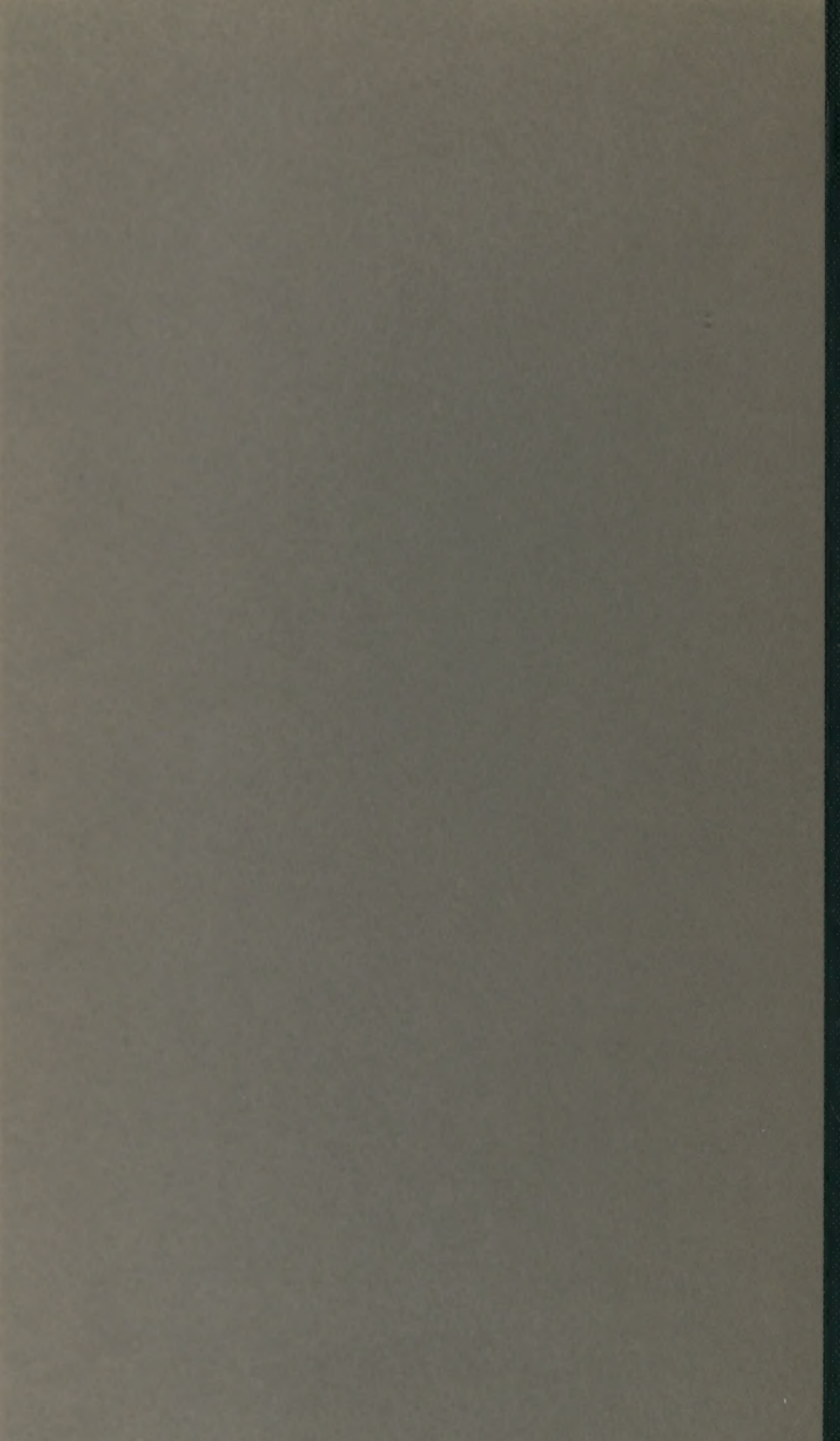


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Letters of Ann Gillam  
Storrow to Jared Sparks

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1921



VOL. VI, No. 3

APRIL, 1921

# Smith College Studies in History

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JOHN SPENCER BASSETT  
SIDNEY BRADSHAW FAY

*Editors*

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LETTERS OF ANN GILLAM STORROW TO  
JARED SPARKS

EDITED BY

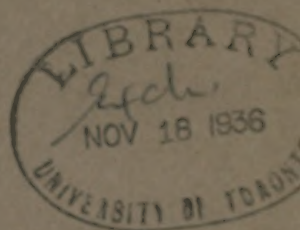
FRANCES BRADSHAW BLANSHARD, A. M.

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NORTHAMPTON, MASS.

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# SMITH COLLEGE STUDIES IN HISTORY

JOHN SPENCER BASSETT

SIDNEY BRADSHAW FAY

EDITORS

THE SMITH COLLEGE STUDIES IN HISTORY is published quarterly, in October, January, April and July, by the Department of History and Government of Smith College. The subscription price is seventy-five cents for single numbers, two dollars for the year. Subscriptions and requests for exchanges should be addressed to Professor SIDNEY B. FAY, Northampton, Mass.

THE SMITH COLLEGE STUDIES IN HISTORY aims primarily to afford a medium for the publication of studies in History and Government by investigators who have some relation to the College, either as faculty, alumnae, students or friends. It aims also to publish from time to time brief notes on the field of History and Government which may be of special interest to alumnae of Smith College and to others interested in the higher education of women. Contributions of studies or notes which promise to further either of these aims will be welcomed, and should be addressed to Professor JOHN S. BASSETT, Northampton, Mass.

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# SMITH COLLEGE STUDIES IN HISTORY

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JOHN SPENCER BASSETT  
SIDNEY BRADSHAW FAY  
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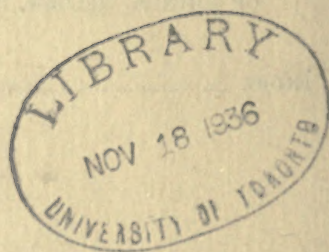
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VOL. VI, No. 3

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# Smith College Studies in History

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LETTERS OF ANN GILLAM STORROW TO  
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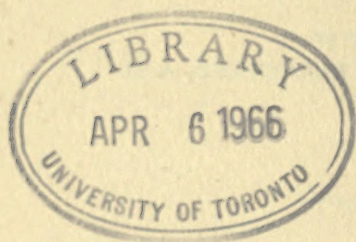
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## INTRODUCTION\*

Among the letters which Jared Sparks carefully preserved, there are many written in a clear, dainty hand without formal salutation, and signed only *A. G. S.* These letters gossip about notables of Cambridge and Boston: George Ticknor, George Bancroft, President Josiah Quincy, Edward Everett. They contain appreciative criticisms of new books of the day, such as Southey's *Life of Wesley*, and Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero Worship*. To Sparks they carry Boston's opinion of his work, seconded when favorable and opposed when hostile by the writer, who is obviously devoted to Sparks. The reader of these letters feels that he is being introduced to a delightful community, but even more, to a charming, witty person with a keen yet kindly view of the world, and a beautiful capacity for friendship. Fortunately Sparks has given us a clue to the writer's identity by endorsing each letter on the back in his methodical way, *Miss Storrow*.

The two were not friends from childhood; in fact, their early lives were passed under quite dissimilar circumstances. Ann Gillam Storrow's parents were both well-born; her mother, Ann Appleton, the descendant of the Appletons and Wentworths of New Hampshire, her father, Thomas Storrow, an English gentleman and Captain in the English Army. Owing to Captain Storrow's ill health and lack of business shrewdness, the family led a nomadic existence. Ann, the eldest daughter, was born in Halifax, in 1784, but within a year the family had moved to St. Andrews, New Brunswick, thence to Campobello, and finally, when she was ten years old, to Jamaica. Each change left the family poorer and her father's health more delicate. As Jamaica did not agree with him, he decided to move once more, this time to Boston, where his wife had relatives. But on the voyage the

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\*Miss Storrow's letters to Jared Sparks are preserved in the Sparks's Collection of Manuscripts, which I have been permitted to use by the courtesy of the Librarian of Harvard University. Mrs. Eben Dale, grand-niece of Miss Storrow, has helped me by showing me unpublished family papers, and by recalling family traditions.

gallant Captain died. Ann, a child of eleven, was old enough to realize her loss, and to understand something of her mother's problems. Fortunately Mrs. Storrow was a clever woman. With the help of friends, she established a school for girls in Hingham, expecting to be able to support herself and her children. Here Ann probably had a brief experience of school life, although forty years later she wrote that she had never gone to school. The experience was very brief, however, and terminated in only a year and a half by the death of her mother. Life must have looked bleak to the little girl, left without father or mother, almost penniless in a strange country. Who befriended her at the time is not known. Her younger sister, Louisa, was taken into the family of a wealthy Boston merchant, Mr. Stephen Higginson. Ann may have gone with her sister. Certainly, when Mr. Higginson, after the death of his first wife, married the beautiful Louisa, Ann became an established and indispensable member of the household.

Although constantly busy taking care of her sister's numerous children, and helping her with the lavish entertaining Mr. Higginson loved, Ann found time for much good reading of poetry, essays, and history.

Stirring questions of the day probably interested her then as later, especially the religious question raised by the growing conflict between liberal and orthodox theologians. Her many resources stood her in good stead when, during the Jefferson embargo, Mr. Higginson lost his entire fortune, and was forced to retire to a farm at Bolton, Massachusetts. Ann described her feelings at leaving Boston as "perfect anguish."<sup>1</sup> But she grew to love the beautiful, quiet place, and later looked back upon the five years spent there as the happiest of her life. They were made happy partly by the joy of a new friendship—that for Jared Sparks.

Sparks's early life had been one of unmitigated poverty and slowly lightening dullness. His parents, unlike Ann's, were poor, humble people. He was born in 1789, in Willington, a

<sup>1</sup> Letter of October 7, 1820.

small country town in northern Connecticut. Here and on a farm in New York, he spent most of the first twenty years of his life, working hard at farming or carpentry, studying when he could—finally attaining the height of district school teacher. He, like Ann, was largely self-taught. When he was twenty years old, a local minister, attracted by the young man's diligence and intellectual promise, encouraged him to go to Exeter. There, and later at Harvard, he divided his time between hard study and hard teaching to support himself. One of his schools was at Bolton. He finished his last term there in February of his senior year, 1815, two months before the Higginsons moved to Bolton.

Just how and when he met the Higginsons is uncertain. That he should meet them was natural enough. His conspicuous success at Harvard and his interest in Liberal Theology must attract a man as devoted to the College and to the Unitarian Movement as Mr. Higginson. Sparks speedily became the friend of the whole household, and particularly of Ann Storrow.

Circumstances, tastes and temperament all contributed to draw the two together. Because Sparks was the friend of the whole family, they met constantly, and on easy terms. Especially the circumstance that Ann was five years older than Sparks may have facilitated a natural friendship. Further, they found in each other the combination of similar tastes and different temperament which makes social intercourse delightful. They enjoyed discussion so much that Ann could remind Sparks a few years later of the times "when the day has proved too short for talking and listening and we have been obliged 'to steal a few hours from the night.'"<sup>2</sup> Books formed a chief topic of their conversation, as later of their letters. "I thought of you a thousand times I believe while I was reading these Lectures,"<sup>3</sup> writes Ann, wistful for the old talks. To a man with Sparks's literary ambition, Ann as critic was a friend worth having. She had a fine mind, a "man's mind," one of her relatives has called it. She was so well-read, and talked so brilliantly to distinguished

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<sup>1</sup> Letter of September 6, 1820.

<sup>2</sup> Letter of April 15, 1821.

visitors that her nephew, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, grew up without "the slightest feeling that there was any distinction of sex in intellect."<sup>4</sup> Religion, too, was an absorbing interest for Ann, perhaps even more than for Sparks. Her eagerness to see him in the ministry influenced him strongly in his choice of that profession, and while he was a pastor in Baltimore she gloried in his success. "Do you remember once you told me that I should bear the responsibility of your success in your profession—since I talked so much and so earnestly to you about it, and urged you so strongly not to look back after having put your hand to the plough?"<sup>5</sup> Both showed a pioneer spirit in religion, Sparks choosing to go in the early days of Unitarianism as "Apostle to the Gentiles" in Baltimore, Ann still inquiring into theological questions until the age of fifty-eight.

Alike in serious interests, they differed widely in temperament. Sparks was unimaginative, calm, and so "judicious" that as an historian, "he found it easy to convert himself into what Madame de Stael so happily called 'contemporaneous posterity.'"<sup>6</sup> He had at the same time a sweet serenity which made one of his early pupils characterize his discipline as "truly paternal."<sup>7</sup> Ann could never have converted herself into "contemporaneous posterity;" she identified herself too closely with the life around her. Much more alive than Sparks, with warmer emotions, quicker preceptions, keener tongue, and more acute sense of humor, she must have constantly refreshed and stimulated the somewhat prosaic man. She must have piqued his interest, too, by her changing moods, not always gay, often melancholy. Her niece's description shows Ann as she appeared to one who knew her intimately. "In conversing her face was full of sweetness and vivacity, and lighted up with the spark of genuine enthusiasm, but its abiding expression was one of sadness. Her temperament was indeed rather a melancholy one, combined as

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<sup>4</sup> Higginson, *Cheerful Yesterdays*, p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Letter of January 7, 1820.

<sup>6</sup> Mayer, *Memoir of Jared Sparks*, p. 251.

<sup>7</sup> Ellis, *Memoir of Jared Sparks*, p. 16.



that often is with much wit and humor, and the quickest perception of drollery in any form."<sup>8</sup> Ann's was the artist's temperament, Sparks's, the scientist's; they found each other mutually complementary in disposition, while their chief interests were identical. What wonder that they were friends for forty years?

