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LETTERS OF SARAH ORNE JEWETT TO ANNA LAURENS DAWES

By C. CARROLL HOLLIS

One of the fashionable weddings in Boston of November 1875 was that of Ella Walworth to George Little. Many of the bride's friends attended, and those who came from some distance stayed at the Walworth home. The two older Jewett sisters were there to greet other guests, most of whom they had known for some time, but also to make new friends, one of whom was Anna Laurens Dawes of Washington, D. C., daughter of the newly elected Senator from Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Although Dawes had gone to Washington as Representative in 1857, Anna had spent her girlhood 'in the north' where, at Abbot Academy in Andover, she had been a school friend of Ella Walworth and had visited at her home. Thus, she too had met many of the other guests at the wedding and had probably heard of Sarah Orne Jewett, two years her senior, before their meeting.

Their acquaintance might easily have been of the conventional sort that is carried on by occasional meetings at social functions and by the annual exchange of greeting cards, but both young women seem to have welcomed the opportunity to develop their acquaintance through letters. As in most sudden correspondence-friendships, the early letters are devoted to exploring the feelings, tastes, and ideas of the other. Only two of Anna's letters to Sarah have survived, but since these are early in the friendship, I have inserted them in their proper sequence to give some sense of the person to whom Sarah wrote so freely.

Sarah's letters do add a few items of biographical importance that students of her life and career will be glad to know, such as her criticism of George Eliot, her comments on Henry James, her close friendship with the sculptor Daniel Chester French

and his lively sister Sallie, or the expressed admiration by both Anna and Sarah of the work of a now forgotten writer of fiction for teen-age girls, Mrs. Adeline Dutton Train Whitney. But the value of these letters is less in their revelation of outward events than in the remarkable insight they give to Sarah's character.

It has always been recognized that she was about as uncomplicated in her reactions to life, to herself and her career, and to her family and friends as any person in American letters, but I doubt that it would be possible to find anywhere any series of letters so completely without guile as these. Even the mild and generally acceptable hypocrisies of social interchange seem to be absent, to be replaced with a remarkable candor that is without the blemish of archness, name dropping, posturing, or silliness that one expects in the letters of the unsophisticated young. Indeed, if anything, these letters show a simplicity of mind and outlook that present something of a problem to the literary critic.

The simplicity we honor in the great artist or the great person is not the childlike and naive simpleness of outlook of the inexperienced innocent. Or, rather, if it is that, it has been re-gained after, or, if you will, maintained through the many pressures of life which force the average person, consciously or subconsciously, to compromise, deviate, qualify, or otherwise weaken the clear vision of his youth. It is in this battle, personal or artistic, to hold or to gain this simplicity that great saints and great poets are made, and the necessary discipline for victory is always self-imposed.

Specifically, what concerns me here is that I cannot imagine the author of these letters as the author of *The Country of the Pointed Firs*. The distance from Deeplaven to Dunnet Landing, or perhaps one should say the difference between them, has always seemed to me to be one of degree, not of kind. Now I am not so sure. The writer of these letters did write *Deeplaven*, and was indeed doing so between her letters to Anna Dawes, but I find here nothing of the dignity, restraint, compassion, profundity of insight, large acceptance, enveloping charity of her classic work.

Perhaps at no other time, before or since the period of these letters, was it possible for a serious writer to maintain for so long the simplicity of girlhood. Protected by her family and friends, and in fact by society itself, not only from what might

corrupt her innocence but even from what might disturb her candid yet solidly Christian view of herself and the world, she represents a certain perfection of type of the genteel society. We have for many years enjoyed pointing out the mawkishness, the prissiness, the circumlocutions, the underlying fear of life, and even the perversions of the genteel era, but it is well to remind ourselves that (if these letters are at all typical and representative of young ladies of this set at this time) what was being protected was worth protecting. As such, one can imagine this person of the letters as the author of *Deephaven* and rejoice that she had the time, opportunity, and desire to write as she did.

But only near the end of this correspondence does one sense that a different person is developing. Not even the most loving protective care can always ward off the personal trials upon which strength of character is tested. With her father's death in 1878, and her own illness and pain in the succeeding years of this correspondence, her letters take on a less self-revelatory tone and manner. It is not that the earlier letters in which she rattles on about herself, her reading, her likes and dislikes, are tainted with self-love or self-importance (for they are anything but that), but only that, like any young person, she wrote about that which she knew best, herself. But when to write on and on about real grief could only seem like complaining, when to write about one's pain would seem to be self-pity, then the mature person avoids the subject. I do not mean that the late letters are laconic or impersonally cold, but they are less innocently confiding.

The correspondence does not continue into the years of Sarah's mature artistic achievements, but even if it had I doubt that any clues would be given to the larger vision that separates *The Country of the Pointed Firs* from *Deephaven*. What these letters do reveal are those lovely gracious qualities of a highly talented, unselfconscious young lady of the genteel society. If these qualities alone could not make the writer that we esteem so highly, it is equally true that these were the qualities to be strengthened, deepened, and broadened in her later years, and then transmitted to her major artistic triumph.

The letters, now published for the first time, are in the Henry Laurens Dawes Papers in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, to which I am indebted for their appearance here. There are twenty-six letters, plus two fragments not of sufficient

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importance to publish. These would seem to be most of the letters Sarah wrote to her friend, although there may have been later letters which were not preserved. Sarah's handwriting is fairly easy to read, but sometimes she turns the completed page sideways and writes across the lines, which makes some of the reading difficult. She makes the short dash a universal mark of punctuation, which I have followed also, although I have occasionally regularized her punctuation for reasons of clarity.

The two letters of Anna Dawes (numbers 1-A and 3-A in the series below) were brought to my attention by John E. Frost, who had discovered them in his investigation for his biography of Miss Jewett. These letters are in the Columbia University Library, to which I am indebted for their appearance here.

LETTER 1

South Berwick¹
21 Dec. 1875

Dear Anna

You see I keep to the fashion of our tender farewell and discard forever the formal 'Miss.' I wish to tell you about the circular I promised you and which no doubt you have entirely forgotten. However I must try to keep my promise all the same! I mean the society for the encouragement of study at home — you remember we were talking about it one day? I wrote to my friend Ellen Mason² to send me some circulars for you but though I have two letters since she has quite forgotten to put them in. She is busy — and I don't suppose that when I mention them again I should get them for a week or so, and the truth is I can no longer put off telling how dreadfully edified Mary³ and I were with your sweet note and your lovely appreciation of the item I had sent. I knew in an instant what you referred to in "Baddeck"⁴ and it was capital! How did you happen to think of it? Mary and I had such a laugh and I went up in the book closet in the garret and sought for the Atlantic and brought it down to Mary's room in triumph. I wish you had been there — and indeed I have wished I could see you a dozen times. *Didn't* we have a good time! I have heard twice from 'the bride,'⁵ once from Washington and once from home. She appears cheerful doesn't she? Only think of Alice's⁶ going to Paris.

I have been very quiet since I came home and did not do anything during the first week as making eight visits in less than three weeks is apt to lessen one's enthusiasm. I had some blessed good times though! Last week and this I have been writing with great diligence and have never felt more like it. Isn't it nice to be busy? Which question I am proud to ask being woefully lazy by nature. Did you know you have another friend in Berwick beside the Jewetts? Mrs. Burleigh,⁷ — who goes to

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Congress — and she told me the other day to give her love to you. I wonder if you have gone to Washington yet — I have forgotten when you told me you were to leave. I must stop writing — but you don't know how much I wish this could have been a talk instead of a letter. I wish I could see more of you. I hope you will have a pleasant winter. Don't you want to send me a little letter one of these days? though I know it is a great deal to ask of such a busy girl. Only I know you wouldn't write if you didn't care to do so & I have confidence in your sincerity. "Are you asleep?" "Good night Pet!"

Yours sincerely

Mary sends ever so much love to you — and desires to say that that was a sweet note of yours, and she hopes you will lose none of your interest in good reading while you are in Washington.

1 Most of these letters were written from the Jewett home, and for subsequent letters there seems no reason to repeat this address. Similarly, although the signature varies from Sarah O. Jewett to Sarah to S. O. J., there is no apparent relation of the form used to the tone of the letter, so the concluding name is omitted.

2 Ellen Mason of Boston and Newport was a longtime friend whose many social and charitable enterprises are mentioned throughout this correspondence.

3 Mary Jewett, two years older than Sarah, enjoyed many of the same friendships. She also was at Ella Walworth's wedding where the two sisters met Anna Dawes.

4 Under the heading "Recent Literature" in *Atlantic Monthly*, XXXV (June 1875), 737-738, an anonymous critic (probably Howells) reviews *Baedeker's Handbook for Travelers* (Boston: J. R. Osgood, 1875). The genial commentator remarks humorously on the value of Baedeker's and its American counterpart (also reviewed) for American tourists and especially for honeymoon couples.

5 The bride was Ella Walworth Little. She seems to have been a favorite friend of both Sarah and Anna, and at her home each had been a frequent guest.

6 Alice Walworth, Ella's younger sister, was apparently something of a problem in the Walworth household. Subsequent references reveal that Sarah and Anna finally came to dislike her, although earlier they had taken her side in family differences.

7 John H. Burleigh was a Member of Congress from 1873 to 1877. In Berwick the Burleighs were a well known family who ran the town industry, the woolen mill, and lived in a locally famous estate on Powderhouse Hill.

LETTER 1-A

Washington, D. C.
Dec. 23, 1875

My Dear Sara—¹

A merry Xmas to you and your sister. I wish I could say it to you. However letters are almost as good.

Your charming and characteristic letter was a sort of stirrup cup as I started for this place. The plain English of which remarkable expres-

sion is that it was brought to me after I was already seated in the cars — and put me into a most exhilarated state of mind. I shall be only too glad to buy your epistles with the depreciated paper currency in which I deal myself, and count it a kind thought on the part of my Fates which made it necessary to explain Miss Mason's silence.²

I wish that young woman had remembered however — for I hadn't forgotten by any means: & if ever I am through with the accumulated horrors of the dressmaker, the dentist, the holidays, & the like I hope to spend some of my mornings in study. I confess however that I have a sort of childish dread of exposing my studying to perfect strangers, beside an idea founded on past experience that regular hours are an impossibility to me; at least until I go to live in my Chateau en Espagne. You have no idea what an enviable person you are — with your opportunities to be "busy" and your ability to improve them.

Social life is in a quiescent state as yet. A few vigorous people are "making as many calls as they can before New Years," or getting a few dinner parties "off their hands," but the whirl has not yet commenced. Mrs. Robeson called the other day, but I am sorry to say that I was out. It doesn't make any material difference however, as I presume I shall have another opportunity before the season is over. Indeed I do know Mrs. Burleigh. I like her too. Don't you remember I said I knew somebody in S. Berwick, but alas for any advantage it might be to me with Mrs. B. I couldn't remember who! Is she coming on this winter?

Our bride is an old married woman by this time, and apparently likes it better than ever. After all said & done, I don't feel particularly attracted, do you? I always did admire St. Paul, & I agree with him that the unmarried state is "better." I am not strong minded either! And Alice is on the other side. Happy mortal! I think it is just the thing for her too, don't you? What a fine family that is and what fine attachés they have too. Did ever girls find better husbands than George Little and Wallace Pierce?³

I must stop, though I feel inclined to run on indefinitely. Do write to me someday soon, and if you will ask a lot of questions I will try to write a letter that will interest you. My love to your sister, please.

Very sincerely yours,

Anna L. Dawes

Do you remember our conversation on the education of working people — please to laugh, for it has been my stock in trade for some time!!!! My address is simply to Father's care.

1 This spelling is not a simple mistake, for the envelopes of both letters spell the name correctly. Probably the name was part of some teasing in reference to Sara Jewett, the actress, on whom see Richard Cary, *Sarah Orne Jewett Letters* (Waterville, Maine, 1967), 45, 46.

2 Reference is to Sarah's paragraph of explanation about the missing circulars for a home study course which Ellen Mason was to have forwarded.

3 George Little had married Ella Walworth, and another of Ella's sisters, Julie, was engaged to Wallace Pierce.

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LETTER 2

7 Jan. 1876

Dear Anna,

I was delighted to get your letter and I meant to answer it before now — for I do enjoy a talk with you particularly but I — “haven’t had any time”! I think there are at least fifteen letters patiently waiting on the back of my desk — and I should like to go into bankruptcy — if the answers were not all to be sent to the nicest people in the world. I like to write letters and I like to get them and it is only when I owe more than fifteen that my heart grows faint within me, for I have all my other writing to do — and not half enough time for that! I don’t know what becomes of one’s time, but I *have* been struggling with a little sewing which was put off until after Christmas.

