

Mary Walsh James to Henry James, 25, 28 May [1873], from Cambridge

ALS Houghton, bMS Am 1093.1 (47)

1 Cambridge

2 May 25<sup>th</sup>

3 My darling Harry

4 You have by this time some what recovered from the surprised and  
5 bewildered condition into which Father's last letter must have thrown [^]you[^]— He  
6 seized eaegarly the opportunity of writing to you, delighting as he has in giving surprises,  
7 and I have no doubt he did justice to Sylvia and Sargy in their interesting circumstances—  
8 Unexpected marriages seem to be an epidemic, for yesterday a well authenticated report  
9 reached us of M<sup>r</sup> Rouse's engagement,! to a Miss Dunn of New York or its vicinity—  
10 Sargy's engagement ought not to have been so great a surprise to us, as it seems the outside  
11 world were expecting it— But it will never cease to be a surprise to me, because it shows a  
12 want of perception and appreciation in him, of what I should have thought would have been  
13 of the first importance to him in a woman, that is feminine modesty and personal  
14 refinement. No doubt her cleverness has attracted him, but I should have thought that the  
15 high estimate she places upon it herself, would have weakened that spell— She has no  
16 doubt some very good qualities, which will be helpful to Sargy, and supply his lack— She  
17 is said to be very practical and energetic and also generous— People are enquiring “what  
18 are they to live upon?”— Sargy is not likely to be able to support a family by his literary  
19 labours, and D<sup>r</sup> Cabbot has a family of eight children to provide for. It will have to be a  
20 long engagement— Speaking of long engagements reminds me of your enquiry about

21 Carrie's photograph— I said in postscript I believe to my letter that upon reflection I  
22 thought I ought not to send it, because it was the only good one we have of her, and when  
23 asked by our friends about her, we want to show her to the best advantage— Wilky sent us  
24 one enlarged from this one, but it has made her look coarse, and being in a ball dress is not  
25 so pleasing— Poor Wilky! he says very little about her of late, but to mention her name—  
26 I am afraid she is not a strong helpful woman, and does not ~~help~~ keep up his courage— No  
27 doubt he is happier upon the whole for having made the engagement for it gives him a  
28 motive to keep at his work such as it is; I fear otherwise he would have thrown it up before  
29 this. His present place of assistant Paymaster, keeps him out of doors ^which is good as  
30 compared with office work[\_]; but he is three weeks out of four upon those dreary roads  
31 paying the monthly wages, and you may imagine it is any thing but enlivening work—  
32 I enclose you recent letter of Bob's from which you will see what a blessed thing his  
33 marriage has been to him It contains a bit of news too which is full of interest and pleasure  
34 to us all— Dear boy! he has his dark moments but they are passing; and you see what  
35 periods of joy and peace succeed—  
36 Will's vacation is fast approaching, only one week's work more. He was late to dinner just  
37 now, and came in with his hands full of primroses and cowslips from Grace A's.  
38 garden—he had been sauntering in the Norton woods with Sara. He will be glad to get  
39 through; he has done his part well I am sure, although with his usual self depreciation, he  
40 insists on pronouncing it a very superficial thing. He hears that the class next winter will be  
41 three times as large and feels much discouraged with the prospect—for as he has not done  
42 justice to 45, how will he do any thing for 120 or 30?  
43 The hour for the arrival of the Nortons has come at last. The boat is due to-day, so may be

44 in at any moment. Charles & the children go to the Ashburners, M<sup>rs</sup> N & the daughters to  
45 M<sup>rs</sup> Bullard in Boston to stay until the weather is suitable to go Ashfield. It will be a trying  
46 ordeal for them all— Charles had been very unwell up to the moment of sailing, having  
47 had a recurrence of lung trouble which <sup>^</sup>confined[<sub>^</sub>] him to his room— Poor man! I trust  
48 the voyage may have brought up, for this coming back will open afresh his wounds—  
49 Summer has come upon <sup>^</sup>us[<sub>^</sub>] the last two days The Spring has been perfectly delightful;  
50 no heat at all, but a gradual preparation, for the exquisite verdure and blossoms, that have  
51 <sup>^</sup>so[<sub>^</sub>] suddenly burst upon us. Alice & I have been rejoicing in every hour of it. I hope  
52 when next I write I will be able to say something about our summer plans, for as yet we  
53 have made none—only one thing—[<sub>^</sub>]I[<sub>^</sub>] have decided to do, not to go far from home,—on  
54 Father's account—  
55 Aunt Kate is still in New York, she seems loath to leave Cousin Helen alone—  
56 With regard to your movement darling Harry I am very happy to be able to think of you as  
57 in cooler regions— Do not fail to seek a decidedly tonic air for the summer, for in view of  
58 the probability from what you say of your being in Rome next winter, you ought to have  
59 (your ~~natural~~ constitution demands it) a thorough wending this summer. Since getting your  
60 statistical letter, Father is in receipt of \$260 from Atlantic Monthly for three unpublished  
61 pieces. Story \$100, Carnival \$100 and Roman drives \$60— Also of a letter from the  
62 Galaxy people saying—that some days after your piece for them was in print, they received  
63 from M<sup>r</sup> Church an announcement of ~~of~~ your having asked \$150 for it. They go on to say  
64 that they never give more than \$100 for any piece however, <sup>^</sup>long[<sub>^</sub>], unless it is previously  
65 agreed up, and that M<sup>r</sup> Church who knew perfectly this arrangement, must be held  
66 responsible for the difference This seems a strange way of doing business—but Father will