During the first years of their friendship, Sparks tutored at Harvard and edited the *North American Review* in Boston, near enough to Bolton for frequent visits to his friends. When, partly as a result of Ann's urgings, he went as pastor to Baltimore, he corresponded frequently with Ann, making her his chief confidante in times of trouble. She in return, gave him good counsel and news of happenings in the world he had left. By the second year of his absence, she had much to tell him of affairs at Harvard, for Mr. Higginson had been appointed steward of the college, and had moved his family to Cambridge. After four years Sparks resigned his pastorate, worn out by ill health and arduous duties. As he returned to Boston to take control of the *North American Review*, Ann's disappointment at his forsaking his 'high calling' was mitigated by pleasure in his nearness. For twenty years they lived no farther apart than Cambridge and Boston, except during the periods Sparks spent in historical investigation in the South and Europe. Letters became only occasional substitutes for conversation.

They had been friends for seventeen years when Sparks married Frances Anne Allen, of Hyde Park, New York. Ann was somewhat taken aback at this step, but she was unselfish enough to find a new friend in Mrs. Sparks, and to rejoice in her old friend's happiness. When Mrs. Sparks died, leaving a little daughter two years old, Ann grieved for her friend's loss, and cheered him in his absences from home by accounts of little Maria's progress. Sparks's second marriage to Mary Crowninshield Silsbee, of Salem, could not have pleased Ann. Sparks had known Miss Silsbee before his first marriage when, as daughter of a Massachusetts Senator, she "reigned" in Washington society. At this time Ann had taken Sparks to task for his

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<sup>8</sup> Higginson, Louisa, *Memoir*, (unpublished).

devotion to "a woman to whom common report gives so little that is intrinsically interesting and valuable, though much that is glaring and attractive."<sup>9</sup> But when Sparks finally married the "Star of Salem," he and Ann felt enough mutual love and forbearance to preserve their friendship free from strain.

Three years after this marriage, in 1842, Ann and her sister, Mrs. Higginson, moved to Brattleboro to live with Mrs. Higginson's son, Francis. Brattleboro was a small place then, with only its natural beauties to recommend it to an intelligent woman who had lived long in such a centre of culture as Cambridge. Ann found many good works to do, but she was lonely, and she loved to write to Sparks about the old experiences she had enjoyed with him. Perhaps Mrs. Sparks, twenty-five years younger than Ann, could not sympathize with the older woman's feelings. Perhaps she heard echoes of Ann's former criticism. That she was ready to take serious offence at a slight omission is shown plainly in Ann's letter to Sparks of April 5, 1846. Two more letters from Ann dated soon after are recorded in Spark's letter book, but they have not been preserved. Then there is a silence of eleven years broken finally by a friendly little note of good wishes to Sparks and his family as they sail for Europe. Sparks records his prompt reply, which was to be the last communication between them.

But the benediction of Ann's last little note showed that silence had caused no real estrangement. Ann was a gallant soul; she could not repine at injustice, nor let it destroy the spirit of her greatest friendship. Sparks could have said truly then, as he had said fourteen years before, "If ever I had a guardian angel, it has been she for the last twenty years."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Letter of May 1, 1828.

<sup>10</sup> Adams, Herbert B., *Life and Writings of Jared Sparks*, Vol. II, p. 535.

# Letters of Ann Storrow to Jared Sparks

Edited by  
FRANCES BRADSHAW BLANSHARD

## CHAPTER I

TO THE PIONEER MINISTER, 1820-1823

### *Difficulty and Success*

JANUARY 27, 1820.

Do you remember once you told me that I should bear the responsibility of your success in your profession, since I talked so much and so earnestly to you about it, and urged you so strongly not to look back after having put your hand to the plough? And do you remember how willing I was, unlike my usual feelings, to take the responsibility? Now I ask you if you do not respect my judgment, or my second sight? Or call it what you will, was I not right when I believed that you would make a useful, efficient, and most beloved Pastor, and that in the exercise of your sacred and interesting office you would be a happy man? I should be glad if you could read Mr. Taylor's<sup>1</sup> letter to Mr. Higginson<sup>2</sup>, and Charles Appleton's<sup>3</sup> which made "my very een wot shod." If the last is an enthusiast, I doubt if anybody will lay the same accusation against the first, and your last letter to me, so full of spirit and zeal, was a perfect joy to me. If I could think that I had had the remotest influence, if in the concurrent testimony of all your friends I could suppose that my voice had been heard in favour of your decision, I repeat again and again I should not think I had lived in vain.

I am very glad you enjoyed so much and did so much good to yourself and others in your Charleston tour.<sup>4</sup> I regret with you that we could not have a larger and abler Yankee repre-

<sup>1</sup> James Taylor, unitarian minister in Philadelphia, and an old friend of Sparks.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Stephen Higginson, Miss Storrow's brother-in-law.

<sup>3</sup> Charles H. Appleton, a trustee of Sparks' church in Baltimore.

<sup>4</sup> A trip to help ordain Samuel Gilman as unitarian minister in Charleston.

sentation,<sup>5</sup> but you should remember how sorely we are afflicted in all ways, how necessary it is to provide for our own household before we extend our views so far off. It seems to me we are in general in as destitute a condition as any Southern state can be, and in some respects more desolate, for our sheep, many of them, have known the benefit of enlightened shepherds, but it pleases God to smite the shepherd and the flock is necessarily scattered. However, you should be thankful for what you can get and not groan so much because you cannot have all. Have you forgotten a Baltimore ordination?<sup>6</sup> There never was a more brilliant embassy than that. You are very unreasonable to hope so much would be done for G. My mind is not half so much enlarged, and my views not half so extensive, and my benevolence half so diffusive as yours, and therefore you must not expect me to be so much grieved in this case, as I should have been had the same thing happened in the other. . . .

I am thankful you have undertaken Ledyard,<sup>7</sup> but I trust you have not forgotten another narrative which will be even more interesting to me. Remember I have your *promise*, and I know you will not forfeit your word.

Farewell. Love from all. *Write*.

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<sup>5</sup> Sparks wrote Miss Storrow, December 24, 1819:

"Those who ought to be awake are slumbering, I shall not soon recover from the mortification I felt, that one minister only could be found to attend the ordination at Charleston. Had they come on as they ought to have done, the trumpet of truth might have been sounded in the ears of all the Southern States." Quoted, Adams, *Life and Writings of Jared Sparks*, Vol. I, p. 164.

<sup>6</sup> When Sparks was ordained at Baltimore, May 5, 1819, the most eminent Unitarians came from New England to assist at the ceremony. William Ellery Channing preached the ordination sermon, "his most important contribution to the Unitarian Controversy, and to the definite integration of the Unitarian body." Chadwick, *William Ellery Channing, Minister of Religion*, p. 144.

<sup>7</sup> Sparks had begun to collect manuscripts for his life of John Ledyard, explorer in Siberia and Africa (published, 1828).

*The Theatrical Mr. Everett*

APRIL, 20TH, 1820.

Where are you, and what do you, my dear minister? Is it your deliberate intention to renounce us all, both of hill and valley? I am sorry to write you, two letters for one, but my letter has not won you to write me, and my silence does not provoke you to, and therefore I have no alternative left but to address you again and "still keep my memory green in your soul," whether you will or not. . . . I have heard of you sometimes, through Mr. Lee, and always that you are doing a great deal, that you are a constant and an arduous laborer, and what is much better and more gratifying that your exertions carry their reward with them in the attention and love of your people, and your own increasing usefulness and respectability. I feel sometimes almost willing to defraud your hearers of a portion of their intellectual food, for the sake of my own gratification; and I very often think I need exhortation, council and even reproof as much as any of them. Therefore why not consider me as one of your flock, whose burden though you are not bound to carry, still whom you may teach to bear more lightly, her own.

You have had Mr. Everett\* with you. I should like extremely to know how he seemed to you. He makes a prodigious noise in the world, and I think the world is bewitched about him, for though his preaching is an old story, still crowds on crowds assemble wherever he is to hold forth, people are astonished and dazzled, and their most powerful emotions are drawn forth. Yet as I heard one of his admirers say only a few days since, it is *theatrical effect*. This cannot, it seems to me, this cannot last long. We are rather too cold and calculating to be led away in this manner. Everett is a most extraordinary young man. He holds the web of his destiny almost solely in his own hands, and who shall limit his power? His ambition is inordinate, and his means of gratifying it abundant, and where will he rest? I have

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\* Edward Everett.

not seen him yet. My sister was in Boston when he arrived, and I have repeatedly heard he meant to come to Bolton, but I would rather *you* should. . . .

*Wonders of Niagara*

BOLTON, SEPTEMBER 6TH, 1820.

I wish with all my heart I could have written a letter which you might have found on your return to Baltimore, if it could possibly have given you half the pleasure which I received from yours. My friends and family greeted me with the warmest welcome, and your letter seemed to me like the congratulations of another dear friend, the tones of whose well remembered voice was lost in the distance.

I have had a most delightful tour. We went, as you will readily suppose, under the happiest auspices, everything smiled on us at home, and persuaded us that we never could leave our household gods with an easier mind. We had every accommodation which could render our journey comfortable and agreeable; and on the twenty-seventh of June we left Boston without any decided plan excepting to see everything that it was desirable to see between Boston and Niagara. As Mrs. Dwight and Catherine<sup>9</sup> were both somewhat delicate, we traveled slowly, never going more than thirty-five miles in a day, and as the weather was at first extremely hot, we rarely did so much.

We went first to New Haven by a rout which our friends thought proved our utter contempt for all geographical accuracy, for we spent two days in wandering about Rhode Island before we reached Providence where we might be traced. We took the Steam Boat at New Haven, and landed at New York on Tuesday the fourth of July. This circumstance you will readily imagine did not make this "mart of all the world" either externally or internally more interesting to us. We remained however until Friday in order to take advantage of the *day* boat for the sake of the Highlands of the North River. We beguiled

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<sup>9</sup> Mrs. Edmund Dwight, of Boston.

the time as well as we could by making several little excursions from the city, one of which was particularly gratifying to us, our ride to Patterson to see the Passaic Falls. I dare say you have been there. It is a wild, but singularly romantick and beautiful spot, and though the stream was extremely shallow in consequence of the long drought, still we could form a good idea of what it was, and what it would again be.

We enjoyed very highly the stupendous scenery of the Highlands and landed at West Point at six o'clock, just as the summer's sun which had scorched us all day was drawing round his head a watery veil of thin transparent vapours. I never shall forget the exquisite colours which gilded and adorned the lofty peaks of the high mountains as we approached this chosen spot, nor the soft and gloomy light which gave to every object in nature the magick of painting.

We had ordered the carriage to be ready for us at Fishkill, and after spending sixteen hours at West Point, which seemed then, and even now appears to me, like a beautiful dream, we crossed the River to find our coach. We reached Albany exactly a fortnight after our departure from Boston but nothing detained us in this disagreeable city longer than was absolutely necessary, and on our course towards Schenectady we only stopped a moment to mourn over the ruins of grandeur and beauty in the Cohoes Falls, which the drought had reduced to a few scanty rills. "Alas no more the groves of pine, could in his mirror darkly shine." We wandered along the shores of the Mowhawk until we arrived near its source at Utica where we left it and took another direction. We departed from our course here to make a pilgrimage to Oldenbarnevelt, to see Mr. Van der Shemp. With this singular and most interesting man and his family we past a few very delightful hours. We travelled through a part of the state, the settlement and improvement of which increased in a manner which almost baffles all credulity, to Geneva where Mr. Henry Dwight<sup>10</sup> resides. Here we remained three days by

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<sup>10</sup> Henry Dwight, Unitarian minister, then banker, of Geneva, N. Y.

the borders of the sweetest lake which ever spread its translucent waters to the sun. Here we were only an hundred miles from Niagara, but as we made a visit of two days to some friends of Mr. D. on our way, we did not reach Niagara until five days after we left Geneva. I am not perfectly certain whether you have ever seen this wonder of the nation. If you have, you know past a doubt that no words can give an idea of its majesty or beauty, if you have not, *take* my word for the truth of the assertion. We were four days near the Cataract, and I saw it in every possible light, and nearly all times of the day. How can I describe to you the mingled emotions of ecstasy and awe, the perceptions of sublimity and beauty which filled my heart when I gazed on this most perfect work. I think I never felt my own littleness so forcibly, and I can truly say I never felt the presence of God so deeply. While the waves of an eternal ocean seemed poured out before me, while my eyes were dazzled by the sight and my ears deafened by the roar of the descending flood, my continued though secret exclamation was, what must be the power of that Omnipotent Being, when this work of his, which almost annihilates my senses and deprives me of the power to think, when *this* is but as "the outer skirt of his glory?" My dear friend, "it is a sight your eye *must* see, to know how beautiful this world can be." It was in vain to suppose that our eyes could be satisfied with looking, so when our allotted time had arrived, with slow and unwilling steps, with many longing lingering glances we left Niagara. It excited in me a feeling which I am sure, no other thing in nature can excite, and I must always remember with peculiar gratitude that I have been permitted to feast my senses upon its glories.

In order to redeem one day from the Steam Boat, we went to Rochester eighty miles on the famous Ridge Road. There are some very fine falls in the Genesee River which here empties into Lake Ontario, but they seemed unprofitable and insignificant to us after Niagara. We were under the necessity of waiting longer than was desirable for our Boat, and we continued, not-



withstanding our high disdain for all meaner things, to amuse ourselves several hours in watching the little rainbows, which after all *did* dance most sweetly and gracefully in the spray of the Cascade. At length the Boat arrived which was to carry us to Ogdensburgh. . . .

Our sail to Ogdensburgh excepting the first night in which I suffered severely from seasickness, was truly delightful. We stopped a few hours at Sackets Harbour, and the afternoon of the same day, we glided with a gentle breeze through the Lake of the Thousand Islands. This was a scene of tranquil beauty which I would have all troubled spirits to rest upon. Nothing can be lovelier, nothing can offer a picture of more perfect repose. We lost all recollection of the wind and waves of the preceding night and were alive only to the peaceful sweetness of the untroubled lake gemmed with these islands of the blest. At Ogdensburgh we took a common passage, or as they called it, a Durham Boat, in which to "glide down the Rapids of the lordly tide." We were in all about twenty, with a skillful and experienced Captain and a very stout hearted as well as stout limbed crew. These Rapids afford scenes of a very different nature from the one which we had just left. We were prepared for emotion and high but pleasurable excitement, and this we certainly experienced, but we were told of dangers and hardships in the passage, neither of which could we find. There was but one lady besides ourselves, and this was a very sweet young woman from Philadelphia, Mrs. Stocker. However we none of us could "get up" one single fainting fit, or even a fulltime shriek, so without any *real* adventure we landed nine miles above Montreal the second day from our departure from Ogdensburgh.

