

Mary Walsh James to Henry James, 5 April [1870], from Cambridge

ALS Houghton, bMS Am 1093.1 (38)

1 Cambridge

2 April 5th

3 My darling Harry

4 We got your second letter from Malvern March 8th. It was cheerful and hopeful,
5 and we were delighted to get it— You say an impression has been made; and seem very
6 hopeful that it is the beginning of a decided change for the better— God grant that it may
7 be so—but do not dear Harry give up too soon— You spoke in your last letter of going
8 to London the middle of April— Perhaps you only meant to go and see Aunt K. before
9 her departure— This would be an immense tempta- but resist it, rather than give up the
10 treatment before it has done all it can do for you at the present time— M^r Fields was
11 making some inquiries about you of father the other day, when your whereabouts, and
12 why you were there came out. Mr F says that he was a perfect martyr to this trouble for
13 years— That when he was in Paris in a most dreadful state twelves years or more ago D^r
14 Sam Bigelow gave him a prescription by the use of which he has enjoyed perfect comfort
15 ever since— He is not cured, but finds that half the dose which he used to take keeps him
16 in perfect order— I enclose the prescription which take care of and try if you have need
17 of it— Will says it is Colocynthe in a pill, and he thinks you may have tried it before you
18 went away, but not persistently— The great virtue of it lies in its being taken while
19 dining, and taken daily— Fields says he has given it to at least 20 persons, and all have
20 been benefitted— It seems that half the world almost, suffer in this way— Fathers

21 photograph I know you will like— I dote upon it, think it simply perfect both as a
22 likeness and as a photograph— Will's also is good as a likeness, but a very poor
23 photograph— It was taken on a dark day by a different man, before we ~~have~~ had become
24 acquainted with this superior artist— He has chosen a different one to send Aunt K. so
25 you may perhaps see both— By this time you will have become somewhat used to the
26 thought that you are to see dear Minny no more. It is very hard to realize it, she was such
27 a living person— We have been looking for Kitty with her baby ~~all~~ for a week past; but
28 now she writes that Dick is so full of business that he cannot spare the time— They will
29 go to Newport for a few days to see Aunt Charlotte who has been very sensibly affected
30 by Minny's death— She is much more feeble and suffering—
31 You enquire about Howell's letter— It has reached you e're this, and explained its own
32 delay— Poor Howell's has certainly his share of human affliction— He has told you
33 about his sickness, and now I understand, his wrist is so lame, ~~with~~ that his wife has to
34 write for him— She fortunately is very much better this winter than she has been for
35 years— The last news in our circle is the prospect of losing Arthur Sedgwick who has
36 made up his mind to accept [^]upon trial[[^]] an offer of M^E Godkin's to go to [^]N. York[[^]]
37 and help edite the Nation— His family are all strongly opposed to it, so he has decided
38 to go for six months, and see how it goes— He it seems dislikes the practice of his
39 profession, which he says he studied only as a pis aller, and never intended to follow. He
40 prefers journalism to any thing else, and if he had more originality and power, and could
41 supply just what Godkin lacks, or rather add a new element, and not simply repeat
42 Godkin, it might be a good thing all around— The Nation needs 300 more subscribers to
43 make it pay—will Arthur supply them?— His aunts and sisters will feel his absence

44 terribly We were very much amused with your pictures and characterizations of your
45 fellow boarders— From what you say Mary Wilkinson must be a rare exception to
46 English girls generally—she struck you as so simple frank and charming— D^r Wilkinson
47 is publishing a pamphlet in ~~English~~ England, and has written to father to try and bring it
48 out for him here at the same-time— He calls it, “The Commonwealth & the
49 Godwealth”— Father has been entirely unsuccessful with the Boston publishers and has
50 written to Lippincott to try him— Pamphlets do not pay, and Wilkinson is only known
51 by a few— Gail Hamilton is out in the most disgraceful way before the public in the
52 “Battle of the books”— Her object is to revenge herself upon Ticknor & Fields for some
53 injustice in a pecuniary way she [^]says she[^] has received at their hands. The Fields who
54 were her warm ~~and~~ personal friends! From what I hear she has ruined herself by it, and
55 will find it hard in future to get a publisher—
56 Be assured dear Harry we enjoy~~ed~~ your letters to the utmost and keep them with pious
57 care, so you will have them all as notes when you come back— What a pleasure it will
58 be for Aunt K & you to spend a week together before ~~you~~ she leaves. It will seem to
59 bring you nearer to know that she has just come from you— She long very much to see
60 her dear affectionate soul that she is ~~and~~ so tell her to prepare herself to be terribly made
61 of when she gets home—
62 Mary Tweedy bids us say to you that Lady Rose hopes you will not fail to call upon her
63 when you are in London— I enclose her address— Alice wrote you a week or more
64 ago—
65 I have nothing special to say about Will— His ups and downs are not so marked as they
66 were at one time but I cannot but think that this general level is higher than it was a year

67 ago— I never dare to ask him a question about himself; so have to draw my own
68 conclusions— He is letting his beard grow and therefore looks badly This decision
69 inspired the taking of the photographs—
70 Love warm, deep, and inexpressible from each and all Your loving
71 Mother

Notes

4 your second letter from Malvern March 8th • Henry James to William James, [7], 8, 9 March 1870

26 you are to see dear Minny no more • Minny Temple died 8 March 1870

27 Kitty • Kitty Temple Emmet

28 Dick • Richard Stockton Emmet

29 Aunt Charlotte • Charlotte Green Temple

31 Howell's letter • William Dean Howells to Henry James, 2 January, 6 March 1870 (see Anesko, *Letters, Fictions, Lives* 69-74)

39 pis aller • for lack of anything better

51 Gail Hamilton • Pseudonym of writer and editor, Mary Abigail Dodge (1833-1896)

52 the "Battle of the books" • *The Battle of the Books, Recorded by an Unknown Writer for the Use of Authors and Publishers* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1870)

53-55 she has ruined herself by it, and will find it hard in future to get a publisher • Dodge, under the name Hamilton, continued to pursue a successful career as a writer after 1870, publishing with leading publishers, including Harper and Osgood

62 Lady Rose • Charlotte Temple Sweeny Rose, wife of Sir John Rose; she was the sister of Mary Temple Tweedy and Robert Temple, Jr., the father of Henry James's cousins, Kitty, Minny, Elly, Bob, and Henrietta Temple

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