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1879

## Tom Gerdine to Roxana Chapin Gerdine (1878 August 20)

Thomas Cobb Gerdine

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West Point Miss

August 20<sup>th</sup>

Dear Mrs:

I have been expecting a letter from you ever since you left, as it is generally the business of those that are absent to commence all correspondences, that every one may know who they wish to correspond with, and until yesterday could never account for my not getting any, when Pa came across the above extract from the New York Bee, giving an account of your actions, showing that you are too busy. Allow me to congratulate you on your seeming good health; the impression with us, when

you left home, was, that you were  
in bad health, and purposed making  
a very private visit, only to see your  
relations, and to recover your health;  
but from the above extract, I see that  
your health is such, that it will per-  
mit you to travel around, and see  
the "elephant" in New York. Now that  
the war is over, I was wondering what  
reading matter the papers would  
find to supply the place of "Another  
or great-battle." "Great expectations  
from the result." "Most desperate fight-  
ing of the war." "Twenty thousand  
killed on the field." &c. &c.; but now  
that curiosity is satisfied, the  
movements of such illustrious  
personages as yourself, will a-  
gain give employment to thous-  
ands of starving printers, but  
while you are doing this you should  
did you ever calculate whether it  
would counterbalance the employ



ment that you are giving the devil.  
I was glad to see that you had vis-  
ited the Greenwood Cemetery, I  
think that it was at once the grand-  
est, and most sublime spectacles  
that I have ever witnessed, but I  
suppose that it has changed a  
great deal since I was there; did  
you see that large monument  
near the southeastern corner? It  
is about ten feet high, and on the  
northern side, was the age, birth,  
death, &c. of the occupant, the  
eastern & western sides were plain  
marble, while on the southern side,  
there was depicted, with a preci-  
sion that would have done credit  
to a Grecian sculptor, a storm at  
sea, a very large ship seemed  
to be surmounting the frothy  
waves, while the rain was pour-  
ing in torrents, and the light-  
ning was sending its lurid streams



almost within reach of the ship,  
but was prevented by an almost  
invisible shield, with the words,  
"God is my shield," inscribed on  
it. I saw numerous others, that  
were just as beautiful, I love  
to wander in a cemetery some  
time, though it may sometimes  
throw a passing cloud over the  
bright haze of gaiety, or spread  
a deeper sadness over the hours  
of glory, yet who would exchange  
it even for the song of pleasure,  
or the burst of revelry? No; there  
is a voice from the tomb sweeter  
or than song; there is a recollec-  
tion of the dead, to which we  
turn, even from the charms of  
the living. I am glad to see  
that Major Hopkins and Mr. Webb  
are still with you, because I know  
that they are perfect gentlemen,  
and will do anything that