarter of a mile off one of the  
 great high roads. It was settled about 160 years ago by a number of Quakers, & in  
 particular by Abraham Shackleton from Yorkshire, who founded the school &  
 the ~~most~~ illustrations of whose pupils was the renowned Edmund Burke, the  
 orator and statesman. Abraham's son, Richard, a lively, witty, pleasant man,  
 succeeded his father in the school, and was followed by his son, Abraham  
 (the second) who died in 1818, leaving the establishment with his son, in law, James  
 White, my preceptor, the father of my lady's love, and my wife's uncle. He was  
 very orthodox, but remarkably tolerant, gentle, & enlightened, with an utter abhorrence  
 of pedantry, and a vast capacity for the acquisition & retention of knowledge. The  
 village was a little Quaker Athens, retaining much of the best side of Quakerism &  
 none of its starchy. The house, the post office, was the residence of Mary Lead-  
 beater, a daughter of old Richard Shackleton. She was a friend of Burke, a  
 correspondent of Crabbe & other eminent literary people, a poetess herself, &  
 the author of the "Cottar's Dealings" which you may have seen. She was a  
 remarkably sweet spirited & beautiful minded woman. She had a number of  
 bright, lively & gifted daughters at that time, all unmarried, & full of poetry &  
 romance. In another pleasant home lived old Lydia Shackleton, widow  
 of the last Abraham, a very fine old Englishwoman. She was a great  
 great grand daughter of Margaret Fell, who had for her second husband  
 George Fox, the founder of Quakerism. Her two daughters, Betty & Mary,  
 lived with her. Betty was then nearly 60, an extremely interesting woman, full  
 of feeling and intellect. She doated on her ~~own~~ niece Hannah White (the master's  
 daughter) and probably saw my boyish attachment to her favourite - for  
 I soon looked on her as a ~~very~~ dear Thomas friend. Her sister Mary  
 was of a less profound & impassioned character, but she was witty, original, &  
 had strong attachments. In short I became ~~at once~~ immediately roman-  
 tically attached to Ballinacorney & its inhabitants. I set up as a schoolboy poet &

MS.A.9.2.29.7  
 It occurred to my whether if out of your fears to write to Mr. Puffinbarger might not be a little better to send it here  
 you do. And should feel to entirely at my own in troubling any body else of the paper.

Mary Bryant's picture does not seem to contain any thing - and has been of the large consequence of further perfection of the picture. I have a list of names of my friends' wedding, which was followed in a year after by my own.

editor of a juvenile magazine which was afterwards printed. There  
a great many ~~other~~ <sup>more</sup> interesting & pleasant people in the village, who was  
up the society of the place, than I have time to talk of, or even to listen to  
but I spent a very delightful 18 months there - in some respects, the happiest  
I ever spent. It was a time of so little care and so much positive  
enjoyment. An usher came to the school on my term who soon attracted  
great attention. He was ~~an~~ a Frenchman - his name Theodore Eugene  
Lubitz - aged about 20. He left Paris when about 14, & had lived the rest of  
his term in Glasgow and graduated at the University. He & I soon became  
fast friends. He was imaginative, reflective, volatile, capricious, and very  
attractive from his intellectual gifts & graces. He and I used to go together like  
the Seamus twins, and we were at home at the ~~the~~ Shackletons and at the  
Post Office. - - - Well, this is all 30 years ago. Mary has been & one of her  
3 daughters is dead. The other two are married. One of them, a beautiful  
facinating, sylph like creature <sup>then</sup> is now enormously fat & has not a tooth in  
her head. James, which is dead. The school is extinguished. Old Lydia  
Shackleton, the fine old gentleman, is dead. Her gifted & admirable  
daughter, my honored & beloved friend, is dead these 3 years. Hannah White  
has been married these 19 years to J. E. White, and is now the mother of 4 children  
and settled with her family since last May in the neighborhood of Lynchburg  
Halls, Ohio. Her aunt, Mary Shackleton, who was a remarkably robust, healthy  
woman, has suffered terribly for ten years past from some internal nervous  
disease, which obliges her to recline whenever she is not walking, which she is  
able to do for in the early part of the day. I have never known any one  
suffer so much pain as she has done. She tried doctors to no end,  
but the water-cure did more for her than any thing else. On trying a  
famous establishment near Lake Erie years ago she was amazingly  
relieved from a state of the utmost agony and depression. Still this  
relief has not been ~~complete~~. The pain returns at times with great  
severity, but not at all so badly or so constantly as before. She has two  
brothers with large families living in or near Peabody. She has a large  
circle of attached friends & is eminently suited for pleasant social  
enjoyment. She is young minded beyond all I ever knew. Her  
mind grasps no odds and gets no wiles. She is wonderfully buoyant  
and gay - her letters are full of life and a most peculiar originality.  
Well, this poor suffering Mary, with all her infirmities, is about to follow  
the Lubitz to Ohio, although she is ~~full of~~ 62 years old, & must give  
up such a circle of friends in exchange for one beloved family in the  
back woods of America. She is a quaker but has no capacity for theology  
politics or any thing abstract. She is too much a child for any thing of this kind.