Canada is a dismal place to me. I never felt happy when my brothers lived there, and now that I remember how much they suffered during that period, it is to me the very grave of enjoyment. We remained in the Province ten days, dividing our time between Montreal and Quebec, and very thankful was I

when the towers of the City receded from my sight as we crossed the River for the last time, to go to St. Johns to take the Steam Boat for Whitehall. We had a delightful sail down Lake Champlain. The weather was as fine as possible, and we had a few agreeable fellow travellers, but on the whole I assure you the pleasantest hour to me, was the one in which we landed. We took a very pleasant rout home through Vermont on the borders of the White River, and through New Hampshire by the Merrimack. At length when we had exactly completed nine weeks, we saw again with a pleasure which can be known only to wanderers the spires of the "Elect Spot."

Thus my dear friend, I have given you an outline (I anticipate your smile, for I grant it is a peculiarly complete one) of our journey. I shall take the greatest pleasure in filling it up whenever you are disposed to let me *talk* to you. When shall it be? I cannot regret your not coming here this summer, but I cannot bear not to see you once more in our beloved Bolton. You are so intimately associated with every scene I have cherished here, that I shall feel if we leave Bolton without your being with us again, as if we were removing much farther from you. This very hour of "night's black hour the Key stone" reminds me of you; for the time has been when the day has proved too short for talking and listening and we have been obliged to "steal a few hours from the night."

Thus I go on, saying all manner of things without mentioning what is yet very near my heart, and very much in my thought, *The Book*.<sup>11</sup> I have as yet read only three letters, but those I am extremely pleased with. I confess I did not come to the work with a mind perfectly unbiased. I had no sort of doubt that you would make your case perfectly clear to every candid mind, and I know very well that you never would give to the publick *anything* which was unworthy yourself, or the cause which you support. *I knew this*, for I have the most perfect reliance

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<sup>11</sup> Six "Letters on the Ministry, Ritual and Doctrines of the Protestant Episcopal Church." Sparks's contribution to a press discussion with the Reverend W. E. Wyatt, Episcopal clergyman and theologian in Baltimore.

on your judgment, and it is no great flattery to tell you so, and I do not believe you felt much more vexed than I did, at the expression of Mr. H.'s<sup>12</sup> doubts and fears. But they arose from his affection for and interest in you. Mine acts in a very different way. *His* leads him always to *fear*, while *mine* persuades me *never to doubt*. As far as I have heard, certainly among all our friends, the universal voice is in your favour. When I have finished the book I shall write you again. I doubted whether I ought not to wait, but I was too impatient to tell you how thankful I was for your letter, how I rejoiced that you had seen my brother and my young sister, how glad I was to get home, and above all how truly I *am* your faithful and affectionate friend. A.

I beg you would not be alarmed at my long letter, but bless your stars that it is not twice as long.

*The "Book of Books"*

BOLTON, OCTOBER 7, 1820.

. . . I dare say you have long before this discovered or been informed of the opinions of all your friends concerning the book of books, and my feeble testimony in its favour can certainly add very little to your satisfaction. As far, however, as it is of any value let me assure you how completely it has secured my approbation and admiration. It is perfectly satisfactory to my mind, and I should think entirely unanswerable. The style in which it is written carries with its evidence the simplicity of truth, and the spirit is such as religious controversy should always maintain. I think you have become a *Humanitarian* which you know used to be the object of my dread. I am willing to think you are right, although I cannot quite agree with you, for I am not sufficient for these things. Although to consider our Saviour as a mere law-giver may be to view him with all reverence when by his law, life and immortality were brought to light, still it does not quite satisfy my mind. You, my dear friend, are *now*

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<sup>12</sup>Mr. Stephen Higginson, Ann Storrow's brother-in-law.

the only person to whom I look to be enlightened on these dark subjects. Since the beloved guide of my soul has been called to the reward of his faithful services, I wish to think and believe rationally and justly, and there are very few of my friends who mingle so much discretion with their zeal.

The more I consider your book the more surprising it seems to me, and the more I think of you the more of a moral miracle do you appear to me. You should be the happiest man in the world as well as the best, for surely you have been preserved from evil in the very "hollow of his hand," and the angels who have taken charge of you have guided you to all greatness and goodness. *Are you happy?* Do the cares and duties which multiply so thickly about you shut out the intrusions of sad and painful thoughts and in the sympathy which is necessary to be exerted for others, is the acuteness of your own sensibility turned aside? This seems a strange expression and is a stranger idea, but I am perfectly satisfied that it is only from such a result that you can ever be happy. Happiness is a relative term, and many of us understand very well how far it goes, but surely that sweet peace should be yours which virtue bosoms ever.

You have heard from William Eliot<sup>13</sup> no doubt since his return. He can tell you of his delight, but others must say how agreeable and amiable he is, and how very much he has improved. I have not yet seen him, but I hear this account from everybody who has. They say he has returned to his home, feeling and thinking and behaving just as he ought to. I presume they are to be married as soon as they can be prepared, for Catherine writes me she is continually engaged with William and Margaret visiting upholsterers, and giving her opinion concerning Cabinet furniture. They are entering life with the gayest, brightest visions floating before them. Will this always continue? Are no reverses, no unkindnesses to cloud their happy sky? Is it not ask-

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<sup>13</sup> William H. Eliot, of Boston, a life-long friend of Sparks. He had just returned from Paris, where he had been studying medicine. His brother Samuel Atkins Eliot, was father of the future President of Harvard University, Charles W. Eliot.

ing too much of humanity to imagine that these will never occur? . . . In about six weeks we are to quit<sup>14</sup> our beautiful hills and vallies which have for five happy years risen and expanded before our eyes. These years have been to me by far the most pleasant and tranquil of my life, and do you think I feel no regrets at resigning this sweet open prospect, and receiving in its stead the sands of the desert? I cannot say indeed that the feeling with which I quit Bolton bears any comparison to that with which I left Boston,<sup>15</sup> that was perfect anguish. I am sure no cleavage what[ever] can affect me so deeply. I am, it is true, considera[bly] older and I have more experience if not more wisdom, but everything about me is connected with sweet associations, and I can never think of Bolton without a train of delightful recollections. I should be delighted to see you here once more, but I should have learned little in the school of this world, if I indulged *often* in unavailing wishes.

*Jefferson, and "Other Curiosities"*

BOLTON, NOVEMBER 12, 1820.

One more letter from Bolton, and then to launch into our new world. I assure you, my dear friend, it is not without something very nearly allied to a pang that I quit a scene which has produced for me so many simple and touching pleasures. I am somewhat past the age for the indulgence of romantick regrets, or I could find it in my heart to exclaim with Gray, "Oh happy hills! Oh pleasing shades! Oh fields beloved in vain!" But my experience and my reason tells me it is after all but one of the moves of life's great Chess Board, and time will show how important it is to be. Whether I take a *Bishop* or a *Castle* or keep a "King in check" it is no great matter so that I can but win the game at last. These have been five happy years, and it is not strange that I should have a few misgivings about the un-

<sup>14</sup>The Higginsons left Bolton for Cambridge when Mr. Higginson was appointed Steward of Harvard College.

<sup>15</sup>The Higginsons moved from Boston to Bolton in 1815, when Mr. Higginson failed in business.

certain future, since the past is all that we can call our own. We shall have many pleasures, that I cannot and do not doubt, but in this sweet quiet Bolton they were within our own power, in Cambridge it must in a considerable degree be otherwise. Trees and fields and summer airs and sweet flowers can shed only kind and wholesome influences over us, but do men and women always do this? I do not wish to disparage my fellow beings—very few deserve it—but I really think if we were all angels we should be a good deal better off, and I am not good enough always to be willing to wait the appointed time.

I had a delightful letter from you in October for which I thank you with all my heart. I dare say you kept a journal. I am sorry you would not send it to me. No, you need not fear that I should bring Niagara to overwhelm your mountains. Our travels through the country, like our journeys through life, lay in such different paths that they are not in the least to be compared, and you might as well fill up Lake Erie with the Peaks of Otter as expect me to threaten you with my incomparable Cataract. I saw very few persons, at least we never *sought* any excepting Mr. Wadsworth, of Geneseo,<sup>16</sup> and Mr. Hopkins, of Moseau,<sup>17</sup> men too remarkable in their different courses ever to be passed by, they both live within a short distance of the Genesee River, and have made a paradise for themselves in the bosom of the wilderness. But *places* and *things* it was our object to become familiar with, men and women we took as we might chance to meet them. I am very glad you saw Mr. Jefferson,<sup>18</sup> I should be extremely unwilling to be within twenty or thirty miles of his "exhibition house," and not peep at the curiosity, whether you call it "natural or artificial." He is a plant of most peculiar genus, but I think he must be the perfection of his tribe, and I hope I may see him yet. Don't you consider this among my reasonable hopes? . . .

<sup>16</sup> James Wadsworth, philanthropist and educator, of Geneseo, N. Y.

<sup>17</sup> Probably Samuel Miles Hopkins, Jurist and Congressman. He died at Geneva, N. Y., October 8, 1837.

<sup>18</sup> Sparks wrote, while on this tour, (August 7, 1820), "My way home is to be by the Sweet Springs, Peaks of Otter, Natural Bridge, Madison's Cave, Jefferson's College, and other curiosities." Adams, *Life and Writings of Jared Sparks*. Vol. I, p. 173.

*A "Tremendous Unitarian"*

MARCH 20TH, 1821.

Some invisible and no very friendly spirit seems to tie my hands, or at least cloud my understanding when I would write to you, my dear Pastor. I address you very often with my *mind*; and if my pen could accomplish its task as easily, I should not have left your last and most warmly welcomed letter so long unanswered. I was excessively disappointed on opening one large packet addressed to me to find it only books for the children and I could not *help* saying "could he not write me one word?" My dismay however did not last very long; and I am sure you would have been satisfied that the time which was spent in framing the letter was not lost in the account of benevolence, if you could have known how much these tidings from my absent and affectionately remembered friend came like a beam of sunshine to my heart. . . .

I do not understand what you mean by saying you "feel every day that you are rusting out." Has your ambition of literary eminence increased in proportion as your labours are heavier? You do more than any body else that I know. Palfrey<sup>19</sup> says you study twelve hours in the day, that you absolutely *devour* books, and yet with all this you use such an expression. You *use it*, but certainly you cannot feel that it is a correct one. Your review in the last N. A.<sup>20</sup> does not look much like rusting. Your Unitarian Miscellany<sup>21</sup> sure does not savour of it. I like this little book of yours *in general* extremely. I think most of the pieces are calculated to do a great deal of good—to do away with prejudice and to open the eyes of the unenlightened to the purity and simplicity of truth; and if you do not wear yourself entirely away in the cause, I think you will live to see the success of your endeavours in the just and liberal views which will in the end prevail.

<sup>19</sup> John Gorham Palfrey, friend of Sparks and historian of New England.

<sup>20</sup> North American Review, with which Sparks had been connected, May, 1817-March, 1818, and which he was to edit, 1823-1830.

<sup>21</sup> Unitarian Miscellany—propagandist periodical published by "The Baltimore Society for the Distribution of Books," organized by Sparks.

I am grieved that you meet with so much and [so] violent opposition, for I find your words constantly verifying—"I shall be a *tremendous* Unitarian"—are you not afraid that in supporting the doctrine you shall lose something of the spirit which is of infinitely greater importance in the eye of God? Forgive me, my dear friend, but how can I but be anxious for you under circumstances in which I would not trust myself for the world, even supposing other things equal. I know how great the provocation which you receive, and I know too that I am not capable of being a judge in the case, but in two or three of your pieces, there is a sort of recrimination, or retaliation<sup>22</sup> which I do not love to perceive. I do not think this is unnatural in the least, alone and unsupported as you are, I know that it is absolutely necessary to maintain a very high tone, yet may not this be done without in any degree descending from your dignity? You will tell me and perhaps truly that I am very presumptuous. Convince me then of my error, and I will bow before your better judgment in this, as well as in almost every instance in which we have differed. Farewell—I have not half done but I shall write again while you are at New York.

### *Excursions into Literature*

CAMBRIDGE, APRIL 15TH, 1821.

. . . We have had a dismal long winter—dismal, however, only because long—for in many respects it has been a very pleasant one. We ceased to be in tumult and confusion after we had been here six or seven weeks, and now I think we have a more undisturbed possession of our time than we enjoyed in Bolton. . . .

I have read a good many books this winter which have given

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<sup>22</sup>Sparks replied in the Miscellany to attacks on Unitarianism made by a Presbyterian minister, the Reverend Doctor Miller, of Princeton, N. J. Edward Everett's comment on these letters resembles Miss Storrow's, "The people here condemn your tone in the letter to Dr. Miller as too sharp. I am myself inclined to think the cool manner more efficacious," (May 17, 1821). Quoted by Adams, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 181.



me pleasure, among them Southey's<sup>23</sup> *Life of Wesley* holds the foremost place. I don't know what may be your opinion, and I find very few persons who speak and think of it as I do, but to me it is one of the most delightful books I have read for many years. The character of Wesley himself is inexpressibly interesting, and however violent, mistaken, or even indiscreet his zeal might sometimes have been, still it was a sort [of] enthusiasm, or quixottism if you please, which must find a corresponding sympathy in every feeling soul. I think he was a very great man, and a very good man, and if we had a few like him in this world, we should not be in such hourly sorrow for the perpetual languor and luke-warmness of our holy things. He does, to be sure, give some horrible descriptions of the effects of his preaching and doctrines and some that are disgusting and almost ridiculous; but on the other hand there are a few which are as sublime and touching as I ever read, and with all his ambition and love of power he had the interests of religion as truly at heart as ever man had; and a life of more entire, and absolute self-denial I defy almost anybody to show.