67 write at once and make Church if possible pony up. Uncle Robertson writes that the term  
68 of your letter of credit expires on June 1<sup>st</sup>—that there are still between two and three  
69 hundred pounds due upon it, but the time must be renewed—  
70 Father wrote him to extend the term another year, and add \$2.000 to the amount—this will  
71 be satisfactory to you?  
72 Howells has made a hit pecuniarily with his story. Three thousand have been sold  
73 already— There is a good deal of criticism of the Boston man, whom it is said must have  
74 been conceived in pique— Howells disclaims having intended him as a typical  
75 Boston<sup>ian</sup>[^], but I must say it looks very like it. Kitty is a fascinating conception, and is  
76 evidently of a more genial and generous inspiration— Fortunately the money is more  
77 important to him than the fame at the present moment; it will just come in time to furnish  
78 the new house—  
79 M<sup>r</sup> Sumner has just obtained a divorce on the ground of desertion—so your friend will I  
80 presume resume her old name—but cannot marry again I believe—  
81 Wednesday—28<sup>th</sup>. Finding that Will had written to you by Sunday's mail, I detained my  
82 letter to give you news of the Nortons arrival— They got in late Monday Evening, after a  
83 prosperous passage— They are all well but Grace who suffered as usual very much from  
84 the voyage— Charles looks better than was expected, and seems as formal and elaborate  
85 as ever in manner— The children are fine strong looking children— The two families will  
86 now have their hands full of care—  
87 Will heard to-day from Wilky that he could get passes for him, so he will start about the  
88 third week in June and go to see them— It will be delightful all round— Wilk writes that  
89 he did get a letter from you about six weeks ago, and means to write soon— Don't be

90 surprised if you don't get a letter for six months—

91 The weather has set in sweltering, but just what we have a right to expect—but it tries one's

92 equanimity at first— Aunt Kate is waiting in N. York the arrival of some dresses which

93 she ordered from Md. Monois—not wanting to give any one trouble in receiving them—

94 Oceans of love from all

95                                   Yr loving Mother

## Notes

- 7 Sylvia and Sargy in their interesting circumstances • Sylvia Hathaway Watson would marry William Ralph Emerson in 1873; Thomas Sergeant Perry had become engaged to Lydia (Lilla) Cabot (1848-1933)
- 19 D<sup>f</sup> Cabbot has a family of eight children to provide for • In addition to Lilla Cabot, their oldest, Dr. Samuel Cabot (1815-1885) and Hannah Lowell Jackson Cabot (1820-1879) had seven other children: Samuel Cabot, Jr. (1850-1906), Arthur Tracy Cabot (1852-1912), James Jackson Cabot (1854-1875), Helen Jackson Cabot (Almy) (b. 1856); Guy Chilton Cabot (1859-1927); Godefrey Lowell Cabot (1861-1962); Russell Jackson Cabot (1863-1865)
- 20-21 your enquiry about Carrie's photograph • See Henry James to Alice James, 25, 26 April [1873]
- 21 I said in postscript I believe to my letter • See Mary Walsh James to Henry James, 21 March [1873]
- 37 Grace A. • Grace Ashburner
- 38 Sara • Sara Sedgwick
- 44 M<sup>rs</sup> N & the daughter • Catharine Eliot Norton and Jane and Grace Norton
- 55 Cousin Helen • Helen Rodgers Wyckoff Perkins
- 59-60 your statistical letter • Henry James to Henry James, Sr., and Mary Walsh James, 4 May 1873
- 61 Story • "The Last of the Valerii," *Atlantic Monthly* January 1874: 69-85
- 61 Carnival • "A Roman Holiday," *Atlantic Monthly* July 1873: 1-11
- 61 Roman drives • "Roman Rides," *Atlantic Monthly* August 1873: 190-98
- 62 your piece for them • "The Sweetheart of M. Briseux," *Galaxy* June 1873: 760-79
- 67 Uncle Robertson • Alexander Robertson Walsh (1809-1884), Mary Walsh James's and Catharine Walsh's older brother; he was Henry James, Sr.'s, business agent
- 72 his story • *A Chance Acquaintance* (1873); Kitty Ellison and Boston socialite Miles Arbuton are the primary characters
- 79 M<sup>f</sup> Sumner • Charles Sumner
- 79 your friend • Alice Mason Sumner
- 81 Will had written to you • William James to Henry James, 25 May 1873 (see *The Correspondence of William James*, 1: 207-210)

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