Aug. 30th, '93.

Dear Florence:

I suppose you will never ask me to visit you again,- and quite right too. If I were sure you have not been prevented from asking somebody else by my dilly-dallying, I should feel reasonably contented, tho' sorry to lose the society of yourself and family, and the glimpse of the sea.

But, it is late in the year, and Mt. Desert is so far away "-a desert inaccessable"; and I feel as if I ought to finish the pasture picture; and there are matters I am very anxious to see Robert about (he is coming up in a few days); and we are poor; and I expect Merwin any time, this month; and Sintram's leg is so bad that it is now in a stocking; and Merwin has asked me to Concord for the last week in Sept., and other ands, to that extent that, I have decided to go back on my last proposition and stay ter hum.

I thank you ever so much for being so much interested to have me come, but a journey in three jumps - I'm afraid I am too old for it.

My love to all.

As ever,

E. M. T.

Oct. 1st, /93.

Dear Florence:

Shall I not send you 'David Balfour? I have finished it. But perhaps it would be well to wait until you leave the so distracting place of the World's Fair, for it is a book to be read with all the powers of appreciation you possess. I am fresh from reading it, but it seems to me that there is nothing in way of story telling to surpass the last part of it. It's a great treasure among books.

Do send some of your party to the Stock Pavilion, for a look at the horses. See if there are any Arabs? Also if Denning Allen, a Vermont horse is there. You said you would

go yourself to the Forestry Exhibit.

This reminds me of something that appears to me exceedingly comical: the fact that Vermont in order to show to the world its wealth of marble quarries has adopted the Pompeian style for its state building. What genius conceived this plan, to unite such seemingly conflicting conditions of life? The interior is said to be decorated in the Pompeian fashion.- What can this mean? Find out for me, will you not? Perhaps there is a frieze representing the sturdy Vermonter, with sheepskin leggins and mittens, his toga wrapt about him, armed with a bit stock and a half-inch bit, sallying forth, to tap the sugar maples on the slopes of Vesuvius; or possibly, watching a trotting-chariot race at the amphitheatre; or bringing in the harvest with dancing and song (so like him!) and sacrifices to Ceres.

It is cold here now, but clear and bracing weather. The boy is in the best of health and spirits, and very cunning.

Commend me to all.

Yours,

E. M. T.

(Sketch.)

Oct. 12th, '93.

Dear Joe:

I am grieved to hear that the society's exhibition is so remote in date; and I am the more inclined to try Philadelphia. But I would take it as a true friendship, if you would inquire into the probable character of the show. This you might do, might you not? at the Players? possibly of Chase? It's Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

I have a great mind to send this picture to you - To say truly, I do not know if it is as good as I might be expected to do, or damned bad. I incline to the latter opinion. If it's <u>too</u> bad, of course I won't try to exhibit it anywhere, not Philadelphia even. I should like to have your opinion on it -- to know if you think there is any virtue in it, or to

hear you denounce it in the opposite case.

Pictures may be sent to this Penn. show by Dec. 2 at latest, so there is plenty of time for the framing, which you are very kind to offer to look after.

I have a bright, supposed-to-be golden light in the upper righthand corner of the canvas, and I am anxious that the frame should not prove the better counterfeit - so to speak,- Consequently a wide band next to the paint is to be avoided - this is my idea. [Camel's hump picture]

(Sketch.)

Could this be done at moderate expenses? But of that later;- first, I want your opinion of the picture, and according to that will I regulate my ideas respecting its framing:- If you say "Good",- I'm prepared to go to any reasonable expense - etc. I understand you are expecting to leave for Chicago on the 16th? So Florence writes. In that case had I better wait until you return before sending the picture, had I not?

If Thayer should be in town , could he not be induced to look at the picture? It would do me much good to hear what he might have to say about it - particularly what he would find to condemn. Of course I should have to ask you to report him, for with the kindest intentions he would never get to the length of writing me.

Do you find all this rather hard on you? I make use of your kindness, and have no means of repaying in kind -

Well, we must certainly see Robert in company - the very least he can do, is to let us have a box - I feel that it should be a great occasion. So you have really bearded the Kipling' in his den?

Florence wrote much of Miss Balestier, she returned that / liking.

Well, until next December.

E. M. T.

Oct. 24/93.

Dear Harry,- [Hook] If you are thinking seriously of buying my

spring picture, you must not take too early an opportunity to tell me so, because there is a possibility that it may not please you so well when finished. It would be a great satisfaction to me for you to have some one of my pictures.

Faithfully,

E. M. T.

Oct. 28th/93.

Dear Joe:

Thanks for your letter. Florence told me of her fleeting glimpse of you at Chicago,- she was sorry to see no more of you.

You mistake about my wanting your opinion on the selling qualities of my picture - my confused and stupid letter gave you a wrong impression: what I want is your opinion of its value as a work of art - that is, if you can detect any art or value in it. I am really very anxious for a criticism, because I am so far at sea as regards any estimate on my own part, as I never supposed it possible for any Christian or ordinary man to be. Sometimes it appears to me to be reasonably good - sometimes, so utterly bad, that I am tempted to suppress it. Do pitch into it - especially as regards its color, which is nothing more than crazy, it sometimes seems to me.

How about a black frame or a black inner edge?.

Robert is happy in the Coughlan company - Charles C. is an intelligent man I guess, and Robert finds one Stewart (a Scot of Allan Breck's line) a very congenial companion.

I am greatly pleased to hear that Miss Terry approves of his being in that company.

Florence is here now - and her friend Mrs. Elliot - do you know her? a most sweet lady.

Yours

E. M. T.

Oct. 30th, '93.

Dear Harry:

I forward in this mail one of those vile collections of short stories which the drowsy time dotes on. This is, however, a case with an exception; 'it is not wholly vile because' it contains a story of Turguenieff's; new to me, and I guess to you also: 'The Brigadier'.

How are the little girls? I hope they prosper in kindergarten pursuits.

Have you read David Balfour? Do so. It is wonderful; all Stevenson's old power, or lacking but little of it, and coupled with something more masterly, more inevitable in the telling.

I have a hope that Thayer will accept me for a pupil for a month or so, or be willing to criticise my work daily (for I hope to do a little painting of heads, of the nude perhaps, while I am in New York). Is it not a pleasing possibility, that of returning for a short space to the delightful irresponsibility of pupildom?

Shall I not send you the Atlantics Florence sends me? They are interesting - a very different sort are they from the Century's, Harpers', Scribners', and such like abominations.

Yours,

E. M. T.

Nov. 2d,

Dear Florence:

Thanks so much for your letters. The bird you spoke of might perhaps be a gold crowned kinglet:- it is the description of one; only it would be hard to be deceived regarding that variety on account of the diminutive size,- still, without other birds at hand to make comparison with, it might seem to you larger than it really is. The ruby crowned is a larger bird than the gold, but no dark line occurs on the head:- I was thinking that the red patch might on occasion look gold-

colored. The chestnut-sided warbler, which is white below, has a gold patch on the crown.

The cedars you describe, I know;- very dark and sombre. Do you not enjoy the oaks? I remember those in the south, and the swamp Spanish or pin oaks in Central Park, with great delight.

I think you have made a mistake in your last letter, written Henry IV. for VI.; is it not so? If not, you had best reread until you obtain some light. Of course you cannot continue in such a blind and otherwise senseless condition with regard to this play, if you study it sufficiently.

Mummie has been reading Wuthering Heights aloud, I don't recommend anyone to read it, and I hate even to think of it; for it comes near the chief position, in my opinion of all the outrageous conceptions ever written down. The appeal to the feelings would seem too gross, if it were not for the terrible reality of the story which convinces when the credulity is most strained, and makes to seem true and reasonable what would otherwise appear as outrageous improbability. It is much less like an imaginative work, than a simple narration of actual occurrences.

Yet there are some moments, certainly one, where it approaches, and perhaps reaches the pathos of real tragedy - I mean where Katherine (the first Katherine) learns of Heathcliff's return - You know the book, do you not?

It reads like a story that, if not actually witnessed, has gradually grown up in the mind, and been so studied and so felt, each character so clearly seen, that no uncertainty or obscurity at any moment of the narration, troubled the author's mind. The touch is as sure as if, in every turn and circumstance of the story, it followed the cold fact.

The style, to my thinking, is admirable, so simple, so clear and every now and then illuminated with thrilling words.

So far as I have read of the Bronte's works, this seems to me easily second. It is an ugly, depressing story - terror and gloom make the atmosphere of all their works as well as of their history..

Your boy is well and very merry. It is now wintry here -a snow covered country - and the trees are all bare. Mummie keeps well. Joe is home I learn - My love to

him when you see him. If your something-or-other club of young women ever discuss "Wuthering Heights", do let me know what they have to say of it - such a situation would indeed, be amusing - I should like to hear a young female opinion of Heathcliff - as indeed of all the characters.

Farewell - Love from,

E. M. T.

Nov. 8th/93.

Dear Joe:

I was much pleased to get your letter wherein you say you like the picture I sent you. It is a great encouragement to me to get your good word of it, for to my thinking it seemed a failure positive. Of course I appreciate that every attempt to copy nature, is, in a manner, a failure, but this one seemed to me, strained in color, both hard and feeble in execution, and altogether damned in the suggestion of a fake; for you must know that it was not all painted on the spot, but traveled to and fro a weary while.

I hear from Charlie that you have joined the good work of the good government clubs, and I am hopeful of and greatly interested in your success. I saw the Boston papers to-day that say Maynard and the other doubtful candidate were properly defeated; but of the 1st Assembly District of N. Y. nothing is said.

Farewell. Yours,

E. M. T.

I'm glad to see N. Y. papers (some, at least) have gotten over foolishness in speaking of the Irving shows. They appear willing now to accept them without superfluous remark, as, in a manner, above criticism. But that they should know it is the wonder.

E. M. T.

Four Winds Farm,
Stowe, Vt., Nov. 19th/93.

Dear Mrs. Elliot:

The books were all appreciated; there wants no apology for the amount of literature; on the contrary, the more thanks are due you. My mother took very kindly to Mr. Trollope's work, and for my part I find the books on Arabian travel interesting throughout. The Arab's is certainly an ideal existence

I shall send La Marche à l'Etoile to Florence (who had already gone to New York when the books arrived). The illustrations are impressive, the mystery of the silhouette figures and the simplicity of the designs appeal strongly to the imagination. There is an atmosphere of night, and a sense of width and stillness, as of an open and wintry country, very powerfully rendered. The appearance in the various groups, of sustained and deliberate motion seemed to me to be admirably given. I am curious to know what the music is like.

Here we have had none of the snow storm you speak of - or very little. It has been a very mild and pleasant Autumn.

Florence will have told you, perhaps, of her finding a little Arcadian owl, in our wood. He was very compact, very cunning, and winked his eyes at us in a sleepy manner; but they had nevertheless the angry expression of a bird of prey, and when fully opened upon you, conveyed a feeling of awe or rebuke very odd as being imposed by such a small personality. The warbler you speak of seeing in company with chicadees, will be the worm eating or Swamp warbler, will it not? A bird rare for the neighborhood of Boston, since Ridgeway finds it usually south of 40 , and occasionally in the Connecticut valley.

My mother would have notified you at once of the receipt of the books, but unfortunately, she had forgotten your new address. She asks me to say that Ayala's Angel arrived at a moment when she had nothing to read and that she takes the greatest interest in it. She sends you her thanks and her love.

I am very sincerely, Yours,

E. M. Taber.

Nov. 28th, '93.

Dear Florence:

Enclosed find five dollars, which, if it not too much to ask of you or some of your household, you will kindly invest in chrysanthemums, of pale purplish blue, of magenta, perhaps of white, but with none of the less precious tints of yellow;- these to be a bouquet for Edith, on the approaching 2d. of December.

By the way, I give you a short time to execute this commission, for I expect this letter will arrive on the morning of the 1st.

If there is some conventionality regarding kind of bouquet, color, or such, I suppose you will follow it.

I enclose a card to be attached; and really feel a little nervous, since I never came so near going to a reception in my life. I shall prove a natural philosopher, and find the court existence but a vile life, in respect that it is not in the fields. But my hope is, that this million of manners will have abated when I arrive. What say you?

We've been having real wintry weather, but today a dull thaw is set in. Mummie well.

Farewell. Commend me to all.

Yours,

E. M. T.

Feb. 11th, '94.

Dear Joe:

If you see Robinson, say to him that an inconvenient Grip has clawed me in his clutch, and shipped me into Vermont, and that is the reason why I did not repeat my visit to him, as I promised. I wanted much to see his pictures by a bright sun. If he exhibits a scene on the Erie Canal, trees reflected in the water, I doubt not you will be as much pleased with it as I was when I saw it at his studio.

I hear you and certain Tabers and Holts have been

charading most amusingly.

I hope it is possible to sell one's picture at a less figure, if it should be offered, than the price set down in the blank. Does the presiding genius (I don't know what you call 'em) report to somebody such offers? or do they die, unrecorded and ineffectual? A parlous fear.

Farewell.

Yours,

E. M. T.

March 6, '94.

Dear Joe:

You have been so kind to let me know of the receipt of my picture, and of the jury's opinion of it. I am immediately relieved and pleased that it was liked, and (of course) that Thayer should have been one to speak well of it.

Two weeks ago it was 70° below z at noon, now the weather is as warm as summer;- doors and windows are wide open:- the most astonishing change in the space of time that ever I saw. Had I not finished (so to speak) that picture when I did, it would not be any more complete now; such a different world is ours at present.

Thank you very much for your notes.

Yours as ever,

E. M. T.

My love to Robert if you see him.

Stowe, Vermont,
March 15th, '94.

Dear Joe:

It grieves me much to hear of the coming transformation of that delightful old room. If it were not for the base prejudices of this age of insurance policies, the only course would have been to have set a light to the house, and have watched the old - order, I was going to say,- old disorder of things, fly away in smoke, like the young gentleman's magical trunk.

Dear me, Joe, it makes me feel very old and sad.

I had a very kind note from Brush; and I hope your hint of a letter from Thayer will prove a fact.

I am very much surprised that everybody should have liked my picture so much. Many thanks for all your pains about it.

Faithfully,
E. M. T.

Stowe, Vt., Mch. 15th, '94.

Dear Harry:

Neither Mummie or I have heard of you or of the children for a coon's age - or some such indefinite interval of time. How do you come on?

You will be interested to hear that Brush liked my landscape, and was so kind as to write me to that effect. He and Thayer voted for it for the Webb prize;- the two out of all the list of American artists, whose good opinions I should have been anxious to secure. I am pleased and surprised - but not after all, unduly elated; for of all persons it is I, who know best the baseness and meanness of the attempt.

Forgive all my crossings out; I am a little tired, and have gotten into a tongue-tied state, the wrong words only presenting themselves.