I think we have one here<sup>24</sup> who in many respects would make a very clever Wesley. He would like nothing better than to be the founder of a sect, nor do I believe he would be very particular what principles that sect should support, provided he prescribed to them. In everything that regards effect he might be another Wesley, but in the spirit which actuated *him*, Oh, how mournfully would he fail. I suppose you will think by this time I am a confirmed Methodist, but you are wrong, while I admire the *Hero*, I am extremely sensible to the extravagancies and I was going to say, the abominations of the system. Wesley somewhat redeems it, and the heavenly minded Fletcher<sup>25</sup> sanctifies it. Yet it is very bad business after all, I do believe.

I have been reading Mr. Ticknor's Lectures on "French Literature"—and a richer treat I should not desire. It is the fullest

<sup>23</sup> Southey, Robert, *Life of John Wesley*, 1821.

<sup>24</sup> Edward Everett.

<sup>25</sup> John William Fletcher, "the St. Francis of early Methodism." *Cambridge History of English Literature*, Vol. X, p. 415.

and finest account of the French literary history that probably has ever been written. A good deal of it, of course, can be interesting only to scholars, that is, the origin of the language and the earliest part of the history; but when he brings his account down to the times and names with which we are all conversant, nothing can be more beautiful or interesting. I thought of you a thousand times, I believe, while I was reading these Lectures, and one or two I perfectly longed to copy for you. That upon Fenélon is one of the most exquisite Morceaux I ever enjoyed, and that upon Madame de Staël is written with all the eloquence and enthusiasm which could be produced by his unbounded admiration and his personal knowledge; and yet notwithstanding these "thoughts that breathe" no one would suppose from what he says that he has had the intimate intercourse with all Madame de Staël's family and friends which we all know that he had. George Ticknor has the modesty of true wisdom, and the simplicity and openness of a child.

*"Mere Hercules"*

NOVEMBER 7, 1821.

I am very glad your conscience smote you when you remembered for how long a time my two letters had remained unanswered, but I have the advantage of you for my conscience would trouble me much more if I wrote you frequently. I think it is a very good thing for everybody to have as much to do as he can possibly accomplish, and perhaps a little more, but you do so much more than anybody else in this world *can* or than you ought, that it seems something a little short of wickedness to add even the mite of one of my letters to the burden, because if I write, I do not feel quite satisfied unless you answer; *and so* that being the case "I now," in true Yankee phrase "sit down to write to you to let you know that I am well and hope you are the same."

My eyes are dazzled with excess of light, I suppose, in this "my *darling* Cambridge," (I wonder where you learned such an expression—I never taught it to you, I know) and most

things seem dark and cloudy to me, but I hailed your last most welcome letter as a beam of light, not making the darkness visible but chasing it far away. I am ten times more sorry for your disappointment with regard to Ledyard's manuscript than you can be; for I had set my heart exceedingly upon seeing a narrative of that remarkable man written by you, my dear Pastor, and I am not going to give up the hope yet. Some happy chance may still put you into possession of these precious documents, and be it sooner or later, I am sure you will never lose the inclination to make the right use of them. I trust that you are convinced of what my eloquence has always failed to substantiate in your obdurate mind that you had better never have become such a flaming champion for Unitarianism. You see it has cost you the Ledyard papers, at least you think so. However, this is but cold comfort to you, my devoted friend, devoted to the cause of reason and the dissemination of religious truth. Go on and prosper, for the blessing of God will rest on one who so strenuously applies all his extraordinary powers to the diffusion of light and liberty.

Your Miscellany is constantly gaining reputation here—yes—even here, where so many shocking things have been said and thought of it.<sup>20</sup> I heard Mr. Cabot last week speak in the highest terms of it and you, which to spare your blushes I forbear to repeat. We all look on you as a mere Hercules, and our little stars hide their diminished heads, I assure you, when they see how much more brilliant and steady is your light.

You say we must get you among us. I wish to Heaven you could be. There is a luke-warmness about our best, I mean our best *residents*, which bodes no good to any cause, but least of all to those of religion and morality. George Ticknor, to be sure, has been the instrument of a good deal of commotion concerning

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<sup>20</sup> Sparks was censured in Boston "for asserting in his own local organ, without consultation with superiors, theological opinions calculated to disturb the ecclesiastical peace." Adams, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 183.

the want of Discipline in the College,<sup>27</sup> and a great quantity of paper has been blotted and abundance of words have been wasted (I was going to say) on the occasion. Whether any thing will come of it all remains to be proved. Some people are very sanguine that there will be a thorough reformation but I know very well the moral and perhaps the physical constitution of some of the Governors must undergo a most surprising change first. For my own part I am sick of the name of College which I sometimes hear exalted to little less than a third Heaven, but much more frequently hear degraded into something scarcely short of Pandemonium; and to tell you a homely truth I find most of the uses of this world stale and unprofitable. There is nothing like freshness, and little like feeling, excepting in little children; and if it was not for their dear sakes, I think I would willingly shut myself in a nunnery and close my eyes on the world and all its busy follies. But children are my comforts and delights and the longer I live among the interesting race the more they become endeared to me and the more I am convinced that they are the only animals worth living for. Unluckily they have too strong a propensity to become men and women, and then you know I must cease to care for them if I care for myself.

You have undoubtedly before this heard from himself that Mr. Folsom<sup>28</sup> has been elected Tutor. We think this is a great acquisition to our society, and a very great gain to the College. Mr. F. is agreeable, and though rather too reserved he is willing

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<sup>27</sup> George Ticknor, Smith Professor of Modern Languages and Literature, was leading a movement to reform the government, academic standards, and discipline of the College. He wrote, "But one thing is certain, a change must take place. The discipline of College must be made more exact, and the instruction more thorough. All now is too much in the nature of a show, and abounds too much in false pretences. . . . It is seen that we are neither an University which we call ourselves—nor a respectable high school—which we ought to be,—and that with "Christo et Ecclesiae" for our motto, the morals of great numbers of the young men who come to us are corrupted." Quoted, Holland, *Life, Letters and Journal of George Ticknor*, p. 358.

<sup>28</sup> Charles Folsom, Librarian of the University, appointed Instructor in Italian in 1825.

to talk to those who are desirous to hear him, and are willing to take a little pains for it, and I am one of those.

*Tyrant "Publick Opinion"*

DECEMBER 1, 1821.

Why should you *not* write me a "periodical journal"? Believe me there are few people to whom you could do so much good, certainly no one to whom you could give so much pleasure. Why then should you deprecate the thought of writing to me more frequently than once in six months? I begin to be tired of this wall of separation (though to be sure it is not the most delicate thing in the world for me to be the first to say much about it). I have not seen you, it is now two years and a half and the greater number of your letters have been *printed* ones to me—now, for the most part I like these extremely—I think some of them absolutely unanswerable and all of them the product of a powerful and ingenious mind. Since the first letter to Dr. M. of which I spoke to you in April, I find nothing to object to either in the Miscellany or the letters, on the contrary find everything to admire and to *wonder at*. Yes, *wonder at*; for you know I have told you a hundred times that I thought you a mere standing miracle, and the more I see and know of you the more I am confirmed in my impressions. In the first place you are capable of greater exertion than any man living, you *do* more than anybody else, and you do better too, because you never leave anything until it is *perfectly* done.

You cannot wish to be *at home* half so much as we wish to have you. I should think that was scarcely possible. But as for peace and ease, alas, my dear friend, where upon the troubled earth do you expect to find it? It is true you could not be so "goaded on every side" as you are now, but you know as well as I do, and perhaps better than I do, the trials and vexations which attend the most eligible situations in this part of the world. There is a spirit of *entire* independence which you can sustain and enjoy, which is unavoidably abridged here. *You* are

amenable to no tribunal, here publick opinion governs with a sway which is all but absolute, and there is little consistency in publick opinion. I do not mean to abuse the system of things. But I do think that a young man can scarcely pass through a more tremendous trial than to be a minister in Boston, or engage in a more thankless task than to be an officer of the College. . .

I rejoice to know that you have obtained the Ledyard Ms. I think I ventured to prophesy that they would be yours at some-time, though perhaps I did not expect it would be quite as soon. . .

Farewell—your little blue-eyed friend<sup>29</sup> is fast recovering her beauty, and her brilliant little sister, Mary Lee,<sup>30</sup> will stand a good chance of rivalling her. I say nothing of my darling Thacher's<sup>30</sup> beauty, but I have a feeling sense of his weight, seeing he has been in my arms three quarters of the day because he has been sick. Farewell again. There is no house where you would be received with such a heart warm welcome as ours and no one who is more truly and faithfully your friend than—  
A. G. S.

### *The "Man of the World"*

FEB. 3RD, 1822.

I am sorry my dear "Chaplain"<sup>31</sup> that I said anything in my letter which you feel as if you did not deserve, as too "complimenting." "I scorn your words"—I should just as soon think of complimenting the *other* Apostle of the Gentiles—so you may set your modesty entirely at rest, and please to put my offending letter into the fire, and forget that it has ever been written. And so you are becoming a man of the world.<sup>32</sup> Heaven forbid that you should lose your identity. I entreat

<sup>29</sup> One of the Higginson children of whom Sparks was especially fond.

<sup>30</sup> Mary Lee and Thacher Higginson, Miss Storrow's niece and nephew.

<sup>31</sup> Sparks was appointed Chaplain of the House of Representatives, December 10, 1821.

<sup>32</sup> Sparks wrote Miss Storrow, January 20, 1822, "I am drawn into the vortex here, and you may expect to see me a man of the world,—not the mute being I was seven years ago." Quoted by Adams, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 190.

you not to be *quite* polished before I see you; if I were to find you all soft and smooth and sweet, I should never believe it was you, and of course you know half my pleasure in my Southern tour would be lost to me. So I beg you would remember me in the midst of your refinements and reserve a little of the old leaven for my sake. . . .

I suppose Mr. Higginson made honourable mention of his new son<sup>23</sup> in his letter to you. Though sons and daughters are not very rare blessings in our house, yet I do assure you we look on this little new one with very gentle glances. . . .

*Grief at Parting*

FARLEY, MAY 6TH, 1822.

I fear very much my dear friend, that you, who have so rarely known what human weakness meant, have found it somewhat difficult to excuse the display of it which was sufficiently visible in me the day we were last together:<sup>24</sup> nor do I mean to apologize for it. I have been led to believe that absolute selfishness was not the leading trait in my character, but I fancy I should come very near to the truth if I were to confess that it was the predominant feeling at that time. I hated to part from an old friend—even to go towards those who were bound to me by strong ties—but whose kindness and affection I had yet to purchase by an exertion which I dreaded to make. I wished exceedingly to be a longer time with you, for I was thinking too much of myself to say half so much as I desired to of you, or your affairs. In short, I felt homesick and *friendsick* if you know such a disease; and I was afraid to express what I felt, lest in your wonder at my weakness and irresolution you should forget that I aspired to be called your friend. . . .

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

<sup>24</sup> Miss Storrow saw Sparks in Baltimore on her way to visit her brother, Samuel Storrow, in Farley, Virginia.

*Dull Virginia*

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26TH, 1822.

I once heard you say, my dear friend, and if I remember right my scanty portion of eloquence was called into action to combat the idea, that we owed no gratitude for the mere gift of existence. As is very common in such cases even with abler orators than I am, I think I left the matter in your mind very much where I found it and I have only to hope that experience and reflexion has taught you better things. However should you still continue skeptical as it regards yourself, I am sure you will not withhold your sympathy with your friends who may differ from you. Will you not be ready to congratulate my brother and sister on the birth, or the gift of existence to their first born son? . . .

It will be somewhat difficult for me, unless like many travellers, I can *make* a good story out of slender materials, to give any account of my impressions concerning Virginia since I have never been beyond the gate of Farley House. . . We all regret very much that you will not be able to come to Culpepper this season. Though I have always hoped such a pleasure I never calculated much upon it; for I knew you would be unwilling to leave home excepting under the most favourable circumstances, or in a case of necessity. Why you had no aid from New England in the Dedication of the Washington Church is more than I can tell.<sup>35</sup> You could not however reasonably expect anybody from Cambridge, for the term had commenced. Ingersol's ordination took place during the vacation. . .

My brother leaves us tomorrow for Richmond, whither business obliges him to go. . . He has been considerably indisposed, and we hope the journey will be of benefit to him. In short, my dear friend, if I must confess the truth, Virginia is a "mighty" poor place to be well in, but it is the poorest of all places to be sick in. . .

<sup>35</sup> Sparks complained frequently of lack of support from Unitarians in New England.



*"Mr. Norton's Unhappy Forgetfulness of Himself," and Mr. Bancroft's Great "Alteration in Manners."*

CAMBRIDGE, NOVEMBER 6TH, 1822.

. . . Since you turned from us the light of your countenance, the concerns of our own little world have gone on pretty much in their usual course. Mr. H. has not become more reconciled to the Bible, nor ceased to rail at the want of zeal among our theologians. Our atmosphere to say truth is rather a cold one, and nobody feels it so keenly as he does, if only from its very contrast with his own warmth. There is no doubt that he frequently defeats his own object by the injudicious expression of his feelings, but he is considered a privileged man, and such, unhappily, may say what they please; for everybody *believes* his intention is good.

. . . Greenwood<sup>36</sup> will tell you of Mr. Norton's<sup>37</sup> unhappy forgetfulness of himself and his own dignity, at the Brighton Cattle Show, the rumor of which may have reached Baltimore; for it has flown like light all over the country. He ought to tell you that there is but one opinion on the subject expressed by friend and foe, and that is, utter reprobation of such foolish and indecent conduct. Even the account Mr. Norton gives makes the matter no better. It only proves his utter ignorance of all the usages of society and his overweening opinion of his own power. There is no point from which the whole proceeding can be viewed which can afford the least palliation for any part of it. It has given the enemy very great occasion, and very just, for triumph, and it is a thing which cannot soon be forgotten. He is truly a city set on a hill, and it is a great pity that he should ever be unmindful of his own true dignity. . . .

