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Letter to Louise Guiney, 1877 January 29

Patrick Guiney

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January 29. 1877.

My dear Julie.

I have read and reread your letter in answer to my Pecavi. How could you find it in your heart to impose so cruel a sentence upon me? and yet it is plain that I have no right to find fault inasmuch as I gave you unrestricted authority to do so. The sentence is hard, but, ^{as} it comes from you, it is welcome. As a lawyer, though, I enter my respectful protest against the reserved and further punishment which you intimate is in store for my reprehensible laxity as a correspondent. The Constitution of the United States prohibits, or, rather, does not allow more than one penalty for the same offence. Therefore, you are barred of all right to punish further, unless, indeed, you claim that Rhode Island is not in the United States.

Your Mamma will visit you any day you name in your next letter between the first and the fifteenth of February. She wants to fit you in the matter of some dresses, and will take you a small bagful of kisses from me. Still, I must exercise my right to grumble over the severity of your sentence, and to feel like an illustration of Hudibras' immortal couplet -

"No rogue ever felt the halter draw,
With good opinion of the law."

Papa.