How are the babies: I hope Charlotta will not have

[Hemlock Tree]

lost that very cunning form of baby talk by the time I see her again.

Mummie begs you will let her have a line about the children, if you can possibly find time.

Love to the three.

Yours,

E. M. T.

March 18th, /94.

Dear Florence:

We have had April in March this year - a lovely month. The Robins (who are singing sweetly today) and song sparrows (not yet heard) anticipate their usual date of coming, by just about three weeks. The thrushes I must look for now, if this rate of arrival is regularly followed, in something less than two weeks. It takes me rather by surprise, but it's a wonderfully pleasant one. Your hepatica I believe show no flowers yet; the most forward of all, seemingly, is a little half unfolded strawberry blossom, on the edge of the swamp.

It is an excellent sugar year, and of a temperature to allow of enjoying out of door festivities.

Edith leaves today: She has improved very much in this last year, has she not? She seems to have more self confidence, and to be merrier and brighter, without having lost reserve or humility. She is as sweet as usual and as simple; Society has not gone into her, evidently; but appears to have had a healthy enlivening effect.

There was, perhaps, a flaw in Mr. Chopps philosophy: he did not allow for difference in temperaments.

Farewell.

Yours,

E. M. T.

May 18th, '94.

Dear Mrs. Elliot:

This morning I find several numbers of the "Garden and Forest"; and their arrival brings sharply home to me the realization that I have been rude, in not writing you before, when I returned the books you lent me, last autumn. Yet it has been in my mind to do so very often.

One cannot write with any real feeling about matters concerning which one's impressions are no longer fresh; it seems as if they must seem stale to the reader: But the books are very enjoyable, and certainly contain a great deal relative to Arab minds and manners to point a moral by contrast with the kind of world we live in.

Was there ever a spring so early and so swift? The general aspect now is of June rather than May: but you know the Vermont June is only half a summer month.

One night in the early part of April, as my mother and I were locking doors and windows, & putting out lamps, before going to bed, just before the last light was to be extinguished, my mother caught sight of a fluttering object on the floor, which proved to be the scarcely expanded Cecropia. We shut him up in a room by himself and kept him for three or four days -- I do not know if they feed at all in this stage; but this one would sit slowly waving his wings, in the palm of my hand, and make no objection to a pin's head coated with a syrup of sugar and water, being thrust under his mouth; indeed, I thought he depressed his head, as if tasting or absorbing the liquid. But it may have been an involuntary trembling of my hand that caused the seeming action. A warm spell of weather followed, so we took advantage of it to give him his freedom; his attempted flights ending in staggering encounters with the walls, were a somewhat sickening spectacle.

It was a cruel thing to hurry up his appearance under false persuasion, and confront him with bare and colorless April, when, in the natural order of things, he should have broken the chrysalis in June. I must say so much, though I remember that you were a party to the deceit.

I tried to catch one aspect of the Spring, that seemed to promise a slower change -than most, but even if the season

— the veery is silent: True they are mystery-lovers and never sing until

had not been so short, the failure of my eyes which have become quite weak of late, would have prevented-- I do no painting or reading whatever, and use my eyes only to write letters. I never had much trouble with my eyes before, so I make a great fuss about it. Still, the being thrown out of employment has its unpleasing side; 't is not all cakes and ale, as late events show.

Of the birds, only the veerys seem late; the bobolinks sing, but the foliage makes a concealment; but this year I begin to fear that like the before-mentioned singers, they pass thro' a stage of material excellence, and have fallen victims to the unnatural appetites of West Indians or inhabitants of Guatemala. But this is a flippant tone to take respecting a thrush.

I wish you could see the colts now; they are running in their pasture, and are full of tricks of unconscious posing, for the poetical pastoral, wild, etc. They continue as tame as dogs.

My mother is in New York, or she would send you some message.

By the way, after the sudden appearance of the moth, my mother became apprehensive regarding the wasp's nest, so there is nothing to report of that: I carried it out and left it on a stump near the wood: of what has since happened to it or its inhabitants I know nothing.

Very sincerely yours,

E. M. Taber.

Sat. 19,

Drove around by the Moss Glen Fall and the Grassy Road.

The long hill to Brownsville was as beautiful as usual; the leaves meeting overhead, the banks thick with ferns and wild flowers, and spongey with mosses. A real forest undergrowth on either hand, of hobblebush and moosewood. The birds are beginning to sing more than they did two weeks ago;

and at last I have heard the veery -- the "honeyed whine" as Charles Reade says. Carmi's friend, the owner of Dandy, stopped here yesterday at noon. I was rather amused by him, though I thought his manners somewhat demoralizing for the youthful help. His face was smooth-shaven, formed and inform-ed with a kind of piggish impudence; - the kind of raw dandy that only a country town can produce. He stood about, smok-ing a vile cigar, and commenting in a drawling tone, and not without some slight savor of wit, on Harry Gibbs abilities as a laboring man. The latter youth (a pupil and imitator I im-agine, of this genius) was assisting his father in laying the exterior wall. I go regularly, every day, to have a little fighting game with Sintram. Audrey is growing tamer and more gentle, all the time. She begins to show white hairs, as if a star was forming in the middle of her forehead; as a sign of a changed nature or not, I am unable to say. I enclose a sketch of their very different heads.

Faithfully,

E. M. T.

..... Tell R. T. to look at Carazza's sketch called "Jerry" in the Atlantic (latest). We have been inter-ested in her writing.

Dear Florence:

Harry took back to N. Y. with him, three letters which I received from Brush, Thayer and VanDyke- I am much pleased to have you see them, but I trust that Harry will be cautious in showing them to other people. I say this because he inti-mated that they might aid to arouse an interest in my work. I do not in the least distrust his good taste or feeling in making use of them; but other people are not so whole-souled and direct as he is, and might see in the exhibition of a con-fidential communication like a letter, a crafty and mercantile spirit - or at least, a reprehensible want of reserve. He is so kind to take so lively an interest in my pictures, that I did not like to protest against his carrying off the three

letters.

He showed me the plan of the proposed Burlington house - it is very grand, but very pleasant.

The spring beauties were out on the 12th. We have now all the violets, and the wake-robins are just opening.

Thrushes here on the 12th, singing two days later. The early spring are singularly mixed up with the winter birds. The shorelarks are seen along the road sides, with robins and song and tree sparrows. Yesterday a flock of redpolls stopped for a little while, among our spruces on their way north. I have not this spring heard the note I call the winter wren's.

Mrs. Elliot's Cecropia cocoon was vacated on the 13th or the 12th. We found the moth at night, just as the last folds were being shaken out of his wings. He was lovely, but not a very large specimen, only 5 inches across. We kept him for 3 days, then, the weather turning warm, I let him fly. Since then we have had even milder weather than he would have known in his native June. I hope he has been reasonably happy; though it was an ill turn to substitute early spring for the more poetic season.

Farewell.

Yours,

E. M. T.

May 1st, 1894.
Stowe, Vt.

Dear Harry: [Holt]

About your picture (Early spring in Vermont) "Lingering Snow" would be a name that pleases me, but it is in sound, as in reality, a plagiarism: Bolle's book "Land of the lingering snow". I am getting very fussy over it; and the time of year is beginning to crowd me a little. Indeed, I am out of the spirit; and I would either like to send it you as it is, or do more to it next fall. I believe that all the essentials, so far as I am able to see and render them, are there; it has gathered much detail since you saw it, but there is

more that I should like to put in. It is however, about as much finished as my last picture. Shall I keep or send it? Telegraph me if you want it in time for the Century show. ....

Faithfully,

E. M. T.

May 4th, '94.

Dear Florence:

This is the most astonishing spring; It comes, as Brer. Rabbit might put it, 'a-zoonin' All one can do is to feebly express admiration at the rapid succession of events; to endeavor to record any of these daily changing aspects is quite out of the question.

The hobblebush, the cherry, the Juneberry are out. The dog tooth violets, spring-beauty, dutchman's breeches, hepatica are all about over. I found one and the last hepatica flower yesterday, but I saw from the scattered petals, that many had been in bloom. The trees are cloudy, round, of pale pinks and yellows, no solid masses of foliage, tho' the aspens are bright green and almost in full leaf.

I enclose a sketch of a thing I started yesterday afternoon. Light bluegreen aspens, against the rugged old hemlocks, and the mountains beyond. It has been hot and dry; and a strange thing it is to be able to see snow not only on Mansfield, but in the spruce wood of Hogback.

Cliff swallows were here on the 21st of April, so you may know that most of the birds have arrived. Last night, for the first time this year, I heard the rippling, tripping song which I think is the winter wren's, in the swamp, after sunset.

I received last night a very kind letter from Harry: he has been very good about this picture business.

Love to all.

Yours,

E. M. T.

I'll go look at your pink hobblebush as soon as poss-

ible; it should be out now.

E. M. T.

May 16th, '94.
Stowe, Vt.

Dear Joe:

I am delighted to hear that there is a chance of your coming to Stowe, this summer. Prove true, imagination ! only in this case it is rumor, painted with many tongues. Again an infringement of the truth: really I hear it but from one tongue. My mother said something to that effect in her last letter. How-some-ever, I hope you are coming.

.....

Farewell, yours,
E. M. T.

.....

June 10th, '94.

Dear Mrs Elliot:

.....

I came upon a partridge and her brood the day before yesterday while in the wood. I had never seen the young before. I almost trod upon them, and could have caught one in my hand, I think, for they were just at my feet. However, I had the two irrepressable little terriers with me; one ran into the undergrowth where the hen was clucking to the little ones, and as Brer. Rabbit says "a considerable flutterment" ensued, and an angry mewing; and presently the little dog darted out in a fit -- the result of a fright I must suppose. As a consequence I was unable to satisfy my curiosity concerning the young partridges - who escaped in the confusion.

Very sincerely yours, E. M. T.

.....

August 6th, '94.

Dear Florence:

.....

Harry is here you know - He looks very well, and seems to enjoy himself. He strews his family along the ridge pole of the barn, where they cling like young swallows, and he visits them with encouragement, like the parent bird. They were not sure that they liked it at first, but since Frances sat on the cupola roof, the ridge pole is no longer considered seriously. These diversions not having a sufficient element of excitement for him, he loops a rope around one of the chimneys, and climbs up and down the side of the house, taking advantage of such support as windowsills, casings, and shutters afford.

I have never said a word to you about your baby; but I have listened with interest to all I have heard about his intelligence, amiability, etc.--

What a good thing that was of Mrs. Catherwood's in the late Atlantic (not latest, I think) "Pontiac's Lookout."

I sent to Randolph and Co. for something, and they mailed me a dreadful thing, - Appleton's monthly bulletin,-- a perfect rogues gallery, full of pictures of the very worst offenders notably the beast called Marten Martens, who I am pleased to see is as gross looking as might be expected. Him, they call an artist, and add that he writes all his books in English!!!!!!! I feel rather bitter about this one in particular, for to him I owe several very disagreeable impressions, having been so rash as to read a little way into two of his ugly books.

In literature, the world goes the way to damnation with a blindness quite astonishing. For my part I don't dare to look beyond the title page of any new book that does not bear one of the names, Stevenson, Wilkins, Hardy. I have a new book (not a novel) that gives me keen joy - it is Battel's Register of Morgan Horses - there are in't photographs that well exhibit the beauty of the Morgan family; and I am pleased to see Polly's grandsire spoken of with great respect.

Farewell. Love to all.

E. M. T.

Sat. Aug. 1894, Summit House Mt.Mansfield

Dear Florence:

We have already spent two nights here; arriving on the first day at about 6 o'clock. It was clear, cold weather, and at that time in the evening the notch was in deep shadow, a dark purple blue;- you know how dark a spruce-timbered mountain like Stirling can look. As we made the last turn on the road toward the summit, the north wind came over the ridge cold and strong, making a wintry sound in the dwarf firs. Yesterday was such another day, but warm in the sun. Today it is bleak, cloudy, with occasional showers; but the wind continues in the north. Beautiful as the sunrise is, the sunset is yet more lovely to my thinking. It is beautiful to see the shadow of the mountain, stretch over the valley. One experiences a state of feeling very lofty and Olympian in watching the night overtaking the dwellers below, while there remains to us a reserve of sunlight in the west.

I have heard the whistling of white throats, the twittering of juncos, and have seen both,- but no redpolls - indeed nothing else. The birds are shy and hug the bushes, flying low and stealthily: I fancy this rocky region is a breeding place for hawks, which would account for the timidity of the lesser birds. Indeed if it were not for the frequency of picnic parties, and the bits and crumbs obtainable about the house, there would be no especial encouragement for the birds to remain.

At sunrise Harry saw a small hawk, owlfaced - a sparrowhawk, I suppose. There is much gold thread (the leaf) in the wet mosses, some wake-robin, also Solomon seal. Now there are in flower everlastings, aster, buttercups, white gentian, and a lovely little white flower, which I hope to identify when I get my Gray's Manual (forgotten and sent for); no golden rod on the very top. Blueberry bushes and mountain cranberry grow among the firs and birches (of the latter an Alpine variety I should think) A little way below, spruce and mountain ash.

It is not like the old state of things on the mountain now: parties drive up every day; and the little house is crowded. Some stray city people, but mostly from the country -

not uninteresting but attended by too many rebellious and impish small boys.

Thanks for your letters.

With love,

E. M. Y.

Sept. 6th, '94.

Dear Florence:

I am back again from the Mountain; and feel much better for the change: It was a very interesting two weeks; but the country of pigmy forest and bare rock, thick cloud mists, or wide maplike extensions of view is too phenomenal to be well endured; it is full of a strange interest; but there is no repose.

I found nothing to paint; but there were many wild and interesting effects:

Some days one could not see more than a few rods away, the thick mists drifting like smoke among the firs; at night, the lights from the windows threw a shadow of oneself upon the dense cloud, and there were strange gliding and spectral illumina-tions. Sometimes people would kindle fires of brush and dead fir-trees; the whole top of the mountain would be lit up, the light flickering on the rocks, showing them pale against the sky for an instant, and again, leaving them indistinguishable in dark masses.

Rabbits used to play about the house at night, but unfortunately the proprietor's cat has driven them away; though a small specimen, she kills full grown rabbits.

The only wild quadruped I saw on the mountain, (excepting mice) was a weasel, who passed close by within three feet of me, without observing my presence. He looked around at last, but testified more curiosity than alarm, creeping back among the rocks to stare at me; he thrust his little head out of a minature cave, and his eyes shone like spots of gold.

