

Key West, February 22<sup>nd</sup> [18]50

Dear Lottie

I have come to the determination to write to you this mail, and let Em's letter rest awhile unanswered, as it took her a couple of months to get ready to answer my last, I do not think it deserves a speedy answer, but still I do not approve of the spirit of retaliation altogether, so I will write to you hoping [*sic*] you may have more leisure than Emma, and will answer it as soon as received, and inform me more of the particulars about home, and home affairs. I feel quite anxious to know how you progress in your music, what new pieces you have learned, and how you are getting along with your other studies. If you would make a practice of writing to me every week it would improve you very much in composition, and afford me great pleasure. I often think of your fine toned piano, and wonder when I shall have the pleasure of hearing you play on it again. I expect it will be many years, it seems to me I would never feel lonesome, with such an instrument in the house with me. Ossian says he will get me one as soon as he feels able. There is a family liveing [*sic*] next door to me who have a piano and as I am very intimate there I have frequent opportunities to practice, but I find I have forgotten a great deal since I left you. I cannot play old Zac's quick step. I have forgotten it entirely. Tell Ma I have just finished my quilt, and founds it quite a job, have quilted alone with the exceptions of two afternoons I had a friend to help me. I have only used one roll of cotton it looks very pretty, which is some compensation for pricked fingers and aching shoulders. We have had some quite cold weather for the last month past, which is very unusual here, at this season of the year, it was so cold that we felt the need of fire places very much, for you must remember our houses have no chimneys. I took refuge in the kitchen, and found the old stove very comfortable with a good wood fire in it, it behaves very well, and I can cook any thing by it excepting bread and cake, the oven bakes meat beautifully but will not bake any thing else. My health is very much improved since I returned south, but I have to continue to diet, and it is very hard work here, much harder than it was at home, for we have no variety in our market, beef, turtle, and fish, is all that is ever for sale in it, and no vegetables [*sic*]. Ossian leaves the first of April for Tampa and as there is not accommodation for ladies in traveling there, I shall have to remain at home alone. O how much I wish you was with me, I shall feel very lonesome and sad untill [*sic*] he returns, he will be absent a month or six weeks. The last news we heard from the seat of war was favourable [*sic*], the Indians had consented to remove and were bringing in their women and children and stock and other property which Genl. Scot [General Winfield Scott] was authorized to purchase from them, it was reported there was about 600 in already. I should like to go over and see them very much. We received on Sunday morning a present of a barrel of oysters from Indian River, the gift of one of our friends remaining there, they were a treat I can assure you, and brought to mind very forcibly old times, when we used to live in the midst of them. The accounts from that part of Florida is very encouraging, settlers are returning and the plantations are yielding abundantly, our old place has orange trees bearing limes the same leomons [*sic*] and bannans [bananas] and planta[i]ns in abundance beside many other tropical fruits, but I would not go back and live there for the whole of them. Ossian says he may go to California as soon as his term of office expires here, and settle perminently [*sic*], what do you think of it? I should then

despair of ever seeing any of you again. Our friend Mr. Gorden has a son there who made five thousand dollars in a very few weeks, and is now speculating, and I presume will soon be a rich man, he hears from him very often. I am glad to hear Mary is safely through her confinement, hope she may succeed in raising her child, she has selected quite a romantic name for it, but as Shakespeare says (What's in a name). Truly the name is of but little consequence compared with the importance of training her little mind and habits so as to make her amiable and useful. I am glad to hear Emma Kate is such a little woman. She is a very smart child, and if well trained will make a brilliant woman. Remember me to Lucy tell her I have not forgotten her. My heart was so full of grief the morning I left you I forgot to bid her good bye, but tell her never mind, next time I will try and be more thoughtful. And Ma I suppose is the same old tune out in the garden half her time. O! I forgot your ground is covered with snow and ice, while ours is fresh and green, but I suppose she has them in the house and watches them and knows every new leaf they put out. There is great pleasure in it. I find it so with what few I have, the lilly [*sic*] I brought with me has bloomed, and it was the admiration of the whole Island, the blossom was perfectly white and very large. My damask rose is still doing well, the tea rose has blossomed. I am obliged to keep it in the house and out of the sun. I find it is to[o] powerful for it, the flower seeds I bought from home I planted about 2 months since and now I have lady slippers in blossom, they look beautiful. I wish Ma could see them. Ossian planted some of the seeds out of the grapes I brought, and two of them have come [*sic*] up, and are growing finely. He enjoyed them very much they kept perfectly good. Ossian is perfectly well, sends a bushel of love to you and all the rest, is over head and ears in books, his father made him a christmas [*sic*] present of four hundred dollars worth of Law books. Give my love to Charlie and Oby. I wish they would write to me. Tell Em, she may look for a letter next mail.

Now Lottie don't you fail to answer this immediately no matter about the writing or spelling, do the best you can, and you will soon improve. I shall be disappointed every mail that comes and brings me no letter from you. My love to Pa and tell him I feel truly grateful to him for his kindness in sending me the Home Journal another year, it comes very regular and we both enjoy reading it very much. We would know but little about the outhur [*sic*] part of the world if it were not for newspapers. We have now a regular mail twice a month and if you will only write I might hear from you quite often, do not fail to do it, how is cherry and my whitey?\* I should like very much have him with me, remember me to all my friends who enquire after me and believe me ever

Your affectionate Sister  
Kate

\*[Written in different handwriting above line]  
cat

Transcribed by Nicole J. Milano, University of Florida, 2009