


1827

24: 1827 November 5: R.T. Dunbar (Paris) to Mary Dunbar "Dear Sister" (Forest near Natchez)

R. T. Dunbar

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My dear Sister. You long expected but never despaired of letters I have at least had the supreme felicity of perusing, and will now do myself the almost equal pleasure of answering. In the first place in answer to the expression of your affection I will only say that you had no right to think I should not very much value any correspondence from you, unless you might have remembered that I had written several times to you before without the least sort of ceremony, so I really don't know what you mean by being so superstitious, unless it is a hint for me to be so too; but you know that's not my way. and as you happen to be Mrs Decker, I consider myself at liberty to treat you without any sort of ceremony, just as if you were Mrs Featherston or Mrs Decker, so your hints I am sure you are all flying away. I am very sorry for your disappointment about Mrs Fitch and Flinners dear not coming this winter, but still you will if I have heard the truth have the poor children to bother you and try you quite temper. Have you been really angry since then last six years, except with me, who could you know, make even Mrs Decker angry. When you write to Princeton please remember me very particularly to your mother and Flinners dear; and ask them about your pretty cousin. I have been lately very well supplied with letters from home, but am still anxious to hear that you are all well. You tell me nothing of the health of the country, so I presume it was not bad when you wrote, but September is a dangerous month, and I should like to hear it was safe over. Vapors will now be rushing very frequently from Normandy to France, so I expect more letters than ever and hope I shall not be disappointed. The winter has commenced here, and a disagreeable time it will be if the commencement is a sample. Paris is extremely dirty and muddy in wet weather and the want of side walks makes it of course, much more disagreeable; indeed it is almost impossible to walk except on the Boulevards, so I shall have little to take me out of my room until I set out for Italy. Yesterday was the fête of Charles and the birth day of his present Majesty, and as usual on such occasions, divers amusements and entertainments were offered to the public, and in the evening all the public places were illuminated. I was much disappointed in the sight of the day, being far superior in splendor and magnificence to what I expected, and as to any affection or regard towards the person of the King which the day would naturally have called forth had such existed, I certainly saw not the least evidence. But I will give you a detail of my walk that you may have some idea of a Paris fête. I walked first to the Palace of the Invalides where the King received the compliments of all those who could gain admittance, and the court in front of

of the Palace was covered with an immense aspen blaze of every
page of every description, and pieces of every colour, now sacrificed
with the sight here, I continued my walk through the Garden of the
Elysées, where were a crowd of all sorts of people to the Champs
Élysées, in which place there were ~~several~~ temporary Theatres, a Ballroom
and two Mazots, de Cocagne, as they are called, for the gratification
of Paris. Representations of different pieces were going on in
the Theatre of course not the very best, and the Mazots well swayed
expressed the sensuous and perseverance of various competitors for the prize
which was hanging at the top at the particular distance of fifty
feet from the ground, and I saw many a poor fellow, his strength
fasting him, cast a wistful glance above, and down he would go
to make room for another. In another place immense quantities of
bread and sausages were thrown among the populace. This was rather
a disgusting part of the show. It was exactly the way I have seen our
hogs fed, and I think the King might make his gratuity more accep-
table by distributing it in a more decent manner. The place was of
course filled with booths of various descriptions, temporary Cafés,
Restaurants, and shops of every kind. Hokey balls, and games
at every step and such a smell of stewing and frying, that I was
glad to be off after the ascent of the balloon, which is always a mag-
nificent sight. It seemed that all Paris was on foot, all the avenues
to the Palace perfectly crowded with carriages & spectators and the
dashing uniforms of the soldiers of war were a prominent feature
in the spectacle. In the evening we went to see the Luminations, but
it was poor, so I came home and went to bed, rather dissatisfied
with the day, for I had not even had the satisfaction of finding
more than two or three subjects to laugh at. The jour des morts
was two or three days before, and had it not been so had a day, would
have afforded some entertainment to a stranger. It is a day particularly
devoted to the memory of departed friends or relations; and the cere-
monies, particularly that of Pique à Chaise of which you have heard so
much, are crowded with brothers, sisters or parents who come to pay
the tribute of a tear, and a garland of flowers to the memory of
them they love. It is an pretty custom this of decking a grave
with flowers. Many of them are umbrellas and planted with roses
or other handsome plants and are very carefully preserved &
ornamented, which has a beautiful effect. Every thing was in

to make Paris be ~~what~~ an interesting place, it is the repository
of the ashes of those of ^{whose} remains is made found the most exquisite taste
is displayed in the execution of the monuments and the natural beau-
ty of the flowers is ~~so~~ ^{unparalleled} ~~it~~ ^{it} ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~an~~ ^{an} ~~extensive~~ ^{it} ~~view~~ ^{is} ~~of~~
the beautiful valley of the Seine, which it overlooks, and of almost
all Paris. I think I would rather be buried here than in any place
I ever saw, except at home -

I wish some body would tell me something about the anchorage. I
hardly ~~ever~~ ^{have} any thing about the folks there, or how the race
colts once that come on - Give my love to cousin Charlotte &
her father and wish them well - you accuse me of understanding
human nature. Is it when I send my love to my pet? Now, say my
dear that I send them, and transcribe it into a compliment
to yourself, or rather into a hook to catch a compliment or a kind
word for myself - and how you must help them for me again, and tell
them to hurry with her copy-book, and my compliments to Willy,
for keeping the knife so well and so long - Now before I bid
you good-by, I must give you as I have my other sisters a lecture
about saying, "must stop, paper's out," ^{though} a great deal more to say, when
in fact the paper is not out, and you have room to say a heap more
if you would: now I'll get a rule and measure for your satisfac-
tion. - Having measured I find there are 40 square inches of blank
paper in your letter. I have measured & calculated liberally too. Now a
square inch can very conveniently contain the average quantity of six words
and a half - $6\frac{1}{2}$ multiplying 40 makes the very respectable sum of
240 words, so you see it is mathematically proved, I. Q. D. as Euclid
says, your paper was not finished and I "did not perceive the necessity
of your coming to a conclusion." This letter is going direct to N. Orms
so it won't cost much postage, otherwise I could not post so much
pussence in it - But I believe I can't write a letter otherwise, for I
write as I think and never stop till I get to the end, unless to mend
my pen which you may see has just been the case - If you don't
want me however to send so much chit-chat across the Atlantic
I may give you another than a different sort of an epistle, perhaps
a long, baroque, profound and erudite dissertation upon the lost
fashion, a subject which could not fail to be extremely interesting
to you and Helen. Talking of fashions how beautifully they crop
their children here - plagues on that fellow Broun, if he had given
me time, I would have sent you a heap of things - I have like

to have forgotten & say what an excellent supper she is you began
to speak he and I accompanied finished the business. She says
the granthos about the want of the tea and coffee no wonder. I
then she took into the ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ when I was at the Grange
for me that is a long and we had a great deal more than any
other family in the neighborhood. However it must tell her I should
not to let her stare for want of her criticisms as she is in the
main a very good woman and raised a flock of sixty four
turkeys for me though I never eat one of them, but that is not her
fault for one of them I remember last year had to celebrate my
arrival last fall, from the North. I think it is most time
to say good bye - give my love to every body and tell Mother
I assure him it is not necessary to give me any hints or cautions about
you taking any country better than my own, or any place more than
home - your affectionate brother P. Y. Deane

Paris November 5. 1827 -

My Mother
Father
Mother
Wife
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