Eagles, that have their nest in Nebraska notch, came

sailing over the mountain on clear still days. There were hawks, chicken, and also I suspect, the marsh harrier. I saw flocks of juncos and white-throats, some song sparrows, myrtle warblers, the Nashville warbler (new to me), a pair of gold crowned kinglets, and a golden-winged woodpecker; and on one occasion, on a cold day with a leaden wintry sky, I hear a low croaking sound, come from among the brush on the steep western slope, and presently four large blackbirds arose, wheeling against the sky; and one of them uttering a loud hoarse croak, they took flight across the mountain and disappeared in the south east; they were ravens.

On one very cold morning a weasel was caught asleep in the hotel pantry; he was put into a tin pail, the top covered with a pane of glass, and exhibited to the curious for an hour or so. I made some sketches of him: He was the most attractive little wild creature I have ever seen. His eyes were rather large and dark, his expression innocent and somewhat pathetic, his fur was so thick as to form ridges, and was of a liver-brown color; the tip of his tail was obscurely black - some thought him a young one, but, I believe he was the so-called Least weasel, more or less common northward. That one I saw two or three days previously was exactly similar in size and color. He did not appear at all frightened, but spent the greater part of his term of imprisonment curled up asleep.

What I wrote you of the plants on the mountain was the result of a superficial observation, before I had time to examine them, and was quite erroneous: If it is of interest to you, you will find here a more accurate account of what was peculiar to the summit,- the region of dwarf forest and mossy bogs between the two peaks.

The balsam fir - the principal tree.

A dwarf variety (I believe) of the canoe birch, mingled everywhere with the evergreens.

The spruce, sparingly on the summit.

The mountain holly,- very pretty shrub with ash-grey bark, pale leaves and red solitary berries.

The mountain ash, less handsome than the same tree in the valley.

Cranberry tree - common, the berries less deep red but more

transparent and (it was said) sweeter than of the cultivated form in the valley.
Wild black cherry - rare.
Blue berry
Low?
Canadiam, with downy leaves and branchlets.
Dwarf, with the lanceolate-leaved alpine.
variety - very pretty.
The bilberry (called blueberry here).
(The leaves are of lovely colors, at this time of year, varying from a sage green to purple.)
The creeping wintergreen, in among the mosses, very common;
and more delicate, with smaller pointed leaves - was the creeping snowberry,
in the mossy bogs the small cranberry with tiny shining leaves,
and mottled terminal berry.
Bunch-berry was very common.
Of spring flowers, I saw the leaves of many lilies.
of gold thread (very common)
of 2 kinds of violet
of wakerobin (one)

The blue fruit of Clintonia (common) and a solomon seal.

One of the most interesting shrubs was the Labrador Tea, the leaf dull green, the edges recurved, and beneath covered with a thick rusty wool; when crushed the younger leaves gave a sweet fragrance like lavender, the older ones had a strong and somewhat turpentiny flavor.

Indian pipes were not infrequent. There were two plants growing in moss, one in wet boggy places, the other on barren slopes, both of the heath family but which I could not identify satisfactorially. Also a lovely little white flower, very regular.
Five sepals, five petals, pod (superior) with 3 pistils, 10 stamens, regularly opposite sepals and petals, all placed individually on the receptacle. Color, white with fine silvery streaks.

(Sketch.)

The petals are notched at the top, spatulate in general form; the leaves are alternate, (I think) clasping and are fine, needlelike, and grow densely like a moss. The nearest I come

to it in Gray, is the Cassiope, an alpine flower. Perhaps you can help me out. It was very common, flourishing where it seemed impossible for anything but litchens to find the means of life.

Where grass had been sown, near the hotel, buttercups, asters, some kinds of goldenrod and much everlasting was to be found; also a few raspberry bushes.

I found also a pretty little purple veined orchid.

When we first came up there was a quantity of snakes-head flowering on the East side (not on the summit).

The substitution of moss for grass, in the open, for leaf mold, in the wood, was both strange and delightful. In boggy places there were velvety carpets, six inches deep, of beautiful orange colored moss - indeed there were almost all composit colors, none pure, of course, except perhaps yellow.

Much of the time on the mountain the air was thick smoky from the effect of the terrible Michigan fires. .....

Did you ever read accounts of events more awful and thrilling? And the fearful loss of life and property is, it seems, the result of the recklessness of railroad and lumber men.

I looked through that very dull and tiresome book called Esther Waters-- but I found nothing worth the trouble; if you had mentioned the number of the page or pages on which the description you refer to, occurs, it would have been the better way.

Another Atlantic, with another good thing from Mrs. Catherwood. Does anybody take Mrs. D. seriously? There should be a literary tribunal or judgeship established before which such authors should be taken, and compelled to make an oath never to write with intent to publish again, on pain of death.

All well. Love to all.

Yours,

E. M. T.

See Stevenson's "My First Book" in Maclure's current number. I am reminded of the Stevenson plays: I enjoyed them exceedingly. It is a very diluted form of the strong Stevensonian wine, however: you miss him where he is best, in his power to realize in a few words of inimitable descriptive writing.

They are interesting and picturesque, but too slight

for plays; there's not enough body to them, especially Deacon Brodie and Admiral Guinea. They are not based on common fate and experience. The theme is not of a deep or permanent interest. They are too much made of what is phenomenal and incidental.

And everything is pushed to obtain a picturesque effect (and indeed perverted, though the very flimsiness of the theme compels it, generally, as in the case of the unromantic, coarse brute Moore, made to pose at the close of one of the scenes, as Brodie's Mephistopheles - a device to close the act effectively).

The situations do not come like reading and writing, by nature, there is too much of art in their production. The character of Brodie is enough to damn the play in itself: for the simple reason that he is a real scamp; and to interest, as a play should interest, there must at least be a balance of moral qualities, if not a preponderance for good: Mathias in The Bells, is an instance in point; in him you have a genuine picture of remorse. There is nothing convincing about Brodie's remorse, his "new life" etc. You feel that it was but a temporary and fleeting conception, in which, by pure chance, he died. Indeed you cannot help suppecting that it was but another device to end him decently and extort a little sympathy not properly his due. As for Admiral Guinea it is an incident, not a play. Who is the hero? Not Christopher, of all others, not the Admiral, who is hardly real. Pew is the hero, ... such being the case it is necessarily a failure. Beau Austin, because it has a deeper and wider human interest is better -- but it is not a good play to my thinking.

Notwithstanding and in spite of feeling all this, I read them with interest and great pleasure: what a wonderful picture of the various rogues of the last century in the dicing scene in Deacon Brodie!

E. M. T.

Stowe, Vt.
Sept. 17th, '94.

Dear Mrs. Elliot:

.....I am sure I shall enjoy the book exceedingly. I have looked into it, and am, I confess, a little staggered by the style; but there is the same lively feeling for beauty in this one as in all.

I spent about two weeks on Mt. Mansfield where I made an acquaintance with the heaths, in many varieties; most of the plants, other than the mosses, in those alpine bogs and on bleak places, are of that family; especially interesting were the trailing kinds, the snow and wintergreen berries and the small cranberry. It is a very amusing place, but it affects one as being too strange for pleasure in long continuance there; and during August, the thick, red atmosphere that resulted from the forest fires, made it seem the more phenomenal. I saw two birds, new to me: one was a Nashville warbler, the other the raven - in fact a company of four. These were heavy beaked and more impressive in appearance and in manner of flying than the crow; and the hoarse and startling croak has a better quality than any crow expression that I know of.

I wish you could have seen a little weasel that was caught there; I am sure he would have pleased you greatly. He was the most innocent looking carniverous animal I have ever seen I believe, and was very lithe and graceful and beautifully furry.

My mother sends you her love. With many thanks for the book, I am, faithfully yours,

E. M. Taber.

I have been trying with no success whatever to find a little pencil sketch I made of the sympathetic weasel -- this is as near as I come to it from memory. He was asleep! or pretending.

(Sketch.)

Nov. 13th, '94.

Dear Florence:

I am delighted to hear that the baby is so biggerty, "Cocking his bonnet sae hie" .. Is it a bonnet, by the way, or the same old detestable monstrosity of a cap. If he goes on at this pace, his first intelligible utterance will be a spirited rendering of "Wha dare meddle";

"Oh, wha dare meddle wi' me?
"Oh, wha dare meddle wi' me?-
"My name is little Jock Elliot;
"And wha dare meddle wi' me?"

Harry has, in's mind, writ me down a liar, I suppose. I am; but no compulsion: will you believe that we have had but two half days of sunshine since you left? It is the fact; and I still wait for two (I ask no more) clear mornings to finish his picture and send it on. To the house, or to Sill's?

Yesterday at evening it cleared, and remained fine for a few hours. Mummie and I had gone down to the village, with Polly, in the little yellow sleigh. We came home just at moonrise. With the dispersement of the clouds, the air grew intensely cold; the mountains, uncovered for the first time in more than a week, were so heavily frosted that they seemed from the cloudline, built up of solid ice, every tree an icy pinnacle -- Hogback and Stirling were rose colored, reflecting the sunset - The air was very clear, and there was no dimness or reddening of the moon; it seemed astonishingly big behind the trees in the woodroad and the swamp, and shone with an extremely bright and cold radiance. Later at night it was very powerful; it showed the mountain with most remarkable distinctness, the face a dead white against the sky; and the snow in the clefts of the notch, behind the shoulder of Stirling, glimmered with such brightness, as to suggest the idea of being lit by concealed artificial light.

The day before when we passed thro' the woods, we came upon a little troop of partridges: driven from the ground thus early, they were feeding on the immature buds. Some fluttered down and strutted with a jerky hen-like walk thro' the snow; several flew over, passing high above us, swiftly and silently, but with perceptible fluttermentt,- a quick motion of the wings

as in the flight of all heavy or feeble fliers.

I hope these notings of everyday (Stowe) matters is not a bore to you. It pleases me to write them down.

Love to all.

Yours,

E. M. T.

Nov. 20th, '94.

Dear Florence:

I am sorry about the bookmark design; but I found that the two mornings spent over it, entailed afternoons of eye-difficulty and increased nervous irritability, of which under ordinary circumstances I have enough. To prevent temptation, (for being tacked to a drawing board, with all the things to work with handy, it did offer a temptation), I destroyed the design;- no loss, for it was a feeble effort.

You sent us a book by one Hall Caine;- you must not do such things. We found it quite impossible to endure: half a page of that style, elaborately built up of such shoddy construction, wearied us out.

What shall I say to Mrs. Elliot about "Lord Ormont etc" Shall I not confess the simple truth, and return the book? My brain is too tired to deal with word puzzles. I'm too irritable to tackle Mr. Meredith;-"words, words, words!" And my eyes are so bad, from the snow glare, that I cannot undertake such a many pages of printed matter. I would say simply that I am not feeling in the spirit, only I fear she might think that fantastical, and also I suspect that conventionality has some form to soften such a statement. Remember to say a word on this subject when you write.

I've not given up the idea of collecting and furbishing up my weak-kneed poetry, but I do not feel like dealing with anything of pen and ink designing just now. I refer to book covers, etc.-

It has turned bitter cold.

Love to all. Yours, E. M. T.

Nov. 20th, '94.

Dear Harry:

I thought of Kipling the other day, and in a charitable spirit: I remembered the Punch parody of his account of his American experiences; how, when he left the train at Brattleboro, he seemed to find himself encased, set, as it were, in a great sapphire. Now this was true, and showed a discriminating sense of color. Toward evening the snow is sapphire tinted, and the moon and stars shine with a cold, blue light.

.....

Why don't you run up and see us -- on Thanksgiving -- particularly?

It is real winter here, though not much of snow; but you like the song of the owl, do you not? Why not enjoy it for a bit? Or must it still be for the time, -"you, that way;- I, this"?

Faithfully,
E. M. T.

.....

21st, '94.

Dear Harry:

How sad and sudden is this news of Stevenson's death! What a loss! The best living writer of English, "the youngest son of old Sir Walter", the last of the story tellers gone; while the realistic novel flourishes as a green bay tree, and the freer field exists for those "brainy" authors who deal with the vital questions of the day.

How the Philistines of N. Y. are triumphing in their testimonial to Dr. Parkhurst. They are in such a glow of virtuous self-complacency that they go near to making themselves ridiculous. Indeed, they begin to resemble not a little, "Jump to Glory Jane", and the like. They've got religion ; and conviction of sin being past, comes Glory Hallelujah-, and it comes a gronin' !

If this feeling could be expressed in the endowment of some permanent charitable institution it might pass, or if, like Slingsby Guy and Lionel, they could make their testimonial entirely of ginger bread, no great exception could be taken. But they will as like as not put the worthy man on a monument, his foot on the crouching policeman , or equestrian, spearing the Tammany tiger, with, of course, a basso relievo representation of classical ladies playing leap frog around the pedestal. Well, perhaps you are happy to be in Worcester, and I in Stowe.

We will not think of going cityward, until this weather which is so mild and treacherous, has declared for positive winter. We are in reasonable health.

I trust this will reach you by Christmas to carry a Merry Christmas to you and to the dear Little Girls, I wish I had something else to send them, beside wishes.

Farewell. Yours, E. M. T.

Insert letter on page 227.

Dec. 5th, '94.

Dear Florence:

.....

Robert has sent me some (I think) very good pictures -- Romeo and Joseph Surface -- a perfect Joseph. If you have not received any, I'll send them on to you.

E. M. T.

Love to Harry and Joe, when next met up with.

Dec. 27th, '94.

Dear Florence:

The wunk has arrived, and truly it is a strange creature! How we shall agree I know not; I have never hitherto

been able to make a watch go, but I hope for better success this time.

Thank you and Harry very much for it.

I am glad the picture looks well, and that Harry's liking of it continues as strong --

Love to all.

Yours,

E. M. T.

Big snow storm here, and zero weather,

"Two days wrong!" sighed the Hatter.
"I told you butter wouldn't suit the works!" he added, looking angrily at the March Hare.
"It was the best butter," the March Hare meekly replied.
"Yes, but some crumbs must have got in as well; you shouldn't have put it on with the bread-knife."
The March Hare took The Watch and looked at it gloomily; then he dipped it into his cup of tea.....
"What a funny watch!" said Alice
"It tells the day of the month!".....
"Does your watch tell what year it is?" muttered the Hatter.
"Of course not", Alice replied "but that's because it stays the same year for such a long time together".
"Which is just the case with mine!"

31st Dec., 1894.

Dear Harry:

We are not coming to Worcester at all this winter, so there's an end of that. I'm very much disappointed; I should have enjoyed the relief of absence from this place so exacting, apart from the enjoyment I expected to take in your society and the childrens. These doctors are a strange set; to them the world is made up of "Me, my patient, and other doctors." That any one should entertain any idea or hope beyond that of physical improvement, comes not within their calculations.

Yours, E. M. T.

.....

January 19th, '95.

