

Woburn, Mass:

Sunday 4 Dec: 184

Well my darling are you tired of this long silence between us? So am I and here I come to sit down at the little feet and look up into the beautiful eyes of the one who has been for so many years my dear, dear friend. What am I doing all these long weeks, days, & hours away from my little library and solitary work season? - "sowing the moments with that which shall grow up to crowns & sceptres" as Jeremy Taylor or some such old worthy says? Heaven knows - This I know I am enjoying myself in the lap of the completest leisure - I only taste sparingly of pleasure even for somehow I can no longer gulp down great heating draughts of it as I used to - Mr How said the other evening as we were returning from a delightful symposium

we had had in his exquisite rooms -
"Now, when will you come in to some con-
-certs -" and I had to say "Never" I have
put aside his courtesies of that nature
with many a skilful excuse but at last
resolved to face the real truth both for
himself & myself - A crowd wears me
beyond measure - I am stronger & better
in health than I have been for years but
never before has my nervous sensitiveness
been so painfully delicate - I cannot even
bring myself to face a party of strangers
even agreeable ones - I have made these
kind persons Mr How & his family enter-
-tain ^(viz us) me alone - Now don't think I have
grown fanciful & affected - I am simply
growing old that is the solemn fact and
with years has come the wisdom of knowing
how to spare myself from the draining exhaus-
-ting effects of undue excitement especially
that which results from the enjoyment of

Art, especially ^{keen & painful} so organizations like ours.
I love a little society just a little, but
if that society demands too much of me
I must give it up for I can only receive
& take so much - to a certain point it is
bliss, beyond that, mortal anguish
I had a nice long letter from C. C.
a fortnight ago - she sends dear love to you
and to Mrs Ties - she says she has sympathized
deeply with Mrs Ties in her trouble and
would have written to her had she known
where to address her - she wishes you would
write to "them" (meaning I suppose herself
& Miss Fetting) Her letter is delicious - Her
nephew's wife has lately given birth to a son
(in Oct:) and C. C. says she has taken grand-
rank by brevet - she is a grandmother with-
out any of the preliminary ^{pain} - Is not this
"improper pun" as she calls it very like her?
Altogether the letter ~~was~~ is delightful - she re-
-iterates her oft repeated tempting invitation
of the bedroom & sitting room looking over
to St Peter awaiting me in Rome - asks when

you are going to see her but says nothing of coming to America - She is in England now - with her mother her nephew & his family - She has been there all summer Miss Stebbins and her sister from New York have been with her all summer also

I wrote to her in reply among other nice things are account of your charming Newport season how La Farge fell in love with you & made you sit for a St Cecilia and added that she might expect to see you & Mrs Tiers in Rome before me - that you were both restless & moving, were talking of journeying all the while, intended going to Niagara in March, to Majorca next, and then Romeward to Rome would follow as a natural consequence

I have just been reading Jarves' Art-Idea" he speaks in the most laudatory terms of La Farge - he says his ^(La F.) landscapes are gems of imaginative suggestion - he takes up where Turner left off & has more inspiration & intensity than any other American

artist - Have you ever read any of Jarves' books? He is a sharp cutting materialistic critic - His chapters on aesthetics are devoid of poetry of feeling & expression, but when he touches on Art & Artists of his own time he is very knowing truthful & clever - He is full of the keen trenchant epigrammatic criticism born of the press & the review not of the library & the studio - He has learned ^{or most} all that he knows from intercourse with men ^{more than with} ~~with~~ books - he is a fatiguing writer - he writes ^{as} on the edge of a train or a Hoeys fast Steam press - There is no repose, or calm in him as in continental critics - just as you are preparing to dissent from some crude American notion on aesthetics which he utters boldly with a true Yankee-know-as-much-as-any-body ^{style} he sentences you with a passage full of sterling sense and originality - His notions on Catholic ^{det.} betray the total absence of early

classical culture - he has evidently entered
the great Cathedral of Art as ignorant of
its symbolism and deep meanings as
as a Baptist or Methodist layman is of
the vital significance of Catholic rites &
ceremonies - He has studied Art from the
surface downward or rather inward
while the classic student starts from the
heart and works outward - But he
is worth reading so get his books - His
summary of American artists is very
useful, and very just - He finds fault with
the naturalistic tendency of our great artists
and is himself for a critic just the same
Are you having May in December as
we are? Such lovely weather! And such
delicious solitary walks as I take! I can
browse by the hill side & in the pine woods
for hours walk six & eight miles & return
home fresh & buoyant while three hours
with Mr How & his family crammed to

overflowing with music, sparkling talk,
delicious & dainty soups, fine pictures
& all that send me home jaded & worn
out - This atmosphere is delightful, bracing
& invigorating to me - is it not strange?
I shall never pine for Society or its en-
joyments again when I am back home
How mercifully we are fitted for our station,
and how beautifully we adapt ourselves
to all changes! Here am I, who in my youth
doted on Vanity Fair pleasures - I could
rise early, go to bed late - drink from the
fountain's centre (not from the brim, or
the goblet) - without fatigue - recover came
circumstances enjoined ^{comparative} solitude, my
senses were deprived of ^{almost} every ^{esthetical} emo-
tion and I was thrown on my own re-
sources ^{& those which I could gain from books} for mental & spiritual aliment
See how soon my nature has adapted itself
to the difference - my kaleidoscope being
broken I sat myself down to construct new

illusions out of the ^{silken} rags & broken crystals
When I am taken back to fresh perfect
kaleidoscopes I shrink ~~back~~ away from
their brilliant forms & hues and feel
a secret hankering for the wrecks which
comforted me in ^{my} first sorrowful hours
Dear, this is the blessed effect of "years that
bring the philosophic mind" - not that like
the poet I have lost any sense of "radiance
or gladness" there is the same "splendour
in the glass & glory in the flower" & "the clouds
that gather round the setting sun" take no
sober colouring to me - There is the same
"celestial light" "the same" glory on the earth"
that robed it in those other times but the
unrest, the looking before & after, the pining
for what is not all this is gone thank God

I have not replied to any part of
your last letter yet & here at the end I
must say a few words - I am sorry you
told Frank any thing about my Ticknor

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& Field's negotiation. I only intended to
have you & Mr Peacock know it for reasons
which I supposed would be evident to you
Poor Frank! what would he say if he
knew that you do not like "expansive
men" for a more expansive man than
Cousin Frank does not live - Now I like
expansive men that is when they know
something - Mr How resembles Frank
in his naïve expansiveness for it is so
pleasantly toned down by culture & as-
sociation with truly refined persons in
youth. His expansiveness as you call
it is not raw & unformed - indeed he
reminds me in many things in many
characteristics of Cousin Frank -

The great charm in such ^{young} men is their
firmness of principle - I do not feel anxious
about Frank especially - he may remain

unmarried these ten years & he will
then take to Miss S. as pure & loyal a heart
as he gave her at one & twenty - such men
are never soiled by the world. The trail of
the serpent may pass over them & leave
no slimy trace of sin - Unto true bad women
can never harm them - Frank's armor
— is his honest thought

And simple truth his utmost skill "

as Wotton says of his Happy Man. I don't
think as I used to of men - I believe more in
their good when they are good & I think the
man who needs safeguards and checks is
"not worth the care - I would never waste
care or tear again on a man if I had my
life to go over - I am a true fatalist on the
subject if a man is to go to the Devil he will
go - but there are "the elect" ^{Sept} in ~~them~~ ^{in the} I believe.

Good Bye write when you can or when
you feel like it - I received the Ms. many
thanks - Ann sends love - Remember me
to Mrs. Jen - With dear love your friend Anne Brewster