<sup>36</sup> F. W. P. Greenwood, of Boston, who later supplied as minister and editor at Baltimore after Spark's resignation.

<sup>37</sup> Andrews Norton, Dexter Professor of Sacred Literature, was usually a strait-laced person, quick to condemn others for any breach of manners. (Cf. below his harshness to Bancroft.)

I believe you were one of the few who liked Bancroft<sup>38</sup> at his first appearance among us, and was willing to look beyond the strangeness and wildness of his manner to the fine sense and real good which he possessed. People were not willing to wait until the delirious joy which he felt at first returning had subsided into sober reason, and took it for granted that he must always act like a fool. A little experience of him however has taught these wise ones that they were false prophets, for I do not believe you ever saw greater alteration in the manners of any man. He is a very popular tutor and would be an eminently useful one if he could meet with the least coöperation from the government; but in all his plans he is obliged to stand by himself, and the boys are permitted to learn that they are omnipotent and may by a petition overturn the "best laid scheme." He certainly has been exceedingly exercised since he came home. He has preached two or three times, and you know pretty well what awaits a young man at his first beginning from his best friends. But when there is any irregularity in the proceeding, and any great peculiarity in his manner, you may judge what he is obliged to suffer from the various animadversions of those who think the best way to cure a preacher of his faults is to tell him all of them at once. I am almost principled against ever telling anybody of his imperfections. I am sure that the knowledge when not communicated in the most delicate of all ways must give very great pain and it not infrequently occasions a degree of irritation which to say the least it is best to avoid. But Mr. Norton does not agree with me. He wrote a letter<sup>39</sup> to Bancroft while he was at Worcester telling him of all his faults

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<sup>38</sup> George Bancroft returned from study abroad with a combination of German and Byronic manners shocking to conservative Cambridge, and particularly to Professor Andrews Norton, formerly one of Bancroft's best friends.

<sup>39</sup> Bancroft writes of his feelings on receipt of this cruel letter, "I was *not* offended. I was wounded. My spirit almost bent beneath it. Why? First, because Mr. Norton, I had believed, loved me, and I certainly loved him most sincerely, and now in this letter he tells me he deems it '*desirable*' that I should give over visiting at his house." (Bancroft to S. A. Eliot, April 2, 1823). Quoted by Bassett, *The Middle Group of American Historians*, p. 140.

and all the little peculiarities of his manner. Mr. N. told us it was as friendly a letter as he could write, and that Mr. B. had taken it amiss, and that all communion between them had ceased. Mr. H. read the letter however and said that he did not know how after receiving it they could well meet. Be that as it may, they never have met, but either that or his own good sense has worked a great change in the young man, for now, to use Ticknor's phrase, 'he is as quiet as a lamb.' He preached last Sunday at Frothingham and was very well liked by many people, and absolutely condemned by no one. And this is the way Cambridge folks go on. I think a great deal is effected, but on the other hand a great deal of strength is "wasted in strenuous idleness." Ah my dear friend, when you come among us, what a change will be seen in the face of things; and that you *will* [not] come, either sooner or later, I *cannot* and *will not* believe.

#### *Discreet Friendliness*

CAMBRIDGE, APRIL 20, 1823.

. . . I only now write you a few lines to thank you, though late, for a *long* letter which you were so kind as to write me sometime since, and to thank you too for a *short* one confirming a rumour which for two months I should think had been "familiar in our lips as household words." On this subject so interesting to us all and so momentous in itself I have not a word to say. I know you have not taken so important a step<sup>60</sup> involving such deep consequences without the most solemn deliberation, and as your friend, most firm, and faithful, I am perfectly willing that you should abide by the decision of your own judgment, and you must acknowledge this to be disinterested when you remember how natural it is to wish to interfere with the affairs of our neighbors. You are prepared for a diversity of opinions in your case I doubt not, for on what subject can people all think alike, but you have a place in the hearts of your friends here, and an estimation in the publick opinion from

<sup>60</sup> Sparks resigned his pastorate in the spring of 1823, because of ill health and the difficulties of his position.

which it would not be a very easy matter to dislodge you, I rejoice to hear that we are to see you in the season of flowers. We shall all greet you most affectionately.

A. G. S.

*The "Regenerator of Affairs"*

CAMBRIDGE, JUNE 15, 1823

. . . A letter from Mr. Appleton told us yesterday that you were to leave Baltimore this week for Bedford Springs. As he does not say that you are *ill* absolutely, I hope you are doing this as a precautionary measure. Keep well, I beseech you, or if you are sick do everything to make yourself well, for we all want you beyond anything that you can imagine. I cannot but look forward to you as the regenerator of affairs in our little world, where I feel inclined to cry out everyday, "Help Lord for the righteous fail!" I hope you will not think me lost to all grace because I quote Scripture, but you may depend upon it we are all in a dismal state and unless you come and help us I do not see but we must go to destruction. I do not know that you will be *permitted* to assist us by the light of your wisdom, but it seems to me when the reins of government and good order are altogether loosened and almost lost, it becomes a matter of common interest, in which every energetick person should unite, to endeavour to bring about a better order of things. I know that Mr. Folsom writes you very often and I suppose you are informed of everything that is going on beneath our sacred shades. You will see then how much good you might do here, if it was only by lifting up your powerful voice against the abuses which have crept into our best things. I suppose you will tell me this is moonshine. Maybe it is. I should almost be willing to have you abuse me if you were only here.

## CHAPTER II

TO THE EDITOR AND TRAVELLING HISTORIAN, 1825-1840

*Caustic Criticism*

OCTOBER 11, 1825.

I return your manuscript safely, my dear friend. You imposed on me a task which I am very sorry to assure you it is impossible for me to perform. With all my anxious wish to oblige you I have not been able to read more than half of it. It has not even the merit of being amusing from its nonsense. It is the dullest and most execrable stuff that I ever attempted to read and I would advise the author to hill his tobacco and hoe his corn as much more eligible employment for him.

*College Acrobats*

APRIL 29, 1826.

I have no great college news to tell you. I heard yesterday that an Italian instructor had been installed this week. Gymnastics are very much the rage here at present. Indeed we think ourselves fortunate when we look on to the Delta and see a student walking or standing on his feet, the head being so much more frequently substituted. The symmetry of the solid earth is a good deal marred by the machinery necessary to the "carrying out the plan," and yesterday a gallows was erected for our young aspirants to climb upon, which I have no doubt is a good deal higher than Haman's. It all serves a good purpose, for a considerable quantity of superfluous animation is spent here, which for want of such a vent has heretofore expended itself in breaking windows, dismantling recitation rooms, and making bonfires.

*Rival Claims*

FEBRUARY 5, 1827.

Your most welcome and long expected letter, my dear friend, I received a few days since. I need not say how much it rejoiced me to hear of your success and happiness, and to find by the tone

of your letter that the clouds which had gathered over the brightness of your mind and spirits, and which seemed so almost impervious were all removed. Is it success that has made you so contented, or has the blessed air of the South had such a delightful influence? I heard of a strange *sentence* in one of your letters lately, the one, I mean, to William Eliot. I do not know whether it was reported to me correctly, but it led me to suppose that you found the whole atmosphere south of New York filled with balm. I am glad if it was so. I am sure ours was anything else. Everything with us has been frozen with the cold and buried in the snow but our hearts, and I have sometimes thought mine beat more feebly than usual. . . .

You are a very fortunate or a very eloquent man, perhaps both, so soon to arrange your affairs with Judge Washington.<sup>1</sup> He who goes so straight to his object as you do it seems to me always succeeds even if all the *graces* of persuasion have not been accorded to him. I do not mean to disparage yours, my dear friend, but I never thought you were formed for a courtier, and it is no matter, since without it, you have gained access to the treasury of Mount Vernon. But in this full tide of successful experiment what becomes of the North American? If your attention is divided by another object, not to say absorbed by it, how can you expect that it will continue to retain its justly earned reputation. The next number is provided for, but you will be in Virginia until May or June, entirely occupied. Can you always have it prepared, and prepared as you like to have it, by proxy? You will very likely tell me that I have no write [sic] to ask you such questions, but you are mistaken. I *have* a right to ask you any question which involves your reputation, or welfare, and therefore you must have patience with me, as you have always been obliged to, and I will endeavour not to wear it quite out.

Our world has been in a state of great excitement about Mr.

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<sup>1</sup>After three years' effort, Sparks obtained from Judge Washington permission to use George Washington's manuscripts at Mt. Vernon.

Channing's New York Sermon,<sup>2</sup> the greatest effort which perhaps he has ever made, but there are various opinions concerning it even among his friends. This was to be expected in so bold an exposition of the effect of a popular doctrine. I wish you to tell me precisely what you think of this sermon, and indeed I desire much to know what you think of Mr. C. and how far you coincide with him in the *theories* which he preaches so openly. He is said to be in advance of his age, and I think this is very likely, for he broaches new if not strange views of a state of religion, liberty and perfection which *may* come, but certainly which does not now exist, but will it ever? That is the question, is he only an enthusiast, or is he a prophet? I remember perfectly what you said of Mr. Channing, when five years ago we were walking together in the Pennsylvania Avenue, where perhaps you are walking at this moment, but then you were particularly disturbed by something which he had omitted to do, and which you thought he ought to have done. I think you must have seen occasion to change your opinion by this time, and if so I think you are too wise a man not to say so. Here is another question. . . .

I thank you heartily for your kind intention with regard to my "beloved Ledyard." Do not flatter yourself that you will have silenced me when Ledyard appears. Something else I dare say I shall have to gratify my malice upon. So good bye. Think of me as kindly and as often as you can, and believe me always most truly your friend.

*Boston Defended*

CAMBRIDGE, April 6, 1827.

I wrote you half a letter last week *my dear Mr. Sparks* (as the title of friend has become hack-nied, I will no longer use it to you, of course). Something occurred to interrupt me in the progress of my work, and accident has prevented me from at-

<sup>2</sup> William Ellery Channing preached at the dedication of the Second Congregational Unitarian Church, of New York, December 7, 1826, a sermon entitled *Unitarian Christianity Most Favorable to Piety*, second in fame only to his Baltimore Sermon at Sparks's ordination.

tempting to complete it until now. I am afraid I shall not be very agreeable, for I am going to remonstrate, not ask questions, mind you. These, I can answer more to my satisfaction than you can, or rather than you do.

You abuse Boston in a most untoward manner, and for the life of me I cannot see why. It is true that I am a recluse for the most part, and not sailing along the current. I may be in ignorance of what is passing. It is perhaps then not strange that I cannot realize the bigotry, prejudice and narrow-mindedness of those whom taken in a mass, I have always been in the habit of considering among the best and most enlightened. Where have you ever lived, where have you found truer friends, or warmer hearts, where have your views met with a readier coöperation, and where have your projects received a more cordial support? Where have you been more uniformly treated with the consideration which is your due, where has your society been more sedulously coveted, and where might you have been happier, if indeed it is in the power of circumstances to make you so? I do not pretend to deny that prejudice and narrow-mindedness exist, but they are the exceptions not the rule. Think better and more kindly of us then, and if you do mean to leave us, at least give us your parting blessing.

#### *Danger to the North American*

One reason why I have not written you sooner is because I was desirous to hear the publick sentiment with regard to the *New Quarterly*.<sup>3</sup> I have not yet been able to read it myself, but I hear the most agreeable report of it from all sources. It is exceedingly popular and although I have not learned what patronage it has received here, yet I doubt not it is very considerable. "Where, where is Roderick now?"

The *North American* has come out, and it is found to be much less entertaining than Walsh's book. Now I for one cannot but consider it a very unlucky circumstance that this number

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<sup>3</sup> *American Quarterly Review*, edited by Robert Walsh.



should not be a brilliant one. I am not afraid that the subscription should decrease, the world is so much governed by caprice, that I should not be surprised if this should occasionally be the case even when no other novelty is present; but you are away—it is in vain to deny that this makes a very strong reason why the work should lose something, and your time and thoughts and the energies of your soul are devoted to another object, a great and noble and glorious one indeed, *that* I believe no one will venture to deny; but still that object is *not* the N. A. and all the wise, your friends, and the friends of the work unite in maintaining that to make it what it should be, and to give it the influence which it ought to have, the work should receive the undivided attention of the Editor. My dear friend, give the N. A. up if you please, and devote yourself to whatever object you think of more importance, or of greater national interest; but I beseech you do not suffer it to lose its well deserved fame in your hands. I feel a great deal on the subject for you, or I should not venture to express what I now do at the risk of offending you, but I would rather peril the regard which it has been my pride and pleasure to believe you have entertained for me, than that you should not be true to yourself and to your reputation as an Author or Editor.

I have read Mr. Greenwood's<sup>4</sup> beautiful Review with very great and peculiar pleasure. I thank you for giving me the key to it. As to your heresy with regard to the Rev. Dr., I think I must leave you to your unbelief, for I should gain little by endeavouring to convert you.

I have not much to say with regard to myself. I go along much in the usual manner, not very strong either in soul or body, not very good and not very bad. I suppose some "honest chronicler" tells you all the news, and it will be an old story when you receive my letter, that Tom Lee is engaged to Eliza Buckminister! "Oh tell it not in Gath, nor let the sound thereof reach

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<sup>4</sup>Greenwood reviewed two collections of poems, "The Atlantic Souvenir" and "The Memorial" for the *North American Review*, Vol. 24, p. 228, 1827.

Askalon!" If you have not heard it, you will be less surprised at the news than many of Eliza's nearest friends, for it was managed so very adroitly that no mortal, not even Miss Lowell who lived in the house, had the least suspicion that the business was in agitation. The world is much pleased with the match, and if he likes, and she likes, who shall say them nay?

Farewell! I am always most truly your affectionate friend.