Oh, I think you must have received a circular of the study club by this time as I directed an envelope to you and asked Ellen to put one into it & send it along. She might not have thought to send it to me for ever so long and I concluded this was the safest way! She’s usually in a hurry when she writes to me — dear Soul! I am hard at work on a third ‘Deephaven paper’¹ — This is much like the ‘cronies’ and is to be called D. Excursions if ever it is finished² — and gets to Mr. Howells. I was outdone this afternoon — for I had just begun writing and everything was spread out and I had all sails set for a solemn afternoon’s work when some one called to me to say that a friend was coming a little later for me to go out and make parish calls! Wasn’t it hard? But I knew I had to go sometime and might as well make the best of it, then and there. I had a pretty good time — one sister informed us as we left that she’d about given up hope of seeing anybody — she’d been here five years and had only had one or two calls! Doesn’t that show an unsocial spirit? You needn’t hold me accountable, *I* belongs (*sic*) to St. John’s Episcopal Church in Portsmouth!³ These were mostly a lot of new people who have lately come into town. They get dreadfully mad if you don’t call at once; then they never return the calls and still condemn you as stuck up. I dare say you have had similar acquaintances in Pittsfield and can sympathize. Do tell Mrs. Burleigh when you see her that I spent an afternoon in making parish calls and that Shoetown⁴ and the landing have been properly attended to — and the committees have faithfully done their work this year. She’ll laugh I know. Yes, I do like Mrs. Burleigh ever so much and I miss her — I didn’t see her to say good bye. She’s *very* kind, and I don’t know anybody who is more useful here in the village. I don’t see her very much for I am not great on calls — and then we’re both away a great deal.

I wish you were here. I can think of ever so many things I should like to chatter about, but there’s no use in trying to put them into one letter, and if I did, I couldn’t know what you would say, which would be the best part — a letter is only half, at any rate. I suppose you grow busier and busier. I should think there would be a great many pleasant things about such a winter in Washington as you will have — and no end of advantages, but, as you said in your letter one’s own particular pursuits have to be crowded out very often. I am afraid I shouldn’t like

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it, for I am not used to a grand whirl of society, except for at most a few weeks at a time when I am away visiting and I should be cross at having to give up my fashion of living. I always think I am going to have a magnificent time being 'gay'—when I am in Philadelphia or other places, but I get tired to death of parties before the first week, and I settle down into an unambitious round of lunches and dinner parties and very small "evenings"—I like my friends one or two at a time so much better than in a crowd—and as for the strangers—why I do like to know new people but one never has much satisfaction with them even at a party. Oh well! I'm a most unmistakeable country girl—that explains it at once, doesn't it my dear?

I wonder what I have been doing since I wrote you that will bear telling about. Skating for one thing; just as nice as ever, too—and reading a little, and the writing which I have told you of, already. I must say good bye—this letter has already been delayed two days—and I wish to be sure of its going by the next post. Thank you for your letter—we are new friends to be sure but I am certain that we are very good friends and I wish I could see more of you, most heartily. With best wishes for your new year (minus a week!).

Your sincerely & affly

Mary sends love to you. She has been ill for several days, which seems strange for she so rarely 'gives in' to such things, though she's not at all strong.

1 At the time these early stories were composed, Sarah was not consciously aware of the later collection and quasi-unification of them in *Deephaven* (1877). But it is interesting that Howells's suggestion could not have been a complete surprise, for she is, even at this time, thinking of the sketches as part of a larger frame, loosely called here the 'Deephaven papers.' The two earlier 'papers' were "The Shore House" and "Deephaven Cronies," published in the *Atlantic* in September of 1873 and 1875 respectively. On these, see her enlightening comments to Horace Scudder in Richard Cary, *op. cit.*, 28-32.

2 It was, of course, finished and was published in *Atlantic Monthly*, XXXVIII (September 1876), 277-290, and later included in *Deephaven*.

3 According to John E. Frost, *Sarah Orne Jewett* (Kittery Point, Maine, 1960), 44, 162, Sarah and Mary received the sacraments of baptism and confirmation at St. John's Church on November 27, 1870. There was no Episcopal church in Berwick, and Sarah continued in the family tradition of attendance at the Congregational services when she was home.

4 Shometown was apparently that section of Berwick where the lower income families lived, the French Canadians and the Irish who worked in the mills. Cf., also, the letter of December 11, 1876, below.

LETTER 3

27 April 1876

Dear Anna

I haven't been at all prompt in answering your two valued letters, which I received at a time when my spirits were low on account of two severe attacks of rheumatism in rapid succession. Words cannot express

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my appreciation of your sympathetic words and cheerful discussion of interesting topics. I forgot the infirmities of age and wished I were with you to go on with the conversation. What a sweet thing friendship is! and now — to speak seriously — I have been miserable most of the time since I wrote you last and am just beginning to feel like myself again. I am terribly hard at work on my stories, and am getting on capitally at last, though it worries me to think I had to break up all my plans and promises. I am trying to finish some of my work before the first of May but I think it: a forlorn hope. It was pleasant to hear of your Washington life and the people you see — and I had a good laugh over Mr. Bancroft's literary friend! He must have considered it an inestimable privilege to meet her!

2nd May — I have not been able to finish my letter before, though I have thought of it every day. I have a friend visiting me, and everything seems to have come together. I don't see how I can possibly have anything to do all summer after this, I don't see what will be left! We have a church fair coming off on Thursday, for one item: and you probably know what that means in a small town? I am hurrying to finish some copying and when I go over to the old house to my work my friend goes with me, and reads and takes naps and otherwise kindly entertains herself. I hope she is having a good time, poor thing: but I have serious doubts. However there's nothing else to be done, & she seems reasonably cheerful. I had such a nice letter from Ella last night. Instead of losing her on account of her being married, I think she has grown nicer and I truly never enjoyed her more. I may go to town next week and then I shall see her — for a call at least. I have to do some shopping for I begin to realize that the middle of June (the time set for my Philadelphia visit) is not so very far off. I want to go on some accounts and rather dread it on others, as it will be sure to be hot weather — and hot weather in Philadelphia goes beyond any other hot weather in the world in point of making you feel good for nothing. I don't see how you ever get time for reading! I have read less this spring than I ever have before I think. While I had the rheumatism I devoted myself somewhat to literature. I had some very nice books about Ancient Peru which I found very interesting. Do get the *Royal Commentaries of the Yncas* published by the Hakluyt Society, some day — for I know you would be highly entertained. I had Prescott afterward and it really seemed dull. I feel it my duty to read a sufficient amount of the history of my own country: this being the centennial year! I haven't begun yet, and I must say I don't get up much enthusiasm over it.

Miss Seeger¹ wishes me to give you her kindest regards. I believe I didn't tell you that it is she who is staying with me, and Mary wishes to mention that she is tempted to get another wedding herself for the sake of meeting you and having another improving occasion like that in November which will never fade from her memory! Good bye and forgive me for this stupid letter which I have had to write at odd times.

Yrs. sincerely

¹ Presumably this is Harriet Foot Seeger, a schoolteacher friend of the Jewetts from Boston. Cf., also, the letter of July 7, 1878, below.

Washington, D.C.
May 26, 1876

My Dear Sara

Wouldn't it be nice if one could sit down and answer a letter just when they got it, or at the very moment when the mood seized them. You would get much "larger pieces" of my lining and less ugly patch-work in that case — to quote ideas if not words from Mrs. Whitney.¹ Have you read that last book of hers *Lights and Insights* or don't you worship at that shrine? I have been for a long time — and grow each year more vociferous — one of those who cry "Great is Allah and Mrs. Whitney is his prophet." It is true that I can't understand everything in her books, but I don't believe she can either! so I don't care for that.

So you have been writing and writing — which being translated, means enjoying yourself. I might be more inclined to be envious if a friend of mine hadn't written

"The world might all go wrong
With one too many daisies —"²

Do you know that sweet, fresh little daisy poem did me a world of good. It made me think of a pen & ink sketch you once made Ella, wherein a child stretches her abbreviated neck unavailingly toward a knot hole in the fence. And it gave me a sense of companionship firstly, and it said a world of things to me secondly — fifteenly. If I had any ability I should illuminate it & hang it up in my apartment!

So Julie and Wallace are about to marry, and then, having their cake, are going to eat it in Europe. To all appearances the raisins are almost too thick therein. Still I am too much pleased for them to be very curious. Are you going down to the wedding?³ I greatly regret that I can't be there to disturb the morning slumbers of the guests, but I expect to spend that portion of my existence improving my mind at the expense of my body in Philadelphia. Don't fail to write me full particulars. We leave here the 5th of June — and stay in Philadelphia a few days. I don't suppose either strength or purses will allow more than that. Then we shall be at home for a brief season I hope. Only they who board half their lives know what home means. I will not descend to vulgar particulars, but if ever you need a feeling description of that method of existence, I shall be only too happy to supply at a moderate price!

I'm almost through, and I haven't told you that I've been to New York! Nearly four weeks I spent in and around that pivot of earth. Very good times I had too, and delightful acquaintances I made to say nothing of old friendships revamped.

I really must close for I have a thousand things to do. Please give my love to your sister, and write very soon to

Your beloved friend
Anna L. Dawes

¹ Adeline Dutton Train Whitney (1824-1906), a sister of George Francis Train, lived in Milton, Mass., and wrote many volumes of poetry, sketches, and fiction for a teen age and young adult audience.

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2 These are two lines from Sarah's poem "Discontent," which had been published shortly before in *St. Nicholas*, III (February 1876), 247. (Cf., also, *Verses*, Centennial Edition (Cleveland, 1949), 18-19.) The lines, which are 31 and 32 of the poem, are not recalled exactly.

3 Neither Sarah nor Anna attended the wedding of Julie Walworth and Wallace Pierce, although both took a proprietary interest in this as in so many of the Walworth household affairs.

LETTER 4

29 May 1876

Dear Anna

I was delighted to get your letter just now and though there are fifty other things I ought to do instead, I am going to give myself the pleasure of having a little talk with you. I came home from Portsmouth half an hour ago, where I have been spending Sunday with Georgie Halliburton.¹ It was a very pleasant Sunday for my younger sister² was also there (with another friend) and she was confirmed last evening. Of course I was very glad for her sake — and then it brought back my own confirmation most vividly, and it came over me how much happiness and how many good things have 'come true' and are realities which used to be only dreams and wishes. It was one of those times when one stops to look back — you know exactly how I felt, I'm sure, and isn't it funny that I *should* be 'sure' and should be writing in this way to you? It is very nice to be sure of people; I'm certain of that and somehow it seems as if I had already had the nice long quiet talks with you which I am sure I shall have some day.

I am so glad you like Mrs. Whitney for I do, dearly, and I think no book ever did me more good than that blessed "Leslie Goldthwaite."³ I did not realize how much I learned from it until within a year or two. I read it first when I was fifteen or sixteen and just at the right time — and the older I grow the more I find in it — and it seems to me it strikes the keynote of all her other books. I think Mrs. Whitney has done an immense deal of good, and I know you 'lots' better since I know you like her. I haven't read the last book yet.

I have been so busy! Since I wrote you I have been in Boston a few days shopping & spent a night with Ella who is nicer than ever I think, and since I came home I have been sewing and we have had visitors most of the time. There is an old schoolmate of Mary's here now. I'm going to N. Y. & Phila in about ten days and I expect to die of the heat. We three girls are going together and what father and mother will do I'm sure I can't tell. I wish I could see you. We are to be at the Windsor in N. Y. until the 20th of June and after that in Phila — until after the fourth. At the Windsor we are to be with Mrs. H. J. Furber⁴ and if you don't go straight through, do be good and let me know — though I understand only too well how hard it is to make appointments at such times and I shall understand perfectly if you tell me afterwards you were in the city a week!! I'm so glad that you like the daisy, dear,

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and it was so good of you to tell me. I have some new little scraps and if I were not writing with all my might and with the guiltiest conscience I would send you one or two. I can't be at the wedding. I'm very sorry but it is impossible for us to get ready to go to N. Y. at the time we are invited and we are having to hurry — and I know I shall be tired out anyway — so I shall not try. We hope to get off by the fifth. With love to you in which Mary would heartily join.

Yours sincerely and fondly

Beg pardon for not "staying written to"! —

1 Georgina Halliburton was an early friend of the Jewett girls from Portsmouth, who was usually referred to in family correspondence by her nickname, "Wags."

