

Henry James, Sr., to Henry James, 17 October 1873, from [Cambridge]

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1 Oct 17, 1873

2 My darling Harry:

3 Willy is spinning on his way to you in this the ~~sixth~~ seventh day of his voyage,
4 and will probably reach you before this letter. I hope from the style of weather we have
5 had since he left, that his voyage has been smooth, at least comparatively. Never was
6 there such an Autumn known for blandness in point of air, and gorgeous golden pomp in
7 point of light. The heavens seem bent upon decorating the earth with new beauties every
8 day, and such a sunset of blazing and dazzling crimson as we had last night was enough
9 to make the very cattle cry out Alleluia.

10 Alice went yesterday to drive with Ellen Gurney, and had a splendid time. They
11 went about ten miles & saw the glories of the land in new places, while they settled
12 several questions in regard to pastry and persons. I lunched in the morning with Pres.
13 Charles Eliot to meet a Mr Broderick, a writer for the Times Godwin & Agassiz and
14 Henry Adams made up the remainder of the nimbus. Mr Broderick is most peculiar in
15 appearance ^& conversation[^] so much so in fact as to call out your tenderness, & make
16 you wish that his mother and sisters would keep him at home. I think he asked as many as
17 80 distinct questions in the two hours we were together. Agassiz was in great force
18 stomach & brain both, Henry Adams saturnine and silent. Godkin as usual, but sad, very,
19 & C. E. himself very courteous & hospitable. In the evening I dined at the Gurneys with
20 Mr & Mrs Agassiz, H. Adams & Clover, & Godkin. H. A. Clover & Ellen all asked with

21 interest after you, and all expressed pleasure in your literary activity. The hosts both &
22 the Agassizs were particularly expressive in regard to Willy & Mrs A desired me
23 particularly to give him her love & say to him that if she had known he was going so
24 immediately, she would have come in to say Goodbye to him. ~~I send you~~ Clover Hooper
25 told me that Emily Russell was engaged to be married by Mr Pearson, some old rejected
26 lover of hers for many years past. And that I believe was the only bit of news I heard. In
27 the morning at lunch Mr Broderick asked Pres. Eliot what sect President Grant favoured.
28 He replied—the Methodist.” At least I infer as much, he said, from a remark he made to
29 me about his boy when he came to put him in College, where he now is. I asked him what
30 profession he destined his son for? He said “I think he will be a minister, for he is a
31 pious child.” This raised a laugh among the company, but I liked it. I thought it showed
32 Grant more simplex munditiis than the professors and critics about me.

33 We are all hugely disappointed at there being nothing of yours in the Novr
34 Atlantic. I wish you would stir Howells up. He says it will be be out in the Decr. no—the
35 Albano article. Boott was in this morning—boyish, happy & blushing, looking like a
36 piece of blue sky as to his air and person, and intent upon a receipt of mothers for
37 cooking cranberries. Goodbye my lovely boys. I have been hearing so many things about
38 you both of late apropos of Willy’s going away, that I am quite set up. Your loving
39 daddy.

40 I send by todays mail Atlantic & Nation

Notes

- 10 Ellen Gurney • Ellen Hooper Gurney (1838-1887), wife of Ephraim Whitman Gurney and sister of Marian (Clover) Hooper Adams
- 13 Godwin & Agassiz • “Godwin” seems to be a misprint for Godkin; Agassiz is Louis Agassiz
- 20 Mrs Agassiz • Louis Agassiz’s wife, Elizabeth Cabot Cary Agassiz (1822-1907)
- 20 Clover • Marian (Clover) Hooper Adams (1843-1885), wife of Henry Adams
- 25 Emily Russell • Daughter of Boston merchant George Robert Russell and Sarah Shaw Russell
- 29 his boy • Grant’s second son, Ulysses (Buck) S. Grant, Jr. (1852-1929) attended Harvard; he became a lawyer
- 34-35 the Albano article • “Roman Neighborhoods,” *Atlantic Monthly* December 1873: 671-80

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