*Charm of Flattery*

MAY 20, 1827.

It is in vain to deny the fact, flattery is a very pleasant thing; by its sweet influence we are enabled to swallow many a bitter draught from the cup of life, and the worst wish I have for the man or woman who enveighs against it is that they may never have a friend who can administer it, in the proper manner. This will be punishment enough. Such was the spontaneous feeling of my heart, my dear friend when I read your letter; the idea that my "eloquence had quite disarmed you, and that from henceforth you would love Boston in spite of yourself," was so delightful from you, who "never insinuated to man or woman that they were finer people than they really were," that though in conscience I did not believe a word of it, yet I was good natured one whole day in consequence, and this is no small thing for a poor soul who, like me, am confined to the region of the very most withering wind that the east ever poured forth. And to receive praise, when I dreaded wrath, wrath, not so much directed against my own devoted head, to be sure, but poured unspairingly on that ungrateful community who were always taken with a new thing and had neither sense nor taste enough to understand and enjoy fine ideas clothed with proper words. I am most agreeably disappointed, and I thank you with all my heart, and I am not unmindful of my obligation to the three kind friends who were before me to propitiate you. After all, however, I still hold to my opinion that the Quarterly is a popular book, and I have heard it from so many sources that it is idle to say any contrary thing. That however, is of no consequence, on the contrary it

is very well that it should be so. I have no sort of objection that two stars of brilliancy should appear in the literary hemisphere, only let the North American be Lord of the Ascendant. You know very well that I never for an instant doubted your power to accomplish anything you chose, all I desire is that it may be made apparent to other people; and now I have done with this part of my discourse, and since you are not offended with my earnestness, I will not regret what I have written.

You are in Paradise<sup>5</sup> you say. I am glad of it I am sure, and I am almost ready to believe it, since any place may be Paradise on earth which is sheltered from East wind and free from the eternal causes of dissention and excitement which make such shipwreck of the peace of quiet-loving people. Men, women, and children are all plagues, and yet I do not see how one can live very long alone. One is sick, another is wicked, some talk too much and others talk too little—people will be happy or miserable in their own way, and do what you can to convince them that yours is unquestionably the best, you prevail nothing with all your eloquence. Now are not these sufficient causes of dissatisfaction? From these you are happily preserved. Your sable friends may quarrel or love, may fight or dance, and what does it signify to you? So that your food is arranged with due regard to time and order, and your horse caparisoned at the appointed hour. You are rather better off than if you had Eve with you.

Our President is very sick. For several weeks he has suffered the most agonizing pain in his head, which was supposed to be rheumatick. It has been necessary to reduce him in every possible way, by bleeding, medicine and starvation; and today I have heard that his disease is probably a tendency of blood to the head. He is however somewhat better, although the pain is not removed. It is an awful consideration for those to whom his life is valuable, for it involves [the] absolute necessity of a degree of caution and abstinence which we all know will be the very most difficult lesson which he can ever learn. The scandal

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<sup>5</sup> Mt. Vernon, where Sparks was at work on the Washington Papers.

caus[eries] insinuate that the lady of his heart is in despair, but I cannot tell how this may be. I should think the very idea that such a lady laid claim to him was quite enough to make the President sick.

The Steward is as usual absorbed in the promulgation of the good word. What a pity you have looked back from the plough. What a field is opened to you! Farewell, my dear friend! I long to see you, and I am always truly yours.

*Bon Voyage*

DECEMBER 11TH, 1827.

I was too much impressed with the idea that it was the last time I was to see you for an indefinite time,<sup>6</sup> to be able to say more words to you than were absolutely necessary, my dear friend, when you were in Cambridge. I am thankful you are going because you desire it, and because your duty as well as your pleasure and improvement will be promoted by this arrangement. Yet I am not so disinterested as not to regret your absence more than I can express. It is in vain to ask why it should make any difference whether you are in Washington or Mount Vernon during the next ten or twelve months, or whether the wide ocean rolls between us. Depend upon it the feeling is a very different one. Of this however it is not worth while to say anything. Neither is it necessary for me to tell you how much I shall miss you, nor how often "my thoughts will follow you to distant lands o'er foaming seas." Mementoes are I know rather useless things to those who can remember their friends without, but I shall feel very much pleased if you will put my "persevere" pencil case into your pocket and use it while you are absent. I shall then have the gratification of thinking that I can be associated with something that is useful to you.

And now farewell! my dear and excellent friend! The God whom we both love and trust, will, I earnestly believe, preserve you safe through all perils and dangers, and return you unharmed

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<sup>6</sup> On March 24, 1828, Sparks sailed for Liverpool for a year's study abroad.

to be a blessing and honour to your friends and your country. We cannot indeed tell what a day may bring to pass, and if before another year closes, I should be laid in my narrow house, should my senses be spared it must always be a delightful recollection to me that I have enjoyed your friendship for so long a time, and that it is but interrupted here to be renewed in a purer and happier state of existence. You will, I hope, write me from the South. Think of us all as well and *happy* performing our daily duty with alacrity and pleasure, willing to gather the flowers which adorn our path, and not utterly dismay[ed] if we find some lurking thorns. Is not this philosophy, better than that, is it not religion?

Farewell again. God bless you, and keep you with his own right hand! I am ever most faithfully and affectionately

Yours,  
A. G. S.

*Captive of a "Reigning Belle"*

CAMBRIDGE, MAY 1ST, 1828.

I almost envy you the surprise and pleasure you will feel to see your Yankee friends, my dear North American, and altho' you will be sorry for the occasion, I think sorrow will scarcely be the predominant feeling. When you are in Europe, you may perhaps be willing to imagine that *Boston* is your home—even Boston, that place of narrow coldness and prejudice and your heart may warm towards the headquarters of good principles when you have near you in your exile such interesting representatives of those you have left behind. They go in full hope of receiving both health and pleasure, and I think Mr. Norton is just in a state to obtain both by a sea voyage and change of air and scene. I cannot tell you how great the privation is to me just now. Mr. H. and my sister have been absent a month, and no day of that time has elapsed that I have not spent a considerable part of it with Mrs. Norton. This has made me feel her value more sensibly, and though six months when it has past seems almost nothing still the moments lag deplorably sometimes in

their passage. I do not however mean to complain. It matters little whether time's wings are tipped with feathers of the bird of Paradise. So that his progress is marked by undeviating duty we shall arrive at the desired haven at last. I have been and still am exceedingly desirous that our friends should make this voyage, and I doubt not the happiest results for both. You have been at sea thirty-eight days or rather it is so long since you have left New York. I trust before this you have reached your resting place. You see I count the days.

Mr. H. and my sister are enjoying themselves very much in their Southern tour, my last letter was from Baltimore. They seem very fully to appreciate the value of the "happiest home you ever had."<sup>7</sup> They remained there nearly a week. The Ordination<sup>8</sup> was a very splendid affair, and altho Mr. Walker did not exceed himself, still he must always be more striking and powerful than almost anybody else. Louisa is in great admiration of Nancy Williams. I scarcely believed that she would admire her so much. Her fine powers of mind, her sweetness, grace, and dignity of manner, and the simplicity of her character and feelings are constant themes of her praise.

Your spirit seems instinct at Baltimore, and I am sure no other mortal ever so gifted can make your place good. Certainly not the Pastor they have been obliged to choose; but my dear friend there are some reports of you which do not rest in Baltimore, for they are currently talked about in New York and are believed by many persons in our colder climate. They say you have so far forgotten the severe simplicity of your character as to make one in the motley group to bow before the Altar of Fashion; that you have laid your hardly earned laurels on the shrine of Folly and Vanity, that, not contented with these sacrifices, you have even rooted up the trees of the Sacred Groves to ornament the Idol. The Star of Salem I think is Lord of the Ascendant everywhere, but I must say it gave me a sore feeling

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<sup>7</sup> The home of Mr. Amos A. Williams, with whom Sparks lived while in Baltimore.

<sup>8</sup> The Ordination of George Washington Burnap, Sparks's successor.

when I heard that you must be one of the worshippers of Miss S.,<sup>9</sup> of a woman to whom common report gives so very little that is intrinsically interesting and valuable, though so much that is glaring and attractive. I hate to think that you are assailable through your vanity. Now I am perfectly aware that this is a harsh phrase and I doubt not will make you angry with me, but if you will examine your own heart, you will perceive the truth of what I assert. I doubt not the lady has a great deal of talent, and *power* she must have. This I hear from every source. But her thirst for display and admiration is so utterly insatiable that it leads her I verily believe to sacrifice for the sake of it much that is lovely and beautiful in a woman's character—properties which you my susceptible friend, love and admire as much as anybody when you have the clear possession of your faculties. A year of absence and change will do much to cure you of your fever of the brain. I do not speak of all this as any violation of propriety or good feeling, but I always dislike to see you whom I set so high, descend from your elevation, and I trust you will forgive me for supposing you superior to *common* weakness, or to the enticements of *common* vanity. You would think it strange that I could write in such a strain as this to you, if you know how much I felt at the receipt of your last kind and most affecting letter; believe me I realize in my inmost heart all that it contained, and this is the principal reason why I say what may chance to offend you. Thinking so highly as I do of your powers and character, and loving you so affectionately, I cannot bear to have you do anything which leads the enemy to triumph. I cannot bear to have you let a reigning Belle lead you captive.

Of the small doings, and very great results of your friends the *Corporators*, I leave Mr. Norton to give you the details. I think you will believe we are in a strange state. For my part it seems to me when I look over to the College that I am contemplating the return of chaos. The blackness of darkness rests

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<sup>9</sup> Miss Mary Crowninshield Silsbee, daughter of the Honorable Nathaniel Silsbee, Massachusetts Senator, became Sparks's second wife in 1839.

on all the affairs of Alma Mater, and where the light is to come from I cannot divine. It is dismal to see the President's house shut up, but it is more dismal to remember what the reason is. We all think however that these proceedings have had the effect of an electric shock on Dr. Kirkland's mind, for he seems to have wakened from his lethargy to a greater degree of brightness and vigour than I ever expected to see in him. We are all well, and as happy as circumstances will allow us to be. . . .

As for myself, my dear friend, I have very little to say. I am the same dull woman that you have always known—very keen to see faults, and not over prone to avoid them—yet trusting to the kindness of my friends for patience in the first and benevolent blindness in the last. But under all circumstances and at all times I am most faithfully and affectionately yours.

*Elections—Academic and Otherwise*

AUGUST 30, 1828.

You will long before this, my dear North American, have received my letter by Mrs. Norton, and if I have not offended you beyond all terms of reconciliation, you will not I know be sorry to hear from me again. When I accuse a man of vanity, if he *knows himself* he will accede in a degree to the charge, and the burden of proof remains with me after all, who in the folly of my heart expected to see a son of Adam without. So thus we stand, when I again hear that you have been carried captive by the flattery so skillfully administered of another *irresistible* I shall merely say with the good book "the creature is made subject to vanity not willingly" *perhaps*. . . .

You wrote me a delightful letter, and I was truly thankful to receive it. It was just what I desired to know, all about yourself and your own doings. If I could have such a one every month I know I should be much happier. But I never expect what is impossible, and therefore I shall be perfectly contented with what I can obtain. You have brought the beautiful country of England before me, and have realized all my dreams of the



land of my Father's.<sup>10</sup> You need not believe that I shall call your love of daisies and primroses, and violets "trifling." A mind cannot be deeply sophisticated which can be taken from itself by the love of flowers, and I believe a heart cannot be far from God when it is willing to open itself to the sweet influences which his small but beautiful works are designed to produce.

We are in the midst of our summer vacation. The "Presidential question"<sup>11</sup> is not talked about, and the Corporation are left at liberty to do their own work in their own way. Either to have no President, giving the new and striking spectacle of a body without a head, or by delay to prepare the publick mind for the admission of Mr. Ticknor (which has been said) or by the election of some new and unlooked for Candidate, to penetrate every incredulous one with wonder and admiration, how this may be I neither know nor care. It will be all the same to me, but in the meantime elections of another kind have been successfully carried on in our town of Cambridge; for instance Mr. Farrar<sup>12</sup> has chosen Miss Patch, the celebrated, as his adjunct Professor for life, without asking consent of the Corporation. Mr. Follen<sup>13</sup> (he sinks the LL.D.) has persuaded Miss Eliza Cabot to assist him in the instruction of the youth of the University and the Theological Institution, without laying his case before the Faculty, and our own Francis,<sup>14</sup> without saying a word to the Medical Society, has chosen his cousin Susan Channing to be the Doctor's mate. . . .

I have taken a small sheet of paper that I might not be tempted to write you too long a letter, but I know I shall not say half the things I desire to. There is no use in my being sentimental and telling you how much I miss you this summer, for you and summer are somehow associated in my mind. You have been gone four months. I trust the time of your absence

<sup>10</sup> Miss Storrow's father, Captain Thomas Storrow, was an English subject.

<sup>11</sup> Finding a successor for President Kirkland.

<sup>12</sup> John Farrar, Hollis Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy.

<sup>13</sup> Charles Follen, Instructor in German.

<sup>14</sup> Francis Higginson.

is *half* gone. This is a lovely evening after a very hot day (July 29th), the sun has set—but his parting beams are still seen in those crimson and golden clouds which we have so often seen from our western piazza, and as the shades grow deeper and deeper until almost nothing is left but a dark line against the sky, I cannot help wishing you were here that I might say instead of write Farewell!

*"The World"*

DECEMBER 1, 1828.

. . . A part of your letter I must confess has troubled me more than was on the whole worth while. I do not understand how I came to mention the words "vanity, young lady" and above all the unpardonable word "world," a second time, when I was sorry enough that I ever said anything on the subject. I suppose that I entirely forgot what I had written and with the "inconsequence" which usually, or rather, sometimes, attends me, said it all over again. I certainly have no particular 'charge' to bring against the young lady whom you confess yourself so much interested in. I never saw her, and probably never shall, unless—. If she is as admirable as you think I could not withhold my homage from her and certainly I never should wish to. When I used that terrible word "*World*" which has given such high offence, I thought you might possibly understand that the *world* contained some of your best and dearest and most honoured friends, whose names I did not on the whole care to put into my letter. But the *world*! Strictly speaking, do you think I care for the world? The world! What has it given me? Alas! what can it give anybody? But this is nothing to the purpose. Let "vanity" and all the disagreeable thoughts the subject has given rise to be at rest between us, my dear friend. I should feel too much grieved to think that anything could disturb our good understanding.