Dear Robert:

..... The idea of producing Henry IV. is to my thinking most happy. Julia, I am sure, would make an admirable prince. I picture him a blonde young fellow, whose aim is to appear rather fine and effeminate, with all his roistering and swagger: You remember how scornfully he decries Hotspurs early morning sport of Scottkilling, as a superfluous exhibition of brutish powers. He should be made up pale, rather than rosy, but pretty; and I think a woman might succeed in tempering in her personality the coldness of his spirit, so far even as to make the part a popular success. No man could so play the part and be other than what the prince is in reality; selfish, clever, ungenerous, no fit figure for a hero.

Do you remember Howard Pyles "Men of Iron"? There's great aid in the dressing of the piece in that book; the costumes are most feelingly rendered. Why not consult Howard Pyle about scenes and dresses? Joe knows him, or used to. Oh, what a play to put upon the stage! What characters! The scenes are more vivid to my mind's eye than anything else in literature, I think. How can you possibly hope to fill out the parts as they should be? yet despair not; a suggestion in the right way would be precious indeed.

I can think of no one (but then I know few comedians) to be a Falstaff, save Owens; and the something in his style dry hard and mercenary (so to speak it) might lend itself to express the underlying cynicism of the character. They all cry out for talented interpretation: Bardolf, the old dog: Pistol (B. Owen would be well here, too) Glendower; the king.-- I should love to talk the play over with you: -- One scene in particular requires to be played between good actors: Hotspur's quarrel with Glendower. Hotspur, of course, would be in safe hands, but you must have a good Glendower. He is a great figure. Do you remember how Papa, in telling one of his stories, would rouse himself to give point and emphasis to the climax, his eyes (so extraordinary, with a power of intense expression, I have never seen equalled) burning truly ~~with~~ like coals of fire? You know the manner: it is thus, I believe, that Glendower should speak his part; with passion and con-

viction (of the moment, at all events).

I enclose a scribble I made some time ago, before I heard of this interesting undertaking of yours. It may amuse you to look at it; perhaps it would be a good way to cross the stage in the battle, whacking your way with a long two-handed sword. An unfortunate touch, spoilt the glare of Hotspurs left eye; it used to be better. .....

All well.

E. M. T.

Feb. 6th, '95.

Dear Mummie:

You have escaped the coldest spell of the winter, in being now in a comparatively temperate region: It is one of those days when from an indoor point of view, it would seem impossible to sustain life, outside, for any length of time. There is no speck of color in sky or land; a shadowless and blinding day, with overhead a dense cloud, of the same ghastly white as the snow. Now, at eleven o'clock, I have just been around to the piazza to look at the thermometer which stands at 18 below. Last night it fell to -22. It was a dreadful night; the window panes, except in the double windows were so clouded by frost as to be opaque; it was unusually dim for a winter night, and with the moon somewhere behind the cloud. A heavy wind blew from the west, rattling the windows and making the dry snow hiss against the glass, as it does in a south storm. John was up this morning just in time to save some of the pipes from freezing: the wind drove the cold into the house; and Mr. Todo found it so chilly, that he was glad to spend the night in my bed, under the clothes.

..... Yesterday I drove to the village to mail a letter to you; Polly was cramped up (you know how horses stand in severe weather, with the flank dropped, the legs drawn in) and was dancing as if on hot plates; there was a cutting wind and much drifting snow in the air: I guessed that the temper-

ature was as low as zero; but on reaching home, I was surprised to find it ten below.

Now it is half after three: I have just come up from the barn where I have been to see the beasties: they seem reasonably comfortable; the horses are double blanketed. The bow-wows go on three legs; and nearly shake themselves to little bits, when out of doors and the touch of the brass door knob on the bare fingers stings like fire. The temperature rose 5 degrees about one; but the wind has since changed to the north, and now I see there is a drop again to 16 below. I expect this will be a record breaking night at Four Winds. For my own part, I am amused by watching to see how low the temperature will fall; I do not suffer from the cold. With the western parlor shut off, and by diligent feeding of the fire I have been able to keep the main parlor at about 50.

I find that Carmi has to go down for groceries, so I send this off, though I expected to finish up the note with something startling -- say -- 30 , but you will have to wait for this in my next.

E. M. T.

With love. -

Feb. 9th, '95.

Dear Mummie:

I have no objection to the entrance of Harry Holt's picture for the Webb prize, though I feel quite sure it will be of no avail: I do not think it so good a performance as my last year's picture; and that failing of the prize, I think there is small chance of this one.

This week has been the most severe I have ever known: this is the fifth day since the thermometer has remained below zero. On the coldest of these days it never rose higher than thirteen below. It is now 6 below, I believe. To add to this, we have had high winds, much snow, and very little sunlight. Indeed the snowis so deep, that I fear, in the thaws to follow, that the roads will be impassable. The day before yesterday I took Polly out: she was very fresh and went nicely;

but the cold was too intense for the driving to be other than painful. I had to change hands continually, sitting on the disengaged one, to restore circulation.

Henry Gibbs was here the other day: the man's nerves are gone, as a result of overwork since his accident; He trembled so much that he could hardly sign the receipt of his bill. He tells me he is affected that way at every slight excitement, and sometimes, he cannot speak so as to be understood.

Last night "a gentleman" was announced, and followed Jenny into the Parlour. He was a gentleman with a little black bag, containing preposterous representations of fruit and flowering shrubs, for which he wished to obtain an order. I managed to compromise by taking his name and address, and expressing my willingness to order by him whatever I shall need of his wares. He hinted darkly of calling again in a week, so this security is but temporary. The gentleman is a Mr. Bandy of Waterbury, and I could not but express my admiration of his fortitude in the prosecution of his business. It was at that time quite dark (about half past seven o'clock) there was a cold wind from the west, drifting the snow heavily, and the thermometer stood at 8 below. No snow plows had been through the roads; and for the most part, he must have trudged knee deep. He wore no boots, and only a kind of mackintosh for an outside coat.

Mr. Todo is a very "gento" boy, and has his pocket full of good behavior and merit cards. I think you ought to bring him a prize of some sort.

Love to all. E. M. T.

Feb. 18th, '95.

Dear Florence:

You ask me if I am not to send another picture to the Exhibition; I really don't know. Perhaps you heard that I began one of the mountain, that I was compelled to relinquish;

and my hope was then to finish a smaller winter sunset picture, which I began in November.

The reason why I gave up the former, is that the subject is too great to be treated otherwise than with the best of whatever powers one may possess. This winter I have been conscious of the beauty of the country, rather as pain than a pleasure, It has oppressed without inspiring me: all this winter's painting I have done under a compelling sense of duty, and not because I have found interest or amusement in it. I have felt the difficulties much more than heretofore, and they are great. In the first place the weather is so variable that the same effect (or what is approximately the same, sufficiently so for a painter's purpose) occurs perhaps at intervals of four or five days; then the excessive cold compels one to paint in a cumbersome fur coat, and causes such difficulties as the clouding of the glass, the stiffening of the fingers, and limits my endeavors to the little space of some two hours, for besides the energy expended in the work, there is the additional demand of resistance to the cold. You can well imagine that work so interrupted, and of such short duration, must be taken up in no very placid spirit: whenever the opportunity occurs to continue my painting, I find I begin work in a flurry, made nervous by the feeling that something must be accomplished before the effect changes, or my energy fails, and hardly have I worked myself into a state of calmness, when either the one cause or the other puts an end to the proceedings. My eyes, also, have suffered from the snow glare; in painting the mountain picture particularly, for in that case I faced the sun (though not directly). I said I had hopes of finishing the smaller, sunset picture; but now I have serious doubts on the subject: Of course you know that the running of this place involves considerable work and thought and time: every thing, almost, that is done on any farm is done here, the chief difference being in the matter of degree. There is some phase of the work that calls for my direction almost every day. Last spring I found that, at an average, I spent two hours every day on farm matters, besides what thought I was compelled to give to such things at other times. This is not so busy a season; but when you consider that I now have the charge of the house also, and the care and responsibility of the lit-

tle dogs (who are almost as exacting as children) you may be able to understand that I cannot get on very fast with my painting.

I received a telegram from you today which I must say does not strike me as very reasonable. The difficulty I spoke of, is ended: Ella is able to be about and do her work as formerly. If she had continued to be ill, I should have had to hire some help for the cook; who, though she made no complaint of the additional work, yet has none of the loyalty or sense of allegiance (American servants are quite without such qualities) which might have helped her to accept the difficulties of the situation with good will. It was for this reason that I wanted to know as near as possible when Mummie would be likely to return.

I think you kept Lincoln's birthday better than did most people, I mean those that ate dinners and listened to speeches. Truly this age is the triumph of Philistinism. If Lincoln could have heard the pitiful and vulgar gabble, that this anniversary has occasioned, perhaps he might have repented of saving such a nation of nonentities. Now that England, Japan and most of the hitherto quiet corners of the world, are beset with radicals and reformers, the United States, by contrast, seemed to possess some little of conservatism and respectability;- 'twas but seeming: Every public occasion discovers the contrary.

Yours, E. M. T.

March 3d, '95.

Dear Florence:

Your letter wh. arrived when we were at Wtby, was very welcome, and I am delighted to hear that St. Gaudens' liked my picture. It will be the only work of mine at the Exhibition this year; .....

I have read Harry's article in the Forum, and found it interesting, and I have no doubt of its being excellent, tho'

my understanding of such matters is very feeble: in its expression it seemed very much to the point. In the same number was an article by Boysen, or what's his name, an American Swedish professor at Columbia? Did you read it? Perhaps it was put in as a contrast to Harry's hard sense: it is the most monstrous confession of wrongheaded idiocy, that even these miserable times afford.

..... E. M. T.

March 4th- 95-

Dear Mrs. Elliot:

You have no doubt thought it odd that I did not return the Lord Ormont you sent me, but the truth is, I ventured to keep it because I was anxious not to lose the opportunity of reading the book, and yet could not find sufficient strength of mind to begin the struggle with the forced and baffling style of its telling. I have just returned from Waterbury, where I went on the unpleasing compulsion of tooth ache; and I took the book with me in the hope that being cut off from my usual occupations I would find myself better disposed to deal with it; a hope realized: It has given me much pleasure; but I cannot agree with you in thinking it is one of Meredith's best.

My mother, who is with me now, has but lately come from New York, where she left Florence and all her household in good health.

I must tell you of a little trip my mother and I took (while at Waterbury) for the purpose of seeing a horse of the old and now rare (in unmixed descent) Morgan stock.

We drove through the towns of Waitsfield and Moretown, which lie southeast of Camelshump. The latter is a wildish region, well timbered; and the road was interesting and but little travelled. There were no distant views, for the valleys were deep and narrow; but the peak of the hump from time to time overlooked the dark spruce-clad ridges.

At a well-to-do farm near Waitsfield, we found what we went to see. The horse shows his affinity in blood to the old Black Hawk, in his spirited bearing as well as in the jet black and glossy coat. His head was wide at the eyes and exceedingly long from the setting of the ear to the eye, which was of a clear hazel; the nose fine and tapering, the lips thin. His legs were clean, hard and sinewy, the hoofs round and high. The flank exceedingly deep, and the loins broad and muscular, as in all Morgans, the body round; the back short: the neck heavy, with a swelling crest against which the diminutive ear was almost hidden. He was a horse of the old times, such as one sees in Flemish battle pieces of the 17th century; of great solidity yet with an Arabian fineness of finish.

A deficiency of bone in the shoulders was perhaps his only failing. He was small, barely 15 hands; but with a carriage and action I have seldom seen equalled. It shows the saddest degeneracy in New England's tastes and morals, that such a stock as this horse represents, is now superseded by the poor creature, loose-coupled, leggy, wooden headed, the Hameltonian trotting horse. Truly we live among an unblessed generation: when the lumber dealers and horse breeders have accomplished their ends, it will be time for a second deluge.

This winter has been very severe; bare ground has not been seen here for four months; we have almost given up hope of any other season. One looks anxiously now for shorelarks, tree sparrows, perchance bluebirds: so far, none have made an appearance.

My mother sends her love to you.

I am very sincerely yours,

E. M. T.

Mch. 11/95.

Dear Florence:

Thank you so much for the cunning sketch of Elliot, who must have grown considerably to appear so calm, so self-

contained; but for that matter, he was never very young.

You will be sorry to hear of a triumph of Philistines and Malignants, in the final success of the railroad party of Stowe. There has been much throwing about of brains -- that is to say all that could be mustered to the controversy. To add insult to injury the projected road is to be the offensively modern electric railway; steam we might have suffered without bitterness for time and use have gathered considerable poetry about the steam railway -- but an electric road .....! Of course the idea is to communicate with Morrisville eventually, in order to catch the White Mountain tourist; and within a year or two, I doubt not, a branch line will be run to the summit of the mountain.

I really think this success is partly due to the personal popularity of Mr. Pike, one of the projectors of the scheme, and partly to Mr. Wilkins somewhat overbearing advocacy of the opposition. Mr. Wilkins position with the voters of Stowe is like that of a hectoring monitor among boys: he has spited them, like the Latin grammar master, and receives a like reward. I did not go to the town meeting or vote on the question; I am too much Laodicean to take an active part; indeed, although this tempest in a teapot seems an assurance of real and lively interests, yet I find myself regarding these affairs like a sharer of Royce's philosophy: (according to Harry Taber's story of Royce and Pres. Hall) "real if you like; but not <u>damned</u> real",

Love to all.

Yours,

E. M. T.

I have at last read <u>Lord Ormont</u> (which I suspected to be not quite in Geo. Meredith's best vein, on account of its popularity) I have written Mrs. Elliot and returned the book, so that's done with.

March 17th, '95.

Dear Florence:

Thanks for the catalogue: I agree with you about Kenyon Cox's design; yet like all of his, it has so much that is good and truthful, that one laments all the more, that additional feeling (of poetry, sense of beauty, what?) the charm which is always lacking. His is a Spartan attitude: he will not concede a stroke, a line to the pettiness of the "pretty"; rather he seems happy to insist on what is unlovely, than to relax his severity.

I like the Blashfield sketch very much -- at least the head; the pose I do not think has much charm. Simmon's widow I thought simply dead uninteresting; and I found French's children too literal, too much of the body and too little of the spirit.

Do you care for Lord Ormont? Frankly I do not like it particularly; I do not believe in George Meredith; he seems to be in a false position as a novelist, he is so little of a story teller; and I think this is why the sophisticated age has come so to doat upon him. It seems as if he did not feel well enough convinced of the reality of his story, to dare to put it in simple phrase; his style seems a device to create atmosphere, not only to assist the reader's, but to help his own powers of realization.