2 Caroline Jewett was six years younger than Sarah.

3 Leslie Goldthwaite is the young lady to whom much of educational and moral value happens in Mrs. Whitney's *A Summer in Leslie Goldthwaite's Life* (1866).

4 I presume a New York relative of the Jewetts, for Sarah's grandfather was named Theodore Furber Jewett.

LETTER 5

The Windsor, N. Y.
7 [?] June 1876

Dear Anna

I will certainly meet you if I possibly can. The only thing which would hinder me is that my friends may possibly make some plan for me and if I only know of your coming in season I will take care of that. I do wish to see you ever so much — and I was so glad to find your note waiting when I reached here at eleven last night. I think we should keep up a majestic correspondence if we acted upon our impulses — for I should like to send *you* a long letter this morning!

I shall probably be here until the 20th if I live so long in this heat. You mustn't think it will be any trouble to me to meet you for we are very near the station here — and I can easily go over — and if it is in the evening I can have the man for company I think —

Aren't you glad you are going home? I don't mean by this that I am homesick myself; but the country is so lovely, and it is *so* nice to be in one's own quarters. I thought of Ella yesterday, and of the bride, but I had no time to do anything but 'think.' If you were only here! I have ever so many things on my tongue's end to say. If you have more than an hour or two, why cant you come here? Good bye dear and Mary's love to you.

Yours sincerely,

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LETTER 6

The Windsor - Tuesday
13 June 1876

[Dear Anna]¹

I am afraid that I cannot meet you tomorrow, for there is a plan for me going up to West Point, made at my own suggestion. It seems to be the only day which suits every body else, and of course I can't stay at home and I should be sorry to miss the trip too — as I never have been up the Hudson except at night by rail. I told Mrs. F. days ago how much I should like to see the river from the boat and how disappointed I had been every time I have had to take the train and the result was that we made a plan to go all together and I'm *so* sorry they have chosen tomorrow! You will understand I know dear. I am so sorry to miss you for I have thought about it a great deal — and hoped we should have a nice talk.

I have just come home from a tremendous journey to Brooklyn and "Greenwood"² and I am so tired, and stupid as an owl. Thank you so much for your letter which I have been reading. It brings me very near you, and I understand you so well. No, it doesn't take years to be sure of one's friends, as you say. I wonder if you know and like as I do a little poem of "H.H.'s"³ in which she says:

"That newest friend is oldest friend in this:
That, waiting him, we longest grieved to miss
One thing we sought —"

I wish you were here just now for I have the library all to myself — and we would take the two biggest chairs and pull them close together. I'm pretty tired, but I don't believe I should be cross! — I am having such a good time. I think I never enjoyed New York half so much before and I like this careless jolly life just now, for I had been working hard and have not been very well, and I need just such a "vacation" though perhaps it is impertinent in me to think I "need" one. My friends are angels of kindness and Mrs. F. puts her carriages at your service and racks her dear brain to find out what amuses you and where you wish to go — and The Windsor is lovely and I have been hungry as a bear ever since I came and — there are *such* good things to eat, and I am happy!! I am glad your experience of the Centennial has been so pleasant, and I wish we could have been there together. I saw such a jolly play last night — "Pique"⁴ though by "jolly" I mean only that I liked it — and to tell the truth it is tragic for the most part. I like to be "harrowed up" don't you?

I think if this ink were black I might write longer, but there is something discouraging about it today. I use it in my work, but I hate it for letters, somehow. It is growing dark in the room and I suppose I might as well get ready for dinner and stretch out on the sofa to rest myself — for I believe I am to go somewhere this evening.

I know you will understand about my not meeting you and believe me when I say I am very much disappointed. I do hope I shall see you before very long. I wish I could have changed the plans and arranged

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to be here — but don't you know when one is with half a dozen people one can't do exactly as one pleases. I hope you will have a lovely summer. God bless you dear and help you to keep close to Him, and give you His peace and His strength always.

Yours sincerely

1 There is no salutation for this message. Indeed this would seem to be a letter carried from one hotel to another in New York City by a servant or messenger. In days before telephones, perhaps regular dispatches between major hotels was standard practice.

2 Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn was something of a tourist attraction during the middle years of the nineteenth century.

3 H. H. was Helen Hunt, better known now by her married name Jackson and as the author of *Ramona*. Her poetry was well known in the 1870s and was always signed H. H. I have not found these lines in her collected verses and presume the poem quoted had appeared in some magazine but was not collected.

4 *Pique* was a "comedy-drama" by J. Augustin Daly, "founded in part on the novel of Florence Marryat (*Her Lord and Master*) and in part on the public excitement caused by the kidnapping of Charley Ross," G. C. D. Odell, *Annals of the New York Stage* (New York, 1938), X, 16.

LETTER 7

25 July 1876

Poor dear Dawes-y!

did she think her friend meant to go back on her? I am afraid you will find me a bad correspondent, but we will not say anything about it, and I know you will consider this delay only an accident, and accept the apologies which I offer. I have been so busy and so tired since I came home and we have had three of our Philadelphia cousins with us beside other friends, and there have [been] two voyages to the Isle of Shoals and a picnic at the seashore and numberless long drives, and mornings and afternoons spent in boating down river. I am getting rested since the cooler weather, and it is lovely here now: I think Berwick is new to me every year and never was half so pleasant as it is this summer. I wish I could have you here to see it for yourself, but I know it is no use asking you. Sometime you will come and see me wont you?

Oh I *do* wish I could write this letter all in one piece — but there is no use trying for people walk in and out and I have to stop on account of a caller — and lots of things happen. Just now I went upstairs and saw an inviting chunk of candy on my table so I had to stop to eat that. I was sorry too that I couldn't go to visit you. I should have liked it dearly. I know I have told you this before, but it is a comfort to me to say it again so you needn't mention it's being a repetition. I must say over again also that I wish I knew your Mother! I like so much what you said about those two novels (You see I go from one thing to another but this was another interruption) I have not read either of the stories but I know exactly what they both are. I began Mr. James's story¹ but I can't remember it now. Mr. Howells told me (or Mrs. H.) that this was better than anything he had written and unusually free

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from his usual faults. I am going to read it by and by. But I wish I were with you to talk about the two stories. I wonder if you detected the connection between the two parts of your letter which I did? It was this question of the stories, and your not having seen any of the Centennial show cases! I think a person who doesn't see show cases in this world, and a person who *does* there lies a wide difference. And this world seems a very different world and the people very different people. I don't know whether you see any connection now, but I was thinking of your having looked at the goods inside and not noticed the outside things and the decorations which after all did not make the buttons or the tacks or the carvings and jewelry one bit better. I suppose we are all more or less influenced by people's position in the "worlds fair" the houses they live in and the company they keep — but I thank the Lord that you and I have some slight capacity at any rate, for liking people for themselves — what they *are* — and not what they *have*. I don't like Mr. James's characters — that is I shouldn't like real people who acted and thought after his fashion, but I think he writes cleverly about them and makes them more or less interesting. And I think as you do that the moral of the thing is not good. But I must not write any more about this. I am thinking of going out for a call with my cousins and I wish to finish this before I start. I wish I could express my satisfaction at the cooler weather. Have you had a woodfire in the parlor fireplace and the thermometer at 54° one morning? I am beginning to lose my dragged out Centennial feeling and to feel some interest in what I do beside sleep, and be on the sofa reading. I am afraid I have been cross and stupid since I have been here, and it worries me to think how little I tried to do for one of my friends who has gone away. Every thing seems so discouraging when I am tired and not feeling strong — but it is so much satisfaction if one can do right and be good natured under such circumstances. Fair weather sailing isn't half the satisfaction. These remarks are made wistfully, and in the spirit of great humility, for I forget so easily and am so careless about trying hard. Life seems very different as I grow older, but always pleasanter, and more "worth while" — in spite of the troubles that come. I have had singular few 'troubles' except with myself — but those have not been easy to carry by any means. Well, good night dear. I wonder if you know how often I think of you, and if you will not care a little when I say that I have somehow grown fond of you and think of you as one of my real friends. I do believe with you that sometimes one may "get acquainted" more easily through letters than by being together. So much of my 'friendship' with nearly all my cronies has been carried on with pen and ink that it seems natural. I am really very little with some of my best friends. But I am none the less fond of seeing the girls, though I have not the usual contempt for letters. Mary's love to you and she says she should even be willing to be pounced upon early in the morning for the sake of seeing you.

Yours sincerely

1 The reference is either to *Roderick Hudson*, James's first novel, which had just been published but had appeared in serial form in the *Atlantic* from

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January to December 1875, or to *The American*, which had just started in the *Atlantic* for June 1876 and was to continue until May 1877.

LETTER 8

8 October 1876

Dear Anna

I have been wishing to answer your letter; but (to make my excuse at length) when it came we had some people staying here and I went in a few days to stay at the seashore taking one of my friends with me, and after I came home and she went away, I spent Sunday in quietness and repose and started on Monday morning for Philadelphia with my Father, who seemed to have such a pathetic desire that I should keep him company that I could not refuse though I was not enthusiastic about it. It is needless to say I wished to go with him in spite of not caring for more of the Centennial! However I had a charming visit, much pleasanter than that of last summer — I enjoyed seeing the Centennial again, and also of seeing my friends. I have two beloved cousins Alex and Ned¹ (they make me wish for brothers more than anyone else I know!) and I was driving with them and boating up the Schuylkill and always having some good time or other. We took the new way of going on to Phila — as we went by steamer from Portland to N. Y. and had a grand storm, which I am glad to have experienced though it was not so pleasant at the time. I could hardly keep my berth and the chairs in the cabin banged against stateroom doors, first one side and then the other, and some barrels got loose on deck and bumped about industriously. However I went fast asleep after a while and after we got around Cape Cod we had better weather. It was the best thing of all to see the crowd of schooners come out of Vineyard Haven when the sun came out in the morning after the storm. There were hundreds of them, and all that day we were sailing along over the pleasantest sea catching glimpses of New Bedford & Newport and the towns along shore and finally got into N. Y. early next day — and I was sorry the voyage was over with.

The night after I went away Ella went to Conway to meet her father and drive home with him. She meant to have spent the day with me but some friends came to see her & she had to take a later train. So it all happened right as I had to leave in the morning myself for Portland & I could not have seen her but a few minutes. Carrie saw her at the train and said she looked so bright and pretty. I believe she is to go to Phila soon but I hope to see her on my way to Concord this week. I am dreadfully disappointed not to have had a visit from her this summer.

I am delighted with what you said of *Daniel Deronda*, and yet you will laugh at me when I tell you I have never read the book except a few pages here and there. Of course I know more or less about it, since everyone talks so much about it, but at first I waited until it should be finished and lately I have waited again wishing to be quiet and to feel exactly 'like it' — I never expect however to like any book of

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G. Eliot's so much as I do *Adam Bede* and I know this will have the same defect to me that *Middlemarch* has — that of seeming unsatisfactory and unfinished. And there is always something lacking in George Eliot's books because however high her standards of morality and however grand her ideas of life one misses the least suggestion of one having a true and real friendship with God, and that our success must depend upon this after all. Perhaps you say this is inferred — many people do — but it does not seem so to me — and I have the same feeling in reading *Middlemarch* that I do in reading — *Antigone* perhaps; or any of those tragedies of Sophocles — it is fate, it is hopelessness, we are working helplessly against resistless and unchangeable forces, or if we are lucky enough to hit upon some line of action which leads to apparent success, then we are none the wiser and none the surer. These books are grand books and I do not see how anyone can help learning a great deal from them and being lifted up out of the ruts and petty ways of living into which we get so easily. Yet I am sure we learn more what to avoid than we do what to copy — even when we are expected to *copy* oftenest. It is all true, what you say of the characters working out the problem of life each after his own fashion — but do not you think there is only one way in which this becomes possible for us? I have no wish to put a Sunday-school strain of conversation into such books as these, but though *we* may supply the missing thoughts from our own experiences and see how, and how only our lives may grow grand and useful, don't you see that many people must read *Daniel Deronda* without a knowledge of this kind, and that it is almost a heathen book after all? Perhaps you are thinking that I try to speak with great authority after my confessing that I have not read the book, but I suppose that I know almost as much about it as I shall after I have read it in course. Did you ever happen to see a book by Principal Shairp called *Studies in Poetry and Philosophy*?² There is an essay at the end called "The Moral Motive Power" which has always seemed to me wonderfully good. Mr. Shairp reviews the different ways men have followed and shows plainly at the end that nothing but our Christian religion gives the help or is the 'motive power' toward a perfect life. This is no very new idea but the essay helps one to understand some puzzles, and to give one a great deal of confidence. I think that you are finding more and more, as I am thankful to say I am, that it is only this friendship with Christ and our following him and keeping close to Him which is the real thing and the true life. Things are not sent to us bad or good. God plans the event and we are to choose whether it helps or hinders us — sometimes by conscious choice but oftenest unconsciously and according to our education. I am sure this belief must underlie every thing — we are in the world for our spiritual education and every thing is planned for that isn't it? — and success is not a thing of chance but a thing of choice with us. There is something of Fenelon's which I must have quoted to you since it is my great delight — "God never makes us feel our weakness except to lead us to seek strength from him." George Eliot may write grand books and may go never so deep in her knowledge of human nature and of these problems of life but no book will ever

seem perfect or finished, as no life will, that does not recognize the great truth of all truths. It is having Christ in us which is the hope of glory after all; one must always come back to this.

