

Mary Walsh James to Henry James, 3 April [1874], from Cambridge

ALS Houghton, bMS Am 1093.1 (54)

1 20 Quincy St.

2 Cambridge.

3 April 3rd

4 My darling Harry

5 Your letter of March 7th came to us only a day or two ago, but was full of
6 comfort and blessing. It reported you well, much better than you have been for a long
7 time— evidently in good spirits; full of plans for work, and bent on making the most of
8 your remaining, precious days in Europe.

9 Will wrote to you at once about the success of your application to Howells; and by
10 the time this reaches you, you will be mentally launched upon the largest enterprise you
11 have ever undertaken. The things you have sent out of late, are evidently making a mark,
12 and preparing the way for a favorable reception of what may come after—

13 The daily Advertiser says this morning speaking of your article [^]in the N. A. R.[[^]], “M^f
14 James is always fascinating, ~~wether~~ whether he writes a story, a sketch of travel, or a
15 criticism, ~~or a criticism~~”— Every one is delighted with Md. de Mauves, so you must be
16 sure not to fall below that.

17 There is nothing exciting to tell of in our quiet lives. What most interests you just now is to
18 hear about Will. He has seemed to come up the last week, and has got at work at home in
19 his old way. D^f Waterman gave him to understand that he was too much driven with his
20 teaching, and might give it up to him; but he hears nothing more from him on the subject;

21 and I think Will is disappointed— He would have liked to pitch in to a couple of months of
22 works— The more I see of him the better I understand, why he came home as he did.
23 Having gone back from the top of the waves which he says he reached in Jan. and having
24 made up his mind that he had secured all the good he was likely to from relaxation; he felt
25 it incumbent upon him to waste no more time or money—and so turned his face at once
26 towards home. I think he did wisely, and he will have a better chance here working freely,
27 according to his strength preparing himself for next winter, than in staying on without
28 purpose, or belief in its results.

29 Father has had another bad cold, which he finds it hard to rid of. He has had a very lively
30 discussion lately with M^r Elliot Cabot on philosophical points which has interested him
31 very much. Will seems very much impressed with Alice's general condition. Her good
32 health, her good spirits, her wit, her intelligence, and personal charm. He is very sweet
33 upon her, in his own original way, and I think she enjoys very much his charming
34 badinage—

35 We dined (Father & I) yesterday with the Bootts to meet ~~the~~ M^r & M^{rs} Charles Perkins.
36 She has a charming expressive face, and a frank, free, friendly way with her, but she talks
37 incessantly so much gossip, and pronounces her dictum upon every thing and every body in
38 such an irrevocable way, that all the charm of face and manner seems to fade away— Her
39 handsome, feeble minded husband, seemed so sweet, and unworldly beside her that one
40 wondered how they could dwell together in the same spheres.

41 Wilky's fortunes seem to be brightening; that is if he is prudent and all things work well—
42 He is about to leave the Rail-road altogether, and to enter a business for the making of iron
43 chains & bolts. He tolds us of his plan when he was at home— It seems that more than a

44 year ago he borrowed \$5.000 and put it into this firm. The business was started by a young
45 man, son of the Whaling who is one of the Kings of the Mil. & St Paul Rail road.
46 According to Wilky this Jim Whaling, is a man of unusual business capacity, and bound to
47 succeed. He has great advantages in making contracts for work with rail-roads through his
48 father. They have had a remarkably good start, in spite of the panic, which crippled them
49 for a few months. Wilky is so sanguine that one can place no reliance upon his judgment,
50 and little upon his prudence; but he is to do the routine work which will make things much
51 safer—and Bob who I feared would be very much opposed to the move, says in a letter this
52 morning, that he thinks with prudence he thinks Wilk's prospects are fair—
53 I had a letter yesterday from Aunt Mary—inclosing a photo. of M^r Tweedy, with his hair
54 parted in the middle, trying to look very young, but looking very grey and strangely older.
55 She says she hopes to meet you in England before you come home— Alice got this
56 morning a few lines from Bessie Ward enclosing a photograph of herself, and speaking of
57 the illness of her lover, who she says is “almost out of danger” Poor child, she says expect
58 to live half the year on one of the Baron's Estates in the neighbourhood of Dresden, and
59 spend her winters in Rome— She seems to cling to her old friends, her early ones. À
60 propos of photographs you were visited in getting Will's letter by quite a family party— I
61 hope you felt at home among them— They were none of them good, but Alice's; and I
62 think we have a large one of her which is still better. Remember how hard a subject I am,
63 and be think even for this one of
64 Your loving Mother

Notes

1-2 20 Quincy St | Cambridge • Letterhead stationery

5 Your letter of March 7th • Henry James to Henry James, Sr., and Mary Walsh James, 9 March 1874

9 Will wrote to you at once about the success of your application to Howells • Henry James had been negotiating with *Scribner's Monthly* to publish a serial novel, but in his 10 March [1874] letter to William Dean Howells, James had offered the novel (which would appear as *Roderick Hudson*) to *Atlantic Monthly*, and Howells had accepted it; William James's letter, apparently communicating Howells's acceptance to Henry James, is lost (see also Henry James to his parents, 9 March 1874; Henry James to William James, 22 March [1874]; and Henry James to William Dean Howells, 3 May [1874])

13 The daily Advertiser this morning • "Current Literature," *Boston Daily Advertiser* 3 April 1874 (p. 1, col. 3), discusses among other subjects Henry James's April 1874 *North American Review* essay (326-56) on Turgenev, "Frühlingsfluthen. Ein König Lear des Dorfes. Zwei Novellen. Von Iwan Turgéniew"

13 N. A. R. • *North American Review*

15 Md. de Mauves • "Mme. de Mauves," *Galaxy* February, March 1874: 216-33, 354-74

35 M^r & M^{rs} Charles Perkins • Charles Elliot Perkins (1843-1925) was president of the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad; his wife, Edith Forbes Perkins was a niece of railroad magnate John Murray Forbes (1813-1898)

53 Aunt Mary • Mary Temple Tweedy

56 Bessie Ward • Daughter of Anna Hazard Barker Ward and Samuel Gray Ward (1817-1907), old friends of Henry James, Sr.

57 her lover • Monsieur de Schönberg, Bessie Ward's fiancé

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