I rejoice that you have with all your difficulties and hard work had so much enjoyment in France. I doubt not that it is the very Paradise for a citizen of the world, and you will prob-

ably always find it so, until you want the comforts and solaces which are never to be found there. . . .

We all go on in the full tide of successful experiment in Cambridge. We are excessively literary, excessively charitable, and excessively useful. Since Mrs. Follen dawned upon us, a most extensive Sunday School has been established which puts poor Dr. Holmes all to naught. The Chapel young Ladies, headed by Mrs. F.—with one or two Village Ladies, and several young theologians headed by Dr. Follen, are the teachers. It produces a "great excitement," or as my wicked sister says, it is a "tremendous engine." It amuses and occupies the teachers and gives them a pleasant topick of conversation, and it may do some good to the children who have no domestick altars to surround. At any rate it is an innocent gratification to us all. Then, an Infant School was established last summer in Boston, and we are all exceedingly engaged in getting up a fair, for the benefit of the Infants, as it originated in Mrs. Higginson, who, when she was at the South last spring, was let into all the mysteries of the business. The Cambridge ladies are busy in the matter, and in the intervals of the meeting of Sunday-teachers select parties of ladies and gentlemen meet and work for the fair. The young Theologues are publishing a small "Offering," (as their book is to be called) for the benefit of the fair. And now I think you will acknowledge that we are not likely to stagnate for want of due "excitement." I assure you it is high fun for me, who sit in my snug corner from morning until night, doing what my hands find to do, but neither reading, nor teaching, nor writing, nor working for the fair.

What do I think of your going to Timbucto?<sup>15</sup> Just as I did ten years ago, my dear friend. When you have the sweet and consoling alternative of "resigning your mortal tenement to that beautiful city of the dead Père la Chaise," I cannot imagine how you can think for a moment of leaving your bones to bleach

<sup>15</sup> Sparks had wanted to explore Africa since the summer of 1812. He had once tried unsuccessfully to have the African Society of London send him on a voyage of discovery.

in the Great Desert, or if perchance a feeble member of your party should have strength left to cover them, to merit that your epitaph should run thus. "I was following a career most happy to myself, most extensively useful to others. I was drawn away by a flattering illusion, and here I lie, a victim to folly and forlorn hope." Now do you not think this would be a capital epitaph? I assure you it is quite impromptu.

*The Quincy Invasion*

JANUARY 23, 1829.

The months and weeks and days go off wonderfully fast, my dear friend, whether one is sick or well, happy or miserable, so fast, that while I was writing the date of my letter I was obliged to pause in order to remember what was the year. . . I heard of you at La Grange,<sup>16</sup> the other day, by your letter to William Eliot, which to be sure I did not see, but I was very glad to know how highly you were enjoying yourself. You really believe La Fayette<sup>17</sup> a great man! A great memory he certainly has, and at any rate it is most useful to you and I am thankful you have the privilege of using it to your advantage. How rich you will be when you come home!

What do you think of our new President?<sup>18</sup> I dare say his election gave you as much surprise as it did us, or him. I do not know whether I can use a stronger term, for he told me the other day that he thought it was the strangest thing in the world that without any new reason, (this year) he should have been *put out* of the Mayoralty and have been *put into* the Presidency was such a surprise to him that it was still the uppermost feeling in his mind, what it could all mean. I believe the Corporation have chosen him because they could not choose Mr. T.; for the publick would not swallow such a portion by any means, and they had reasons of their own for not choosing another man who was

<sup>16</sup> Lafayette's home.

<sup>17</sup> Sparks visited Lafayette at Lagrange in the fall of 1828.

<sup>18</sup> Josiah Quincy, Mayor of Boston, 1823-1828; President of Harvard, 1829-1845.

much more fit; and so they saw fit to choose a middle man, whom they expected would fall in with all their plans of reform and all the various schemes which occupy their work-shop brains; and if they have not caught a tartar, I am much mistaken. I believe Mr. Quincy is a high-minded honourable, independent man, and I do not believe he will follow anybody's lead. He lacks judgment they say, and the poor man is subject to fits of abstraction, and occasionally he is taken with a metaphor, whereupon he gets stuck. But what of all that? He is very handsome, and remarkably agreeable, and as honest as the day. Is he not fit for President, with these qualifications?

Then Mrs. Q. and all the young Q's; think what golden days are preparing for us. Tom Lee said the other day, when he heard that Mrs. Channing and her daughters were coming to Cambridge to live, "you will soon become too strong for us," but how will it be now? I should advise the owners of the Charles River Bridge to sell their shares as soon as possible. Boston will soon be such a small concern to us, that I expect grass will grow on the causeway. Mrs. Farrar, and Mrs. Follen, and Mrs. Norton, Mrs. Channing and Mrs. Webster and Mrs. Folsom, and your interesting friend Miss Lowell, beside a good many stars of more feeble radiance, form such a galaxy of brilliant orbs, that we never need look beyond it for light or heat. It was rather a doubtful matter at first how our three Queens, Mrs. Norton, Farrar and Follen, would manage to reign in the same age, and under the same influences, but the matter has most amicably been adjusted. Their paths are very distinct, and there never has been the least symptom of collision. Now when Mrs. Quincy comes, this may well be termed a Holy Alliance, one which even you may approve, heretick as you are in these matters. In the midst of these changes, and undazzled by the brilliancy which surrounds us, we continue to jog on much after the old manner. We are too old to change much.

*Up-to-date Cambridge*

FEB. 9, 1831.

. . . Cambridge has caught something at last of the spirit of the age. When the whole world is given over to Lectures, when every little nook and corner of New England has its Lyceum, how strange that the *people* strictly speaking, living in the sphere of so much light, should grope in utter darkness. This has appeared in its true aspect to our professors, and they have generously volunteered "to pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind, to breathe the enlivening spirit." Judge Story<sup>10</sup> began, and as far as I can learn said nothing at all, for an hour. This was kind, for if the full blaze had appeared at once, nobody can tell what the effect might have been. Ticknor came next, and he gave us three very entertaining lectures on Shakespeare. These I was so fortunate as to hear, and I was exceedingly gratified, and very sorry when he left off. Mr. Farrar came next. He has given two, one on electricity—one on the theory of sound; and on Friday next his last will be on the coming eclipse. Neither of these have I heard, but they have been very much admired. I am often behind the age you know, so you must not expect much improvement in me when we meet, but certainly I stand in a much less responsible, of consequence a safer position, than that friend of ours—who is so far before the age in which he lives. . . I earnestly hope you will write to me. It is very long since I have been much acquainted with you and I feel as if it was quite time to renew or brighten the chain. Farewell, whether talkative or silent, believe me ever affectionately yours,

*Formal Congratulations*

JUNE 23RD, 1832.

My dear friend:—

I received your note of the fifteenth, three days after it was written, and as you will believe I answered it immediately, but the following morning I had the mortification to receive my note

<sup>10</sup> Judge Joseph Story, Dane Professor of Law and a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

again, with one from you announcing the necessity for your immediate departure for Washington. I trust before this your affairs in that quarter are rightly settled and that the "judgment"<sup>20</sup> which threatened you because you never have condescended to be a "political party writer" will be averted. It is too flattering to me to suppose that I can have had any influence in this your honourable course, but if indeed I have added one feather weight to the balance, that bright little favour shall give additional brilliancy to my plume.

I cannot more deeply sympathize in your happiness, now you are permitted to proclaim the glad tidings to the world, than I did when you first gave the idea of the bliss in prospect. You know the strong and affectionate interest I have always taken in everything that concerned you. You know how ardently I have always supplicated for you the blessing of a lovely wife, of a quiet and happy home, but even you can scarcely realize how fervently I bless the Authour of all enjoyment, that your long search has been so richly rewarded. I would tell you how much I anticipate from the possession of a new friend, and from the personal knowledge of one whom I have so much reason to believe worthy to be loved, but I am too old, and I have suffered too much to look forward to anything this world can give me. Be you, my beloved friend, as happy as I know you are capable of being, and as I know you deserve, and one source of happiness will be mine of which the world cannot deprive me.

I thought to write to Miss Allen,<sup>21</sup> but my heart fails me, and I do not hold the pen of a ready writer just now. I therefore leave you to say a kind word for me *at your leisure*, and to make an interest in her sweet thoughts for me, which perhaps I might not be able to make for myself.

We are all well, and ask you to receive the warmest congratulations from the family circle.

I am ever affectionately yours.

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<sup>20</sup> Probably connected with Sparks's failure to obtain the right to publish a second series of Diplomatic Correspondence, the right being given, for party reasons, to the Democratic Editor of the *Congressional Globe*.

<sup>21</sup> Sparks married Frances Anne Allen, of Hyde Park, N. Y.

*"Heretical Notions" on Education*

PORTLAND, NOVEMBER 10TH, 1835.

I thank you my dear friend for your kind letter, and for the honour of your perseverance in a good resolution. Let me tell you that I received it just a fortnight after I left Cambridge, and that was exactly the time when you promised to write me. I am very much pleased with your account of Maria.<sup>22</sup> I think she already shows by her exemplary deportment that she is worthy to be the daughter of her parents. I delight in her astronomical discoveries. Why is not the light of Mrs. Austin's candle just as good as a comet to her? I think one of the follies of the present mode of education is the terrible anxiety to give children "right ideas." It is true the little people sometimes form strange combinations in their own minds—but what does it signify? They have the happiness which the exercise of their imaginations can give them, while the reason and judgment have time to gain strength. And then the discipline of life, and daily experience and judicious but not too exacting watchfulness will do the rest. I think a child's mind ought to do something for itself. It certainly finds much less field for exertion, where it finds everything done to its hand. These are terribly heretical notions, my dear friend, and I pray you not to expose me to the educating public. It will certainly be said of me, that never having learned a lesson myself of any sort or kind, having never gone to a school in my life, I have a sort of prejudice against those who have, and would as certainly hang a man who was found with an inkhorn in his pocket as Jack Cade. Perhaps this may be true, but it is more likely that it is not.

I have had a good deal of experience of the modes of educating children, although I am not capable of conducting the technical part of it, and I never could find the use of cramming "right ideas" into a child's mind before the place was large enough to hold them, or strong enough to retain them. No, let Maria mistake candles for comets and see three moons, or three dozen

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<sup>22</sup> Maria, daughter of Sparks, born, 1833.



if she can, her mind may be sufficiently impressed with the wonders of the first and the beauty and mild radiance of the last without being undeceived. I never would do it, I know. Do not distress yourself about her "military air," That is a difficulty which will work its own cure, it may perhaps derange your ideas of female gentleness and quiet dignity for a time, but she will find her true level when she mingles in the world of other children. She will always if she is true to her promise, be superior to most others, and she cannot but feel this, but she is affectionate and craves to be loved, and that is a principle of her nature which will keep her love of rule in check. Thus you see I do not hesitate to give you my ideas about education, just as I would about anything of smaller consequence.

I should shock those deep ones who talk about "primary causes" and "ultimate effects," and what not, things, which not understanding themselves they cannot of course make me understand, but I have held forth to you too much to astonish you by anything which I shall be likely to advance. You have been *used* to such talk too long. . . . But you can scarcely realize what a pleasure, mournful to my soul, it is, to write or talk to you about *your child* that precious legacy<sup>23</sup> of one so loved and so lovely! That sweet link in the brightening chain which unites you with the joys and promises of heaven! Long may she be spared to you, and daily may she bring home to your sorrowing heart the conviction that you are never alone!

I remembered your request to Mr. Davies as soon as I saw him. He is very much pleased with the idea of writing a *life*, and says he shall think himself a much greater man for doing it. He thought he would take General Knox, *he* being emphatically the Great Man of Maine, and he said he could come at the necessary documents very easily. But after I received your letter and told him that you meant to suggest Commodore Preble,<sup>24</sup> he wondered he had not thought of him before, and

<sup>23</sup> Frances Allen Sparks died in July, 1835.

<sup>24</sup> Lorenzo Sabines eventually wrote the *Life of Edward Preble* for Sparks's Library of American Biography.

said the task would be much easier. He is very much in the spirit of the business, and you might write him your ideas on the subject and find that he entered into them very fully I have no doubt. I do not know what Miss Sedgwick<sup>25</sup> may do. She might give you her father's life perhaps, although haply it might suit her better than you. I will not give you the trouble to *ask* me. My genius does not lie that way, I should make droll work in writing a book, so if you ever find I should be so silly as to try—remember and tell me that my vocation is, more to *watch over lives* than to write them. You will have time to write me once more for I shall remain here a fortnight longer, and I hope you will *want to*. Give my love to my dear little Maria, and kiss her, for her and your faithful and affectionate.

*Happy Little Maria*

FRIDAY, JULY 1ST, 1836.

I have just returned from the Botanic Garden. Your child is well, and good, and happy, and lovely. You see, my dear friend, how very artful I am. I want to bespeak a kind welcome to my letter, and I begin with the information which I know very well will insure it. I heard Maria's happy joyous laugh as soon as I opened the door. She knew my voice instantly and wanted to come down and was not very well pleased to have me come up, but I soon reconciled her to the solecism in politeness, and when I had noticed and admired her "little fat arms" as much as was desirable I told her I was going to write to you and asked her what I should say. Of course she sent love and kisses, and then poured forth a list of articles to be brought for the baby beginning and ending with "a kiss and a *kitty*." She sends kisses too to Aunt Mag and Julia and Grandpapa, and desires they would soon come back and see Nimmy, and not go away any more. Her messages to you were not very coherent for her attention was attracted to a vase of roses which was on

<sup>25</sup> Miss Catherine Maria Sedgwick, minor novelist and author of a *Memoir of Lucretia Maria Davidson*, published in Sparks's Library of American Biography, Vol. 7, First Series.

the table, and her love to her father and her admiration of the flowers seemed to divide the emotions of her heart so equally, that it was difficult to say which predominated. Cherish these hours my dear friend, when nothing separates your child's heart from yours but a wreath of flowers.