I have written longer than I intended but I do not apologize to you — and I find it very pleasant to talk with you even in a letter — which is so much less pleasant than having a friend face to face with me. I hope we shall meet this winter. I certainly shall hope to see you if you are in Boston late in the fall. I am going to Concord on Tuesday and shall probably be in town a day or two after my week's visit there is ended. I am a scalliwag to go away again at all but this is a visit which I must make and wish to make to an old friend who has already let me put it off four or five times. I am in torment whenever I think of my neglected work, but I mean to make up for lost time when I once begin. I believe you asked me about Miss Sally Chauncey: the story is true and I really made the call and will tell you more if you care to know.³ Will you think it displays conceit if I tell you that one of the big English reviews gave me a stunning compliment for the *Excursions*.⁴ I was nearly taken off my feet! Do write me soon for I enjoy your letters so much and I am getting dreadfully fond of you. Mary is away or she would send you an equally affectionate message.

Yours Sincerely

1 These are the Orne brothers, members of the large family of cousins with whom the Jewetts stayed when in Philadelphia.

2 John Campbell Shairp (1819-1885) was a principal of two of the united colleges at St. Andrews and also a Professor of Humanities there. His important literary criticism was collected in various volumes; the one that Sarah speaks of here was published in Edinburgh in 1868 and re-published here in 1872. "The Moral Motive Power" is the American title given to the concluding essay.

3 Miss Sally Chauncey is the principal character in "Deephaven Excursions," which had just been published. On this memorable character, cf. also, Annie Fields, *Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett* (Boston, 1911), 113-114.

4 I have not been able to identify the "big" English review which gave the "stunning compliment." Clara and Carl Weber in their *Bibliography of the Published Writings of Sarah Orne Jewett* (Waterville, Maine, 1949) have a section on foreign comment, but nothing listed there would fit this situation.

LETTER 9

25 Nov. 1876

Dear Anna

I go on Arthur Helps' principle that it is (as it ought to be) needless for friends to make apologies to each other — that the friendship once given ought to be trusted. So I am not going to make apologies to you! I wonder if I haven't spoken of that essay before? It is very sensible and it always amused me too — for it seems as if Sir Arthur was a bad correspondent and his essay was an apology in itself. He says that almost all letters between friends begin with excuses for not having written before — and isn't that true?

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I enjoyed your letter very much and it made me wish most heartily that I could see you and have a nice long talk. That is the worst of a very nice letter, to me. It is like beginning a talk and seeing a friend for a few minutes & and then having her whisk away again. There was one thing you said which has been the greatest help to me, and I thank you for it very much — our looking for Christ, and saying this is only the carpenter's son — as we go about our every day work. I have thought of it so many times, and told my girls of it at Sunday School, and really I don't know when anything has struck me so forcibly or been of more practical use, for it has kept coming into my head again and again.

Do you know, I have not read *Daniel Deronda* yet! In the first place, I have not had time to read it at my leisure, which I should like to do best. I have been very much amused with H. James's critique of it in the *Atlantic*² — it gives both sides certainly and there are some capital hits. Mr. Howells told me a little about it before it was printed and I was particularly gratified with the young man's answer when one of the girls professes to have known some clever and charming Jews — "Clever but *not charming*." I think it is such a good 'hit with words.' I wonder if it is not a very shabby thing to have this contempt for that race? With me it is not a prejudice against their belief and history — It is the *looks* of the Jews!! which is not a high-minded view of things at all.

Well, do you want me to relate some particulars about my own affairs? I am writing with all my might, and have been ever since I came from Boston and Concord where I had a most charming visit. I never had been there to stay very long but now I feel as if I knew Concord by heart — and the people there are perfectly delightful, and were so kind to me. That was four or five weeks ago and it was delightful weather, so that we were outdoors a great deal boating and walking and driving. I made some very pleasant new friends, one was Miss Preston³ who wrote *Love in the Nineteenth Century* — and I do like her dearly. I hope you will meet her some time. She had some idea of going to Washington this winter with the Frenches.⁴ If you are in W. this winter I hope you will see them. Judge French is ass't secretary of the Treasury I believe. Mrs. F. is bright as a lark and their son Dan, who is a rising young sculptor, I am sure you will like as much as I do. He is an uncommonly interesting young fellow — so very pleasant in every way. He is an old playmate of mine — and it is his sister Mrs. Bartlett whom I visit in Concord. They used to live in Exeter and I used to be there a great deal at Grandmamma's and Dan and I and Sallie were great cronies.

I have embarked upon a great piece of business in downright earnest — making the Deephaven Sketches into a story and a book, which Mr. Osgood is to publish in the spring.⁵ I have lately sent Mr. Howells the last paper — which is longer than the rest and gave me enough to do — and now I am trying to get some other stories done so that I shall have my time clear after the first week in Dec. I gave up this idea wholly, but Mr. Howells was anxious for me to carry out the old plan, and so I have embarked. Do wish me good luck! I had great trouble

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of mind in deciding on a publisher, for Roberts Bros. & Mr. Osgood both wished for the book, and I was greatly puzzled to know which to decide upon, since both offered great advantages. I don't advise you to write stories dear Dawes-y — it's not a path of roses — yes it is; but they scratch you! Good bye — I think of you every day — truly — and I wish I could see you this minute. We would go down river and stay all the afternoon — wouldn't we?

Sincerely your fond friend

1. Sir Arthur Helps (1813-1879) published among other popular works a collection of short essays, *Brevia*, in 1871.

2. Henry James, "Daniel Deronda: A Conversation," *Atlantic Monthly*, XXXVIII (December 1876), 684-694, was not explicit book criticism but an imaginary conversation of supposed readers of the new Eliot novel. Sarah's somewhat embarrassed comments about Jews seem typical of the period rather than reflections of any personal prejudice. Some years later Anna Dawes vigorously opposed the anti-semitism of the day and was successful in awakening Sarah to the injustice of the contemporary attitudes. Cf., letters of January 8 and February 5, 1888, below.

3. This is the Harriet Waters Preston whose brief friendship with Sarah is treated in Frost, *op. cit.*, 53-54, and Cary, *op. cit.*, 34.

4. The French family were quite as lively and interesting as this paragraph indicates. Sallie French Bartlett wrote long gossip letters to another brother then residing in Chicago. These letters, which tell of the family parties, picnics, and goings-on, are now in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress. The "rising young sculptor" is Daniel Chester French, famous for the Lincoln Memorial.

5. *Deephaven* did come out in April 1877.

LETTER 10

11 Dec 1876

Dear Anna

I am very naughty to begin a letter to you this morning: your friend 'the authoress' has other duties (not alone of a literary nature either!) but I think I am very conscientious of late, and since I have taken business before pleasure so many days — I will do as I please now. I have enjoyed your letter so much and it gave me an immense wish to see you. Do you realize how little we have really seen of each other, after all? — but who shall say that we are not 'getting acquainted'!

I was glad for a minute when I saw that your letter was postmarked Pittsfield — for I have been thinking that you were in Boston. Ella wrote me that she expected you soon after Thanksgiving and wished that I would come up if only for a day or two. I could not possibly go away just now, and I have been so sorry to think that I was missing you — and that it was my last chance, for you would go to W. later. But it seems that my fears were needless, and I am so glad, because I may have a chance of seeing you after all. I am a very lucky girl about seeing people again — but sometimes I think it is very hard that I cannot be with my cronies more. I used to mourn over it sadly when I was growing up but now that I am older I can see how much better it has been for me to have lived just the life I have.

I can understand exactly how you you (*sic*) are both sorry and glad not to go to Washington. I should like so much to go there and see and know something of the political life — for I never have had a chance of that sort of thing. I envy you your having been in the midst of it so much. There is certainly something in this settling of great questions, which makes one think and see farther than if one is under the necessity of deciding upon little things always. I think village life makes one very narrow if one is not careful. You get to thinking these trivial things the all important points in the world's history. I don't mean by this, that I am not fond of Berwick: there never was such a place in the world! — And are you also of the same mind about Pittsfield? I don't mean to call Pittsfield a village! I know you must be fond of your home. I think too that it makes any place pleasant when one cares a great deal about the way in which one lives; it is not where, but how, I think, as one grows older. And there is no need of one's growing narrow any where if one tries to find the meaning and purpose — and after it is certain what the work is which may be done, life cannot fail to be satisfactory. But one grumbles and misses things and complains, over and over again. I know I do. It seems to me that things are not apt to be grand and glorious while one is in the midst of them — they get to be familiar, and one only thinks of them in the most practical way, with little reverence. I wonder if it is not so about life in Washington? — The best meaning of the action comes afterward. We seem to be always hindered from giving ourselves up wholly to admiration or to any sentiment. When one goes to the mountains, there must be unpacking and rigging oneself and all manner of smaller interests to come into the thrill and the lifting up of one's whole heart. But when one goes away the mountains alone are remembered — and this makes me think of something which I am always glad to remember — a sermon of Mr. Brooks's.¹ Perhaps I have already told you about it?

The text was "And there was no room for them in the inn" — When the poor carpenter and his wife came to that inn in Bethlehem everybody told them that it was full. Mr. Brooks said we could not help noticing how that has been followed out ever since down through all the hundreds of years. No room for Christ! We find room for everything else and every body else in the busy inn of our hearts. The Jewish farmer was probably there with his money bags — come to pay his tax — the consequential Rabbi — the proud Roman soldiers — and now they are all forgotten; we do not know anything about one of them except that they kept Christ out. It is just so with things we make room for! really so worthless after all and to be completely forgotten. So we cramp our souls and the doors are too low for any but little stooping thoughts to enter and the rooms get filled with rubbish when God meant us to make them a fit temple for himself. If the people in the inn had known who was to be born how eagerly they would have made ready the best room. If they had known it was the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings, the best friend and Saviour of us all, what a difference it would have made. And all are too busy or too idle. We let friend after friend come into our hearts and dwell there, but it is hard to find a place for Him. I wish you could have heard that sermon Anna! I

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I don't know that it was so powerful as some others, but it was beautiful. Have we even said to each other that we like Mr. Brooks? I like him more and more—and I realize more how much good his preaching has done me and friends of mine—I like him out of church, too.

So you are not 'flush' this winter any more than I! I suppose it is good for us to feel a little poor, and do you know 'Dawes-y' I would much rather not have quite enough than more than enough—I am pretty sure we enjoy life more. I think the worst thing is to have people persist that you are rolling in riches and expect you to be generous when you are giving up things you want horribly. I dare say I have more than other girls, but I don't believe there is another person in town who wants more things that she cant have, than I do! I am either on the top wave of prosperity or in extreme squalor—and whereas I shall probably get high pay in January or February for one or two stories, I haven't just now a cent to bless myself with of my own, and I know father's finances cant be particularly flourishing either. Did anybody ever know such hard times? but ah, those harder times, which make one shiver, though one cannot begin to realize the horror of them! There are almost no very poor people here—at least I do not know of any who really suffer. Shoetown takes one class & the other factories the French—and *Indians*, I was going to say! but I mean Irish—and though there has been some cutting down and shutting down, they are not in want. When I am in Boston this winter I mean to make a point of going among poor people and to hospitals. My friend Ellen Mason is much interested in that sort of thing—and I have been with her some times. I should like to know more of the city poor—and I have a great liking for hospitals.

