

1828

26: 1828 May 13: R.T. Dunbar (Florence) to William Dunbar, Jr. (Natchez)

R. T. Dunbar

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My dear brother, I began a letter to you at Rome, but had such
a fit of the blue devils that I could not get through. There is a capital
at Leghorn nearly ready for Naples & I will give a line or two of
news of myself from Florence where I now am but which I leave in the
news for Venice. My best letters were from Naples some three weeks
since, and although much pleased & interested in what I saw there
I must confess I am heartily tired of Italy already, that is of travelling
Rome through it. I think I would find a residence however of some
months either here or in Rome very agreeable, & will certainly try
it if I have another winter to spend in Europe. The society in Rome
is very good, & perhaps the greater part of it consists of strangers,
abstracted from all parts of the world, particularly from G. Britain,
whose immense quantity travel all over the world in quest of what
they would not find at home, if they would stay there, instead
of expecting happiness or contentment in the wandering life they
lead on the continent. Many English families & I can scarce say
one American Dr. Jarvis, a clergyman too have forced themselves here &
in other parts of Italy for the education of their children, & most of
all for the education of daughters, as if the acquirement of the accom-
plishments of music painting & singing Italian could compensate for
the continuation of Italian habits and morals. We hear a great
deal at home of the morals of society in Italy, of the Taciturn and
their civilities & I was cautious in crediting all I heard, but I be-
lieve it is too true, that marriage is a very different institution here,
from what it is with us, & so far from imposing a solemn obliga-
tion on a wife but gives her a privilege to do what she pleases, as
to the husband - it is always of course understood that both are equal-
ly free and independent of each other! What an idea - to educate
daughters among women of ^{fact} principle, with whom they will necessarily
have frequent communication, if they mix at all in society.

There is a letter now travelling about Italy in search of me which
I expect very day will overtake me here: I presumed it is from you
otherwise I am not sure I would now write to you, and as it is, I
have a great mind to make the favour less gracious by saying I
take my pen because I have nothing else to do. It would be of no
use however, as I suppose you would not know me. It has been
vain to hear any particular news from the Forest. But I hope Mrs
D.

D. has now got fairly underway & will not treat me in future
with ceremony. I received at Rome a letter from my friend
Smith who tells me you & being have been helped by the addition
of a son to your family & that there are now three in the family
at the Anchorage. The last comes I presume the greatest personage
in the house. For which cause please accept and present
my congratulations as in form due. Smith gave me all the
news of the country, and of course I found his letter extremely inter-
esting, as my attachment to home and to our Society are perhaps
stronger than ever; and I read every piece of news from our country
with greater interest. I had been so somewhat lately that I have
almost wished I could see you what I have left behind. I should
certainly enjoy myself at present much more. as it is I really
travel as performing a task & I try to finish it. I have not yet
received any slight notice of our crops although I heard lately
from Holmes, but as he appears to be no great letter writer, he
said very little on the subject for which I don't thank him.
Mr Ferriday has been growling about his want of attention
in handling the cotton; and I believe Holmes is quite ashamed
of it himself, as he says as little as possible on the subject. That is
however to me a matter of secondary consequence; as I am sure
while he is at the Grange the negroes will be treated well which
is what I most care about - nevertheless both things ought to be
taken care of. I shall give you a very gentle hint about
it soon - he tells me Dicky has made a great crop, but as
all & with the smallest plantation too - but I hear ^{hardly} nothing of
Alexis affairs & he ought to have made near 300 bales by this
time on his two places - When you write you can spare part of
your paper to give me some account of our brothers as I have
now given up all hope of ever establishing a correspondence with
either of them. I was sure of very considerable business too - I think
they might bestow three or four hours per annum on me.

The letter I spoke of has just arrived and is from Sister P. and
as I must answer it today will make this letter a little shorter. I
shuffle you off in pain spite for my numerous disappointments. I was
going to say as you deserve, but I know you would have written

Good
Have you not had some very ^{good} excuses. You see I am too
coming to come out & would openly about not being from
you; but indeed you must write to me before the end of fall
as I told you I shall want some of your advice about coming
home. that is whether the plantation can go on as well with me as
without me - you know I have been of abound for three years &
they are only half done as yet, and if I do go back I must
hide myself from the Overseer so as not to be reported as re-
turning, which would be sufficient as I could hardly keep away from
Savannah, when I have so many children to romp with each day
I wonder what the mischief riches me so fond of a parcel of money
children - I suppose it's a sign of old man's ^{days} of my own as it is
with Old man's when they begin to get cats and such other
like various - but I think if I can't find anything better
to write, I had better for your sake wind up and so give
my love to your wife & children, & all our friends

Write soon to me Dear Brother & Wife as ever
affectionately R. J. Denton
Florence May. 13-1828

Indeed it looks so strange. ~~But~~ ^{at} ^{the} ^{end} ^{of} ^{one} ^{of} ^{my} ^{letters} ^{that} ^I ^{don't}
blanks paper at the end of ^{one} ^{of} ^{my} ^{letters} that I don't
know how to fold my letter. But I won't apologise for
it, as I have written enough to show you I am anxious to
behave as a dutiful younger brother, & so you may consider this
as a mere expression of my respect to the Old man of our
family, & by you not to consider it as a letter, as I value
my character as a voluntaneous correspondent, and if it was
known that I had sent a half page of blank paper, some
of my correspondents would profit by the example & send me
pages of the same uninteresting appearance; so by all means
let it be understood that this is not a letter, but a mere
- as I said above; and considered in that light nobody will
think it belongs to them to follow the example, as nobody
that I ever called friend or relation was thought it worth
while to show anything like respect or ceremony to Bob.
^{except}, your wife & my dear Sister Nancy - who, however
has, I hope by this time given it up as a bad job.

William Dunbar Esq:
Front

Natchez
Mississippi

United States of N. America