Letter from Mary to Mother-Spring, circa 1925

Mary Behner

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Description
Mary wrote this letter to her mother, likely during the spring of 1925. The letter is composed on two sheets of very thin paper in blue and black ink. There are three holes along the left side, which show it has been torn out of a notebook. In this letter, Mary talks about vocal lessons and seeing a student recital, plans to go to Toledo, and a Student Volunteers meeting. She asks if she ought to purchase a new hat. She notes that track and field has started and she plans to earn a “W” by her junior year for her participation in sporting activities. On the final page, she writes a few words in Greek and mentions letters she has received.

Transcription:

1
Wed.
Dear mother.
We certainly are having marvelous weather. Had a lesson yesterday and she was so pleased. She has sent for another book with real Italian words in it. Have been using the Italian vowels as Be, da, me, ni, po, etc. She is a graduate of N.W.U. She would like to meet you. All courses students have to go to every recital given. There was one yesterday afternoon - a student recital. I was going to stay about 15 minutes and so we sat on the last seat - pretty soon she came in at sat right down beside me - so I stayed thru the whole thing. She says I am getting along much faster than the average student - encouraging!

Track started last night. Was over there for an hour. Then took a hot shower - a cold shower and then went swimming. There isn’t half enough time to do things here.

Two of the ‘lits’ give a play tomorrow night. Paul is taking me to it. It is held down town at the opera house and we have late “per” - 10:30 I guess. Esther went to the faculty play at the opera house. It certainly is an awful looking place and an excellent fire trap. Wooster is going to build a recreation house for the college so perhaps we’ll have a real place soon.

2
Sent my laundry home yesterday. When you send it back again will you send me my pink friendship pillow case which I left home to be washed at Xmas. I have the pillow here for it.

Had a letter from Dorotha Sanders yesterday about coming to Toledo. She talks as if she is expecting me - Did you tell her that I was coming? Haven’t heard definitely from you but am rather counting on going. Haven’t written to Toledo yet.

Last night at Student Volunteers we told what we got out of the conference. Mine, of course you know. It was quite personal and I told them in a very frank way the good it did me.

I hope you have written to Mrs. Brouwer. The boys are up out of bed now, I guess. Bud has to stay home 6 weeks - for what reason I don’t know.

I don’t know whether my summer clothes need fixing up. Do you think I should get a spring hat in Toledo? I have my tan silk one but it is quite soiled and out of shape. I need one but wonder if I can afford to get it.

3
Our room is in sad need of a cleaning. We’re going to have our curtains & rugs cleaning spring vacation.

Boots has a date this afternoon with Mr. Masse - a Junior.

Haven’t heard from father about going to Toledo. You said he had written, I thought. Seems as if I am always hungry - Can’t eat between meals now though because I’m in training for Track. Track will be much more strenuous than basketball. Am expecting to get about 350 points towards a “W” this year and we have to have 800.

Track 100
B.B. 150
Hiking 100

At that rate I can probably get my “W” in my Junior year.

Three weeks from this Wed. we start our vacation. Will be so glad. Funny Dorotha
Mary Cassatt often depicted the private lives of women and children in her paintings. The Letter is one such painting, which she created in the Japanese woodblock print style. The graphic decorations on the woman's dress, as well as the wallpaper behind her, indicate the extent of Japanese art on her style. The artwork, which depicts a woman sitting at a desk inside, mailing an envelope, is a more than just a quaint genre painting. By painting the woman indoors, Cassatt was making a statement about the way women were treated. In this case, the woman is sitting inside in solitude, due to the fear of being seen by others. Anning is a famous dinosaur discoverer who 'sold sea shells by the sea shore'. She wrote this letter describing her discovery of a Plesiosaur. We asked the people who work in the archives at the Wellcome what exactly the letter says, so if you can't read Mary's handwriting here it is all typed out, including a second page that you can't see in the image. When you read the letter, you'll see that there were some words that even the archivist wasn't sure of. These have been shown with brackets and question marks.

Sandus sent me the same pictures you did in her letter so have sent yours back in laundry.

4 Hope there is some mail for me when I get back to the dorm. Haven't heard from Elizabeth Ivanor for a long while.

Must close now - with much love from your devoted daughter

Mary Elizabeth

Have used 3 different pens to write this letter.

βλέβ (Bean) μητήρ (mother) μπατέρ (father)
άδελφος (brother)

Am enclosing a roller skating program which we had for our Frosh roller skating party

Note

A wonderful letter from Elizabeth Ivanor this morning. & one from a darling chinese girl I met at the S.V. convention. She lives at Oberlin College

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City
Wooster, Ohio

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