I have been so busy since I wrote you before—working a great deal more steadily than I ought—for I find I cant write more than five hours a day or so long as that

[page missing]

Smiths Life by Lady Holland.² I dare say you know it—and isn't it nice—such an earnest purposeful life—and so much gossip and fun beside. I never had read it before, though it's not a new book by any means. By the way, I have somewhere some flowers which Fanny Kemble gave Mr. Howells and he gave me—*would* you like a dried blossom with the additional luster of having come through the hands of the illustrious author of *The Boy with one Shoe*—*The Orchard's Grandmother and Half Done Polly*?³ It is two o'clock and I must say good by—and go to work. Do let me know when you are to be in Boston. I cant promise myself that I will be there then—but I should like it dearly. I think I never wished to go to Boston more. I hope you will have a lovely visit in Worcester. Aren't you tired? I don't know exactly why I ask you that. God bless you dear! and don't forget that I am

Your loving friend

Mary sends a heap of love to you and says don't you wish Ella would have another wedding!

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I have not wished you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. I meant I have not told you that I send you my good wishes for those days and all your other days. Some how I dont feel as if I had half answered your letter. I cant thank you enough for it. I have enjoyed it so much and have learned from it too, a great deal. But I wish we could have a talk!

I hope you are minding the second division of the philosophical poem, "When it is cold you must not scold!" Isn't that funny?

1 Phillips Brooks was the widely known rector of Trinity Church in Boston which Sarah attended whenever she was near enough to do so. Later he became a good friend of Sarah and Annie Fields.

2 This is without doubt the well-known biography that went through many editions in England and in this country: *A Memoir of the Reverend Sidney Smith*. By His Daughter, Lady Holland. Two Volumes. London, 1855.

3 In view of the confusion sometimes made by the use of initials, there has been some doubt as to the author of these tales, signed S.O.J. On this problem, see Clara and Carl Weber, *op. cit.*, 30. But the statement in this letter (perhaps in jocular response to a teasing question by Anna) would clearly indicate that all three works were not by Sophia Orne Johnson but by Sarah Orne Jewett.

LETTER 11

6 April 1877

Dear Anna

I am sorry to have been so neglectful of your letter which I was so glad to receive while I was in Concord. I have been meaning to write to you but when I tell you that on my return Tuesday afternoon I had more than twenty letters to write you will see that I have for some reason been obliged to neglect other friends as well as yourself! You see that in the first place I have not been at all well since I saw you in January and during the first four weeks of my seven weeks absence I was working harder than I ought on my proofs and other of the book's affairs — and I could not attempt to do much else in the way of writing.

But I am feeling somewhat better now, and I wish that you were here so that I could have a long talk with you — I should like to tell you of my visits in Concord and in Boston and in Exeter. So many pleasant things happened to me and I met so many delightful people and everybody was so kind! While I was at Ella's I saw your Mrs. Barnard and your niece Miss Ruth — which was very pleasant. I had not seen Mrs. Barnard since Ella's wedding. I am so glad you said what you did to me about Alice: I had some very nice talks with the child and I never have been half so much interested in her before — but I think it is such a pity that Mr. Walworth objects to her being an Episcopalian. I think that is a question that one ought to be allowed to decide for oneself, do not you? and the atmosphere of Trinity church would do so much more for Alice than the atmosphere of Dr. Webb's church. Besides Ella's & Sallie's going there will make a great difference. I said very little because of course it was not my business — and yet I am sometimes sorry and wish I had said something. Isn't it wonderful the difference it makes in a girl's life like Alice's — this having ever so far

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away and small an understanding of the better life in Christ and ever so little knowledge of his companionship? I think she is wonderfully changed and I never cared half so much for her, did you? As for Wallace whom I never really knew before — I am *so* fond of him Anna! I am very glad to have known him. Mr. Brooks said such pleasant things about him to me — and he seems to take a great deal of interest in him. I enjoyed my visit at Ella's very much — and I wish you and I could have been together there. I really was not well enough to stay longer when I was there with you. I had dreadfully overtired and strained myself and it surprises me to count up now the immense amount of work I did without knowing it — Would you like to know something about the book? It will be out in a week or two and you will know all about it for yourself, what kind of cover it has and what it looks like, outside and in. I hope you will like it, and may I ask you for one thing — you see a good many papers, and if you find any notices good or bad will not you cut them out and send them to me?

I do want to tell you about my visits! First I was in Concord working hard, and very unenergetic as to health, and enjoying the delightful people to my heart's content. I saw a good deal of the Emersons, particularly Miss Ellen for whom I care more than ever, and of all the older people — this visit was more in the houses whereas my others are associated with out-of-door Concord and the picnics &c — and the younger people — there were some theatricals and a good many tea parties & I was there two weeks: then I went to Grace Gordon¹ and that week's visit and my visit at Ella's & at the Kempton &c took up nearly three weeks. Then Grace Gordon and I came down to Exeter together to make my aunt Mrs. Long² a visit, and we had such a good time! And afterward I went to my grandfather³ for ten days or so. But wouldn't I tell you all the particulars if I saw you. I must say good-bye — because it is dinner time. Mary would send no end of love to you if she were here. What are you reading?

Yrs. sincerely

1 Grace Gordon was a Boston friend of the same social set as Ellen Mason and Ella Walworth. Sarah stayed frequently at the Gordon home when she was in Boston during these years. Grace Gordon later married Rev. Treadwell Walden, rector of the Episcopal cathedral in Boston and friend of the Jewetts.

2 Of this person, Frost writes (*op. cit.*, 35): "Sarah Orne Jewett once said that she grew up with her grand-aunts and grand-uncles as playmates. Mary Olivia Gilman Long — Aunt Mary Long — was the *grande dame* of the family. She was the recent widow of a naval commodore, and was childless. She knew all of the family history, and had made her share of it."

3 Sarah's maternal grandfather, Dr. William Perry, was a favorite relation. He is described in Frost, *op. cit.*, 36, and in Cary, *op. cit.*, 47-48.

LETTER 12

10 May 1877

My dear Anna

I have enjoyed your letter very much and have wished to answer it but you will not ask for any apologies I'm sure and so I will save all

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the room they would take. I only wish I could see you today. It is a lovely Sunday afternoon and we would walk a while and sit down at the first acceptable and lonely place we reached. I think I should take you to the top of the hill which is not a great climb and where you would be happy because of the view, as I always am. I truly wish I could see you. I am beginning at last to feel as if I were in my right mind, though I am not wholly rested yet. My younger sister has been very ill, and we have had visitors and *Deephaven* gives me a good deal of work in one way or another. What a busy world this is, Dawes-y! and you see I began by making it a lazy world with no need for hurry. In the first place I am very glad you like *Deephaven*. I should have been very sorry if you had not liked it. It amazes me to find out how much the reviews have praised it and it goes straight to my heart to have succeeded in pleasing my dear friends. I should say a great deal about this if you were here, and tell you that the very success has frightened me and humbled me and made me feel very inadequate, and how hard it is even not to be cowardly. It has not been wholly pleasure, this success which I seem to have — though there is so much pleasure. It is very hard for me 'to take it in' that all the praise is meant for me — indeed I believe I am somehow hindered from taking it in — except in the very vaguest way. Sometimes I have been very sorry because I do not feel more pleased and 'set up.' Can you understand that feeling? I should not have dared tell it you otherwise. But dear, isn't it a tremendous thing to be put into one's hands and can a girl help feeling that she is living a more conspicuous sort of life, and that is frightful to think what a little bad influence will do. Ah well! does not one grow more and more thankful that there is a strength that never fails and a wisdom that never is found wanting and a Love that is always ours; and that the Best Friend may be your own friend and mine. And just now I caught myself thinking of Alice and how true and sensible your idea of her is. I will write to her certainly — I hope she is on the right road and I liked very much the way she spoke of better things. I have had not time to write her lately.

I have been terribly in debt for letters and I cannot yet write long at a time. Sometimes it seems to me that taking care of my letters is enough for one girl and I am sorry when I have to neglect them. You see I have much more to take up my time in town and home affairs than I did at one time — then my friendships and out-of-town interests were almost everything. I am as much interested in my Sunday School class as you can imagine. I have six girls of about twenty — and they are very bright, and girls who have and will always have a good deal of influence among their different sets of friends. I enjoy them very much and since I long with all my heart to help them and to do them good I can't believe I shall wholly fail. I wish very much to read that life of Kingsley.¹ Miss Preston is Mrs. Goddard's friend & she wrote me about it much as Mrs. Goddard did you. I met Mrs. Goddard once this winter for a few minutes and like her so much. I do hope I shall see her again sometime or other. Miss Preston says a great deal about her.

I have hardly read at all lately except a great many Sunday School books, for I have been recataloguing and adding to the Sunday School

library. I have been at work off and on for three weeks and today it was all in order. I am quite proud of it, for though I have had some help, I have really managed everything. It has been a good deal of work and I am glad to be nearly done for nothing is left now but to see to some printing. One day this week I have spent with Georgie Halliburton and she was in town the week before. We have had visitors off and on and I do a little of everything. I am enjoying my friendship with Miss Preston more and more — I must tell you a great deal about her some time. She has such a generous way of looking at things, and she has come to me just the right time as all my friends have. I will certainly tell you of my Concord visit some day; it seems a year ago now, that I was there. I had a very nice time but I was miserably tired and used up, as I have told you.

I must say good bye dear. I have promised to go for a walk with a young cousin² who is staying with us and he has waited so uncomplainingly that I must start soon. He's such a nice fellow — and we are great friends. I used not to like him, and it is delightful to find him so nice as he grows up. He would not thank me for giving you the impression that he is young. It falls very sweet upon his ear to be called Mr. Gilman and I never shall tell that he is at home an underrated younger brother and only 'Charley.' Don't be afraid, your letters are never too long dear Dawesey. Think of how much we should say if we were together and how short the longest letter is compared with that! And I am always so glad to hear from you. Mary sends no end of love and says she looks upon the length of your letters with longing eyes. Thank you for your friendship which is very much beloved and thought of! and I say God bless you and help you most heartily — and am your fond friend —

P.S. Thank you for the extracts which I passed on to Ellen Mason — for I knew she would like them. I don't mean I lightly gave away those you gave me!

1 Charles Kingsley (1819-1875) was well known in America, and the book recommended to both Sarah and Anna was undoubtedly *Charles Kingsley, His Letters and Memories of His Life*. Ed. by his wife. Abridged from the London ed., New York, 1877.

2 Charles A. Gilman lived at Exeter but visited Berwick regularly. He was a favorite cousin with whom Sarah subsequently went on a trip to Brunswick, cf., letter of October 11, 1877, below. Cf., also: Richard Cary, "Jewett's Cousins Charles and Charlie," *Colby Library Quarterly*, V, (September 1959), 48-58.

LETTER 13

25 July 1877

Dear Anna

I am so sorry but I don't believe I can possibly make you a visit this summer. In the first place I am not feeling well at all and when I get away from home I want to go close by the sea and until it is a good deal cooler I should not dare to go far inland. Whenever I have done so I have always had to pay for it. And we are looking for a good many visitors during the next two months — which fact bars the way at

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once. I do want to see you very much indeed and I wish you could come to us for a little while at any rate.

It is very provoking to me not to have felt better this summer for I wished to do a great many things. I have had to give up the plan into which I entered so heartily at first, of getting ready a volume of children's stories for Mr. Osgood to publish in October for the Christmas market.¹ He is very good about it, indeed he thinks it better perhaps to wait awhile — though he says it shall be published whenever I choose. But I hate to give up anything and I should have chosen to do the work now if I had felt like writing all through August.

I am very lazy indeed — and I haven't anything in the way of news to tell you. I have been staying by the sea with my sister Carrie who is not well yet — and one day I went over to Exeter to see my aunt and cousins — the Gilmans and Bells who to my heart's delight have just come home from abroad. Miss Preston is coming to York the tenth of August, and when I can get a chance I am going down — York is only a dozen miles from us — shall not I be happy to have Miss Preston to myself as much as I can there! I wish you were to be there — I hope you will never have a suspicion that I am not awfully sorry I can't go to you for a visit now! I have always wanted to go to the Berkshire region again, even if I did not wish so much to see you, and did not know what good times we could have together. I have had to refuse and put off other visits beside lately, and I get so sorry over it!

I have been so much interested lately in a girl here who is younger by some years than I am, and who has seemed to be very fond of me. I have always fancied her very much and hoped some day I could 'get at' her and lately it came about. She is trying very hard to grow better, and there is something very touching in her way of talking about it. She is a wild out-doors sort of girl very fond of horses and all that sort of thing, and I have been surprised more and more to find how much tenderness and loneliness she has covered up by her careless wild ways. Not that she is rough or rude exactly, but *untamed*! I am getting very fond of her, and I must have told you that it is my great ambition to have younger girl-friends as I grow older, and to do them good and help them — so you will understand the happiness her liking for me gives me. She is so sincerely trying to be a Christian — she has rather a lonely home which I hope to help her make pleasanter for herself and the rest. There is a pathos about her of which I always am conscious and lately she has been ill.