Mrs. Elliot said that in this book he exhibited a better grasp of the story, a more convincing lead to the culminating situation (at least I understood her so) but I do not find it so: it seems to me just as little inevitable as others, his works. It is like the studio work of a painter: it does not convince on the face of it, but requires some adaptation of the mood in order to believe in it; and then one is rewarded with much that is true, and a great deal that is beautiful. The two heros are shadowy, but pleasing; I have no distinct impression of either Lord Ormont or Maty. I dare say mine is not the kind of mind to do justice to the work; perhaps you will think so too when I say that for me "the man Morefield" is the real hero, and that episode the best part of the story.

Yours,

E. M. T.

April 4, '95.

Dear Florence:

I have had such a delightful letter from Thayer concerning my picture. I'll enclose it to you because I know both you and Harry would like to see it. Pray show it to no one else. You know how kind Thayer is, how apt to do more than justice to every one but himself.

I suppose the frames will be along presently. In about a week I shall send down my picture, (not pictures, which you write of). There is but one, and that a poor thing. It is indeed a complete failure.

It fails to convey the effect and sentiment it is supposed to catch, as also it fails in the way it is painted. I would not send it only that Thayer's letter and the favorable things said about the picture now exhibited, give me a kind of Dutch courage.

I seem to have painted this one with stiff fingers, frozen paint, and heart and mind considerably below zero. Indeed such is partially true.

It is very unskillful, not truly felt, and also not finished; -- but of finishing it I despair, because it is our expectation to spend next winter in the south -- Otherwise I should be glad to let the thing go over another year.

Love to all.

Yours,

E. M. T.

.....

What Thayer says about Stevenson is true and interesting, is it not? Also it would be a good description of what Geo. Meredith lacks.

No. 9 Oread Place,
Worcester, Mass. April 22d, '95.

Dear Florence:

.....

I am pleased that you have asked Brush: I want his criticism, and also I want to hear how you are impressed by him. I do not know him, but think he must be excellently simple, Spartan, etc.

There is here a picture of Joe's which he painted long ago, at Scarboro'. I never knew before how truthful it was, though I have always taken pleasure in its color. But acquaintance with a mountainous country has taught me a little concerning those transitions from purple to blue which terminate at last in so pure a color, that it would be hard to exaggerate in what one's palate offers. The foreground is pale, as if the sunshine bleached out color -- but the distance of a jewel like brightness. It is just as I see nature. It has a charming warm, afternoon atmosphere;- it is indeed, too soft, too warm for rigid New England, and I should think it very characteristic of the place in which it was painted.

..... With love,

E. M. T.

[Worcester]
April 25th, '95.

Dear Mummie:

..... You can well understand how one misses birds, particularly at this time of year (for the English sparrow is not a bird, rather the case of the transmigrated soul of a street urchin) Instead of the song sparrow's the white throat's or the robin's song to hear of mornings that dry harsh sound -- bird note it is not.

..... Love to all.

E. M. T.

May 1st,
9 Oread Place, Worcester, Mass.

Dear Florence:

I trust the baby has not had a severe attack of grippe (hideous word!) Are you sorry at having to go back to Lakewood?- Still, it is the country.

The 30th of last month was Carlotta's birth day, but Miss Chapin being away, the festivities were postponed until today. They consisted of a little cake with four candles (white and red), ladies fingers and a dish of ice cream of the same variety in color.

Carlotta sat at the head of the table and dispensed the good things; and the company consisted of her sisters and Helen Thayer (a neighbor) and little Margaret Getchell (aged 3 1/2).

I lunched with Mr. and Mrs. Getchell; Harry was to have been there also, but he arrived very late, having been detained by a lecture: but, when we came away, we took Margaret with us, as it seems the children were anxious to have her of the party. Her mother, at the last moment, thrust into her hand a small box containing two feathers fit to decorate a doll's bonnet, and gave her to understand that they were a present for Carlotta. This extraordinary little lady then marched off with these two, to her, almost strange men, taking Harry's hand with one of her own, and in the other clutching fast her box. This box seemed to weigh upon her mind, for she refused to allow me to carry it for her, and at the very moment of crossing the threshold and meeting with Carlotta (who came to open the door for us) she, in impressive silence, thrust it forward into Carlotta's hands. The latter received it without much understanding the nature of the presentation, whereat, Margaret repossessed herself of it, and still silently, with her eyes fixed solemnly on Carlotta's, removed the cover, disclosed the contents, and shutting the box, again placed it in Carlotta's hands.

All queries addressed to her, she answered with nods, and made but one remark during the feast; something she said in a loud and cheerful tone, but nobody understood it. It was in a language quite of her own; and each child in succession gave up the effort to interpret it.

They were very cunning and pretty - Helen Thayer was amusing too, a plain, simple faced , Yankee toned little girl, pale-eyed and blonde.

For the last two days Dolly has been running the establishment, washing and dressing her sisters and ordering the dinners, and maintaining the dignity of a housekeeper, which is no small matter in the face of such difficulties as are presented by "a playful grocery", who will insist upon miscalling the whole family: Dolly as "Susie"; Frances, "May"; and Carlotta, "Jack"! The last, much (though humorously) resented.

Well, I shall have to consider that I have painted a good picture, if everybody will praise it. That was lovely about Thayer: - perhaps he was not deceived! Thanks for writing me so fully of everybody's opinion; I was, of course, interested to hear all.

The children's table today was decorated with what they call May flowers - "trailing arbutus" - smelling sweet as honey suckle. It grows in the country hereabout, in great quantity.

There were several little presents beside the two feathers; two pots of flowers, a paper doll, and a rabbit in a head of lettuce. (Sketch.)

I suppose Hal is well; I hope to hear of Elliot being all right again shortly. How do you like Lakewood?- There are some sweet woods I know, but, of course, too much haunted.

Well, farewell, with love,

E. M. T.

May 13th, '95.

Dear Florence:

The weather has very suddenly turned from an unusual heat, which advanced foliage (in two weeks) to the degree that's usually seen here about the middle of June (for the apple blossoms had already begun to show themselves, and the

ashes were out) to a nipping and an eager air. Frost is again on the mountains; and if the present heavy cloud should break and disperse, tonight will be one of significance to birds, (if they had the wit? rather the folly, to make much of such matters); for a frost on the lowlands will certainly destroy the wild cherry crop.

Many thanks for your long letter; which you did well to address to Stowe; I have been here since Wednesday; ....

I trust you have the same agreeable change of weather at Lakewood, tho' not in so marked a degree. I have some recollection of the place; the lake in particular; it was a soothing, placid, dismal tarn.

I suppose you see many birds of kinds unfamiliar: Summer tanager, for instance? Do the tufted chicadees come so far north as N. J.?

Here we have not heard a note of the thrushes as yet: If I went down to the swamp after sunset I might hear the winter wren; that would be the best song now - none better at any time except, of course, the immortals and devils, hermits and veerys.

I must tell you about my visit to Merwin: unfortunately he had gone up to Boston on the day of my arrival, but, as he returned in the 5 o'clock train, I saw something of him. He looks and acts exactly as he did of yore; but I expected no change in him. I think he was greatly pleased to see me; and I enjoyed the short time with him very much. His interests are mostly in the stable; and all that, which formed the principal part of our conversation and took up most of our time, would not be interesting to recount.

I hope the children are all quite well now -

Love to all,

E. M. T.

P.S. Your poem I thought good - indeed some of it I like much. I should like to talk to you about it when you come up. You have considerable of the poetic feeling, I think, but what you lack are coherency and a logical way of thinking. Both of the greatest importance in poetry, is it not so?

E. M. T.

Sunday, Aug. 18th, '95.

Dear Mummie:

Yesterday a most trying day: the air thick and enervating, and an irritating wind from the southward. About 2 o'clock thunder began to roll; and from that time, with short intervals of quiet, continued until about 2 of the next morning. Storms kept making up along the mountains from the southwestward and were doubtless heavy on the lake, these backed up across the valley against the south wind; and we seemed to be at the centre of the struggle. The first gun was a rattling peal, that left behind it a close sulphurous smell: the wind dropped dead, and the air was sultry almost to suffocation. The rain held off, however, so that all the oats were taken in, excepting what would make about two loads which was too much wetted; I took Polly down to the village, in order to get the telegram from you (by which I see that you met Robert - a fact which gives us all the greatest satisfaction) and to mail my note. Harry went with me, also Tip and Toby, the latter had been hurling himself upon me at every thunder clap; and I found it more for his and for my own comfort to dispose of him under the seat, where the rattle of the wheels, a little confused and diminished his impressions of the vengeances aloft. From seven o'clock that evening, when the first storm broke with violence, until early this morning, we were in a thick, sultry blanket of mists, lit up for several hours with rapidly recurring flashes and continuous muterings and burst of thunder. At about nine o'clock I gave Toby into Mary's keeping; for he pursued me up and down, until at last he seemed the remorseless and horrid creature of a nightmare -- Even Tip was cowed; and at the louder claps of thunder she put her tail between her legs and crept under the sofa.

I noticed during the afternoon that the cows and horses in the fields acted as if they anticipated a severe storm: they stood facing away from the wind; and were no longer feeding.

There must have been some singular quality in the air that induced a morbidly nervous condition: every one seemed affected by it. The children so cried out at the lightning that Harry spent the most of the evening in their nursery

trying to reassure them.

I put on my boots and a rubber coat and taking a lantern went down to the barn; because I brought Polly home very much heated, & I feared that there might be a lively draught thro' the stable. I found Polly cooled off and in no danger of catching cold: Nancy was also cool; but Nigel was in a sweat: Although he had been working in the afternoon, he was put in the barn at about the same time that Polly arrived home. I wondered if his condition might not have been the effect of fear? As soon as the violence of the thunder storm had passed, the south wind renewed its fury: screaming and hooting as it does in a November storm, and forcing the rain under the edge of the sash. At about one o'clock the most severe of these storms passed. The laboring of the trees in the wind, the rush and hiss of the leaves, had been tremendous: suddenly, it all ceased: there was a pause: in which, could we hear the low roar, growing louder and sharper, of the coming rain. It was just such an effect as we experienced a year ago last June, (you remember perhaps) but it was followed on this occasion by such vivid lightning, that I could not feel satisfied to remain in bed, but got up and dressed myself, and even went down stairs, lighted a lantern and put on my boots and rubber coat, to be ready in case of such disaster, as that of the barn being struck. Happily I had no Toby with me: Mary kept him in her room during the night: I understand she did not get very much sleep. This storm, however, proved to be the last of the series; rain continued during the night, but the wind gradually subsided. I expected to see the rest of the oats perfectly flat this morning: some people's are; but somehow ours have miraculously escaped.

Every one is exceedingly snappish and irritable today- that is to say both Harry and I are. It has been hot with a southwest wind, and tonight it looks like rain -- I trust no more thunderstorms. .....

Yours,

E. M. T.

Stowe, Vt.
Aug. 19th. '95.

Dear Joe:

.....I have heard from Thayer about his portrait of Miss Balestier; I guess between them, the lady with so much of a delicate charm, and the painter with such rare powers for just such expression, that it must be a lovely thing.

He sent me a photograph of his "Virgin Enthroned", which is impressive, and to me, who know so well the subtilties of his work, suggests something very beautiful.

Well, farewell.

Ever yours
E. M. T.

Sept. 2d. '95.

Dear Florence:

I wrote you on the 31st., having then received from Mrs. Elliot the photographs etc. of Rodin's work; but I kept the letter, since on perusal of it I found its tone very unsympathetic; and I did not wish to express myself rashly -- particularly in a matter where it seems you feel so strongly. I know what you worship in art: force; so I am not surprised at your admiration.

I am sorry I cannot sympathise with you; but I am not touched,- all I feel is the man's power.

Even you must admit the incompleteness of the work, its great lacking: absence of charm. And also it seems to me that in subjects that offer most poetically he succeeds less well.

The Saint John I cannot admire; there seems no feeling for beauty, none even for dignity; the Calais burghers, tho' impressive, is a trifle grotesque - a parlous fault-; and, as for the '93 which you so admire, I think considering the nature of the subject, it is inadequate. There is incompleteness in the artistic makeup, and a want too, of the best

qualities, in one, who treating the subject, suggests the terror and passion, without the heroic fire.

The portrait busts are, of course, full of power - and of character.

The door I suppose is the work on which to form a judgment, but of that I get too slight an impression to venture any opinion. Indeed, unless one is at once in sympathy with the work, how little impression, these few sketches etc. give!

I keep them until Harry's return, I know he has a much nicer feeling in such matters than I; I shall let you know what he thinks.

I read the article to my great suffering in mind and body: in the first, through Mr. Brownell's too facile, space-filling pen (he seems indeed a child of the times) remembering too late that you warned me against such rash adventure; and in the second, because of my bad eyes, that see all print in wabbly lines.

When do you come up? Soon I hope; it is so lovely here now.

Yours
E. M. T.

Oct. 6th '95.

Dear Florence:

We are more disappointed than we can well say that you are not coming up. Never did the country look more charming - it is now literally of the loveliest rose color; for we have none of the too clear weather of autumn, nor yet of the thick and hazy kind, so characteristic of the time of year: the atmosphere is more that of spring, with a slight moisture in the air, which gives softness to the landscape.

A few days since, when I had nothing else to do, I undertook to illustrate and write short moral tales for the children's amusement. The second of the series, proves somewhat above their comprehension, or rather, out of their element, so I look for a more mature audience.

Love to all.

Yours
E. M. T.

Daly's revival of Henry IV looks like a challenge. If the papers were not so vile and irresponsible, the so called critics such poor white trash, and the public such a besotted ass, nothing could be better for our side than the opportunity to contrast a really feeling performance with the endeavors of the ignorant, consequential jackanapes.

As it is I think there is a fair chance for the cause of art and virtue.

Farewell.

E. M. T.

Oct. 1895.

Dear Florence:

.....Mummie cut you out a newspaper scrap about John Jay Chapman; Excellent was it not? I think his method of enlightening the lower classes the best yet hit up; sound reasons, enforced by sound kicking - what could be simpler?

Tell me about Joe, if you have seen him.....

And all you can find out of what Prof. Pompelly said of Roseland -

I want you very much to ask Mrs. Evans, to ask her cousin (?) Mr. Mifflin, to inquire out the history of Mrs. Catherwood, where she lives, what her social position is, what her nationality - if French, English or American - her age, personal appearance etc. etc. - all he can find out about her. This is because I have just finished 'The Romance of Dollars' - the best book (novel) in my opinion, from any American pen, since Hawthorne. Do not forget to make this request, will you? Also how many years since she wrote Dollard".

Love to all.

E. M. T.

November '95.

Dear Joe:

.....As I told you I have no great work of art as a result of my summer's labors - it is a curious thing that I cannot paint in summer - the heat and the bright broken sunlight, produce in me an irritable and feverish condition, I had begun to sketch my grey mare into an autumn picture which stopped at 4/5 of completion last year, and the year before, and for the same cause has carried over this autumn - It advances by square inches yearly - I have a mind to abandon it definitely - human life is too short, too subject to accident to meet the requirement of this exacting canvas -

But seriously, is it not odd that I should be paying my first dues to the Society of Artists, just as I appear to be going out of the business?

