

Wilmington, C. July 20-62

Emma, dear Emma:

Here lie all your affectionate letters upon the bed beside me, letters that I have just <sup>been</sup> reading from, and weeping over. Yes, the tears hinder my pen, and I cannot help it. Perhaps I am very weak to write a third time to a correspondent who has given no heed to the two previous letters; possible, maybe still to weep over letters from such a correspondent. Seem it as if you will. The fear that you might, has deterred me, when my heart was so haunted with distressing fears, that I was wakeful and weeping upon my bed in the night hours. - from asking an explanation of this strange

if you know of any thing that will help me to get on my feet, or any other more or less that can be had, please mention any sister Corie.

long illness, but forgive me if I have incurred your displeasure. Forgive me for I love you truly; and let me know the worst, rather than be longer tantalized by fears that would sometimes enter my heart even a second time, after being harshly expelled, with a bidding to haunt me no more. Amid so many claimants for your labor and time, I did not wonder when twice the usual time elapsed after your last came, and I heard nothing; but when I reached home, and perused your very last hasty note, nearly three months had passed without one word from you or Albion, and I even began to fear that one or the other had gone from earth, and left another, weary, sorrow-stricken heart, that could not strengthen itself to tell its tale of woe. That was the worst I could fear.

But, a day or two after I sent you that abrupt reminder, there came to me a letter <sup>from Albion</sup> wholly incomprehensible. In an

error to my anticipated query why he had not written, he said, during the past weeks, he had been "Through the cloud and through the sea." In that letter he said he probably should not write me as heretofore - that I probably knew the reason why. Alas, he supposed I knew Emma had told me what he had done. Asked if he did not right; then said he cared not whether I said "Yes" or "No; as he was satisfied it was right, and rightly done. All this, of course, was as intelligible as so much Greek or Hebrew to me, and naturally excited my wonderment. I wrote to him declaring my right to an explanation and soon received it, in an announcement that the engagement between you two was "laid aside," at his request, or "requisition." That he was prompted to take this step <sup>by the</sup> feeling that it was a positive wrong to oblige a woman to

allow her to maintain that relation to him, in this present condition, and "with the probable future that threatened." Imagine, if you can, my surprise at this, and my farther surprise that you had not written me of it. Tell me Sister did your heart assent to it readily and cheerfully? Can you either of you be happy with the mere word, if obligation were void, between two hearts, for wholly one? His heart says not, and I have been grieving that his extreme sensitiveness should have led him to insist upon what true honor would prompt <sup>any</sup> man to forego, but which must deprive you of little privilege which the heart will long for. His true, if I knew all the truth to come, it might seem a different thing. I might see it to be all happy thoughts for you both. But it seemed to me each heart would be aching needlessly, and made needless by <sup>your</sup> ~~your~~ <sup>lonely</sup>, by the failure of those <sup>weekly</sup> love letters as precious - and so long one of the brightest threads woven into your life.

Emma it seemed strange and sad, and I have been fearing you were giving

yourself up to unhappiness, not caring enough for any body now, to or few persons, to write them. Then I longed to come to you with all the love <sup>that lives</sup> in my heart for you, and gladden you if I could. When these thoughts were uppermost, was my inclination to put upon paper some expression of my heart felt for you. Then the fact of your silence concerning it, seemed to bid me keep my distance, and <sup>entered my mind</sup> ~~unhappy~~ fears that, after all, in your sad hours, Lizzie was no comforter; that old friends must be the happy soothers of your pain. Emma, my sweet friend, when all my knowledge of you came through another, my heart yearned to Emma that devout reverence, which it is our nature <sup>to bestow</sup> upon any object, sacred to those dear to our own hearts. But when you took me so lovingly and trustingly to your heart, when I learned, for myself, all the nobility and generosity of your

your nature, then I gave you a love such as  
my heart never cherished before for one  
so short time known. The continuance  
of our acquaintance by correspondence  
has naturally strengthened your hold upon  
my heart, and I had fondly believed the  
feeling reciprocal. I had believed our  
friendships would be no transient  
things, but would strengthen and grow  
purer as the discipline of life refined our  
hearts, until made complete in the  
glad fruition of our heavenly home.  
Ira! my heart clings to the bright hope  
still. I cannot, will not believe that  
such a change so soon has come. Perhaps  
ah! more than our perhaps suggests itself  
to my hopeful heart - gleaming through  
the cloud of doubt as nearly overwhelming  
now. Perhaps, you are not well enough to  
write. Or that I wish you suffering; you  
know that I only hope there is no worse  
reason for this delay. Happier still should  
I best know you were prevented by the du-

ties and pleasures of vacation weeks  
for I think you must be released from  
school by this time. I am at a loss to tell  
where you are. Possibly at home by this time.  
Or shall you remain in Rushford another  
term - or go to Gainesville? I return  
to Watfield next week, or the week after,  
and every day expecting a circular to decide  
the length of my vacation. It is passing  
quite too quickly. Emma if you are well,  
and this reaches you in time, I pray you  
let me hear from you at once. That the  
correspondence between Allison and my-  
self should be less briskly maintained, and  
even, almost given up, I naturally expect-  
ed. True, I looked not for this while he  
was an invalid, wanting amusement  
for lagging hours - but when he became  
engrossed in business and family cares.  
His letters are too entertaining for any  
friend to be deprived of them without  
regret, and will you cut me off from  
yours too. Shall I know nothing of

your whereabouts and what-a-bouta either?  
Oh! do not inflict upon me this unhap-  
py fate. You who have, from time to time  
subscribed yourself to me <sup>as</sup> *Toujours la même*  
verif. the sentiment, *quodlibet* to

Your longings, respectful, still loving

Lizzie E.

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Mrs. Emma L. Bilborn  
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