

“A LETTER”

BY

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Dear Miss Lucy: I been t'inkin' dat I 'd write you long fo' dis,
But dis writin' 's mighty tejus, an' you know jes' how it is.
But I 's got a little lesure, so I teks my pen in han'
Fu' to let you know my feelin's since I retched dis furrin' lan'.
I 's right well, I 's glad to tell you (dough dis climate ain't to blame),
An' I hopes w'en dese lines reach you, dat dey 'll fin' yo' se'f de same.
Cose I 'se feelin kin' o' homesick—dat 's ez nachul ez kin be,
Wen a feller 's mo'n th'ee thousand miles across dat awful sea.
(Don't you let nobody fool you 'bout de ocean bein' gran';
If you want to see de billers, you jes' view dem f'om de lan'.)
'Bout de people? We been t'inkin' dat all white folks was alak;
But dese Englishmen is diffunt, an' dey 's curus fu' a fac'.
Fust, dey's heavier an' redder in dey make-up an' dey looks,
An' dey don't put salt nor pepper in a blessed t'ing dey cooks!
Wen dey gin you good ol' tu'nips, ca'ots, pa'snips, beets, an' sich,
Ef dey ain't some one to tell you, you cain't 'stinguish which is which.
Wen I t'ought I 's eatin' chicken—you may b'lieve dis hyeah 's a lie—
But de waiter beat me down dat I was eatin' rabbit pie.
An' dey 'd t'ink dat you was crazy—jes' a reg'lar ravin' loon,
Ef you 'd speak erbout a 'possum or a piece o' good ol' coon.
O, hit's mighty nice, dis trav'lin', an' I 's kin' o' glad I come.
But, I reckon, now I 's willin' fu' to tek my way back home.
I done see de Crystal Palace, an' I 's hyeahd dey string-band play,
But I has n't seen no banjos layin' nowhahs roun' dis way.
Jes' gin ol' Jim Bowles a banjo, an' he 'd not go very fu',

'Fo' he 'd outplayed all dese fiddlers, wif dey flourish and dey stir.
Evahbiddy dat I 's met wif has been monst'ous kin an' good;
But I t'ink I 'd lak it better to be down in Jones's wood,
Where we ust to have sich frolics, Lucy, you an' me an' Nelse,
Dough my appetite 'ud call me, ef dey was n't nuffin else.
I 'd jes' lak to have some sweet-pertaters roasted in de skin;
I 's a-longin' fu' my chittlin's an' my mustard greens ergin;
I 's a-wishin' fu' some buttermilk, an' co'n braid, good an' brown,
An' a drap o' good ol' bourbon fu' to wash my feelin's down!
An' I 's comin' back to see you jes' as ehly as I kin,
So you better not go spa'kin' wif dat wuffless scoun'el Quin!
Well, I reckon, I mus' close now; write ez soon's dis reaches you;
Gi' my love to Sister Mandy an' to Uncle Isham, too.
Tell de folks I sen' 'em howdy; gin a kiss to pap an' mam;
Closin' I is, deah Miss Lucy, Still Yo' Own True-Lovin' Sam.

P. S. Ef you cain't mek out dis letter, lay it by erpon de she'f,
An' when I git home, I 'll read it, darlin', to you my own se'f.