

Mary Walsh James to Henry James, 6 July [1874], from Cambridge

ALS Houghton, bMS Am 1093.1 (56)

1 Cambridge

2 July 6th

3 My darling Harry

4 It is pleasant to think how soon this poor intercourse will be at an end, and
5 we shall meet face to face and have a good hug and a good talk once more— Let it be
6 Sept if possible, on several accounts— It will be hot perhaps for a week or two, but that
7 you don't mind in Italy; and you will enjoy the Autumn coming on; and indeed you will
8 enjoy every thing dear Harry for a while at least, from the fact of being at home, and from
9 the fact of our happiness in seeing you— Aunt Kate & Alice started five days ago for
10 their summer quarters, the Bread-Loaf Inn, Ripton, Vermont! among the Green Mts—
11 there's a fascinating name for you, quite like England. You must have heard about it
12 from some of us, but will hear more as the summer goes on— It is so far away, 10 hours
13 journey and rather inaccessible too, that I would not let Father take a room for himself
14 and me until about the 1st of August. If the place proves as attractive as we hope, and the
15 air agrees with Alice, we will spend Aug. there and all come home to meet you, the first
16 days of Sept. Alice is wonderfully well— The summer thus far has been most favorable
17 for her; She showed however her great improvement, by the strength with which she
18 bore two or three hot days before she left. I trust the recreation that Will will take the
19 next two months will tune him up. He has been working very regularly since he came
20 home, and often I doubt not, when he felt very unequal to it. He keeps his good looks,

21 but whenever he speaks of himself, says he is no better— This I cannot believe to be the
22 true state of the case, but his temperament is a morbidly hopeless one, and with this he
23 has to contend all the time, as well as with his physical disability.

24 Father & Will have written to you so often of late, that you must be well posted in every
25 thing that especially interests you— M^r Boyesen took tea [^]here[[^]] a few evenings
26 since— He seems a very pleasant frank person, and talked very pleasantly about literary
27 people in Germany— He knows Turgenief well and corresponds with him— He said
28 that T. had expressed himself as very much delighted with your notice of him, and as
29 feeling very proud of the appreciation of such critics— He was very much amused with
30 your conceit of his having “small hands & feet” and an “aristocratic nose” You have
31 heard of Father’s letter to him. It was so delightful, that I insisted on copying it for your
32 benefit before it was sent off— There were some more Italian notes in the Independent
33 this week— Your story will not appear in the Atlantic until Oct. What do you think of
34 old M^r Howells going as Consul to Quebec!. Howells has gone on in advance to secure a
35 house for them— It will be a pleasant change for the daughters from Jefferson, Ohio!
36 and the paper which has been the chief support of the family, can go on just as well under
37 the two sons who have had the principal charge of it of late—

38 The Misses Lane will be able to testify their friendship to Howells in many practical
39 ways—

40 I was sorry Aldrich’s story flattened out so at last; it opened so well— Boyesen seemed
41 to think very highly of Howells new story; but the opening number did not interest me—
42 He said (he is staying in Howells empty house during his absence) that a large package
43 had arrived for Howells from you— We were wondering whether you were sending part

44 of your story in advance, but did not think it likely. The Godkins have taken rooms at the
45 Bread-Loaf Inn for August. Sara Sedgwick & Grace Ashburner have gone to spend this
46 month at Naragansett, Theodora & Aunt Anne, who is just now very much under the
47 weather, are at home— Arthur has been at home for a month, and expects still another
48 month's relaxation— He looks extremely stout, quite bloated in the face, but we are told
49 he is not well— I fear he has been living imprudently, and is suffering from it, and has
50 broken off work, and come away to have an entire change. The Nortons left some time
51 ago for Ashfield, but Charles is to be most of his time here, because he wants to be near
52 his books, that he may prepare his lectures for next winter—
53 M^r Lowell is expected daily, and may possibly have arrived yesterday—
54 Will was very much disappointed in not to go to the West. He could not have done,
55 under the circumstances, a more foolish thing— We were opposed to it from the first,
56 but left him to see the thing for himself—and he has given it up—
57 Alice sent you a photograph of our little offshoot, which certainly looks vigorous—
58 We hear from Wilky that he too is looking forward to blessing us in the same way in Oct.
59 It trust he will be as much blessed in the parental tie as dear Bob seems to be. Carrie will
60 not have much sentiment about it, but she may make a good mother for all; and as
61 Wilkie's business prospects are so good, it is not to be regretted.
62 Some things, bequests to Wilkie from Loolie Shaw, were sent here a few days ago. A
63 pair of Candelabras & Clock, in bronze and marble, a "Flying Mercury" and a lovely
64 little picture of Cohasset by Gay; one of his best things it is thought. I hung it on an
65 empty nail in the drawing-room just in the best light for it, and it is the sweetest thing in

66 the room—but it must go to Wilkie in a few days, where no one will know whether it is

67 good or bad—

68 Good-bye darling boy, only one or two more letters, and then your dear self—

69 Your loving

70 Mother

Notes

- 25 M^e Boyesen • Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen (1848-1895), Norwegian-born critic and novelist
- 28 your notice of him • “Frühlingsfluthen. Ein König Lear des Dorfes. Zwei Novellen. Von Iwan Turgéniew,” *North American Review* April 1874: 326-56
- 30-31 Father’s letter to him • Henry James, Sr., to Ivan Turgenev, 19 June 1874
- 32 more Italian notes in the Independent this week • “An Italian Convent,” *Independent* 2 July 1874: 3-4
- 32-33 Your story will not appear in the Atlantic until Oct. • “Eugene Pickering,” *Atlantic Monthly* October-November 1874: 397-410, 513-26
- 38 The Misses Lane • See Mary Walsh James to Henry James, 1 July [1873]
- 40 Aldrich’s story • *Prudence Palfrey*, by Thomas Bailey Aldrich, serialized in *Atlantic Monthly* January-June 1874: 1-13, 144-58, 257-68, 385-402, 513-28, 762-84
- 41 Howells new story • *A Foregone Conclusion*, which had begun serialization in the July 1874 *Atlantic Monthly* (1-15)
- 46 Theodora & Aunt Anne • Theodora Sedgwick and Anne Ashburner
- 64 Gay • Probably American painter Winkworth Allen (or Alban) Gay (1821-1910), who was from nearby Hingham, Massachusetts; Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts owns Gay’s “Rocks at Cohasset” (1869) which was given to the Museum in 1923 by Ernest Wadsworth Longfellow

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