

Mary Walsh James to Alice James, 18 July [1872], from Cambridge

ALS Houghton, bMS Am 1093.1 (26)

1 Cambridge

2 July 18th

3 My daughter a child of France! what has become of that high moral nature, on which I
4 have always based such hopes for her, for this world and the next? That you should so
5 soon have succumbed to this assault upon your senses, so easily have been carried
6 captive by the mere delights of eating and drinking and seeing and dressing, I should not
7 have believed; and indeed I see it all now, to be merely the effect of a little cerebral
8 derangement produced by the supernatural effort you made in crossing the Channel— It
9 will be a lesson to you not to exercise such self restraint for the future—

10 How marvellous my dear child your progress seems to be! what a benign medicine this
11 journey is proving to you! Your & Harry's letters from Paris and yours from Ville-neuve
12 are received. They are the best company we can ask, and meat and drink, and all that we
13 desire beside—and they come so regularly and faithfully, and we bless you for them.

14 You learned from Father's last that we are at home— After rather extensive preparations
15 in the way of packing, books ^leave taking[^] &c, we got off to Boar's Head (from
16 whence I wrote you) the end of two days saw us back in Quincy Street, unpacking and
17 settling down for the summer— I did not regret it for it had to be done, before the
18 settling down could be done— Father had felt the intense heat much more than usual,
19 and felt that it was quite impossible for us to stay here I put him off from going until
20 Will got off; and then we went. Our room though ^large[^] & well furnished proved to

21 be very noisy. The house had always been I suspect a second rate transient place—but
22 had been bought by [^]a[^] very respectable man & his wife who keeps it very well, and
23 are making a great effort to raise it into a family house— It was about half full of
24 respectable common people who behaved very well, but were not remunerative as
25 companions— It was utterly doleful in this respect to me, I felt utterly dreary— Father
26 of course was in his room all day ^& in the evening too[^] and could not sleep at night,
27 because he was so disturbed early and late— So we decided at once to pay our \$3.50 per
28 day for two days, and come home to the comfort and quiet and freedom of our own
29 delightful house—where our sacrifices are so few, and our privileges and compensations
30 are so great. It is a sufficient atonement to ^me for[^] any loss I may feel of change of air
31 and scene, to see father so perfectly well and happy, as he is here just now—
32 We have just emerged from three weeks of excessive prostrating heat, unbroken during
33 all that time by the blessed East wind except one day for a few hours. Yesterday however
34 the spell was effectually broken, and to-day we are rejoicing in new found life— Oh!
35 that it may last; but if it does'nt, it is every thing to be at home, so don't pity me—
36 We had a letter from Will this morning ^the[^] first from M^d Desert. He wants us very
37 much to go there; and had taken the refusal of a room for us. He seems to be enjoying
38 himself, although he says the air is not as peculiar; and stimulating to the appetite as he
39 was led to suppose— He is out rowing a good deal with Sara, and M^f Towbridge and
40 speaks of “Anderson Greek professor here, and Warner, and other nice fellows;” so I take
41 it he will have a good time— Poor Grace is down with her hay cold which is unusually
42 bad this season everywhere The Ashburners got off on Tuesday rather a sorry party—
43 M^f A. thoroughly used up by the heat. The Childs have got back from their Stockbridge

44 visit, fat & blooming, mother & children, it is quite delightful to see them They go off
45 again Aug 1st to Cotuate—

46 You want to hear I know all I can tell you about Miss Cary— Wilky sent another
47 photograph which is much more pleasing,—a side face— She answered our letters very
48 promptly, although Wilky said he knew it would cost her a great effort, as she was not
49 given to letter writing— Her letter was simply a very frank and womanly expression of
50 her strong affection for Wilky, and of the supreme happiness she felt in his love for her.
51 Wilky, I should judge is very much in love, and Bob says in a letter this morning;
52 “Wilky seems very happy, I think Miss Cary ought to make him so; and I think she will
53 make you all so by and by” He says Mary is alone, not even her father ^here[_]— She
54 spends her time in sewing & housekeeping”—

55 These girls are neither of them I should judge at all intellectual Miss Cary is probably a
56 person of more sentiment, and stronger affections than Mary Holton She will ask more
57 from Wilky in a sentimental way than Mary will from Bob—and this is just right— How
58 she is on the practical side I have not found out— Perhaps one of these day, they might
59 join their ressources and live together, and let little Mary manage for them all, for I
60 imagine she would be equal to any immergency, so great a little power she is—

61 I grieve at what you say about Anna Hallowell. What a trial to Louly Shaw— A letter
62 came from her this morning to Wilky— Harry’s second letter does not appear in the
63 Nation— Perhaps it will to-morrow I enclose you a scrap to show how we progress
64 politically and socially, and what a disgraceful spectacle we are making of ourselves,
65 before the world— Was there ever so unprincipled a fool as H. G. is turning out to be—