I always find so much to say to you dear Dawes-y but I must just now unwillingly say good-bye. I am sorry your arm is lame — so is mine — that is to say, my chest & shoulder² — and I think we had better learn to write with our left hands. I can already a little, can you?

Yours with much love

1 The plan was given up only temporarily for Sarah did put out this volume of children's stories, *Play Days*, in 1878.

2 Sarah "had sprained her shoulder fairly badly swimming at Wells" earlier that summer, according to F. O. Matthiessen, *Sarah Orne Jewett* (Boston, 1929), 57.

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LETTER 14

10 Sept 1877

Dear Dawes-y my dear friend!

I have thought of you fondly if I have not written. The hindrance was a combination of visitors and my lame shoulder and two, long, delicious, and lazy weeks at York Harbor. I came home from there Saturday night *via* Portsmouth and I must confess that I am a little homesick for the sound of the sea — the charming out-door life and the dear old and new friends from whom I had to part. Most of them had either left already or came away when I did, and yet there are some who will stay until October. I mean to drive down for the day the first morning I think it will be decent to suggest it to my family. Do you always feel a little unsettled and ill at ease when you first get home or rather *back*! It always is a little uninteresting to me for a day or two. I am not ready to write or to do anything sensible. I think one is half a guest, don't you? and doesn't take one's proper place at the beginning. At least I don't, and I remember that while I was growing up and afterward I used to get very blue and lonely and miss my friends awfully for two weeks at least. But my writing has had a great influence over that naughtiness. I can always throw myself heart and soul into that. I am thinking a good deal of late about my winter's work — and I wish I could begin upon it at once. My shoulder (or rather the lame place in my chest which I call my shoulder 'for short') has been troubling me dreadfully this summer — and I know I had better let writing alone. I wish I could talk over with you a plan of which I have thought a good deal — and perhaps I can some day before I carry it out. I shall start writing very soon, for I have so much to do. Mr. Howells has been writing to me for some stories and I wish I had them done. I have thought a great deal about my scribbling this summer — and I never was so much interested in it. We have some visitors coming a little later and after that my time will be mostly my own — which speech you need not criticize because I see its inefficiency and naughtiness as well as you!

Miss Preston meant to come from York with me for a little visit, but was obliged to go elsewhere first. It all came out right though I was so sorry about it at first, for Mother is sick today.

How much better I should like talking with you than writing! We would go for a walk Dawes-y for there is an exquisite sunset shining in at the window through the trees. I feel exactly like a talk with you — and I half think you are thinking of me too, just now. Do you ever feel certain of such things? I wish you were to be here for the next few days. We would stay out doors all the time and spend all our afternoons down river, for the tide is high of an afternoon just now and I should like to pull you down two miles and then stop in the shade and read and gossip until it is time to come home to supper.

Thank you for your interest in my younger girl friend and I am glad to tell you that she is growing stronger and happier in every way. I think you would like her dearly, and isn't it a great thing to be used in helping somebody, and to have people associate you with their pleas-

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ures and blessings? We will try to be good tools and to keep ourselves always ready for God's use, wont we dear? I wish we could talk more about these things, but we *have* talked haven't we? — and we are sure of each other's sympathy, which is a very great thing.

It is growing dark and I must say good night to you — though there is so much else I wish to tell you. How pleasant it has been to know Miss Preston more and to love her better — and about the new friend I made at York — and how nice it was when somebody would tell me they had liked my little *Deephaven* — and thank me for pleasure I had given “unbeknownst” —

Good-bye — I have your litany put away in its letter wh. I can't get at tonight, but I will send it to you shortly. I beg your pardon for keeping it — but I quite forgot it — God bless you and fare you well.

Yours sincerely & lovingly

LETTER 15

11 Oct 1877

Dear Dawes-y,

She “thought to break a country heart For pastimes ere she went to town!” — I suppose I ought to congratulate you on going to Washington, but to tell the truth I am grieved that you are not to be in this region this winter. I hoped I should see you in Boston and that I should see you here. But joy go with you! and you can enlighten the mind of your provincial friend — can't you? and *won't* you? I am not sure, but I don't believe I should like to be in society. I am getting to have a very old-maidenly liking for being quiet. I suppose my writing makes me dislike a ‘racket’ more and more, and yet no girl likes to see new people or enjoy her old friends more or better than I. I suppose it behoves me to acknowledge your ‘bit of a compliment’ as the Irish say — before I mention anything else. I am very much obliged and if I did make it up myself dear Dawes-y, I never should be fool enough to tell yez! I should have thrashed you if I had been there, for that! I should have shaken you well and made a few remarks to you that would not have been soon forgotten. None of your jokes at poor young authoresses if you please. But it was truly a sweet speech and I felt proud and am grateful to you for passing it on. It seems very foolish to say my stories are like Hawthorne's and I wonder why people do! They don't seem a bit alike to me. I wish I were with you and we could have a talk — there is so much I wish I could say about this very matter of praise. It is all very pleasant — but is such a different pleasure from what I supposed it would be when I used to build castles in Spain a great while ago. It is a great puzzle to me to know myself — and other people aren't half so much a puzzle somehow. But I don't believe in thinking much about myself. I believe I take life more and more simply, at least I try to — for I am sure it is the better way. — I must confess to you that I have been feeling rather dull and blue lately — for I do not grow strong as I very much wish I could. My lame shoulder and chest hinder me some days from even writing a letter and I hoped to be hard at work by this time. I shall soon come to the conclusion that I had better

not write any more just now — and try to give it up good naturedly. But I have made ever so many plans and I am so interested in writing! I have been doing a little at a story during the last few days — it is rather out of my line and I am very much interested to see how it is coming out. I wish I could work five hours a day right straight along, which is a senseless wish enough, because I should only be happy as long as I held out and then I should go down in sight of land as I did last winter.

See here, dear girl — you think me a great deal gooder and better than I am and I don't feel comfortable and happy! I feel as if I were taking you in and I hate every kind of deceit. Wouldn't it be nice if one never said more than one meant — if we could in every way be perfectly true? I suppose it is a thing one must try for always in this world and never reach. I'll tell you what I ask for myself every morning and night when I say my prayers — that I may pray and fight to become a brave good woman — that I may be a Christian through and through, and that I may be tireless in trying to do right. I wonder why we don't try harder and care more about being good. We 'go into' almost everything so much more heartily — it seems to me sometimes — and yet isn't it a comfort that the growth isn't all in our own heads, that there is a spiritual growth outside our own consciousness, that God takes care of. But don't you 'forget' hour after hour and day after day, and doesn't it seem as if there were more winter than summer? There is something in Fenelon that is always a great consolation to me when I think about my faults and troubles and carelessness — that when we walk in the dark the roughness of the country does not trouble us — but the higher the sun goes up in the sky the more plainly we see — and the more we see God's brightness, the worse we seem to ourselves. I get so ashamed of myself here at home — and isn't it harder to be good at home than anywhere else — and did you ever think that while we get most of our discipline from our own families, there is compensation because we really love them better than we do anybody else!

I was thinking about Sunday school awhile ago, and I wonder if you took a class in Washington? I wish you could have a class of grown-up girls as I have. It would help you and it would help them — as a younger class cannot. I think it is very seldom one sees a girl so well fitted to help other girls, as you are. You know so well society-life and you carry under all this so strong a consciousness of better things. I think so often of that line "some earnest word amid the idle talk" — and do let us try to remember it. I have often been sorry that I was afraid to speak gravely — but never sorry when I have spoken. All the same, I don't believe in forcing such things upon one's friends — there is always an instinct which teaches one — do not you find it so. And after all God's object in putting us into this world is to let us know him and have his goodness and wisdom and happiness. We are put here for love's sake, and God helps us all he can — but we must take his help in freedom. He does not force us. Now everything that makes people remember this real object of life must be a good thing — and when we are with people who are living for anything and everything else, and we know it and can remind them and help them, for God's sake let us try! —

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And let us pray oftener at any rate, because we are always forgetting what a power that is.

It made me very glad, what you said about Miss Barnard, and I wish you would give my love to her. Isn't it wonderful how one's life reaches out?—beyond one's own knowledge—and how it frightens one sometimes. I think of it so much when I think about my book and my stories and how many people have read them.

Well—I must say good-bye—I don't know when I have written so long a letter. I must tell you that I was in Boston for a day or two lately but I didn't see Ella—and before that I had made a little visit down at Brunswick and had a lovely time with my young cousin Charley—dear little fellow (or big fellow!) He has grown so this summer and he is trying very hard to be a good man. And I know you will be interested when I tell you that in Boston I bought myself a lovable saddle-horse—a chestnut thoroughbred that goes like the wind, and is so far satisfactory in every way. I call her Sheila for the Princess of Thule—is not that a good name? I have no end to tell you about my dear Miss Preston whom I like and love more and more—but I have no time, and my arm really gave out some pages back! Mary sends a heap of love to you and wishes she ever could see you. Do you know how the Alice Walworth match comes on? Mary has been out at Mrs. Claflin's & Mrs. Ellis's & has had a lovely time.¹ She and Mrs. Ellis are great friends you know. Good bye from your fond and true

¹ Mrs. William Claflin and Mrs. Emma Claflin Ellis were friends of the Jewetts. Mrs. Claflin, whose husband had been Governor of Massachusetts from 1869 to 1871, was especially fond of Sarah, and through her friendship Sarah made the acquaintance of many literary personages of New England. This was before the intimacy with Annie Fields and the acquaintance with the literary coterie at Charles Street.

LETTER 16

5 Dec 1877

Dear Anna

I have just finished a long stretch of copying and it is not quite time for dinner, so I am going to begin a letter to you. I have been wishing of late to answer your last letter but my time has been very much broken of late. First my cousin Minnie¹ died and I went to her funeral and then the next day I went to Boston to stay for two or three days with Grace Gordon whose father had just died. I caught cold while I was away and came home sick—and as soon as I felt well enough I had to hurry into some writing.

As usual I wish I could talk to you instead of writing. I want to see you very much—and I have been hoping that we might meet in Boston as Ella said you would probably be there later. But I doubt if I go before January now, unless something turns up. I saw Mrs. Goddard and she praised you most heartily for which I liked her the more. I never have seen her for a very long time until lately and I do like her so much. Indeed I have grown very fond of her. I hoped to see Miss Preston whom she expected two days while I was there, but the rain prevented her coming in from Danvers.

It is after dinner now, and in the meantime I have had a letter from Miss Preston in which she says she may possibly come for two or three days next week. Would it not be very pleasant for me? but I am so sorry we were disappointed about her coming earlier in the season — everything conspired against it then and now it is so dreary. But I want to see her awfully.

Dear Dawes-y I have viewed Mr. May — and I don't think him so black as he's been painted to me in past times. And neither do the family it seems to me. He is very much of a gentleman and the wonder is to me that he should be satisfied with Alice — if there is any wonder at all in the case! I could not see anything undesirable about him in the evening I was with him at Mrs. Walworth's — but Wallace is my favorite of the sons-in-law. Give us your views.

Do you know that I have under consideration a plan which would involve my holding considerable sweet counsel with you? Mrs. Clafin² has asked me for the third time to visit her — bless her kind heart! and this time it is Washington late in January. I said at once that I shouldn't go, but the family persuaded me not to send an out and out refusal — the truth is I like so dearly to be quietly at home and at work at my desk and to take my walks abroad to Boston by and by — and then it would be such a piece of work to get ready and the end would be that my whole winter would be broken up, for I should have to stop to make at least three decent little visits in Philadelphia. I suppose I should enjoy Washington, and there are quite a number of people there this winter whom I know, and it would be great fun to have you there. Wouldn't we have a neat little lark once in a while? — I own that the great drawback is bothering my head about more new clothes. I'm very respectable for staying at home — I have a gallant new black silk and velvet gown for the house — and a brown out-door dress that seems to 'fill the eye' of all my friends, but shouldn't I be unhappy without a light silk? and though I don't like big parties I should be Mrs. Clafin's guest and if she wanted me to go to one very much I should you know, dear Dawes-y — friend of my heart. To tell the truth I don't know whether I want to go or not — I suppose it would be a "great advantage" to me don't you!!