Faithfully
E. M. T.

This letter should be on page 205.

22d. Dec. ~~1895.~~ 1894

Dear Florence:

Your description of Aunt Hattie's melodramatic conversation we thought very funny;- sure it is a fine entertainment of the curdling kind.

I may as well say now, as to confess later, that I shall probably fail you in the scheme of collecting our verses, which you proposed to me when you were here. For I have really next to nothing to contribute; so, by all means, on without me.

What a blow this news is of Stevenson's death! It will soon be that one dare not look under the cover of a new book, for fear of powerful dealing with the "question of the hour", the "problem of today etc., or of finding such crooked expression, such jumbling of words, as to make the reading a toil.

Hal's collection of objects of art was very cunning.

A very merry Christmas to him, you, Harry and all your house.

By the way, you said you would look up the name of that little alpine flower found at North East Harbor, and wh. from the description I thought resembled the little plant that was so puzzling to me when I was on the mountain last summer.

Will you do so?

With love, E. M. T.

Dec. 8th. '95.

Dear Florence:

.....I did not wish to take the photograph of Bunker, because I cannot well carry it with me south - and I may say, also, that I do not altogether like it. It is very like, very interesting, but neither very characteristic or sympathetic to my thinking. If it is the only one, of course it is of peculiar value to his friends: but I think of Bunker as wearing in general, a different expression.

I think you sent the history of Dramatic Art: I send it back, because I cannot grasp so many subjects all at once.

If I should try to read and understand all the things you send me, my poor mind, already a sad tangle, would be hopelessly frayed out in a dozen directions.

Thanks very much all the same.

I'll write you as soon as we get to Bainbridge:- it seems we may arrive there some time - but it is a dreadfully distant country.

Much love. E. M. T.

Bainbridge, Georgia,
Dec. 27th. '95.

Dear Florence:

I have just finished Hardy's book, miscalled novel. Some time ago I ventured the bold statement, when Harry and I were discussing the author in question, that I thought "Tess" just escaped being a decided failure as a work of art, and that in any view, it was artistically feeble. It was the intensity of feeling, and the poetry of Tess's personality, and(what Harry rightly calls Hardy's great power, his best) the suggestion of the poetry in the old pagan peasant life of England, that were the saving elements in the book. On the other hand the dry, loveless, inartistic treatment of the villain, and of almost all the other characters, including Angel himself-- is surely a damning quality. No man who undertaking to write a novel concentrates all his feeling, on a single character, can hope for an artistic whole; but to treat other characters as creatures repellant to his own feelings (as is evidently his attitude toward his villain, Alec) is absurd. No record made with aversion or loathing, is art. Artistic villainy is created otherwise; I'll venture to say that nothing in the way of the devil, outdoes our friend "Pew". And yet, instead of being a dead, indigestible weight like Alec d'Urbeville, he is a joy forever, a kind of horrible delight. And why? Because he is moulded by the loving touch of the real artist. Perhaps Hardy is too emotional to be a perfect artist - well, however that may be, he is not now the man who wrote "Far from the Madding Crowd"-; he's turned himself into a realist or a queerist, or something that is not an artist.

This "Jude the Obscure" is a wonderful instance of what the evil times may bring forth, It is told in the deadest, most perfunctory manner; it has not one touch of what Harry calls his great power, indeed so far from showing the poetry of the peasant life, it evidently aims at the reverse; and ugly and accidental incidents are insisted upon, as with the true realists. It is so persistently pushed in the directions of defeat and misery, that to my thinking it is not a truthful picture of human life. The characters are treated with a remarkable lack of feeling; he has not been able, ap-

parently, to expand any emotional power upon one, even: he is simply, like Dogberry bestowing his tediousness upon us. "What! the public should cry like the horrified Leonato "all your tediousness upon us!" It is a dreadful thing for an artist to get to holding theories: the title page of "Tess" was the first sign of it, in the acute form, in Hardy's case -- now he seems past cure. The next thing you will find, he'll be writing plays like Ibsen's, and I'm disposed to think they will not be so good!

I think in the preface he says something to the effect that he has endeavored to bring home to the reader's appreciation, the tragedy of misunderstood endeavors, and defeated aims. So far as the shock to the sensibilities of the reader are concerned, he (Hardy) may rest him merry: It wants art to raise a story to the height of tragedy. But as, after all, his wish was probably "to make your flesh creep", it would be no consolation to him that nervous tissue had been spared. However, his reward will be great in the sale of his book, and the applause of the Philistines.

You see I am rather vexed; but so must all be who once loved Hardy.

We are delighted to know of Harry's being at home; it is so much a relief to Mummie's anxiety. We should like to hear all the news there is from Edith.

My love to Harry and the children. I'll write soon again.

With love,

Mintie.

Bainbridge, Georgia,
Dec. 20/95.

Dear Mrs. Elliot:

You must know that I have been long intending to answer your letters; and now, for the first time, I find myself with energy sufficient to take pleasure in doing so.

First let me go back to the photographs of the Arab-: my interest was great in them. At first, I confess, I was dis-

appointed to find less beauty than I had looked for; but the extraordinary general excellence of the points began to show themselves, as I examined more of the photographs. The only possible criticism a horseman might make, would, perhaps, be to wish for a greater length between hip and hock;-to me the hock seemed placed a little high, for perfection;- but I am really no judge. The nose and lips seemed finer than anything I have ever seen in horse flesh; but I think there are many Morgan stallions with larger brain room, wider spaced between the eyes. The expression interested me in differing from that of fine horses of our domestic breeds, though equally intelligent, it seemed rather wild than gentle.

I am very much grieved that you thought so slightly of Mrs Catherwood; I had begun to write you on the subject, because I became rather frightened at having recommended the book too highly. I am afraid I must acknowledge an hysterical temperament; yet I think there was truth in my view,- I believe the book is a rare and admirable performance. I spare you the reasons, and mention of the such parts as seemed to me especially good; for I perceive you will have none of it. Certainly there is much to condemn.

This is a singular country where we are now-- It is really the first time we have been quite separated from Northern civilization; we have here unadulterated southern life. To say that it is comfortable, enjoyable, pretty, or admirable except in respect to the air and sunshine, would be to exaggerate grossly. It is in fact rude, grim and uncomfortable; there seems to be no shrinking from - in fact no consciousness of ugliness. The town might be pretty, with its superb oaks and beautiful evergreens of many kinds, but neglect and squalor everywhere make the place far from pleasing. There are many picturesque sights, but they are of a sombre order: the wild looking black men that come in from the woods, ragged figures, with curious long-bladed axes, used for boxing the turpentine trees; the manacled prisoners that pass to and from the jail and court house, under a guard, who carry their rifles in not very soldierly manner but one that suggests convenience for a quick shot.

I do not think I have seen more than one leading citizen as yet; on the whole, the men are stout brutal looking, but not much differing from the types one sees in manufactur-

ing towns in New England. The country, north, certainly breeds something better.--still, I am not disposed to insist very strongly on this, either-New Englanders have not all the virtues.

For the past week we have been rather uncomfortably warm,- the weather in January is said to be somewhat cooler.

I must refer again to Mrs. Catherwood to thank you for the trouble you took in having all my questions concerning her, answered. I regret exceedingly that she should be proud, fat and forty! Though, of course, you will not agree with me, I think, were she 20 years younger and of an humble mind, she might sometime write something very fine indeed.

My mother sends you her love.

I am delighted to hear that Brush is to make a drawing of your little boy: Though I know nothing of his work (alas!) within the last 5 or 6 years, yet I have always greatly admired it.

It strikes me that this rambling letter, will arrive at Boston about Christmas time: permit me then to wish you and your family a happy Christmas season - a wish in which my mother joins me.

It is really hard to believe that it is close upon Christmas, while the weather remains as warm as the Vermont June: we are reminded of the fact, however, in a rather singular way, by the explosion every evening of torpedos, fire crackers etc., which the negroes call "hurrying up Christmas".

Very sincerely yours

E. M. Taber.

P. O. Box 21, Bainbridge, Georgia,
Dec. 28th. '95.

Dear Dolly, Frances and Carlotta:

You cannot imagine how glad Grannie and I were to get your presents, and to know you were thinking of us on Christmas day. I think if it were not for such reminders, we should hardly know what day was Christmas, because in this country the air is as warm as in

summer with us, the trees are green, and the people who live here (they are mostly black people, negroes you know) have the strangest way of celebrating the season: They march in procession with bands playing, and shoot off fire crackers and rockets and Roman candles, so that it seems to us more like the 4th of July than like Christmas.

We live in a house where there are two children, somewhat older than you are. One is a boy named Oliver, and the other is a pretty little girl called Hortense. Hortense had given her for Christmas, a little necklace and a kind of zither, a musical instrument with strings like a harp, but set in a wooden case. She is trying to learn to play on it. Oliver has a rifle; and, this morning, I am sorry to say, he shot a bird, a large handsome bird with bright brown feathers called a thrasher. Hortense felt very badly; I think I heard her call Oliver a "wicked, cruel boy".

I think the little pin cushion is very pretty: Did you make it yourselves? If so, I think you must be learning to sew very well.

I hope you had a very happy Christmas; and that all are well in Oread Place. Please remember me to Miss Chapin. The rest of this letter will be a few words to Fardie, so after you have read your part, will you show it to him?

Much love to you all, from

Uncle Mintie.

Dear Harry:

What is it possesses all the writers of today? How little, even when most in admiration (as brer Rabbit says) did we appreciate Stevenson! Have you read this Jude the Obscure? I sent poor Florence a five or six page letter on the subject; it contains my sentiments on this last book as well as "tess", which you remember we discussed at Stowe. I dare say you are glad that I am physically incapable of such another effort. Yet here is Geo. McDonald: in spite of theoretic tendencies, his works hitherto have had fine artistic quality; it is not lacking in "Lilith", but you meet the deadly thrust of the theory, it seems to me, with greater fre-

quency and delivered with greater disregard of the shattered illusion. In a word, he is less an artist than he used to be.

About this abominable war scare: what a miserable spectacle it is! It seems our representative government doesn't work: here are the president and both the houses ("a plague upon your houses!") so completely out of touch with the people, that they advocate (in the base hope of pleasing their constituents at any cost) a course totally at variance with the true sentiment of the people.

It is all well enough to say that if honest men exerted themselves to elect honest representatives, all would be well. The thing has happened, and therefore may again; it is a danger of our system to be guarded against or corrected; and the only way to do so, seems to me, is to have the upper house non-elective. Yet who is competent to appoint such a body? and how could it be appointed without danger of political trickery creating a state of things as corrupt as now prevails by the elective system? To have the same kind of carrion as our present senate is composed of, a fixture at Washington! The English should thank God for their House of Lords!

I have your note about Philip de Comyns; but I have had no opportunity to get the book. You see I like "Lilith" only pretty well. I hear of a Fairy Story called "The Adventures of Two Dutch Dolls and a Golliwogg". It sounds lovely; have the children it? We were so much pleased and touched to get their little Christmas gifts.

Yours,

E. M. T.

Feb. 8th. '96.

Dear Florence:

I suppose you know fully from Mummie of our pleasure in the fact of the baby's being a girl.

About the book of Esther: I have read it a year or two ago - I, of course, felt the strong dramatic quality - as who can fail to?

I do not understand quite what you want to do. I very much doubt if it could be made into a successful play;- I don't suppose you propose to undertake a dramatic poem.

To say frankly, I think it is infinitely more effective in its original form, than ever it could be in any that the children of this generation have wit enough to weave.

We have some thoughts of moving - of perhaps going so far northward as Camden, S. C.

I trust we shall reach the north -- even Vermont -- by the last of May,

Mummie is well.

With much love, Mintie.

Roseland, Bainbridge, Ga.
Feb. 29th '96.

Dear Joe:

This is now our second day at our log cabin in the pine woods, a much more desirable place than a boarding house in a southern town.

It is surprising that these odd structures do not present a more interesting appearance. This is built of the barked logs, its chimneys half of brick half of clay and sticks, it's veranda of an interesting depth; and yet it looks (somehow) odd, without being in the least picturesque. I think the trouble must be the lack of color - tis all a uniform dirty grey.

Tho' the weather is pleasantly warm, and we sit with doors and windows open until bed-time, yet there are no signs of Spring; true, there is under our windows a peach tree in blossom; and near at hand, it is a delightful intimation, but as an element in the landscape, among the dead oaks and the long shafts of the pines, it counts for very little. You know how it is in these southern woods perhaps: you hear that the jasmine is blooming in February, and your mind's eye sees the picture of bursting spring. It is a fact that the jasmine

blooms in Feb. or even earlier, but it takes nothing from the

wintry aspect of the leafless swamps: one might readily take the yellow of the flowers for frostbitten leaves.

The beauty as well as the wealth of the country is the long leafed yellow pine; the pine is a tree of all regions is it not? but I think this pine shows an affinity with tropical forms, in the manner of its growth:- the flat spreading top, so unlike the conical forms of northern evergreens. It is beautiful in color, a bright green, with shadows purple— blue, more pure in color than I have ever noticed to be the case with any other evergreen. At a distance, in this thick air, the foliage becomes a dusky purple - The edge of a pine wood where there are innumerable patches of purple shadow and the (lilac?) trunks as close as organ pipes, and where there is certain to be one or two long bone white shafts with a crown of skeleton boughs, rigid as old roots,- such a place offers a very tempting subject - I wish I had better health this winter, and could have attempted it. The winter skies, too, have been charming, like our spring skies, pale blue with light streaky clouds, and toward the horizon turning pinkish or purple.

I am much interested to hear of the attempts to make Robert and Julia a New York success. I am sufficiently sanguine to believe it will be done, in spite of the deep Augustin.

Well, farewell.

Yours
E. M. T.

My mother sends her love: she is also much interested in these dark theatrical conspiracies. I gave her your letter to read.

I saw a reproduction of Thayer's picture - it must be beautiful. I am sorry he didn't get the five thousand - but to scorn three!

Roseland, Bainbridge, Ga.
Sunday March 1st '96.

Dear Florence:

You remember the learned man thought Poetry lived in the hot country, and the shadow made certain vague claims to having there been in the anti-room of Poetry's abode. In my opinion the learned man was quite mistaken, and the Shadow having turned out such a thorough going scamp, I think it not too much to suppose him a liar, in the bargain. Poetry is too fine, too subtle a spirit ever to have left the North. To my sick eye this country seems a great waste place, crude, squalid, already half ruined. No forest where the tree trunks are not blackened by fire; scarce a pine that has not the filthy witness of human rapacity the blackened scar of an old boxing. The young oaks that flourish on the barrens are twisted, misshapen, with rough bark and bristling adventitious branches;- they are to other young trees as street urchins to innocent children. Linnaeus said of the American plants "They have an aspect at once smooth and joyous"; and to my mind's eye, the sentence brings the groves of young sugar maples with smooth, straight stems, and the crown of cool and broad leaved foliage.