66 The greatest hit I am told is the Greely fan, which during this reign of heat has sold like
67 wild fire— I caught sight of one for the first time the other day as I entered the car in the
68 hand of a Greeleyite doubtless, as he was dilating with great satisfaction on the amount of
69 brain &c— It is the face of Greely, a capital likeness, bald head, and a grey fringe
70 ornamenting the lower half of it, for the beard— The effect is comical in the extreme.
71 They say thousands have been sold— I missed Fanny Morse the other day, but have
72 written her to come out and spend the night Also Fanny Lombard called while we were
73 away— M^{rs} L. has been very unwell— They have not decided wheather to go to York or
74 to Sheldon Springs—
75 Mary Watson is expected back in a few days with the William Forbes—
76 Annie Watson is spending the summer at Milton— M^{rs} Channing is so happy to have us
77 here!
78 M^{rs} Moshier with whom I sat an hour last evening, poured out her heart to me about
79 Louise Prince, who is a great trial to her— I don't exactly understand it and wonder that
80 she keeps her. She says she has so many gentlemen about ^her[^], some of whom she has
81 become acquainted with she cannot tell how. That she insists upon allowing them to sit
82 with her until 12 o'clk at night, although M^{rs} Moshier goes to bed and requests that the
83 house shall be closed at 10 o'clk— She is so conspicuous in her appearance, that she
84 fears she is making her house a marked place, as she observes people look into the
85 windows a great deal in passing—
86 If she feels all she says she does about it, I wonder she keeps her a single day— She said
87 she had written to her father to tell him about it, and that he must provide a place for her

88 for the summer— I presume she did not like while he was a guest in her house to say any
89 thing to him about it—

90 Love to Aunt Kate. I hope she is still “lusty” as Harry said in his last, and is never
91 reminded of a bodily infirmity. As we came home from Boar’s Head M^r Richard Dana
92 got into the car. What a charming talker he is— He says Sally found people to help her
93 on her way— At Gibraltar she met an English clergyman with two daughters who were
94 going to Geneva by the way of Marseilles— Sally went with them and telegraphed her
95 mother who was at Lucerne to meet at Geneva They are all to remain abroad another
96 winter—Sally too—

97 Love always increasing from

98 Your loving Mother

99 Ask darling Harry to tell me all about himself especially the next time he writes—

Notes

- 11 Harry's letters from Paris • Henry James to his parents, 28, 29 June [1872]
- 14 Father's last • Henry James, Sr., to Henry James, from Cambridge, July 1872
- 15 Boar's Head • Little Boar's Head, near Hampton Beach, New Hampshire
- 39-40 Sara [...] M^e Towbridge [...] Anderson [...], and Warner • Sara Sedgwick, John Trowbridge (1843-1923), Harvard professor of physics, Frank Eustace Anderson (1844-1880), classicist who taught at Harvard, and lawyer Joseph Bangs Warner (1848-1923)
- 41 Grace • Grace Ashburner
- 61 what you say about Anna Hallowell. What a trial to Louly Shaw • A number of James family letters from this period mention Mary Louise (Loulie) Shaw (d. 1874) and her companion, Anna Hallowell. In 1872, Shaw was, apparently, ill, and Hallowell was nursing her; in 1874, while they were apparently living in Nice, Shaw became ill and died as Hallowell nursed her. See especially Mary Walsh James to Alice James and Henry James, 26 July [1872], Mary Walsh James to Henry James, 17 March 1874, and Henry James to Anna Hallowell, 11 February 1874
- 62-63 Harry's second letter does not appear in the Nation • "A European Summer. II. Lichfield and Warwick," *Nation* 25 July 1872: 57-58
- 65 H. G. • Horace Greeley
- 71 Fanny Morse • Alice James's close friend, Frances (Fanny) Rollins Morse (1850-1928)
- 75 Mary Watson • Mary Forbes Watson (1836-1891), second daughter of Mary Taber Hathaway and Robert Sedgwick Watson of Milton, Mass.
- 75 the William Forbes • William Hathaway Forbes (1840-1897), son of Milton, Massachusetts railroad magnate, John Murray Forbes (1813-1898), and Edith Emerson Forbes, Ralph Waldo Emerson's daughter; they married in 1865
- 76 Annie Watson • Mary Watson's sister, Anna Russell Watson
- 76 M^{rs} Channing • Mrs. Edward T. Channing resided at 16 Quincy Street, Cambridge, according to the *Cambridge Directory for 1873*; according to the *Cambridge Directory for 1874* she had moved to 67 Kirkland Street, the home of Francis James Child and Elizabeth Ellery Sedgwick Child

78 M^{rs} Moshier • the *Cambridge Directory for 1873 and for 1874* list an Angie M. Mosher, “widow of Charles,” living in a house at 880 Main Street (now Massachusetts Avenue), which was opposite the southern end of Quincy Street

79 Louise Prince • Louise Lander Prince (1848-1895), stepdaughter of William, Henry, and Alice James’s first cousin, Katharine (Kitty) Barber James Prince (1834-1890); on 16 December 1872 she married Dudley Farley Phelps (Harvard 1867) of New York

87 Her father • Psychiatrist William Henry Prince (1817-1883); his first wife and Louise Lander Prince’s mother was Elizabeth Lucretia Bullard Parker (1820-1859)

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