

1 Nov 29

2 My darling Harry:

3 We have Bob and his little dame on hand now for a week, and sent them back
4 yesterday (Thanksgiving day) at 3 P. M. to Milwaukee. It has been an interesting
5 experience of course, and has left us in a very thankful mood of mind. The tie on its face
6 is not a poetic or mystical one on either side, on Mary's even less than Bob's. But there
7 seemed to be a genuine & even lively affection on both sides, especially I think on the
8 husbands; and the providence which has knit ~~it~~ the tie is ~~a~~ I think palpable even to sense.
9 Bob is the most subjective and self conscious of creatures, sensitive, shy, suspicious;
10 moody, cloudy, rainy, freezing if need be: and his wife has absolutely no "innards", but is
11 altogether in her senses; so that her influence over Bob must be to rescue him from his
12 native tendencies. She is as pretty and tempting as a summer rose, only ~~she~~ her stem is
13 not so delicate as that of the rose, and does n't admit of the same wavy and graceful
14 motion. In fact the rose has a jerky manner of movement, but never the slightest distrust
15 of its being a rose, nor yet any undue consciousness of the fact. She is better sitting than
16 standing, because she is so short; and she is better at table than in the parlour, where she
17 is lovely, and, even saucy, because her hands are busy, ~~and~~ her nervous movement
18 hindered by the table, and her tongue untied. She is a little creature you like to pet. Alice
19 caressed [_^]her[_^] all the while as she would a child; and Willy was charmed with her.
20 She is no way responsive; takes every thing as her due; is the peer of all the world; and

21 dont know the beginning of a life beyond sense. Bob was grim, self-invented, thoughtful,
22 speculative, religious, manly; and impressed one with a sense of a very profound
23 ^mental[^] experience. Willy was very much struck with him, and his own ^nascent[^]
24 intellectual convictions (if I mistake not) very much deepened by his intercourse with
25 him. I think his wife—who has no gleam of sympathy with his subjective states—yet
26 draws him out of these so effectually by her personal attractions, that she will cant help
27 proving the very best help meet for him you can imagine. We are all immensely—not
28 satisfied, but encouraged, hopeful, delighted.

29 Sara keeps poorly. The fire losses are all the talk. Alice thinks of you much more
30 than you would imagine from her silence. She will write in a day or two. She has been
31 hindered by her absorption in the new sister. Wilky is fierce and covetous for improved
32 conditions, and for domestic comfort. He hasn't Bob's self-control nor independence; but
33 I hope will turn out well after all. He must keep in his present place, or he is gone I am
34 afraid. Mother is lovelier every day. Aunt Kate at rest about her eye: Dr Derby saying
35 that there is ~~not more than~~ [^]scarcely[^] one chance in a hundred that her cataract will
36 ever trouble her: and her other bother there is only some old vestiges of inflammation.
37 She is a remarkable soul every way; but in great affluence of enjoyment all the while.
38 Willy is well & Alice, and both send great love along with your loving father's.

Envelope: Henry James jr Esq | ~~Care~~ Hotel Rastadt | Rue Neuve St Augustin 44 | Paris |
France

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3 his little dame • Mary Lucinda Holton James

29 Sara • Sara Sedgwick

29 The fire losses • Boston's great fire of 9-10 November 1872, which caused \$75 million worth of damage in the city's business district

34 Dr Derby • Dr. Richard Henry Derby (1844-1907)

Hotel Rastadt • the moderately priced Paris hotel where Henry James, Alice James, and Catharine Walsh stayed in the fall of 1872 and to where Henry James returned after seeing his aunt and sister embark for the U. S.

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