I have done a great deal of writing since I wrote you and I begin to feel a little tired. There is going to be a story of mine in the first number of *Sunday Afternoon*³ the new magazine which I hope you let your eyes rest upon. I have a great deal to say to you but I must wait until next time. I have felt my cousin's death very much — I think you must have heard me speak of her — Minnie Fiske (not Ella's cousin!) Her death seemed very sudden to me; we were about the same age and were together a great deal when we were children. Good-bye dear and do write to me soon. I have thought much of you though I have not said so in a letter. Yours sincerely and fondly

I've been reading Miss Phelps's *Avis*,⁴ but withhold my views at present!

1 Minnie Fiske of Exeter is the person meant, although this was not a blood relationship. Cf., Cary *Sarah Orne Jewett Letters*, 26-27.

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2 William Claflin, former governor of Massachusetts, served in the U. S. House of Representatives from 1877 to 1881.

3 "A Late Supper," *Sunday Afternoon*, I (January 1878), 55-64.

4 Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward's *The Story of Avis* (1877), a novel about a woman's ambition for an artist's career. The parallels with Sarah's career are slight, but sufficient to arouse mild curiosity as to the withheld views.

LETTER 17

14 May 1878

Dear Anna

That note of yours was most crushing — but as it is getting near June I venture to address you again and to state that I would not disdain a letter from Washington — on the contrary nothing would please me better. Washington is a sad place to leave, for none of your friends have any time to write to you. I think it is so forlorn to be in the midst of things as I was, and then come away and be entirely shut off and cut off from knowing what becomes of everybody afterward. I wish I could see you or Mary Davenport¹ and ask forty questions at once! but I hope I shall see Mary before long for I have to go to Boston in about a fortnight and then I suppose she will be at home. I hope I don't seem like a person who scolds her friends for not writing — I know too well how many demands there are on ones time and how hard it is to keep up with ones letters. I am owing Hattie Bailey and Linda Lawrence myself, and I ought not to fail in giving Julia Stout credit for her letters which I get often and enjoy very much — but she doesn't often speak of what goes on outside her own family.

I do wish most awfully that you were here this minute, Anna Dawes! I think we should indulge in a most satisfactory talk — I do want to see you ever so much — I tell you I wouldn't fall asleep while you were talking this time. Do you remember how tired and sleepy I was that night I stayed with you? I was awfully tired the time I was in Philadelphia and I came home at last pretty well fagged out, and it was so cold and wet I had the rheumatism and was rather melancholy than otherwise. Since then however I have been very well and have done a great deal of writing. I never enjoyed it more — and just now I am taking a day or two vacation for I worked both morning and afternoon the last three days of last week and of course have to pay for it. I have a story nearly ready to copy for Mr. Howells, and I have promised Mr. Gladden one right away for *Sunday Afternoon*. I should like to talk over my plan for that with you. Next week or the week after I am going on a little journey with my grandfather² which we planned last fall. It seems hardly decent to leave home again so soon doesn't it? — but I never would say no to the frisky young fellow. He is only ninety his next birthday but he seems at least fifteen years younger. I have a summons from Mr. Osgood and I wish to see Mary Davenport and some other people so I shall stay over a day or two in Boston. I spent two nights with Mr. & Mrs. Little while I was in Boston on my way home — and I had a very nice time with Ella. Wallace was very miserable it seemed to me — but I believe he is a good deal better. I think the poor fellow is very delicate (Don't mention it!) — I am fond indeed of Wallace.

The family were in their usual state of mind and all asked a great deal about you.

You do not know how much pleasure it gives me to think over my Washington experience. It has all come true, what you told me of it — I have learned a great deal from my visit there, beside having had such an immense amount of pleasure. There is a great deal I could say to you if I were talking instead of writing, and if I were to go to Washington again I should do some things differently perhaps. Still there is after all less to grieve over and regret than there might have been. I would not have missed the experience for anything. It is an education, as you most truly said.

The Claflins I suppose will be at home this week or at any rate some time soon. Hatty Bailey said in her letter that she was to have a visit from Mary^b of a week or two after the first of May while Mrs. Claflin was at the Parkers. What a time of it they must have had packing up — I don't suppose they will rest much after they get home for they always have so many visitors. Mary has promised to make me a visit early in the summer and I do hope nothing will prevent it.

I think I never was so glad to get home as I was this time. Sometimes after I have been away I have been very lonely and like a fish out of water for awhile, but I have been very happy — and it was delightful to have people seem so glad to see me and give me such a welcome. And here in the house they had planned so many little surprises for me and I didn't suppose they had missed me half so much. I am so glad I live in a small town instead of a great one — and I mean to do everything I can to make the people here glad that I do live here and am one of them. Of course one misses a great many things in living in such a place as Berwick but I am away a great deal — and see a different sort of life just as much as is good for me — and there are the greatest compensations. I love country life with all my heart. You don't know how much I enjoy "Sheila" who is better than ever — and high as a kite. I began to think she had gone back to her colthood and must be disciplined and broken anew. But I am luckily very strong and Sheila knows I mean to be captain. I have had some perfectly lovely rides — I wish you had been with me an afternoon or two ago when I went all alone through some lovely woods by the cart-path and across some wide pastures and at last I came out on the river bank at a place which I long to show you some day. The air was so fresh and still that afternoon and all the wood thrushes were singing and Sheila went poking along over the pine leaves and turf. Once I scared up a big brown rabbit and he went leaping off for dear life as if Sheila and I were a couple of fiery dragons. — Well goodbye my dear girl. Mary sends lots of love to you — and will you please give my love to your mother and father — and write soon as you can to

your sincere and aff. friend

I spent a night with the Horsfords^d and enjoyed it very much — we talked ever so much about you and how much we liked you! I forgot to tell you too what a nice time I had in Phila and Brooklyn. Three weeks in one and two in the other place and then I was two days in Springfield and six in Boston. I have been at home a little over two weeks,

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1 William Claflin married twice; his second marriage in 1845 was to Mary Bucklin Davenport, the Mrs. Claflin who was Sarah's hostess in Washington earlier in the year. The Mary Davenport referred to here seems to have been Mrs. Claflin's niece. She was also a guest of the Claflins for this Washington visit and a friend of Anna's as well.

2 Dr. William Perry, Sarah's maternal grandfather, remained active until his death in 1887.

3 This is not Sarah's sister Mary but Mary Davenport mentioned earlier in this letter.

4 Cornelia and Lillian Horsford lived in Cambridge, and Sarah was a frequent guest at their home in the 1870s. Cf., Frost, *op. cit.* 59.

LETTER 18

Wells Maine 7 July 78

Dear Anna

I was very glad indeed to get your letter and I am going to surprise you by answering it soon. I am the more glad to have a chance this morning because I am afraid I shall not get much time for letters during the next few weeks. I have been here by the sea for a week and have enjoyed the last two or three days immensely. Before that the weather was too frightfully hot and I felt tired and sick and beside that I had — or thought I had — to keep on with my writing. It was duty that made me keep to it then, now that the weather is cool and a salt wind blows straight in from the sea I do it for sheer pleasure. I wish you were here this Sunday morning and we would have such a good time together, wouldn't we? I love the sea with all my heart — and I pray heaven it may never be my sad fortune to have to go to live out of possible reach and sound of it. I have always had a sense of its neighborhood in Berwick and there is always the possibility of driving down for an hour or two though sometimes there are weeks together that I never do it. Carrie is here with me; and Mrs. Seeger, and Miss Brown, rather an elderly woman whom I am growing to like dearly, who came on Miss Seeger's recommendation. I knew what manner of person she is at first sight — good as gold; and a woman who has had a hard busy life with much care of other people. She has been a teacher of little children in one of the Boston public schools and will not be promoted because she thinks she knows the work and can do it where she is better than another might — Isn't that good? She was fairly worn out when I first saw her, and now she begins to be fresh and bright again and ten years younger at least than I thought her at first. I have had some very pleasant talks with her.

I must tell you what Carrie and I did yesterday. It was a very great delight to me. There is one of the fishermen whom I like dearly and we got up before four o'clock and went out with him about four miles to see him set and draw his trawls. I wish you had been with us — after we were a little way out from land, the sun showed itself just above the water — pale red in a soft gray cloud and as we went farther and farther out, the sea was growing silver colored with pink tops to every little wave. It was like a fairy story or like The Princess of Thule and the voyages one may go in a fishing boat out of 'Borva' or 'Stowoway' — I didn't think of Sheila yesterday morning either, which was strange! I rowed most of the way out though part of the time we had

the sail up to catch the little breeze and I tended that. It was a delicious morning — and it was such fun to see the trawls. We put out about half a mile of lines and waited half an hour and pulled it up and found fish of all sorts and kinds — some I never had seen or heard of before. I'll tell you who our fisherman is — the man whom I call "Danny" in *Deephaven*. He told me several summers ago about his having a pussy cat on board a schooner and I enlarged upon it at my own sweet will! It is romance about his loneliness: he has a wife and a young boy whom I like — a quiet pleasant fellow like his father, though he's not lame and doesn't wear a red shirt, *as yet!* He has been making me a little fishing boat with all the rigging complete which you shall see some day — and he rejoices that his father is going to take him one of these days to Kennebunk to see the ship yards. Last year when I was here his mother was living somewhere else and I always thought that she was dead. He seemed such a lonely little fellow and he used to go out after lobsters in the darkest nights all alone. I have grown intimate with Mrs. Hatch this year but I have known "Danny" or George, that's his real name, for a long time.¹

We have found a little field of strawberries on a point of land near the sea, and we go there after we eat our suppers, and I lie in the grass and pick all I can find within arm's length. The air is deliciously fresh and I feel so very much better than I did when I came down. I condole with you for the loss of your horse for two months. But aren't you glad that since it had to come it was for July rather than September and October. I can get on very well without riding now, but when it grows cooler it will break my heart if anything happens to Sheila. I ride after tea when it is cool or else put her in the phaeton or light wagon, for she goes very decently in harness now — in any light carriage. Indeed I might say that she spins over the road in a way that gratifies her mistress very much. I didn't bring her here with me, for the green-headed flies are holding court — and she would soon be murdered or else murder me jumping about because they bite her. — It is so pleasant to hear what you write of John Burleigh —² I hope

[page missing]

1. George Hatch and part of the incident described here contribute to "A Bit of Shore Life," *Atlantic Monthly* XLIV (August 1879), 200-211. There is also an account of him in Frost, *op. cit.*, 59.

2. John R. Burleigh, the Maine congressman from Berwick, had died a year earlier, and I imagine the reference here is to a son who perhaps had remained in Washington. A later reference, in the letter of September 1, 1879, indicates that young Burleigh had some personal difficulty, perhaps a drinking problem.

LETTER 19

Wednesday morning (Aug., 1878)

Dear Anna

I returned from Boston last night after a very pleasant little visit. Mrs. Stowe¹ was very nice and her daughter too, and Margaret Bailey and her mother were also there which was very pleasant for me. Mrs. Claflin gave a lovely lunch party Monday so I stayed over until yesterday. Mary sent her love to you and was so glad to hear about you. I

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went to see Mr. Houghton but he was not there for which I was sorry — Mr. Osgood had come the day before from Europe and I missed him too.²

I shall try and drive one day soon — and will bring your gloves and your photographs which you left here.³ Father came home just after I did on Saturday feeling wretchedly and looking worse, so that I was worried to death at going away — and made Mary promise to telegraph me Monday morning early — but he is better now & I believe he and mother are going soon to the mountains. Julia came home with me.

Give my love to Miss Lane and Miss Baker and I hope you are growing stronger every day & I'm your loving friend —

1 The relationship between Sarah and Harriet Beecher Stowe is summarized by Richard Cary, *Sarah Orne Jewett Letters*, 85, note 4. The date of this letter is supplied by Anna in the parenthesis that is added to the heading.

2 These were her publishers.

3 My assumption is that Anna had been visiting the Jewetts on her way to a recuperative vacation period at one of the Maine resorts near enough to Berwick that Sarah could drive over to return these items. The letter of October 14, 1878, indicates that at least some of Anna's time in the region was spent at York.

LETTER 20

14 Oct 1878

Dear Anna

I send with this your pin which I am afraid you must have needed but it was put away in my desk and quite forgotten. I was very glad to see your father the other day at Parker's and to hear that you were feeling better. I knew the air at York and the rest would do you good.

Thank you so much for your kind note of sympathy. Father's death was indeed a most terrible shock to me and I feel the effect of it more now than I have at all. My sister Carrie is to be married next Monday¹ and that gives us a good deal to do and to think of which is perhaps the best thing. I will write you when I can but somehow today I am not in the mood — but I wanted to thank you for your kindness if I couldn't do any more.

