

Mary Walsh James to Henry James, 21 March [1873], from Cambridge

ALS Houghton, bMS Am 1093.1 (44)

1 Cambridge

2 March 21<sup>st</sup>

3

4 My darling Harry

5 I cannot let this mail go without inditing to you a few words of love—

6 Father wrote three days ago, and reported our well being, acknowledged doubtless the

7 photos, and your few words bidding us look soon for a letter— I received Aunt Ms letter of

8 Feb<sup>ry</sup> 25<sup>th</sup> three days ago, and we rejoiced in the good tidings about M<sup>r</sup> Tweedy, and in the

9 pleasant things she says of you, namely that you have been a great comfort to them both,

10 and also that you are a great favorite generally and much sought after in the ^American[.]

11 social world of Rome!. It is pleasant to hear what a good time, our friends the Henry

12 Grenougs are having abroad, after their often frustrated plans for getting there— Perhaps

13 you saw in the papers Ed Van Buren's death— He went off at last very rapidly—

14 We live on as usual in our quiet way, now and then indulging in the excitement of a few

15 friends to dinner—

16 Last week D<sup>r</sup> Hedge & wife, and the Mountfords were invited, the latter did not come This

17 week M<sup>r</sup> & M<sup>rs</sup> Child G. P. Bradford (sweet genial soul) and Juliet Goodwin who is in

18 Boston for a week. Your friend M<sup>rs</sup> Dorr has retired wholly from society this winter—

19 Report says that the cause of it is, that sher libations at dinner parties last winter were

20 excessive, and that she exposed herself on several occasion not only in Boston but also in

21 New York— Charles stays in Europe this winter on this account. This was told me by M<sup>rs</sup>  
22 Fields who seemed to know the facts. This is an explanation certainly of her recent  
23 extravagances of deportment—

24 Alice is planning a little visit to New York next week— She is always favorably affected  
25 by change—and Cousin Helen urges her to come— Poor child! why is it that she has gone  
26 back so? Can there be any thing in this climate to account for it? She has been trying to  
27 write to you for some time past, but always finds her strength too little for a good long  
28 letter—and I dissuade her from it— She does not feel ~~herself~~ <sup>^</sup>from her experience<sup>[^]</sup> that  
29 any other climate would suit her better to live in, but says she thinks that change is the thing  
30 for her; and it was altogether that, that did her good last summer— Do not dwell much on  
31 what I have told you, in your letters, only recognize it as a reason for her not writing—

32 Will is growing to like his teaching <sup>^</sup>more & more<sup>[^]</sup> and gets good from it— He said very  
33 modestly yesterday that he felt he had the power of interesting his class, and felt himself an  
34 increasing pleasure in exercising it— We hear on all hands that he is very popular, being  
35 considered, “delightful” and “splendid” He looks the picture of health, but still complains  
36 at times of sleeplessness, and a tired head—his eyes see all right—

37 Father has his ups and downs as usual, but seldom fails to go to town every day—

38 The notice of Middlemarch in the last Atlantic, is you will be surprised to hear by Arthur  
39 Sedgwick— It is so unlike him that his own family scarcely credit the fact, not having been  
40 in the secret.

41 Arthur we hear is a great success in the fashionable world in New York— He is invited  
42 every where, and according to M<sup>rs</sup> Butler is the most “aristocratic” looking, and behaving  
43 young man in society there—

44 “The week” the paper which was said to have been bought by the Nation, and given to  
45 Arthur to conduct, died a natural death after two weeks existence—  
46 There seems a mystery about the whole affair; Arthur sheds no light upon it, other than  
47 ^that[^] they have not lost pecuniarily. Fanny Perry is engaged to a young Philadelphia  
48 physician by name Pepper— She has known him for some time, and her mother is pleased  
49 with the match— La Farge was here not long ago. He talked of going to Europe this  
50 summer; he looked remarkably well, and said he had been working very hard of late— I  
51 know [^]no[^] man who strikes one so disagreeably—he is so selfish and filled with  
52 pretention and conceit. He lives in New York and leaves that long suffering wife of his  
53 with the whole burden of the family. I was glad to hear Miss Goodwin say that they have  
54 bought the old Grant place on Beach Street in Newport, and are going to have a permanent  
55 home there.