On Wednesday I dined at Mr. Norton's. In my absence Mrs. Sparhawk brought Maria up to see me, and how sorry I was not to be here! She left a very polite invitation for me to come to tea, which I shall accept next week. Yesterday she made a visit to Mary Stearns, and behaved sweetly, Sarah said. Was extremely agreeable and affable to all the ladies and gentlemen she met, and in short she is becoming very popular. So that it is quite fortunate that her gifts and graces are veiled by the groves of the Botanic Garden. She is a lovely and a most promising child, and it is a source of continual thanksgiving to me that she has been given to you. God grant in mercy that her precious life may be spared!

I do not think anything very special has occurred since I saw you on Monday. I have dined twice at Mr. Wells, and yesterday I went into town to execute some commissions for my sister. A woman's life you know, they say, is a history of the heart, and so it may be for anything I know in a great degree, but it is not quite all. I have thought and pondered over your affairs and plans, very deeply, for a week past, and now that I consider the matter over, I will acknowledge how much I regret that you could not have taken a different view.<sup>26</sup> Feeling as you did, or do, your conclusion is just what it ought to be, for I would not for the world have you engage in any undertaking which would in the slightest degree abridge your freedom of thought or action, or in the prosecution of which you would not be contented and happy. I regret the failure, for the Institution, which I know it is in your power so materially to benefit, and I regret it for myself, because—I am very selfish—and I have a vision that you and your child would be near me—*perhaps* during the remainder of

<sup>26</sup> Sparks had declined President Quincy's offer of the Alford Professorship, which then included Philosophy, Economics and Politics.

my pilgrimage. This my dear friend is one of the infirmities of a spirit which you do not yet quite comprehend. But believe me notwithstanding what I have said no arrangement which you could make would satisfy me if it was not *exactly in all respects* what it seemed to me your character and your honourable exertions merited, and if it did not make you happy as you are capable of being. A high and a noble and a useful career is open before you, and wherever your duty or your inclination leads you, go—for you will do rightly wherever it may be. . . .

Farewell. Give my best love to the dear friends with whom you are associated. I need not tell you how much I think of you during these sad days, nor how deep is the sympathy of your faithful friend.

*Illiterate Woodstock*

WOODSTOCK, JULY 3RD, 1837.

. . . General Washington<sup>27</sup> must be your "baby" in the meantime—always hoping that he may grow up as fast as possible and soon be able to make his own way in the world. It might be said that the contrast was rather too striking, between a fair little girl of four years old, and a six foot, full grown Virginian, even though so many wonderful gifts and graces center in him but for all these suggestions there is a ready answer, "there is no accounting for taste." How came it that you said no word of either of your heroes? Did you forget my untiring interest in their progress? There is a terrible lack of intellectual curiosity in Woodstock, much more it seems to me than there used to be. I doubt whether there is a single copy of Washington. I know there is not a solitary North American and scarcely a Boston Newspaper. I sometimes supplicate Norman<sup>28</sup> to find me a paper, and he brings me one of those detestable dirty little things that I hate to soil my fingers withal. We have New York papers,

<sup>27</sup> Sparks finished his twelfth and last volume of the *Life and Writings of Washington* on July 22, 1837. The early volumes had already been published.

<sup>28</sup> Norman Williams, husband of Miss Storrow's cousin, Mary Ann Brown Williams, whom Miss Storrow was visiting in Woodstock.

however, which are sent by Henry Williams, and there I have had the pleasure of reading one or two precious extracts from your friend Harriet,<sup>29</sup> the one on 'Mr. Everet' I have not seen. I wonder what she will say about you! I understood this (herald?) was not to have any leaning towards a personal narrative, "not a leaf of her private journal should be published," she said in a letter, I think, to Henry Ware,<sup>30</sup> but what sort of affair must be her *private* journal, when in this, *Essay* I suppose, she does not even conceal names. I last night read what she lovingly says of the drunkenness of the *ladies* in this favoured land. We certainly feel mighty flattered by such a precious piece of justice and truth. Poor Harriet! or as they call her the "Lady of the Silver Trumpet." "Sad was the hour and luckless was the day" when she landed on our shores; I am glad I saw her once for all that, and much more glad that I saw her but once. Who knows but she would have thought me one of the intemperate if she had seen me much and perhaps nothing short of it would have led me to seek her society.

### Queen Victoria

CAMBRIDGE, OCTOBER 14TH, 1840.

My sister was very much gratified by your account of her interesting young Queen,<sup>31</sup> all but the latter clause, and that inspired her loyal and affectionate heart with equal indignation and sorrow, indignation, that a report so base and *utterly unfounded* should go abroad, and sorrow, that you should have fallen into such bad hands, among those *bad* wicked and malicious people who would poison your pure mind. It is a pity that poor Victoria should be subject to like passions with other strong-willed children. I cannot understand however without supposing her of a particularly bad temper, how she is capable of

<sup>29</sup> Harriet Martineau made herself very unpopular during her stay in Boston, 1835, by her uncompromising and open approval of the Abolitionist Movement, which was still unpopular, and by her book, *Society in America*, published in London, 1837.

<sup>30</sup> Professor Henry Ware, Miss Martineau's host in Cambridge.

<sup>31</sup> Sparks was in Europe for the second time.

treating her mother with unkindness, particularly if the Duchess of Kent is the tender mother and judicious woman she has always been represented. But this is no affair of mine, I leave loyalty to Louisa. I believe I am a cosmopolitan. I am sure it would be difficult for me to say to what country I belonged, or in fact cared much for. I should be thankful if I could always say that I sought a better city, that is our Heavenly.

### CHAPTER III

TO THE OLD FRIEND, 1842-1857

#### *Pastimes in Portland*

DECEMBER 6, 1842.

I do not mean to ply you very hard with letters, my dear friend, but I cannot find it in my heart to let many weeks pass by without giving a short *rub* to the chain, just to keep it *very* bright, and to tell you something about our whereabouts, although no earthly thing happens to us. . . . We go out a good deal in the daytime, my sister and the girls walk for the pleasure of the thing, and I walk too for the necessity. I have so great a respect for Mother Earth that I am rather unwilling to tread her under-foot as much as some people do. You see, I have just been reading Carlyle's Lectures on Hero-Worship, which notwithstanding its many absurdities, is a wonderfully fine book and he talks so much about the Earth—"the kind, just, good Earth"—that I really have imbibed even a greater respect for the universal Mother than ever. Now have I not an original reason for my laziness? Be that as it may, I have done since I have been in Portland what I almost never did in my life before, I have been to three evening Lectures, and what is more, all of them given by Orthodox men. Louisa is quite shocked at my dissipation. She says the Chicopee Camp Meeting has spoiled me, however that may be, I shall continue to go as I see occasion, until I have come to the root of the matter. As yet I have heard nothing that might not have been said by a Unitarian. Last evening I went to hear a Lecture from a certain Professor Bush of New York University, I believe, you may know something about him. He proposes to give a course on the Progressive Nature of Christian Revelation, and this was the Introductory. It was quite interesting and written in a very good style and spirit, but the Orthodoxy was missing, so much the better for his peculiar subject. The admission of reason into any matter of speculative belief, I should think was rather new with

our Orthodox brethren. . . We are reading Harte's<sup>1</sup> *Life of Gustavus*. It is a most extraordinary book. The style is particularly bad, and though I doubt not there is much truth in it,—yet there is such a perpetual puff of the Hero of the North that the Authour can be equalled only by Dugald Dalgetty<sup>2</sup> himself. I must confess I am generally very little interested, and too often for my learning's sake, take the liberty to think my own thoughts while the reading is going on. The ninth Vol. of Alison<sup>3</sup> which we left in the midst, because we could not keep Harte's book, interests me much more. Alison has the "long resounding pomp and energy divine" which I like much better than the eternal involutions of Mr. Harte. . . .

*Reminiscences*

BRATTLEBORO, MARCH 7, 1844.

. . . I have thought of you very often this winter, and often when at twilight the dry wood is heaped upon the andirons, and the beautiful clear blaze illuminates every animate and inanimate thing in our little parlour, making the oldest of us and the dullest, a little younger and a little less spiritless, I have often wished that you were here, as you used to be in Bolton, where so many pleasant hours went unheeded by. There are not many years of my life that I love to recall and certainly none that I would willingly live over again. But I believe those six years were on the whole the happiest of my life, and you my dear friend, are most closely associated with them all.

*Charming Wentworth Higginson*

. . . Wentworth spent five weeks of the College vacation with us. This you will readily believe was a most agreeable addition to our stock of domestic pleasure. He is the gayest and

<sup>1</sup> Harte, Walter, *The History of the Life of Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, surnamed the Great*, 2nd. ed. London, 1767.

<sup>2</sup> Dugald Dalgetty, character in Scott's *The Legend of Montrose*.

<sup>3</sup> Alison, Archibald, *History of Europe from the commencement of the French revolution in 1789, to the restoration of the Bourbons in 1815*, Paris, 1841-42, 10 Vols.



happiest creature that ever I saw, and unites in his heart and mind much more power, as I think, than he knows of, or is yet developed. You will perchance hear among the gossip of the day, that he is engaged and this time, gossip will tell the truth. He and his cousin Mary, Walter Channing's second daughter—have been much attached to each other for some time, and Wentworth feeling that he was tall enough if not old enough to have a will of his own, and to declare it to the world, has persuaded Mary to be of his mind. It is a very happy occurrence to his family. Mary has a fine character and many excellent qualities of heart and head, and she has suffered privation enough to qualify her admirably to be a poor clergyman's wife.

*For "Auld Lang Syne"*

JUNE 14, 1844.

My dear friend. You will receive with this, and I trust they may reach you in as beautiful a condition as they leave my hands, a portion of the lovely flowers which adorn our woods, and make our Green hills gay and glorious. I send them to *you* for the sake of "Auld Lang Syne" and Mary<sup>4</sup> will not feel slighted when I send them to her husband instead of herself. You have not forgotten our Bolton days, I very well know. The associations which cluster round that *greenest* spot of my life are ever fresh to me, and yours my dear friend, although they are of a different nature, yet they can never arise in your mind without a certain degree of happiness. These fair flowers are remembrances of those days. *They*, continually renewed, are ever fresh and fair however the person who sends them a votive offering, has fallen into the "sere and yellow leaf."

BRATTLEBORO, JAN. 13TH, 1845.

. . . I am more and more satisfied that it was a wise movement that brought us to Brattleboro. I always *believed* so, but I am convinced from the experience of these two years. It certainly cost me a good deal, far more than any mortal can

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<sup>4</sup>The second Mrs. Sparks.

ever know, to be contented to leave Cambridge. I have had experiences there, and shall always have such associations with the place, as no other person can have. I lived there in my youth, from the time I was eighteen until I was twenty-four—and this period—although it would make no great figure in a book, was a very eventful one to me. I do not expect that an Autobiography will be found among my papers after my death, and the flood gates of feeling which those years kept wide open have long since been closed; the stream has either become dry, or has been diverted from its course, or has been broken up into a great many little rills. They do not all fertilize the soil, but the traces of some of them still leave it verdant. I would not now be willing to live again in Cambridge—at least I believe not—and that is saying much for my attachment to our hills and cascades and waving groves.

*Comfort in Sorrow*

BRATTLEBORO, JAN. 29TH. 1846.

I received your letter of the nineteenth my dear friend, and that of the twenty-seventh without surprise, although as you will readily believe, with the deepest feeling. That the suffering hours of your darling child<sup>5</sup> draw near their termination, is a source of thankfulness rather than grief, but I am too well acquainted with the human heart to offer consolation to yours in this time of bitter privation. I can only pray that you may be sustained through your trial, and that you may be able with a Christian submission to offer up to the God who gave it this light of your eyes, this blessing of your mortal existence, secure that you are again to be united in the regions of peace and purity. You can never lose your child, she must and will be yours in another world, for the Power who formed such strong and tender ties, never could have done so with the purpose of dissevering them. This precious creature belongs to you and her angelic Mother, and what power can disunite you in Heaven.

I am thankful for all the alleviations which your grief re-

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<sup>5</sup> Maria died February 3, 1846, at the age of 12.

ceives, how precious a privilege I should consider it, if it was in my power to do more than assure you that I am ever most truly yours,  
A. G. S.

Give my love to Mary, and if my beloved Maria is in a state to be spoken with on the subject tell her how much the little girls love her and how very dear she is to me.

### *A Serious Misunderstanding*

BRATTLEBORO, APRIL 5TH, 1846.

. . . One part of your letter surprised me, nor can I possibly remember anything in my late letters which should occasion it. I am not a person to be influenced by *reports* of any kind, and I have always endeavoured to form my opinions from what I *knew*, not from what I *heard* merely. I believe I do Mary strict justice, and I think you will be satisfied when I say so. It was accident which prevented me from answering her last note, I thought until a message came in one of Maria's letters that I had done so; then, it seemed scarcely worth-while, for I could not suppose that it was of any consequence.

### *Farewell*

BRATTLEBORO, JUNE 10, 1857.

My dear friend—

I hear that you are to sail for Europe next week with all your family, and I have so very earnest a desire to bid you adieu that I trust I may be forgiven for yielding this time to the affectionate impulse. I am very glad to hear of the arrangement for I doubt not that it will be of much benefit to your health, and afford you many sources for pleasurable thought, to which as yet you have been a stranger.

Farewell then, my beloved friend of many years. May God protect and bless you and yours. May all sweet influences attend you, and may you be restored to your home in renewed health and spirits. I offer my kindest regards and best wishes to Mrs. Sparks and my love to your children although they know not your faithful and affectionate.—A. G. Storrow.

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