To say truly this is a somewhat ungrateful mood, for in spite of myself, I have, from time to time, been struck by the beauty of color in these Georgia pines, and by the charm of the winter skies. The sandy soil too, allows a lovely blueness in shadows. It is generally a mistake to condemn; to condemn Nature always so; it is simply a way of giving expression to one's limitations. But I do not think it is Nature I find fault with; it is rather with man:- the deplorable mess he has made of this country.

You may suppose I have not seen many birds; only two that are properly natives: the Carolina chicadee, just as saucy as ours but not so pretty, lacking the buff tinge on the breast and sides - a slimmer bird,- and the Carolina wren, which haunts around these buildings, though said to be a shy species. We hear its notes as described by Chapman, frequently, in the wood. The Cardinal jay, thrasher, blue bird, flicker, crow, phoebe and a flock of wagtails (new to me) comprise the whole; strangely enough I have not seen either

robin or mocking-bird, and I have never been near enough to sparrows or warblers to identify them. Yet even if I had been in health to have been able to make some observations, I doubt if I should have been animated to do so. What are the winter birds of the south? The shadow in a sense, but more properly the substance:- it is in coming north that the soul is developed.

The spring comes grudgingly here; the weather is rather warmer than our June, more like July, and yet one must look well for the signs of spring - the general aspect is still more that of winter. At night, however, the frogs are heard,-not the crackling note of our wood frogs, but a plaintive piping, a weak and rather tremulous call.

Our man brought in some wood violets the other day, a large, rather coarse purple variety,- some wild pinks, and twigs from two little heath-like shrubs: one is the huckleberry of this region, the other (with waxy white flowers) he calls 'sparkleberry' -- the dangelberry resembles it more nearly than anything I find in my Gray.

I am afraid I have not anything very encouraging to say regarding literary attempts - my own efforts only cause me to realize how long and how difficult an art it is - how it seems to make more cruel demands than others - at least than painting. It seems so easy, the expression in words is so natural; it seems to demand so little preliminary study, nothing of the training that painting and music require; but in the end, the sentence that comes near to satisfy, is as hardly wrought out as any part of the surface of the painted canvas:- more hardly perhaps, as the effort of concentration is the greater, as there is no interesting mechanical process to hold the attention, no palpable subject, as in painting - in literature all's in the mind's eye.

I suppose this false impression arises from the fact that so many of no great genius take readily to pen and ink; the fact is of course that nothing of the same degree of badness in form and execution would be tolerated in any other art, as most current literature exhibits. In a word, literature is an art, exacting, inexorable- a dangerous thing to play with, like fire. Sometimes it seems that if you can see no prospect of giving it the best of your energies, the most of your time, you had much better abandon hope. But,

really, I do not think this view the right one to take; the greatest work of art is, in a sense, a failure - no one save the artist can know in what degree; the poorest attempt when inspired by real feeling--I mean when the subject is known and loved or deeply felt - can hardly be without some admirable quality, though the work may be too crude in form or obscure in expression to 'be worth a "christian" eye'. But it is the feeling of exultation, of spiritual uplifting, which accompanies such labors, that is of the first value; the moment when one seems to renew the lost sympathy with Nature - that is happiness. The freedom, the relief from the miserable constraints of the world, surely a great boon.

How far such occupations should be allowed to conflict with pressing duties is a question for the individual conscience, if it is really a question at all. In my opinion it skills nothing to puzzle over the matter: people will express their natures, whether or no, and the will can do no more than modify or intensify action;- like the lever of the steam engine it governs the speed, but the lines are laid beforehand in some unalterable direction.

How long do you suppose it has taken me to write you this letter?- more than six days; I write about half a page a day - I'm afraid you will find it somewhat incoherent.

I think I improve a little out here in the pine wood.

Send us the plans (a sketch) of your New York house. We were much interested.

I have received the two books and the magazine: Many thanks. I don't know who Owen Wister is or what he writes about. If it is a work on the North American Indian, or a romance I should not object. Pray do not send me anything about Mars; I have heard of Percy Lowell - I guess he is a good deal of a Bostonian.

Love to Harry and the children.

With love, Yours

E. M. T.

Roseland, Bainbridge, Ga.
March 3d. '96.

Dear Joe:

I should prefer the following manner of having my name inserted in the catalogue:

Edward Martin Taber
born 1863
pupil of Abbot H. Thayer

then follows date of election does it not?
and if permanent address is added, of course, Stowe, Vermont.

I said "no" regarding the reproduction of my picture for catalogue because I thought it would reproduce so vilely, being all blue and rose madder. The mountains, wh. should be dark, would fade out, and the evergreens in front be nothing more than black patches - I have no other reason for objecting.

Faithfully
E. M. T.

Roseland, March 9th. '96.

Dear Florence:

You need not read this letter unless you find that it does not bore you. T'is about the books you have sent me; and I write it partly because I have nothing else to do, and partly because I am cross with most modern inventions, and it is a kind of satisfaction to say so at some length.

"Glasses." Henry James' story although, in my opinion, not very successful, is a good story, but too slight for it's bulk. That is the fault of his style and the danger of being so glib; he tells his story in too many words, He may have reflected that something more sprightly than his usual manner was required, at least I so conjectured; it seemed to me very trippingly told;- at a quick step, which, somehow, did not contrive to shorten the distance. Why not finish at the climax? Why spoil the effect with still more words? It is told however with great authority: It is a pleasure to read a man so sure of his language -- a remark by the way which

would hardly be applicable in the case of your young friend, who so revels in the gift of tongues: - The only thing one may be sure about, regarding his powers of varied speech, is, that he does not speak Turkish, because he begins his article by saying so.

I suppose he can hardly seriously suppose that the general public to whom the article is addressed, or indeed his own exclusive circle, are equally familiar with Spanish, Italian, French and German. Since he is so profuse with these languages, perhaps it would not be unfair to hope that he understands them even better than his native English, and in none of the four, would make such a mistake as to use the noun in the sense of the verb, as he does with the English word "wonder" - or contrive such a sentence as the following: "Cervantes.... will be set in the estimation of men, as high, as deep, as wise as Dante." He embodies current quotation into his matter, with an ease similar to Baboo Jaberjee's in Punch; and he has certainly constructed some of the most awkward sentences on record. What he meant to say about irony, the boy and le soi-disant desillusionne, his English for disillusionized old party, he must explain privately to his friends or those who should apply for enlightenment - it is clearly not written to be understood. I disagree with you in your thinking the shorter piece in the Contributory Club, the better: "Don Quixote" is written with serious feeling (which being evident, how does it happen to be so bad?); the other is rather flippant in its tone, it strikes me. In both cases he seems to have had something to say;- why, why cannot people strive to express themselves with simplicity? whatever Mr. Sedgewick's age and attainments, he has the faults of a young writer, it must be admitted. Mrs. Elliot's revelations about Mrs. Catherwood have had a sinister influence: I begin to think it is you and I, who have made her hitherto, to write so admirably. If certain people believe earnestly in your youth, ardor, subtlety, recognize some rare quality in you, though but half expressed, is there no effect? You are young, ardent, subtile, and not old, fat and conceited, just so long as the belief remains unshaken. We have begun to doubt, and behold! the effect on the writer is seen already: Mrs. Catherwood's article is so dull, and so clumsily worded, that I had to give up reading it after a

page or two.

This "Red Badge of Courage" - have you read it? Is it the modern form of story? Is it really what we are coming to? For my part, I cannot take it seriously:- Do you happen to know how it is regarded by others? Who is Mr. Stephen Crane - is he a warrior in his own person, or is it all the power of imagination? To have fought in the war he describes, he must be at least 50 years old; and 50 years has quite another form of expressing itself.

There is something fresh in Owen Wister's book; it's the old story of western adventure, but told with much more truth, and less sentimentality than ever before (so it seems to me). The stories vary very much - "Salvation Gap" for instance, is the tiresome sentimental never very true kind of tale that Bret Harte told - only it has not his power - But on the whole the stories are good; and it is a pity the book is defaced by Remington's ugly ill-drawn illustrations.

Having read this over myself, I think it would have been the course of wisdom for you to have minded my warning - but I don't suppose you did. You won't like me because I did not like your friend; and for the rest, I don't suppose you care very much about it.

There's just nothing for me to do here, but occasionally to get into a buggy, and trail along at a walk, thro' these wood roads by the blackened pine and the rusty leaved scrub oak. In some of the more sheltered places in the open there begins to be a look of spring.

Last night we had a crashing thunder storm, and one of those flooding rains for which the region is noted: Today two ladies, in a buggy, stopped to inquire if the "creek was swimming". We could give no information; and one addressing the other, said "well, suppose we try it?" But the other objected "We'd better pay some one to wide ahead!" Comical, was it not? Their idea seemingly being that if the mercenary should drown, they would decide not to cross the creek. They went on to confer with Major Brooks on the chances.

You would like Major Brooks; he has a sense of humor and is a plucky old gentleman. He has pretty much everything the matter with his breathing processes and trouble with his heart too, I believe; but he is active and cheerful, and seems to have his hands full of the business of the estate.

I have not talked with him much but I should like

to do so; I guess from his 5 years experience here, that he must have obtained much interesting knowledge of the people and country. He tells me of Southern gentlemen, his neighbors calling upon him in the morning and making protest at the suggestion of having their horses put up; but yielding, they linger on until dinner time. With some reluctance, they accept the invitation to dine. In the midst of the afternoon, as it seems, supper-time surprises them; they consent to remain to that meal; and finally, well after dark, they mount and ride on their way.

Love to all.

Yours
E. M. T.

I find I have forgotten Howells! I cannot let the opportunity pass; I must say something disagreeable about him, too. You needn't read it unless you want to, but I feel constrained to write my opinion of his "Boy's Town", who told you, or did you tell me, that this book flavored less of W. D. H. than others-his productions? How can it be so, seeing that it is a kind of auto-biography? It strikes me as being the very essence of Howells; and very instructive as a kind of explanation of him and of the peculiar American philistinism. Howells' "My Boy" is, on reflection, very much what you might expect, a boy of much sensibility, but surprisingly deficient in imagination, with a very small leaven of poetry in his nature.

The picture Howells draws is on the whole a truthful one, I think; though it strikes me he is not at all times sympathetically in touch with his subject; and, of course, it is truth in glimpses, as he always presents it, as if he never had the whole scene in view at once, but was looking thro' the slats of the fence. But it shows in some degree how our enlightened American people come to be what they are: brought up in an atmosphere purely industrial in a country without traditions, monuments or indeed history - it is not surprising that when they have developed fully their accomplished ambition, is the steam-heater, the hot and cold water supply and electric illumination - perhaps, in addition, the 19th Century Club, or (in another variation) a span of 2'20 trotters.

Howells perpetually harps on boys' failures, and seems not to feel that the successes are made in the imagination and so outrun the little skill and limited means a boy has control of. Thus the desire is satiated long before a tenth part of the task they set themselves is accomplished. One almost fancies he has forgotten his youth, though attempting to describe it, when he speaks- of the circus.

Do you notice the crumbs of socialistic doctrine, so artfully strewn along the way? It is just as well that youth swallows that kind of food without tasting. Howell's theory of equality does not strike me as being particularly sound: the boy is never to fancy himself peculiarly gifted, or differently constituted from his neighbor; he must not hold himself one whit better - (logically, his neighbor in nothing more excellent than himself?) I admit that the moral difference is less than that of temperament, but further I cannot agree.

How successfully he reduces all to the dead level of common place! and with what feelings of emptiness and weariness you close the covers of his book! He is not much in awe of childhood; children's failures, children's fears form the comical element of the work, repeated from chapter to chapter until it becomes a little oppressive.
On the whole it does not seem to me a very valuable contribution to literature.

Oh, how idle are these comments! how tiresome! But I am an idle person, with idle asperations and an idle future.

You should see Mummie and I out on our occasional drives: If I thought I could convey all the oddity of the spectacle I'd attempt a little sketch; but picture to yourself a turn-out so worn that the running gear has lost all trace of its coat of paint, and in its harness has a heavy archaic character, as if of native construction; it is the normal condition of the Georgian vehicle, however, though the hubs slide and jar on the spindles and the wheels turn with waverings - Our horse is an old blind stallion, wall eyed, knee-sprung, who trudges at a walk, (our chosen pace) on unshod hoofs, that have never known cleaner or paring knife; the harness is russet with age and patched with pieces of twine. Mummie, in a large purple blue sunbonnet, is the driver, and I sit by her side like the picture of Svengali; my hair is longer than it has ever been before and hangs in

snaky locks on my coat collar, my face, of an unpleasing pallor, is narrower than usual and obscured by a close black beard; with a black felt hat and black shawl wound about my throat, you may fancy the kind of sepulchral image I appear,- like some dreadful kind of mock parson.

I have seen the brown headed nut-hatch and the tufted tit-mouse, both not of our acquaintance in the north. There are many birds now; but my eyes are too weak to look against the sky for them, and they flit among the budding tops of oaks, avoiding the deadwood of the lower level: I cannot go far to observe them, either, because dreadful inertia weighs like lead on every step and motion: the common action of living is with me, like a fight. Another curious cause that limits my crawlings about, is the extraordinary dryness of the oak leaves, which underfooting produce so sharp and harsh a noise, as to cause pain and numbness of the ears. We hear the cardinal now very often; and after the often repeated "che-cw, che-ow",- follow the most charmingly modulated call notes, very sweet and coaxing. The wren still keeps our neighborhood.

How we rejoiced over your letter describing Robert and Julia's happy reception! I am struck with surprise every now and then, when I realize that I have never seen him as Romeo-, I see him so clearly in the mind's eye. It answers nothing to lament our exile; but a word on this subject would lead to too many words.

I re-enclose Joe's amusing note.

Your

E. M. T.

Roseland, Bainbridge, Ga.
March , '96.

Dear Florence:

I have read the article on Michael Angelo's sonnets; did you want me to say what impression I received from it? Heaven forbid that I should set up as a critic of anything - more especially of what I understand so little.

