

Catharine Walsh to Henry James, 1 May [1873], from New York

ALS Houghton, bMS Am 1095 (55)

1 New-York. May 1<sup>st</sup>

2 121. W 44<sup>th</sup> Strt.

3 Darling Harry.

4 Your letter of April 13<sup>th</sup> reached me early yesterday m<sup>r</sup>, making its journey from  
5 Rome just sixteen days! I was delighted to hear of your pleasant change of quarters, but  
6 must confess to a little regret that you mean to stay in Rome so late, especially as you  
7 find the climate relaxing, and making you “deadly sleepy.” It seems to me that the  
8 invigorating of the other side of the Alps would be most helpful to your bearing well  
9 another Roman winter. But you will be prudent I know and try to act wisely. I envy you  
10 your weeks in that enchanting Tivoli. Is not Perugia considered a desirable summer  
11 tarrying place? And can you keep away from Venice before the mosquitoes reach it?  
12 Remember that a whole summer in Italy told very badly upon M<sup>r</sup> Porter, who I hear is  
13 even now moving about Boston “looking like a ghost”. All Lizzy Boott’s acclimating in  
14 Italy has never enabled her to bear the Italian summers, and I much fear dear Harry that  
15 your American constitution demands during the summer months a more stimulating  
16 climate than Italy can give you. You remember how little justice you were able to do  
17 Thusis, and that part of Switzerland is easily reached. Do try darling Harry to get some  
18 tonic air, as a help to the coming year. I was very glad to hear of the recovery of M<sup>r</sup>  
19 Tweedy’s niece, and sorry to learn that his course does not run more smoothly.—Do you  
20 think the Bootts will have to make another trip to America to learn that Italy must hold

21 them “for good.” It seems a dear way to get at the truth in the matter, but nothing truly  
22 valuable ever comes to us but through serious sacrifices—I wrote to you on the 4<sup>th</sup> of  
23 April, enclosing a duplicate draft, which letter I suppose you have received. I then told  
24 you of Alice’s visit here. I went back with her at the end of ten days, and spent a week in  
25 Quincy Street. I thought Alice very much better for the change, and whilst here, and  
26 during my stay in Cambridge she seemed wonderfully well. What she needs, poor girl, is  
27 constant change of air for a year or even more. I cannot but think that this might make  
28 her a well woman. Her Cambridge life seems blighting to her. A letter from your mother  
29 yesterday says that your father is going in a day or two to look after Country lodgings in  
30 Sheldon Springs in Vermont, not far from St Albans and the Canada line. The Storers  
31 spent a summer there and are enthusiastic about it. Alice is plannig for a trip to Niagara  
32 with me. I hope we may go early in June. She said whilst here, “what a different person  
33 I am from what I was on my visit this time last year,” so although she has not gained all  
34 we hoped, still she has gained much. Your mother also says that Will has been gaining  
35 much from “the lift” during the past month, so much, that they mean to have one in the  
36 house. He has been doing wonders this winter I think, showing how great his gain has  
37 been since you left home. I have frequent reminisences of “this time last year”, and they  
38 are always associated with tender memories of you, and all that you were to us of  
39 unfailing affectionate solicitous care for our every possible need. God bless you dear  
40 Harry, and make you an equal comfort for life to some sweet loving worthy woman. The  
41 Rodgerses have just moved into an elegant mansion in 48<sup>th</sup> Street, where I hope they may  
42 prosper. The Ripleys are expecting to leave their truly comfortable and handsome one in  
43 32<sup>nd</sup> Street M<sup>t</sup> R— offers it for sale. Their fortunes during the last year have been

44 adverse, and although they have not as yet failed, they are forced to retrench their  
45 expenses. The girls behave very well, but of course are much disappointed and tried in  
46 many ways. There is always the hope that next year wool may go up, and their large  
47 stock may redeem their losses, so they are sustained. I have not seen Elly Van Buren  
48 since my return from C— she has been out when I have called. I believe I told you that  
49 Alice and I had such a pleasant dinner with her. I see M<sup>rs</sup> Dennison every now and then,  
50 who always enquires about you. Heaps of flattering things are said about your writing,  
51 but I suppose after your European compliments, American ones are lightly esteemed.  
52 The poor Nortons will soon be “on the briny deep.” Heaven help them safely through  
53 with it. It will be an exciting time with the Ashburners and Sedgwicks.—You may have  
54 heard that Arthur is called the most elegant young man in New York society. Adieu  
55 darling Harry. Weigh carefully your old tantes advice and don’t let the tone of your  
56 system get too much lowered, remembering that Americans need a stimulating  
57 atmosphere during part of the year. Ever your loving Aunt.

58 Catharine Walsh.

59 C. H. sends love. I have not seen H. R. since your letter.

## Notes

18-19 M<sup>r</sup> Tweedy's niece • See Mary Walsh James to Henry James, 27 April [1873], where the illness of Edmund Tweedy's niece is mentioned

30 Storer's • Possibly the family of chemist Francis Humphreys Storer (1832-1914)

40-41 The Rodgerses • The family of Alexander Robertson Rodgers and Mary Ridgely Darden Rodgers

42 The Ripleys • The family of Catherine Walsh Andrews Ripley (1806-1865), first cousin of Mary Walsh James and Catharine Walsh, and Joseph Ripley; they had five children, including Helen Ripley

54 Arthur • Arthur George Sedgwick

59 C. H. • Cousin Helen, Helen Rodgers Wyckoff Perkins

59 H. R. • Helen Ripley

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