Yours always affly

1 Caroline Jewett married Edwin C. Eastman of Berwick as indicated.

LETTER 21

1 Sept 1879

Dear Anna

I beg pardon for not having answered your letter sooner, but I have written very few letters as I had to be busy with some stories & we have had people staying here and I have been on the fly a good deal of the time. And first I must tell you that I am afraid I cannot go to you this fall — much as I would like it — there are one or two short visits I must make before cold weather but I shall be away from home as little as possible — both because I think I ought to be here and because I wish to write. You know how it is: if I go to you, I must make a dozen other visits, and then the next three months will be gone before I know

it. I think I shall go to Newport again for a few days this month for I shall not see my friend whom I am to visit for a very long time if I do not — as she lives very far south. I promised her a little visit early in the summer — and I hate to refuse when my friends ask me to come to them — in the first place I am too selfish to be willing to give up the good times and then I am sorry to disappoint people whom I am fond of. And I have been away so often that I really at one time fell into a confirmed habit of visiting!

I should like to have you here now to go out riding with me. I enjoy my horse more and more and I have ridden more this summer than ever before. I had her down at York for a week this last month and it was great fun — I used to go off by myself almost every evening for two hours or so; the York roads are much better for riding than these in Berwick. Do you still like your horse? I got a new phaeton this summer for Sheila — a light little gig which she whisks along joyfully. I don't like to make her pull anything heavy for I think it is bad for a saddle horse. I am so glad you liked the stories. I have some new ones almost ready and I am to begin my proofs in a week or two. The other day I found I had written eighty-five pages — letters and all — and I came down stairs as late as usual in the morning and did ever so many things beside. Most of it was first writing of course, for I copy much more slowly than that. I believe I have never enjoyed writing more, and after this month I shall have a good deal more time for it. I think there must be twenty or thirty people coming here before cold weather. I tried to count up yesterday and keep thinking of one and another. We had very few here through July and August or rather through July — on my sister's account. Did you know that I have a nephew? He is a very fine baby but I suppose I shall not be so disinclined to touch him when he is a year older. I like him very much however — & he is named for my father.

I wonder if you are going to W. this winter? I don't know whether I should like another glimpse of it or not — though I always like to think of my winter there or rather my two months. I saw a good deal of Maidie Devens at York this summer and I have a greater fancy for her than ever. It seems to me there was some one else — no matter! I had the nicest letter a while ago from Ella Walworth that I ever had in my life (and it ought to be answered too!). Isn't it funny that she and Mrs. Goddard should have been boarding down at Nantucket together? Mrs. Goddard spoke so kindly of Ella and seemed to be delighted with her. I haven't heard from the Horsfords for some time. I promised to go down to Shelter Island but when Lilian wrote me about coming I had to give it up though I hope I shall see them before winter — I grow fonder and fonder of them all.

I believe John Burleigh goes on worse and worse — I did honestly try to help that fellow — but it seemed to be no use at all. — There are so many things I wish I could say to you — I hope all goes well with you. I suppose you are as busy as I with visitors and with your 'own affairs' though I wonder when we draw the line between our only & other peoples! It is a puzzle sometimes to me — but I grow more certain that I cannot write so much as I do and do everything that other girls

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do beside. Write to me when you can, and I always say from my heart
God bless you!

Yours sincerely and affly

¹ Theodore Eastman, who years later was to become the trustee of the
Jewett Family Papers.

LETTER 22

28 Aug 1880

My dear Anna

I meant to answer your letter at once though I dont think 'yer de-
sarved it being a wretch,' but I am getting more and more lazy about
writing, and since I know the less I do of it the better I have a good
excuse for my laziness. I am by no means well yet — that is I do not
feel at all strong and I have to be very careful. I always think that if
I could write stories I should amuse myself and get on very well with
being ill — but, as it is! —

I have been out at the Shoals this summer, and next time you are
tired out you must go there. I never had stayed for any length of time
before, and the air is magnificent and you feel so sleepy and good
natured all the time: that is, I did, and it was a great pleasure! I was
at Rye, had a week also with my aunt — and now I am going to be by
the sea again for two or three weeks, and I am glad enough of it.

We had a most charming visit last week (from Wednesday until
Saturday) from Mrs. Claflin and Mary Davenport. I was very glad to
see them and particularly glad to see Mary and hear all the news —
which she was delightfully ready to tell. Mrs. C. said you are to be
there in September (I think) and if so I hope I shall see you. Thank
you very much dear Anna for your kind invitation but I am afraid it
will be impossible for me to visit you this fall, though I wish I could
see you in your home and on your own ground. I drive a good deal
when it is cool enough, but I have not been ready for riding all summer,
yet I hope to have some scurries by and bye. Write me when you can
— you made me very jealous when you told me of all you were doing.

Yours most affly

Dont you think one day lately Elinor Norcross turned up in Berwick
and came to dine with me. She was on her way to Mt. Desert with a
Miss Pitman, whose grandmother was here. It was very nice to see her
again. Please give my kind remembrances to your father and mother.

LETTER 23

7 February 1881

My dear Anna

If I had not wished to write to you so much I should have sent you a
letter long ago — every day I scurry off notes and letters — but it seems
to me I find less and less time for the letters I used to take such pleasure
in. Dont you know too, that every day there are things that must be
done at once — and so one lets the dearest things be sometimes crowded
out by the things one would not have missed. And then, this long last
year I have been in such wretched health that only a person who has

had the same experience will know how to pity me! There have been so many cares and responsibilities that it was hard to neglect and I do think the physical pain and suffering is really the least evil of a long illness. Yet I can truly say that this has been the happiest and most satisfactory year of my life — and I thank God that I can say so. I shall have to go away this spring I am afraid. I am better than I was a few months ago, but by no means strong, and the severe weather has upset me a good deal. I don't dare risk being here through the spring which always tires me most — and it would involve my dragging about all next summer as I did this last one — more dead than alive! And I do wish to be well for the sake of my writing — and I wish to be everything that is possible to my friends — for I feel as if lately I had been a drag to them instead of the help and comfort and pleasure I always mean to be if I can. Don't you think it is a very great help to be obliged to stop in one's life for a while as I have? One sees everything so much more clearly, and I think I am going to write better and live better for this lesson. It has been like keeping a great Lent for one's next five years.

I thought when I knew of your father's re-election I would congratulate you at once — (I mean your father & you for his sake) but though I am late about it I am none the less sincere. I think I can understand that you were very glad about it and in one way a little sorry too, for yourself. I think one is apt to plan one's life better than it turns out — but when we look back we are pretty sure to acquiesce, and I know that your society life will count for a great deal more in your eyes one day than it does now. There seems to be a good deal that there is no use in, but perhaps we are carried through long roads that seem stupid so that we may reach one point we would not have missed for anything — and if we are not looking forward to it, we always look back gladly.

I had a lesson that I shall never forget one day last summer — I was mourning once my enforced idleness and somebody quietly told me that if I had not done anything else, I had been such a help to her and made her life seem different. It was half unconscious — I thought she had helped me, but it flashed through my mind that if I had been well I should not have been with her then — and I saw that God had been using me, and I was so rejoiced and glad that I would have given up a great deal more, rather than miss hearing her say what she did. We only know one side of our lives, do we? and it startles us to remember once in a while that God is doing his part for us and with us, beside our doing our own.

I should like so much to have you here this afternoon. Mother is going out to dine, and Mary is in Boston so I dine alone and how we would chatter if we were together, and perhaps you would like to have the wish on your dear little Christmas card "come true" as well as I should. I should like to hear what is going on in Washington and I have no doubt you are crazy to hear the Berwick news. Please remember me to your father and mother and don't forget that I am always your sincere and affectionate friend —

I heard in a round about way the other day that Ella and Mr. Little have gone to Cuba. Mary has been in Boston for a month and I feel as if I were an only child!

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LETTER 24

12 December (1882)¹

My dear Anna

Thank you so much for your letter. It seemed a great while since I had heard from you, but I dare say it was my fault for I was so bad about writing letters before I went away — and indeed I am afraid I am not much better now!

There are so many things to do nowadays! and I am so busy since I came home — but I don't find that a lack of thinking about ones friends follows a lack of writing them letters.

I needn't tell you how glad I am to be at home again — it never seemed pleasanter here in Berwick, but I shall leave it for all that, and go down to Boston soon. I am shut up in the house too much in a country winter and I am so much stronger and better now that I want to keep so —

I had a most lovely summer — I don't think I ever can tell anybody how much I enjoyed it — but strange to say I hadn't a bit of a desire to stay over this winter as most of my friends prophesied.

Mary is very well and we are enjoying so much these few weeks we are having together. She would send her love if she knew I am sending you a letter. I should think you would enjoy a winter in Pittsfield very much! Shall you not be in Boston by and by? I am always to be heard of at 148 Charles St² — and I hope I shall see you. I shall make no apologies for this very dull little letter, but I didn't want to wait any longer before sending an answer for your kind welcome home.

Yours sincerely and affectionately,

1 The year for this letter would seem to be 1882 when Sarah made her first trip to Europe.

2 The Annie Fields's residence which was Sarah's home away from home from this time on.

LETTER 25

148 Charles Street
Boston 8 January 1888

Dear Anna

I happened to see the number of the *American Hebrew* this morning at the memorial to Miss Lazarus and your letter reminds me of your own pamphlet about the Jews in general!¹ — you know that you promised me a copy, and wrote me about a new edition that was to be waited for. I did not answer for I thought D. L. & Co. would be sending the little book along but it has never come.

When I was reminded of it again this morning I said to myself that I would hunt it up for I have always wished to see it. When I reflected that you might really have thought that I had it all this time and never said a word about it! So this by way of a sign of life, and to say that you are not to take any trouble, and if the pamphlet is not at hand — next time I go down Franklin St. I will speak with D. L. & Co. & thank you kindly all the same.

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I saw Ella W. (Ella L. I mean) on Friday — she is still worried about her husband, though I think his 'case' is called more promising. They think of going to the South for a little while for a change & holiday. Alice is — I should think — a trifle more selfish and unbearable than ever. That seems to be an illness which has "a complete lack of moral basis" for its only cause!

With which kind judgment I will conclude!

Yours sincerely

¹ Anna had written a long article for the *American Hebrew* which had been reprinted and bound for separate distribution. Anna Laurens Dawes (1851-1938) had a small reputation as a writer herself, although her journalistic career began after the correspondence with Sarah had passed its high period. She wrote numerous articles for *Century*, *Critic*, *Harper's*, *Lend-a-Hand*, and *Outlook* in the 1880s and 1890s, as well as the following books: *The Modern Jew, His Present and Future* (New York, 1884), 36 pp. (Reprinted from the *American Hebrew*); *How We Are Governed: An Explanation of the Constitution and Government of the United States* (Boston, 1885), 423 pp. (Went through five editions up to 1896); *Charles Sumner* (New York, 1892), 330 pp. (Makers of America Series). Other aspects of her interesting career may be found in the obituary notice in *Publisher's Weekly*, 134 (October 1, 1938), 1291.

LETTER 26

148 Charles Street

Boston 5th February [1888]¹

Dear Anna

I did get the *Modern Jew* at last! I should have told you so weeks ago but I have been very much taken into a habit of hurried early morning note writing by Mrs. Fields' long illness, so that I find it hard to begin to write letters again. I was very much interested in your essay — and I was tempted to ask you to give me some titles of books so that I could go on growing wise as to this great subject. Indeed it is far too great for one to be bound by ignorant prejudice as I have been; it is such a good hit at me when you ask whether I am willing to have America represented by the typical Yankee! I have heard Mr. Lowell say the most interesting things about the growing political power of the Jewish race and I believe that he has an uncommon liking for tracing unsuspected lines of Jewish heredity!

Thank you very much for the essay — I shall beg Mrs. Fields to read it when she is equal to essays again. I have been here since the holidays and have only been at home once but Berwick was going on well without me. I am hoping that Mary will be here for a time later in the season. I have not seen Ella lately — I think that she must be in the South as she told me that she was journeying that way. I suppose that you are in the middle of the season? but I must not forget to tell you that I read your *Lend-a-Hand* paper² with great satisfaction the other day.

Ever yours sincerely,

¹ Although no year is given, the reference to *The Modern Jew* indicates that this note follows the letter of January 8, 1888.

² Anna Dawes appeared a number of times in the religious, up-lift magazine *Lend-a-Hand*, so that the particular item Sarah read and admired cannot be identified.