

Mary Walsh James to Henry James, 12 September [1873], from Cambridge

ALS Houghton, bMS Am 1093.1 (50)

1 Cambridge

2 Sept 12th

3 My darling Harry

4 I have not written to you, but my heart has been bounding with happiness
5 with every thought of the good news you sent us in your last letter, now ten days ago— But
6 Alice wrote at once, and Will has done so since, and both must ^have[^] conveyed to you
7 some idea, of our common joy, if your heart needed any such assurance It is now time for
8 another letter, [^]to come[^] to assure us that your improvement continues, and that your
9 dear courageous, hopeful heart is justified and rewarded by this happy result. What you
10 first want to know about is Will's movements. He wrote he says to tell you of his decision
11 to go. He has taken passage in the Spain which sails Oct 11th for Liverpool. He bids me tell
12 you to write to him there. Look out for the ship's arrival, and have a letter there to meet
13 him at the Adelphi. He would have preferred sailing for the continent, but this is so fine
14 and large a ship, with a very good reputation, and he succeeded in getting just the place in it
15 he wanted, and the fare is paid to Havre—so he decided it was best— The making up his
16 mind to back out from his work, has been a severe trial to the poor fellow. He says very
17 often, on the days that he feels bright “there is nothing I would ask but to stay and go on
18 with my work” if I could feel every day as I do now, how I should enjoy staying”— But I
19 think there is no doubt he is doing the wise thing for him— He seemed to have gained a
20 great deal by his summer relaxation, but since coming home, after doing two or three hours

21 study, he says his head gives out and all the strength goes out of his legs. This necessity he
22 is under here to measure his strength every day, keeps his mind constantly fixed upon
23 himself which is the worst possible thing for him— You will find him very much
24 improved in appearance looking as well as he ever did I think, but still very morbid, and
25 much more given than he used to be to talk about himself. He thinks he will bear the
26 fatigue of his journey very well from his experiences this summer—and the entire change
27 in his life, and the new scenes in which he will find himself, promise to do more to change
28 the current of his thoughts, than any thing else could possibly do— If dear Harry you could
29 only [^]have[^] imparted to him a few grains of your own blessed hopefulness he would
30 have been well long ago. I shall think of you together this winter, with great delight, and
31 envy you the many pleasant things you will enjoy together. We shall be very lonely,
32 especially Alice but if you both prosper we will have nothing more to ask—
33 Wilky is to be married on the 10th Nov; and it is a great regret to me that Will will be away;
34 and that neither of you should be here to meet Carrie. I wish you could read a letter which
35 Wilky sent last week,— It was an attempt to delineate Carrie's character, done in very
36 glowing colours as you may imagine, and as Wilkie only could do it—. It is too long to
37 send, but I will put it in Will's trunk. I imagine from the impression she has made upon
38 him, she is a good deal of a person—and when we come to know her, we will I am sure
39 consider her not only an ornament to the family, but a great blessing to Wilky— Did Alice
40 tell you of the munificence of old Cary. He has given Carrie the house in which they live,
41 in which she was born, all comfortably and fully furnished! He will live with them. Carrie
42 has I believe a small property of her own, and upon this basis with Wilky's salary, and
43 Milwaukee prices and style of doing things, they ought to be able to live—

44 We have been having the loveliest of weather since we came back— All the heat was in
45 July before we left, and the summer may be said to have been an exceptionally delightful
46 cool one—a great contrast to young George Putnam who returned a few days ago from a
47 three months trip with his wife says he never suffered at home with the heat as he did there.
48 The absent Cambridgers are returning to their homes. The Nortons are expected in a few
49 days— Old M^{rs} N. has rallied after her extreme illness, far enough they hope to get her
50 home—
51 Grace Ashburner & the Sedgwicks arrive to-morrow, and also the Child family; all but the
52 gallant professor, who when last heard from was in attendance upon the pretty Miss Hatty
53 Pitman— He will be obliged however to tear himself away in time for the Argus on the
54 18th and come back to Lizzy and his themes— Sara Sedgwick writes that [^]she[^] has
55 enjoyed Ashfield very much, riding on horse-back and playing with the children, and
56 comes back a very robust woman M^r & M^{rs} Godkin spent four weeks with them, which
57 they much enjoyed Aunt Anne's visit to England has been much enjoyed by her— The
58 Bootts are settling themselves in the H. Grenough. Lizzy looks much older; Boott utterly
59 unchanged They have got a disagreeable shabby old house to live in, but perhaps they will
60 not mind that as much as we would—
61 The Roman Cross was produced a few days ago, and is on its way to Mary at last. Alice is
62 in first rate— As The strongest proof she can give is her intention of going to Beverly to
63 spend three days, under the same roof with M^{rs} Morse
64 Aunt Kate is still romanticizing in the woods and at the sea, at Kittery Point where she
65 stopped on her way home from St John. The house there has been empty for a week, but
66 still she stays!—

67 We are quite at a loss where to locate you whether at Homburg or Paris—but will soon hear
68 I trust
69 Your Homburg letter reads delightfully— We have not yet heard from the Nation. I got
70 Aunt M's letter some days after your last— With lots of love from all Your loving Mother
71 Hadn't you better put more irons in the fire, and try Lippincott, and Scribner too?

Notes

- 5 your last letter • Henry James to his parents, 14 August [1873]
- 6 Will has done so since • William James to Henry James, 2 September 1873 (see *The Correspondence of William James*, 1: 219-20)
- 8 another letter • Henry James to Alice James, 3 September [1873]
- 13 the Adelphi • the Adelphi Hotel, in Liverpool, often used by passengers disembarking from ships
- 51-52 the gallant professor • Francis James Child
- 54 Lizzy • Elizabeth Ellery Sedgwick Child
- 57 Aunt Anne • Anne Ashburner
- 57-58 The Bootts are settling themselves in the H. Grenough • Lizzie and Francis Boott resided at 747 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, between Quincy and Sumner Streets, according to the *Cambridge Directory for 1874*; this house, according to the *Cambridge Directory for 1869* and the *1873 Atlas of the City of Cambridge* (Philadelphia: G. M. Hopkins), had been the home of Henry Greenough and adjoined 42 Quincy Street (at the corner of Cambridge Street), the house of the late Horatio Greenough (see also Francis Boott to Henry James, 14 June [1874])
- 61 The Roman Cross • See Mary Walsh James to Henry James, 4 August [1873]
- 63 M^{rs} Morse • Fanny Morse's family (see Mary Walsh James to Alice James and Henry James, 26 July [1872]) had a second home, Malt Hill, on Hale Street in Beverly Farms, Beverly, Massachusetts
- 69 Your Homburg letter • "Homburg Reformed," *Nation* 28 August 1873: 142-44
- 70 Aunt M • Mary Temple Tweedy

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