It is easy enough to point out the obvious errors, failures in taste or feeling, such as distinguished the books and articles we lately discussed. I decline to say anything about Mr. Chapman's rendering of Michael Angelo into English: But in lauding the sonnets so highly, claiming more for them, it would seem, than is allowed anything save Shakespeare, Homer and the Bible, it behooves him, in his translations to give some intimation of this extraordinary power, these subtle qualities - otherwise he fails to convince:- It's a large undertaking and it may be that the article would have been more convincing without the poetry; I think much that he said was interesting and sometimes I found the expression poetical - For my own part, I very much doubt if I could write so many words, in as proper an order, with as little violence to English grammar; and yet I feel no shrinking in saying that the article is neither very elegant or very correct prose. My suggestion that it might have been more convincing with the poetry left out, is nothing more than a suggestion in view of the very large obligation imposed; I did not mean to imply, you must understand that the poetry was <u>bad</u>; I hold myself utterly incapable of any intelligent opinion on that subject.

I am glad to hear that you received our circular or prospectus: It is half jest and half earnest. Mummie and I wanted to propose to you to rent the Stowe house for the summer, and it made a kind of amusement for us to present the idea in that business like form. It's rather more elaborate than funny, I admit, but we thought in parts and without deviating from the truth, we had attained the right snobbish tone - the real elegant-advertising manner. Our reasons for wishing to rent the house are the saving of money and the release from the toil of extensive housekeeping. You know, of course, that it is a close run with what money we have, to keep up the house and place as we do and meet other expenses. This is ever a strain on Mummie; and the house-keeping of so large an establishment begins, now that she is tired out with my sickness, to be more a toil than a pleasure. She takes much satisfaction in the smallness and simplicity of our housekeeping here; and to continue the same method at Stowe, would be a comfort and a release. My complete inability to look after anything concerning the farm next summer, would probably throw more than the usual

amount of responsibility on her shoulders. This in itself, makes it very desirable that we should endeavor to simplify our manner of living, either by renting the place and taking some quiet cottage, or by diminishing our stock, selling off our horses, letting the farm on some system of sharing the crop, and, in fact, reducing our responsibilities and expenses to the smallest. It is to be considered too, that if ever the care, the anxiety, the energy and the money expended upon me are to have a return, it must be by the accomplishment of something worthy in art - since it will never be by wealth, or native benevolence. I feel the less compunction then, in throwing off the responsibilities of the farm; for, although I have, for years, well known how fatal a drag such business has been upon my scant energies, yet it was inevitable and simply the result of the situation that I should accept it:

Having my living provided there, I felt under obligations to do what I could to earn it; and I was unwilling to suggest a reduction in our manner of living, which might have lessened my toil, on account of the large general change affecting others (whose rights in the place are the same as mine) that must follow any modofication in detail. Again it was partly because the business was forever at hand, tempting, calling for direction; and finally, in large part, because I did not have a true appreciation of what the position might lead to. Now, I know, by personal demonstration, that a little more of Four Winds Farm as an occupation will not only be death to my last slight chance of accomplishing anything in art, but will interfere seriously with my continuance as a mortal man.

You may see then that both Mummie and I have good reasons for wishing to rent the house, in order both to save our energies and our money. But this plan is all in the air; though we have thought of one or two places, we do not know definitely where we could go if the house should be occupied by others; nothing is decided; and the first step, is to find out definitely from you, if you desire to rent the comfortable furnished residence, commanding the exceptional view etc.

Concerning the letting of the farm on shares, I propose to take that, or some course similar, for the ensuing summer; and as the character of the contract will be in some degree affected by the renting of the house, I should want an

answer from you as soon as possible; for, already, it would be well for me to open communication with someone in Stowe, as either to take a proportion of the crop, or do the work for a lump sum.

What we want of you is to say whether or not you would wish to rent the house for 3 or 4 months, if we could manage to find other quarters for ourselves.

In view of my state of health and this uncertainty of finding a desirable cottage, our advertisement or prospectus goes no further than your hand this year; but do not destroy it - perhaps it may be desirable to use it again in wider circulation -

I think there is no prospect of our going immediately to New York: Mummie's letter, I think, created too much the impression of having reached an extremity; for, in some respects, I am better than I was during the winter, and I think in no way worse. Dr. Tool when he last saw me, said he thought I had improved somewhat. At all events my nerves are a little quieter; the increasing continuance of warm weather has produced that good effect. You all talk as if Stowe meant recovery for me: I am not at all sure that it does; I am afraid of the stimulating air, of the cold mountain winds - however well I may love them, I feel that I must have better nerves and warmer blood to do well in a cold climate. In any case I should shun if possible an imprisonment in four New York walls; the only consideration that would induce me to take such a course, would be the desire to relieve Mummie of excessive anxiety and responsibility; for you may guess what kind of a winter she has had (and how much she needs rest if she can find it, and relief of worries for the coming summer) But now that she has the doctor's sanction to return at any time to New York, if events here should take a decidedly unfavorable turn, she is, I think, contented, or much relieved in mind; and probably prefers to remain, so long as I feel it to be desirable, and she sees no change for the worse in me. Under any circumstances we would probably have to make a pause in the miserable town, for we could not go to Stowe or into New England before the middle of May at the earliest; and by the first of that month I guess the heat here would be excessive - enervating.

We have had the pleasure of releasing no less than 15 bob whites, which were brought living to us (having been

caught in snares) we ransomed them, and then set them at liberty. The last that came, some five, were free in a box - very timorous crowding together in corners and uttering a low piping or twittering; since their release we have heard them all day calling to one another, with a broken, plaintive note. The other party of eleven were secured by having their legs tied tightly together with strips of calico; they sat in the bottom of a basket and only moved their heads, watching us with their bright dark eyes. They seemed to be "studying". They struggled very little when Mummie lifted them out, and with a scissors severed their bonds, and they went off with less show of excitement than the last.

Love to all, Yours,
E.M.T.

Roseland, Bainbridge, Ga.
March 10th, '96

Dear Joe:

Last night was the night of trial; and I cannot bring myself to believe that it went off otherwise than in the best manner. The point, of course, is how the attraction will draw through the two weeks, which cannot consist wholly of first nights and be regularly supported by large forces of friends. I trust the forty odd clerks of the what's-his-name bank whom my good uncle supplied with tickets, did not show <u>too</u> lively a sense of obligation.

About the catalogue of the society: if the place where, is as necessary as the time when, I suppose it would be as well to say Staten Island, since I <u>did</u> happen to be born there.

This simple statement would make me sufficiently native, would it not? Or would you add N.Y.? <u>Not</u> - I should say, as a matter of taste; and I never heard of any other Staten Island.

Yours, E.M.T.

Roseland, Bainbridge, Ga.
April 1st, '96.

Dear Joe:

You deserve a decoration for your part in the Marlow-Taber campaign; the service only allows of stage-jewel orders, I suppose; but then, the honor is all. Seriously, that wonderful first night house, though it vexed, really subdued the critics - did it not? Here, we got the impression of pronounced success, in spite of some newspaper snarling.

I am sorry my picture lost the prize (as usual): It would seem as if one might hardly be so daring, as to make the attempt again: There is a great finality about the number three: See Father William: "I've answered three questions and that is enough". And the Bell man: "What I say three times is true".

You know no one was ever permitted more than three wishes, and three attempts have ever been the limit. I do not see my way to apply for the prize again. However I am glad the picture is well hung.

We have had several days of heat - 83 in the shade; it does not make me so limp as does the cold, nowadays, but it is trying, notwithstanding. I pray for moderate temperatures, that I may stay where I am, until time to go into Vermont; but I am afraid in any case, I shall have to stop over in the unhappy town. But I shall there see you and some of my family.

Farewell,

Yours,
E.M.T.

Roseland, Bainbridge, Ga.
April/ 1896 /

Dear Florence:

I am sorry you do not find it possible to take the house for the summer. Thanks however for the early answer,

though why add the extraordinary caution to rent the farm in any case, "as the tenant would not care for the bother of the farm". You might as well suggest to a turpentine manufacturer, who had a cottage to rent in his pine wood, that he had best carry on the still himself, as usual, since it was not probable that the casual tenant would not care to be troubled with the business. I never heard of anyone who voluntarily and for pure pleasure undertook another's business, especially if it is one he is not liable to know anything about, as in the case of our possible tenant, who would not be (of course) a farmer.

We go on here much as usual: we sit out on the piazza and try to make out the different bird notes. The foliage, now out, is, of course, very fresh and tender, and the wedgeshaped leaf of the black-jack makes pretty arrangements.

I am shocked, yet not surprised to hear of Theodore Robinson's death: he was in poorest health, though a constant worker.

With love,

E.M.T.

Roseland, Bainbridge, Ga.
April 15th, 1896.

Dear Charlie:

We had rather an amusing incident last night, a familiar episode enough in this country, but strange to us. At dusk a lean, weather-browned individual leaned over our front-yard gate and expressed his intention to pass the night

with us. I had gone inside, for I never remain out of doors after sunset, but Mummie was on the piazza. Showing not the least discomposure, as you might suppose most women would have done under the circumstances, she explained to the visitor our inability to lodge him but offered to give him a meal and to set him on the road liable to lead him to shelter at no great distance. He received this offer with a grunt of dissatisfaction, and settling himself on one of the rocking chairs on the piazza, proceeded to satisfy his curiosity concerning ourselves. Where we came from, what our name and station might be, the size and character of our household (this with a lingering hope, I think, of finding some corner of accomodation for himself) etc. etc. In return he gave Mummie to understand that his business in traveling the country was to preach Christ crucified. He had a deep and rather good voice, but, with a peculiar tone of self assertion in it, a marked egotistical note that might easily be pushed to a bullying pitch, I fancy, if time and place should serve.

You may suppose that Mary Hurley regarded this intrusion as little short of piracy or flat burglary. She could see nothing but a walking image of crime in the person of the preacher; and the funny part of it is that the two negroes caught the infection of her fears. After the man had had his supper, during which meal he was watched by 6 awe-struck and suspicious eyes (I may mention here that Mary allowed him only a pewter spoon, lest the sight of silver might arouse his criminal appetite) and when the time arrived for Henry (the colored man) to set him on his way thro' the wood, it seems Henry repented the leaving of his pistol at home. No sooner said, than the cook, Ada, whips out a revolver; and with this in his pocket Henry ventures out with the suspicious stranger.

The menial part of our establishment inspired by Mary, was all in a twitter; and yet the circumstances were common enough in the experience of the negroes, and called for no such degree of excitement.

The opportunity for heroics was not to be missed by any gentleman of color. Henry stated that it was not only expected of him but he felt it to be his duty, to defend the

family, that he should remain on guard all night, he might go to bed, but not to sleep.

Ada and Mary spent the evening in tracing the sound of stealthy footsteps on the dry leaves at the edge of the wood. How they divided the one firearm among them, I don't know. The preacher was seen proceeding on his way to Tallahassee this morning; and a daylight view has somewhat mitigated the blackness of his character and intentions.

The Brook's tell us that we did right to dismiss the man after giving him his meal (a hospitality extended as a matter of course in this country), since, if admitted to the house, such strollers too often prove themselves to be theivish. This is the one excitement or incident of any interest that has occurred of late. 'Tis a very monotonous existence; but the environment has increased in interest as the season has progressed, and our indolent, uneventful way of living, has now the more fitting atmosphere of summer heat--warm days with light breezes, and nights close, still and dark (with the insistent voice of the whip-o-will sounding near and far in the forest.)

In health and feelings, we remain much as usual, except that Mr. Toby seems to be plucking up a little spirit. Mummie is as ever, irrepressibly cheerful, the sustaining and directing power of this particular group, in other words "de boss ob de whole gang".

Yours,

E. M. T.

Washington, Conn. July 17, '96.

Dear Harry:

What a summer of beauty this must be at the fairest of all places? God grant I may be able to see it again, and that within three months time.

The lindens are in flower now - or should be, but perhaps this rich, warm rainy season has pushed the development of all vegetation somewhat ahead of time.

I am sure you have not had a sultry day at Stowe, however all the rest of the world may suffer from heat and humidity.....

I am surprised and delighted to hear of the big crop cut from the small piece north of the house. If the weather does not turn dry now, we may look for solid results from that piece for the next four years. I hope all the new stock has done as well.

Love to the dear babies. Kindest regards to the Pratt family.

Yours ever,
E. M. T.

Washington, Conn. Aug. 3rd, '96.

Dear Harry:

You can scarcely imagine how much pleasure it gives me to hear whatever trivial detail of Four Winds farm's affairs. Your letter was a great pleasure; and I hope you will find time to do me so good a turn soon again-- any kind of information that touches on the place, the dogs, the horses, the people of the village, on any Stowe matter (in fact) will give me the liveliest satisfaction.

Mummie and I picture them,-- the little girls-- constantly indoors and out; and wish for a little real glimpse of them; and regret (alas) howdeeply that a whole summer-- a year-- has gone by without a sight of them. It is cruelly hard for Mummie; and you may guess, as the origim or cause of such separation and delay, that I am quite as regretful.

I'll send you an article in the "Auk" (ornithological publication) by Thayer. Observation on the protective coloring of birds. Full of interest.

With love,
E. M. T.

Monday, Aug. 10th, 1896.

Dear Harry:
Oh for Stowe! Of for the north! Send me word of it! every detail! - - - - -

E. M. T.

Washington, Conn. Aug. '96.

Dear Harry:
I thank you so much for your letters; and no mews is more interesting to me than that concerning the little darling girls.

I cannot write much-- my dear brother, I am a dying man,-- I am more helpless every day; and I begin to fear that I may not be able to die in Stowe. I thought to go there-- my home-- on the chance; but now I fear I am too weak to reach you living. But I shall make the effort if I possibly can.

I think I could die contented there-- and to live again! ah, it is too much-- that I dare not hope.

God alone knows the intensity of my sufferings-- I pray for death; but I want to die in sight of the mountain in my own country, under my own roof.

I meant merely to acknowledge your kind letters, but I cannot forebear this expression-- do not consider it extravagant-- it is bitter truth.

Love to the darling babies and to the good kind people with you, from

Yours,

E. M. T.

Washington, Conn., Aug. '96.

Dear Harry:
I feel constrained to send you this line concerning

the darling children. They have been an inspiration to me; and were it not that death is dealing with me, would have been the inspiration perhaps of something permanent; for four or five fairy stories have been running in my head for the past year, and always made interesting to me by connecting them with the idea of that audience of 3. No artist could hope for a better-- but what I want chiefly to say is in warning regarding Francis. Her delicate constitution, her great susceptibility, her poetic nature, may at times induce a very morbid condition. I feel sure that if she is not most carefully watched and guarded, there is a chance of her incurring great suffering.

I speak solemnly, Harry, as a dying man. How I love those babies!

Goodbye,

E. M. T.

The Cold Spell. Aug. 7th, Sunday.

The wind began blowing cold from the northwest-- a magnificent sunset, cumulous clouds floated in all directions and stretched along the ridge of the sky, like a daylight manifestation of the milky way was the variation of cloud forms-- that constitutes a mackerel sky, a shoal of celestial silver fish.