56 Bob writes often, pictures charmingly their life, filled though it is with hard work, and they  
57 most prosaic surroundings— M<sup>r</sup> & M<sup>rs</sup> Holton were with them taking their first look at  
58 them; and they were all enjoying it much—

59 Wilky last letters are in rather better spirits— His work at Watertown is mostly out of  
60 doors, an immense improvement upon the Office work he has been having. He has the  
61 feeling too of having a position of some responsibility, having a large amount of rail-road  
62 stores under his care— He spends his Sundays with Carrie and they must be real holidays  
63 to him. I sometimes feel inclined to regret that he has trammelled himself with this  
64 engagement; but I am checked by the thought that perhaps it is the very best thing in the  
65 world for him—and I think one can see how it is so. With his tendencies and temperament  
66 he needs some strong motive to stimulate him to work; and if she is only a woman of

67 sentiment, and strength of character, and strongly enough attached to him to help him in the  
68 struggle, we ought to rejoice in it. I will enclose a photo of Carrie which Wilkie thinks the  
69 best likeness of her. Tell me what you think of it I think it a great deal more pleasing than  
70 the other.

71 Give much love to Aunt Mary & M<sup>r</sup> T. I shall answer her letter very soon— Also to the  
72 Bootts, and to Miss Sarah Clark if you see her—

73 Father wrote you all about your money matters. Good-bye my darling boy— Our united  
74 love and blessing upon you

75                                   Your loving Mother—

76 Upon second thoughts I do not think I ought to send away this photo of Carrie; it is so much  
77 better than any thing we have that we ought not to part with it.

78 Perhaps if you ask Wilky, he will send you one like it

79

80 I send you some choice tit-bits à propos to your “Madonna of the Future”

## Notes

- 6 Father wrote three days ago • Henry James, Sr., to Henry James, 18 March [1873]
- 7 Aunt M • Mary Temple Tweedy
- 11-12 the Henry Grenougs • The family of Architect Henry Greenough (1807-1883) and Frances Boott Greenough (sister of Francis Boott), who lived at 747 Cambridge Street, near the corner of Quincy Street, Cambridge
- 13 Ed Van Buren's death • See Henry James, Sr., to Henry James, 18 March [1873]
- 15 D<sup>r</sup> Hedge • Reverend Frederick Henry Hedge
- 18 M<sup>rs</sup> Dorr • Probably Mrs. Charles Hazen Dorr, who resided at 18 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston (see Henry James to Elizabeth Boott, 24 January 1872, and Alice James to Fanny Morse, 4 February 1866, *Her Life in Letters* 5)
- 21 Charles • Charles Hazen Dorr (d. 1893), Massachusetts politician and textiles manufacturer
- 25 Cousin Helen • Helen Rodgers Wyckoff Perkins
- 38 The notice of Middlemarch in the last Atlantic • "Recent Literature," *Atlantic Monthly* April 1873: 490-94
- 42 M<sup>rs</sup> Butler • Possibly Susan Ridley Sedgwick Butler (1828-1883), wife of Dr. Charles E. Butler (1818-1897) of New York
- 44 "The week" • See Mary Walsh James to Henry James, 28 February [1873]
- 47 Fanny Perry • Frances (Fanny) Perry, sister of Henry James's good friend, Thomas Sergeant Perry; she married Dr. William Pepper, who later became Provost of the University of Pennsylvania
- 48 her mother • Frances Sergeant Perry, mother of Thomas Sergeant Perry and of Margaret Perry La Farge and Fanny Perry
- 52 that long suffering wife • Margaret Perry La Farge; she was the sister of Thomas Sergeant Perry
- 72 Sarah Clark • Sarah Clarke, an expatriate artist living in Rome; see Henry James to Mary Walsh James, 26, [27] January 1873
- 80 your "Madonna of the Future" • "The Madonna of the Future," *Atlantic Monthly* March 1873: 276-97

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