I have a list of names of my friends' wedding, which was followed in a year after by my own. Received for 7 articles

Joseph Barker (whom you are determined to cherish) with his wife & three children sailed <sup>in the Africa</sup> for N. York on the 29th, taking Mary S. under their wing. A quantity of luggage and some other emigrants are to sail in the Plymouth Rock on the 20th for Boston. I. Barker has to return from New York to meet these things and those people - and as they may have to remain some days <sup>in Boston</sup> my friend Mary has asked me whether I have any friends there that she could see. And this is my reason for writing to you. I know you don't live at Boston, and that it may not be in your power to see her. But I don't know any one else I can appeal to, with the same freedom on behalf of my poor friend. You may know somebody who would feel a pleasure in showing her some attention, sitting and chatting with her, showing her something of the town, or the lakes. In the freedom she can walk very well and quite as much as most American ladies would like. She is perfectly natural & unaffected. Her mind is ~~very~~ refined but her language is a good sample of the somewhat rude English of the Irish middle class of last century. I think you would greatly enjoy her remarkably rich, & diversified picturesque, easy conversation, if you would let her tarry of home and her own people. She is quite independent - both able & willing to pay her own way. A little sympathy and a little of the society of some of my friends is what I am trying to get for her - if she should happen to have some days in Boston. If you think any thing could be accomplished in this way, perhaps you would send a note to her to care of S. H. Fay the Waffam Street, to await his arrival - ~~or if you think it better, to Mr. Drake~~ I wish the two to write to you when she lands, and she may perhaps hear of Mr. Lincoln, whether she is likely to see any fair that is familiar with mine.

Joseph Barker, apart from his theology, is an upright, honest, outspoken man of great gifts and great achievements. I have a great respect for him. His wife is a mild, pleasing, good woman. The daughter the picture of cheerfulness. The two sons good fellows. They are a most united & happy family - knit together by the isolation which I. B.'s heresy has created ~~around~~ around them.

I am afraid you will set me down as being free and easy in giving you a history of my boyhood in order to push me off my boyhood's friend upon you. But, you see, I am very anxious about her - and as it is quite likely you may not be able to see her, it is just possible you may know of some one who can. I talk as if I knew you all my life. ~~But I should be too happy to have it on my power to do for you any similar kindness.~~ When your sisters arrived in England, I thought Mr & Mrs Hubert to see them. They were at that time thinking of the United States.

I visited in Bristol a few days ago to see Mary (as the last time where I found her) and so is that literary taste and she then returned to see a charming place and she did not at all. I am determined to see a charming place and she did not at all. I am determined to see a charming place and she did not at all. I am determined to see a charming place and she did not at all.

Will you ask whosoever has to do with the money matters to pay Dr. Douglas \$1 for me as my subscription to the North Star. I will give credit for it in my account. A young lady, Miss Henrich, has sent me of to assist any case like Henry's. The last Liberator Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup> that diabolical deed to the slave law on the part of Fillmore, Webster, the Boston corporation, the American aristocracy! It is perfectly atrocious. One don't know what to think or say. It would be worthless to have to look at such people. What is infamous good for if newspapers the are not utterly shocked? -

The letter enclosed in this you will please forward immediately by post. And do send of the skeletons who lived with them in his childhood, called here yesterday preparator to the visiting to his mother & sailing for Boston in the Plymouth Rock. She is going to her mother Mary J. in Ohio.

Miss Maria Weston,  
 Pleasant  
 Weymouth,  
 Mass.  
 U.S.A.

Prepaid

P.S. Dr.  
 March 11 1851

How many we cannot appreciate the tremendous change that an old woman in infirm health makes when she goes up relations, a large social circle, her country & nearly all she was wont accustomed to, for a distant & very different land & different people. I anticipate great unhappiness for her in this change. But as representatives have any affair in her. She went try for herself.

I asked Hannah to read this letter - she it is very interesting but that you will be apt to wonder what it is all about.

Yours ever truly  
 Ruth Webb

Ms. A. 9. 2. 29. 7

It returned to my mother's part of your favor to return to Mr. Buffum might not be able to send her